

The Newbie

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FADE IN:

EXT. AFTERNOON, VERY OVERCAST. TROPICAL BEACH

Sound: couple having sex, the woman laughing amorously

YOUNG WOMEN: mid-20s, petite, race: black.

YOUNG MAN: mid-20s, tall, race: white.

Time period 21 years ago. Exotic island, mostly deserted, a thunderstorm is eminent - the tide is rising, sailors selling beautiful shells are hurrying to beach their small boat. A romantic picnic for two, is getting washed away by the tide. Young woman and man (early 20s) having wild passionate sex under a blanket, don't notice they're being swept away.

YOUNG SAILOR: 20, average build, Latino, cheeky.

YOUNG SAILOR  
(laughing)  
Mira, Paco! And I thought only  
fish, mate underwater.

It starts to rain. The couple get up, quickly manage to grab towels, to cover themselves, laughing and still in the throes of passion. She runs ahead, and stands in front of a nearby grotto for shelter from the rain, he chases her, grabs her, dips her down and they kiss.

OLDER SAILOR: 40, average build, Latino, serious.

OLDER SAILOR  
You should be so lucky. Cabron!  
Stop lusting. Venga! Ayudame! Go  
grab the shells they bought, just  
the expensive ones, let the cheap  
ones go. We can re-sell them.

YOUNG SAILOR  
Brillante! Heffe.

EXT. EARLY MORNING, THREE MONTHS LATER, SAME REGION. CRUISE SHIP PIER.

Same young woman, disembarking from crew gangway. Teary-eyed, pulling her enormous suitcase, along the pier. Same young man teary-eyed stood on upper deck, port side, watching her leave.

EXT. AFTERNOON, NEW ORLEANS. TULANE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION CEREMONY.

TIFFANY: mid-20s, very pretty, average build, assertive, intelligent, but inexperienced, mixed race: black and white.

DARREN: mid 40s, tall, handsome, scant beard/coup days unshaved look, artsy, race: white, accent: New Orleans (NOT southern Dixie).

Tiffany, another young woman similar features, but fairer complexion, than the first one (that was having sex on the beach) is sat among the sea of graduates. She turns and looks for someone sat in the audience. She sees a man, Darren (with 2 cameras: one with a massive lens and the other for average distance) and gives him a huge smile and a wink. He snaps her picture at that moment.

EXT. AFTERNOON, SUMMER. UNIVERSITY GRAD. CEREMONY - LATER.

Tiffany is stood in the procession of graduates, on the platform. The man from the audience is taking pictures of her, auto-shoot. The dean places the hood on her shoulders and hands her the diploma. She turns around, smiles, holds on to her cap, then jumps and clicks her heels. Everyone laughs.

THE DEAN: 50s, tall, quirky, race: black.

THE DEAN  
(very serious)  
Live the moment! (funny) Because  
it's all, in debt and downhill,  
from now on.

Everyone laughs.

EXT. EARLY MORNING. AUTUMN. SF INT'L AIRPORT TERMINAL. CURB SIDE.

Tiffany and Darren are stood teary eyed, saying good-by.

DARREN  
Well, this is the second time I'm  
saying good-by to a woman that I'm  
madly in love with.

TIFFANY  
Oh, dad. It's not a good-by, it's  
farewell. She asked about you,  
yesterday.

DARREN  
Did she? Yeah, but she always does.

TIFFANY  
I know, I know but this time, mom -  
I meant mum. I've got to get use to  
saying that, "Mum, mummy." I kinda  
like the sound of that, Mum. Or  
should I call her Katie.

DARREN

Tif! What did Mummy say?

TIFFANY

She asked if you were bald, all slouched over, had a beer belly by now. And flat arse.

DARREN

You didn't tell her about my arse, did you?

Darren feels his bottom.

TIFFANY

No, I told her that you're in top form for an over the hill, grey around the edges, full fledged beard. I don't like it, don't think she will either. Pitiful, puppy dog-eyed romantic.

DARREN

Oh! That's my girl! I'm so proud you. The woman that you've become.

TIFFANY

And of the woman that I am yet, to be.

Long pause. Tiffany and Darren, very emotional.

DARREN

How can I tell you "good-by."

TIFFANY

You won't have to.

Darren has a feeling a apprehension.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Thanksgiving isn't far away. Mum said that it would be all right for you to come, months ago.

DARREN

Are you sure? You know she's quite a kidder, that mother of yours, Katie Wells.

TIFFANY

Come on, Dad. Now, don't be nervous and chicken out. And there's a guest house not far away. (pause) Families are always together, come Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

When you come, we'll cook our traditional and vegan Thanksgiving dinner together.

DARREN

I don't think I'll be staying for Christmas, Tiffany. You should spend that alone with your mum and maybe her family in Belfast.

TIFFANY

We can't go to Belfast. I asked already. She has the show, it's opening before Christmas and hopefully a very long engagement, if it's fantastic, she said.

DARREN

OK, I will definitely come for Thanksgiving. Otherwise, it'll be your first time with no Thanksgiving dinner. And that would be, just plain un-American. But, you might forget all of your American traditions by then. And me.

TIFFANY

Oh! Dad. It's only about, what. Two months away. I shant have forgotten that quickly.

DARREN

Yes, you will. You already sound like your mother. But, it's not a bad thing. Not really. As long as you don't start sounding like one of those posh snobs. It's all right.

Sound PA announcement. First call for Tiffany's flight boarding.

TIFFANY

Don't worry about that, no matter how I sound, I'll still be the same ol' Tif.

DARREN

Well honey. It's time.

Tiffany and Darren very intense hug and kiss farewell. Very sad, both tearful.

TIFFANY

And bring all the seasonings. I packed mine.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I seriously doubt that they'll have any of the stuff we like, over there.

Darren is too choked up, can't speak, just nods and waves. Tiffany waves back.

EXT. RAINY AND WINDY MIDDAY. HEATHROW AIRPORT INT'L TERMINAL.

Tiffany is waiting by the windows at the arrivals area of the terminal, sitting atop her massive suitcase, holding onto her camera case, with her rucksack on her back. After a half hour, she phones her mother's mobile, no answer, voice mail. Time lapse. She sits for another half hour, camera case and rucksack next to her on the floor. She calls again, voice mail again. She goes to the tube station exit and stands in the long queue at the attendant window, in the ticket hall. Time lapse. Finally she gets served. Attendant is a bit snobbish.

TUBE ATTENDANT: female, 30s, average build and looks, assertive and straight forward, race: white.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Good day.

Tube attendant pauses, waiting for Tiffany to greet her.

TIFFANY

Oh! Pardon me. Good afternoon.

Tube attendant looks put off.

TUBE ATTENDANT

May I help you?

TIFFANY

I hope so. This is my first time in London. My mother was suppose to meet me here. I've been trying to call her, but all I get is her voice mail.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Where do you need to go?

TIFFANY

She lives in Willesden Green.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Do you know the post code?

TIFFANY

Post code ...Ah! Zip code. I have it. Just a minute.

Tiffany gets her phone from her rucksack and searches for the post code.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

OK. It's NW10 0CC.

The attendant steps away from the window and returns with an Oyster card, a card holder and a tube map. She holds the Oyster card up to the window.

TUBE ATTENDANT

First, you'll need to buy one of these, an Oyster Card, you can use it on the underground, over ground, any trains or trams, within London and all London buses. It's £5. Then you need to put money on it, £5 is the minimum. Are you a student?

TIFFANY

No, I just got my master's degree. I'm done with school. Thank goodness.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Well then, no more student discounts for you, dear. You should have come before you finished - UNI, you're not a little kid, after all. Because public transport is expensive in this city.

TIFFANY

But, I heard it's one of the best.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Suit yourself. I wouldn't know, I carpool with my colleagues from Reading. So, that's a total of £10. How do you want to pay; cash or bank card.

TIFFANY

I have dollars, I meant pounds. I'll pay in pounds.

TUBE ATTENDANT

So, that will be £10 then. To get you started. You can top up this card for as long as you want to. And receive whatever credit is left on it and your £5 for the card, when you leave London.

TIFFANY

Oh! I'm not leaving, I'm living here now. With my mom, I meant mum, mummy.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Not that I won't ever leave London,  
that is. And go to visit somewhere  
else. But, I've moved here now.

Tube attendant gives Tiffany a blank stare, waiting for the  
money. Tiffany looks puzzled for a moment.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry! You're waiting for the  
£10.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Yes. We won't be going anywhere  
without that, now will we.

Tiffany sets her phone on the counter at the window, looks  
for her wallet, opens it and searches for a £10 note, then  
hands it to the attendant. The attendant puts the card into  
the holder, adds the money to the card, gets the receipt and  
then passes them to Tiffany. Tiffany takes them and places  
them in her wallet, then puts her wallet in her handbag.

TUBE ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Now, you said post code NW10 0CC,  
correct?

Tiffany picks up her phone and checks for the address again.  
Then sets it back down, on the counter.

TIFFANY

Yes, NW10 0CC.

The attendant unfolds the tube map and points on the map,  
whilst explaining to Tiffany the directions to Willesden  
Green.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Now, you're going to walk directly  
out to the exit for the tube. Right  
over there.

Tiffany turns to her right and sees the crowded exit.

TIFFANY

OK.

TUBE ATTENDANT

You can get on any train that stops  
at the platform. We are here. You  
aren't going that far, on this blue  
coloured one, the Piccadilly line.  
You need to switch at Green Park  
Tube Station, to the Jubilee Line,  
that's this grey coloured line. And  
take a train going north, to  
Stanmore. Then alight here, at:  
Willesden Green.



TIFFANY

Pardon me ... Alight?

TUBE ATTENDANT

You don't have to say that now; you're not a kid anymore, you're all grown up now. But at least you can "sorry" to the bloke stood behind you. Or maybe you're one of those rude people that break wind and don't bother to say a word. Like my husband, God rest his soul.

TIFFANY

What? What's alight, mean?

TUBE ATTENDANT

Well you want to get off the tube at some point and see that beloved mother of yours, that forgot to meet you here, with you coming all the way from America no less. She should have explained all of this to you, so I wouldn't have to - and get on to the next customer.

Tube attendant points to the long queue, behind Tiffany.  
Tiffany turns around and looks, then turns to the attendant.

TIFFANY

She didn't forget about me.  
Something must have happened.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Well, we don't have time to get into that one - now do we?

Tiffany looks very frustrated.

TUBE ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

I thought so. Anyway there's a lift at Green Park, but none at Willesden Green. Not the nicest of neighbourhoods I might add. But, then again you really don't have a choice, with that kind of a mother of yours.

Tiffany looks exhausted.

TUBE ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Maybe some nice bloke will give you a hand with your massive suitcase, they usually do.

TIFFANY

A lift. Elevator - got it.

Tiffany goes to walk away.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Wait a minute!

TIFFANY

What now? Cause you've totally pissed me off, lady.

TUBE ATTENDANT

Me! The nerve! I'm not! 100 days sober, today. Thanks to AA. I'm trying to tell you, you left your mobile. You'll need that to try to get through to that negligent mother of yours. Ask for help to find your new address, with the station attendant. Good luck! Welcome to London.

Tiffany totally frustrated.

BLOKE: 20s, muscular, attractive, construction worker type.

BLOKE

Miss, your phone. You forgot your phone.

TIFFANY

(relieved)

Thank you.

BLOKE

You're welcomed.

Tiffany picks up her phone and puts it in her rucksack. Then walks to the exit, filled to the maximum with people waiting to get on the tube.

INT. RAINY AND WINDY MIDDAY. TUBE CARRIAGE - PICCADILLY LINE.

Tiffany onboard the Jubilee Line to Willesden Green, standing near the double doors, where she has more room for herself and her suitcase. The train stops at Flinchley Road, a young Italian enters, her phone rings, she answers it. It's her mother, she's a bit miffed.

TIFFANY

Hello, Mom. I mean Mum. Where are you?

Everyone turns to look at her on the carriage, because of her American accent and she's talking a bit loud, because she's miffed. The young man makes his way next to her.

KATIE: 40s, slim build, pretty, assertive, classy - but unpretentious, detail oriented, preoccupied, a bit chatty.

London accent with a trace of Irish, race: black (older version of the young woman, having sex on the beach, in the opening scene).

YOUNG ITALIAN/ENRICO: late-20s, very handsome, average build, intelligent, energetic, positive, friendly.

KATIE (V.O.)

Sorry dear. But first, where are you?

Tiffany looks up at the tube route graphic.

TIFFANY

Great, it stopped raining, too. We already passed Finchley Road and next stop is West Hempstead.

KATIE (V.O.)

You have ...

TIFFANY

Two more stops. Yes, I know.

KATIE (V.O.)

I'm so sorry, that I wasn't at the airport. But, I will meet you at the station platform, OK. Don't come up the stairs. I don't want you to struggle with your luggage, going up all those stairs, all by yourself.

Tiffany looks up at the young man and smiles.

TIFFANY

Well, we might not have a problem with that, after all. I mean, I might have that problem, already solved.

KATIE (V.O.)

OK? Don't fully understand what you mean, but ...

TIFFANY

It means, don't worry about it.

KATIE (V.O.)

I'm so truly sorry, Tiffany. I've already left a bad impression, I know. But I got a call from my agent, that got a call from a theatre director, that I can't stand, just this morning to be the last minute replacement for the choreographer of this massive;

(MORE)

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 what I, well we all hope will be,  
 the new West End hit musical. They  
 had artistic differences, never got  
 on, et cetera, et cetera. He, the  
 director, that is; is such a  
 egomaniac, insecure, self-centred,  
 childish, an idiot - but an  
 absolutely brilliant director. He  
 directed me, once upon a time.  
 Besides, the money is fantastic!  
 But, I don't get paid till after  
 the show opens, 1st of December.  
 The first couple months are already  
 sold out.

TIFFANY  
 Yes, Mum. You already told me about  
 it. When you had the interview  
 about six months ago.

Tiffany a bit bored with the conversation.

KATIE (V.O.)  
 I did? That's so long ago. I  
 thought the entire thing was awash.  
 Then I got the call this morning.

TIFFANY  
 Well, that's great Mum. Aside for  
 not getting paid for 2 months.  
 That's a drag.

KATIE (V.O.)  
 A drag, what's that, a  
 disappointment. So, we hope that  
 this one will take off brilliantly  
 and run for at least 10 years,  
 fingers crossed. It's a musical,  
 horror/comedy from Broadway, but  
 with a new cast from London.  
 Anyway, I had to get caught up to  
 speed, on the entire thing. Plus,  
 the first casting for the dancers  
 was also this morning, the main  
 talent has already been cast. Thank  
 goodness. But, the casting for the  
 singer/dancers is what we're in the  
 midst of now; which ran massively  
 overtime, so many delays. I hated  
 for you to deal with the airport,  
 your luggage and getting on the  
 tube all by yourself. But, you've  
 seemed to sort it all out.

TIFFANY  
 Well, of course Mum. I'm a fully  
 competent woman, with a post  
 graduate degree, after all.  
 (MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

And I didn't get lost, like you thought I would. Besides, the London tube, the maps and graphics are pretty straightforward and I have Google.

KATIE (V.O.)

Yes. But, street level, that will be absolutely confusing. Even with Google or whatever. Just ask, dear. Brits love Americans. Helped us win the war, and all that. Even though most can't stand the accent. But, that's nothing untoward you, dear. So, don't get offended. Never take it personally. It's not your fault.

TIFFANY

So, where are you now?

KATIE (V.O.)

I'm just about to get off the No. 98 bus. And walk down to Willesden Green tube station, a 2 minute walk, away. But I'll stop at the grocery store to get us some dinner first, which will just take a minute. The store is just across the street from the station.

TIFFANY

OK, so see you in a bit.

KATIE (V.O.)

All right, good-bye, luv.

TIFFANY

Bye, Katie. Sorry, I mean, Mum.

Tiffany and Katie disconnect. Young Italian smiles and looks at her phone, then points to it.

YOUNG ITALIAN

This. It's an American brand, right?

TIFFANY

Yes. The latest. A Motorola X. "Hello, Moto."

YOUNG ITALIAN

"Hello - Moto." I like it.

TIFFANY

I just got it, earlier this year. A gift for my graduation.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Yes. From university. A master's degree.

TIFFANY

So, you heard.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Yes.

Tiffany feeling a bit embarrassed.

TIFFANY

Sorry, I was talking a bit loud. But she was suppose to greet me at the airport, since 12:00.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Oh, well. These things happen.

TIFFANY

Yes. But getting this far has been ... Anyway that's over, thank goodness.

YOUNG ITALIAN

The tube you mean. Sorting it out?

TIFFANY

Yes.

YOUNG ITALIAN

I know, I went through this myself. When I first came. Got lost all the time. But people here are quite use to foreigners.

TIFFANY

You say, "foreigners" here? We never say that in the US. It's politically incorrect.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Oh, really. No joke. Come on! I'm not put off by it. I'm a foreigner, there, I've said it.

TIFFANY

Well, whatever. But, I don't like it. And I won't say it.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Please.

TIFFANY

No. So don't beg. It's - off putting.

Both laugh.

Both are a bit awkward. Tiffany a bit guarded now, since she's revealing so much of herself and flirting with a complete stranger, but wants him to help her with her suitcase and doesn't want to be rude.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

So, do you live near here?

YOUNG ITALIAN

No. I live in Cricklewood, on the other side; from Willesden Green. Where, you are also going.

TIFFANY

Really!

YOUNG ITALIAN

And I'll help you with your massive suitcase. No worries.

TIFFANY

Oh, no! I couldn't. No.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Don't worry it's nothing. I do it loads of times. There are guest houses and hostels in Willesden. And young ladies and some young men with, too much baggage.

Both laugh.

TIFFANY

But, at least I have an excuse.

YOUNG ITALIAN

And what is that? Your excuse.

TIFFANY

I was born here and now I've come back; to live in London.

YOUNG ITALIAN

With your, Mum. That forgot you at the airport. Lucky you, 'eh.

TIFFANY

She did not forget me. I told you already.

YOUNG ITALIAN

She was working.

Both laugh.

INT. GROCERY STORE.

Katie carrying a basket, loaded with groceries.

KATIE

(talking out loud, very low)

She's probably starved. I haven't a thing for her to eat. Oh, my god! I almost forgot, she's not vegetarian, she's vegan. Forget the dairy altogether, the cheese and the eggs. But I have to have eggs.

She removes: cow's milk and cheese from the basket. Then rushes to get more fresh fruit, vegetables and legumes.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Wonder if they have anything. Something quick.

Katie looks about the frozen food section. Tucked away at the bottom is a box, frozen over, of veggie burgers. She struggles and finally dislodges it.

INT. TUBE CARRIAGE.

PA Announcement: Next stop - Willesden Green. The young Italian gets up and grabs the handle of Tiffany's suitcase and pulls it to the door. Tiffany follows behind him.

TIFFANY

So, this is it. Finally, I get to see her.

YOUNG ITALIAN

This is the first time you're seeing your mother?

TIFFANY

Actually, yes, that I'm old enough to remember, and in person.

They both alight from the tube carriage.

EXT. TUBE STATION PLATFORM.

A small group of people alight from the train, at the same time. Tiffany and the young Italian, lag behind a bit.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Wow! That's ...

The young man is shocked.



TIFFANY

Yeah. I know. It's not like we haven't communicated all these years. But, we haven't lived together since I was a little girl.

YOUNG ITALIAN

Well. (pause) My name is Enrico Franceschini.

TIFFANY

Franceschini. I'm Tiffany Wells. Nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

YOUNG ITALIAN

I'll help carry this upstairs, for you.

TIFFANY

That's very kind of you.

Tiffany looks up, to the top of the stairs.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

And boy, am I thankful.

INT. TUBE TICKET HALL.

Katie rushes in, carrying a large reusable shopping bag full of groceries, looking for Tiffany. She sees her and Enrico entering the hall, she stands on the other side of the barriers.

KATIE

Tiffany, Tiffany. Luv, I'm here.

Enrico and Tiffany (very excited) stood at the top of the stairs, see Katie. Tiffany rushes to Katie. Enrico exits through the double gate barrier, then joins Tiffany and Katie.

TIFFANY

Hi, Mum.

Tiffany searches for her Oyster card. Then crosses the barrier. Tiffany and Katie, big hug, very emotional, long embrace. Enrico is stood near Tiffany.

KATIE

Hello, luv. How are you? My goodness, seeing you for the first time, all grown up. I thought I'd have something clever to say - but I don't.

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

I'm stunned, seeing you, with my own eyes, for the first time. I'm so amazed. Can't find the words.

TIFFANY

(joking)

Oh, mom! Come on! I know deep down I'm still a 10 year old, to you.

Both cry and laugh.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Oh! I'm so sorry. Mum, this is Enrico Franceschini. Enrico this is ...

Katie and Enrico shake hands.

ENRICO

Katie Wells. So nice to meet you. The both of you together again, really.

TIFFANY

Yeah! We just met on the train and chatted. He helped me with this.

Enrico hands Tiffany her suitcase. Tiffany takes it and draws it nearer to herself. Enrico notices Katie's heavy bag.

ENRICO

Is there anything else I can help with?

KATIE

Thanks for the offer. But, I think we can manage, from here. Unless, you want to tote that all the way down High Street and up two flights of very awkward stairs.

ENRICO

Actually I would, but I and my Uncle Er Manzo, have to get ready for a very important meeting; and I'm a bit late, myself. But, it was a pleasure. Maybe, I'll see you around the neighbourhood sometime, Tiffany and your lovely mum, Katie.

TIFFANY

Yes, of course. Good-by.

KATIE

Good-by. And thanks so much for your help.

Enrico exits.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Sorry I wasn't downstairs, to greet you. But, when I got to Sainsbury's I realised I hadn't anything remotely vegan. Except for some fruit and frozen vegetables.

TIFFANY

I'm so glad you remembered. Cause I'm starved. That vegan food during the flight was awful. Good thing I always carry snacks. Besides, with this jetlag, I'm so out of it. I don't know whether to eat or sleep.

KATIE

A spot of tea, will do you good. But, I must say, what I have here isn't much. But, there's a health food shop on High Street and a Whole Foods, not far away. We can go there tomorrow, after I'm done casting or when you're rested. It'll be a couple of days, before you're insync.

TIFFANY

The sooner, the better.

KATIE

So, how was your flight, over? I want to ...

Tiffany and Katie exit the station.

EXT/INT. LATER. KATIE'S HOUSE SHARE.

The concept of adults, that are complete strangers, living in the same house, is totally new to Tiffany; she's very put off by it. Especially since most of the residents aren't tidy and don't speak English. Her mother is older than all of the other occupants, and doesn't care for them at all; with their loud music and loud talking, smoking pot and very late hours. She's barely mannerly to them. She's only staying there because it's so cheap and close to central London. She's hoping that with her new job as choreographer for the production company (otherwise she's been working solely as a tango instructor at a dance hall, for nearly a year) and additional income from Tiffany; they'll be able to afford to move into a proper flat, in a better area of London. Tiffany and Katie enter and stand behind the door, the house is untidy, clothes drying on the airers all about the house, there's the smell of fish cooking in the kitchen, the washing machine is also spinning, very loudly. Two blokes (Housemates No. 1 & 2) are smoking pot and arguing in Spanish, in the side alley. A young woman (Housemate No.

3) is on the sofa in the lounge, watching telly, she's also feeding a cat, sat next to her, some crisps, bits are falling on the floor as they both eat.

HOUSE MATE NO. 1 & 2: male, early 20s, Mediterranean, tall, skinny, unattractive, could care less attitude, tattoos, piercings.

HOUSE MATE NO. 3: female, early 20s, short overweight, Italian, messy.

KATIE

Well, as the say, "Home crap, home."

TIFFANY

Like you said, it isn't much. But, much worse than I ever dreamt of. Not that I was dreaming about something looking like - this.

KATIE

Well, that's reassuring. At least now I know you'll want to get out of here, as quickly as I do.

They both laugh.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Shall we go up. We'll be on the second floor, the attic.

Tiffany looks exasperated.

TIFFANY

Please mum, give me a break.

They walk up the clumsy stairs, passing the kitchen along the way. Tiffany sees the bin, overflowing with rubbish, as they struggle with the luggage. A House Mate No. 4 (The Chef) gives them a non-committal look and a nod, then goes back to cooking.

THE CHEF: male, mid-30s, average build/slightly heavy, a bit brash.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Should I ask?

KATIE

Don't bother. Where's your Italian friend now, when we need him, eh!

TIFFANY

Well, if we weren't living in the penthouse suite - they'd be no need.

KATIE

But, at least it's more quiet up there. And thank goodness that lazy, laying on his backside all day, good for absolutely nothing but leaving his shit all over the place, prima donna, left. And I've never known anyone, in my entire life, that never washes he clothes, not even his knickers.

TIFFANY

Really, no joke. He just buys new ones all the time?

KATIE

How could he, he never worked. And I never saw shopping bags.

TIFFANY

Maybe her had an - arrangement.

KATIE

Anyway, who cares. We have the room all to ourselves. Even though it's costing us £60 more. That's the lowest he'd go.

TIFFANY

Who's, "he?"

KATIE

The property manager, Gilberto. Another lazy one. But he does have, an arrangement. He just charges way more than he should in the first place, for this vile place and in the second place, that includes his overhead. That son-of-a-bitch. I figure per head, he's clearing, after he pays the agency, £20 each. And there are, with you, 10 people in this house.

TIFFANY

That's every month?

KATIE

Every week. You've got a masters' degree, you do the math.

Katie and Tiffany reach the top of the stairs. The door has a broken lock and a number 5, taped on it. Katie opens the door, they both set the luggage down. Katie points out Tiffany's bed. Tiffany collapses on her bed. Katie takes out antibacterial spray, from her carrier bag, then places it on top a dresser.

TIFFANY

(pauses and adds up the  
figures in her head)  
Fuck him!

KATIE

Spot on! And - he's suppose to  
clean this entire house and take  
out the rubbish, three times a week  
and buy all the house supplies.

Katie removes a pack of toilet paper.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Including the toilet paper. I'm so  
fed up of complaining.

TIFFANY

What about the others? Why don't  
they say anything?

KATIE

They won't be bothered. Hell, if I  
care what they wipe their arses  
with.

TIFFANY

Fuck 'em! Maybe with some of that  
trash/rubbish on the kitchen floor.

Katie opens the packaging and sets the toilet paper on the  
dresser. Then sits down on her bed.

KATIE

So, please don't leave any of our  
stuff down there. I don't shop, so  
that these arse holes can sit on  
the toilet and wipe their bottoms  
with my hard earned money. And  
there's only one shower, near the  
kitchen.

TIFFANY

One shower - for 10 people? You're  
kidding me?

KATIE

No. The one downstairs is broken.  
Gilberto says the landlord can't be  
bothered. Another arse hole. That  
is, if he's even bothered to tell,  
him, in the first place.

TIFFANY

For crying out load.

KATIE

And watch our food, too. They will nick it, those fucking lazy bastards. And there's another Sainsbury only doors, away. That way, past the house. Well, good thing you're vegan. They won't bother, with your stuff.

TIFFANY

Damn straight.

KATIE

As soon as Chef, in there, is done, with that reeking fish, I'll fix the veggie burgers. He works at some kind of Italian restaurant.

TIFFANY

Is he a chef?

KATIE

No! He's a waiter. I just call him that. He cooks most times. He's the only one that doesn't nick stuff and he's nice, on occasion. As you can tell, today wasn't one of them.

Katie looks at her phone.

KATIE (CONT'D)

5:00.

Katie jumps up.

KATIE (CONT'D)

It's tea time. Just take a rest, luv. I'll be back in 5 minutes.

Katie picks up the carrier bag, exits and closes the door. Tiffany takes out her phone and sends a text message to her dad. Checks her other messages: FB, Twitter and answers some of them, scrolls past others. Stands up and looks about the room, sees a portrait of her mother in a beautiful intricately decorated frame, that her father has a copy of, picks it up, examines the picture and frame closely and smiles, places the picture back. Then looks out of the large window bedroom window at the rooftops of the neighbourhood.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Katie returns with tea and veggie burgers. Tiffany is asleep. Katie closes the window, then gets a blanket to cover Tiffany. Takes her tea and props up in bed on her computer. Looking at the profiles of the other dancers, that need to be cast for the musical, tomorrow.

INT. MORNING. BEDROOM.

Katie is dressed and ready to leave for work. Tiffany is still asleep. Katie writes her a note. The note says: Good Morning Luv. I'll be at work until 3:00 or 4:00 this afternoon, if I'm lucky. I'll call you when I'm finished. We can meet up and shop, at Whole Foods, if you'd like. Enjoy your rest. I have some fruit for you in the basket, next to your bed. They are already thoroughly washed. And you can re-heat the veggie burgers, that I made last night, they're in the fridge. Look in cupboard No. 5 in the kitchen for anything else you'd like. I didn't have the heart to wake you. Hope you can get good rest. Those idiots downstairs are obnoxious, besides they don't go to work until the evening and smoke weed all day long. But, send me a text message if you need me, OK. Talk later. Cheers Katie. PS All our other cooking stuff is in the trunk in the attic room, the room behind the door. She leaves the note on the dresser, then exits and closes the door quietly.

INT. AFTERNOON. THEATRE - STAGE. DANCE AUDITIONS.

Katie is sat next to the musical's director in auditorium, front and centre.

DIRECTOR: male, late-30s, tall slim build, marginally attractive, artsy, self-involved, very posh, race: white.

DIRECTOR

How many more do we have left?

The stage manager shouts from the wings. She prompts the dancer to go forward.

STAGE MANAGER: female, 50s, slightly heavy, unassuming, race: white.

STAGE MANAGER

One, left. Before lunch and 20 afterwards.

The dancer walks out to centre stage and waits.

DIRECTOR

(nervous)

What do you think about him?

KATIE

I know him, he's brilliant!

DIRECTOR

Did you put him forward? I don't believe in nepotism. True talent, that's all I want for this production. True and amazing talent.



KATIE

What! How could I, I just started yesterday. These auditions were arranged weeks ago.

DIRECTOR

Oh! Sorry, truly sorry, dear. I lost my head for a moment. All this pressure, getting this all done. And I didn't do my meditation this morning. Honestly, my entire day just doesn't go right if I don't do it, as soon as I wake up. And we must break for lunch, at one, precisely, no matter what. My nutritional guidance counselor says, otherwise it's bad for my metabolism. And missing meditation is havoc on my biorhythms, so my life coach says.

Tiffany awakens, confused. A cat is curled up, lying next to her on the bed. She looks for her phone and sends her mother a text message, then goes back to sleep.

Sound: vibration on Katie mobile. She's preoccupied with the message.

Katie looks at her mobile. It's a message from Tiffany, she reads it, whilst talking. Message says: "Where and at what time are we going to meet? No one is here, but me and the cat." Katie looks puzzled, replies, "Can't talk now, I'll call you later, OK."

KATIE

Well, good. It's now 1:00. And we certainly don't want you to be skipping any of your daily rituals from now, do we?

DIRECTOR

What! I don't have rituals. What on earth are you talking about? Let's carry on.

The director turns to the dancer.

DANCER: male, early 20s, slim build, Brazilian, flamboyant.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

What's your name, lovely?

The dancer introduces himself. And proceeds to audition.

INT. AFTERNOON. HOUSESHARE.

Tiffany awakens, gets up. Then draws up the window shade, finds the fruit, takes one and eats it. Then finds the trunk, as directed. Then walks all about the messy houseshare, all the other bedroom doors are locked. She enters the tiny kitchen. There's a cupboard marked with a number 5. She opens it and looks on the shelves; which are sparsely filled, then opens the fridge and sees No. 5 with a few items and the food that her mother bought and fixed yesterday. She opens the fridge, finds the plastic container with the veggie burgers and takes a sniff, approves it and places it in the microwave to heat it up. Then looks out of the window, onto the same boring view that she saw upstairs, yesterday; with the exception of the cat, that is sat on the parapet. Tiffany opens the window and calls the cat inside, the cat comes in and jumps on top the counter and sniffs at the food bits on the counter. Tiffany exits to go to the bathroom, then remembers she has no toilet paper. So goes back to the kitchen cabinet, were she saw a couple of rumbled napkins and takes one. Then goes back to the bathroom and locks the door. Whilst she's in the bathroom, the cat rummages through the rubbish and nearly topples the overfilled bin. Tiffany exits the bathroom, the microwave is done, she picks up the cat and goes back to the bedroom.

EXT. LATE AFTERNOON. STREETS OF WEST END.

Katie walking to the tube station, dialing Tiffany. Tiffany asleep with the cat, awakens and answers.

KATIE

Hi luv. Good afternoon. How are you?

TIFFANY

I'm still dead. I had no idea how lousy jetlag is. I feel like I've been pissed for days.

KATIE

Are you now? Have you found my stash?

TIFFANY

No. I haven't, not yet anyway.

KATIE

Well, when you do, don't let those idiots see you drinking. They'll come in the room, when we're gone and nick some.

TIFFANY

We should have a good damn lock on this door. Everyone else has one.

KATIE

I know dear. I've asked, countless times. But, we'll be moving house soon anyway. So don't bother complaining. But, I will get a lock for the trunk, though - just in case. I know you're not use to this houseshare situation.

Tiffany falling asleep.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Those people are like vultures, carrion, scavengers. Please don't leave anything out. I wouldn't be so strict about it, except for the fact that when I need something, not one of those bastards will so much as lend me a match. Except for chef, and he never nicks anything, not even soap. Oh, I forgot to tell you, you have to light the cooker with a match, it's not automatic ignition like you're used to. And don't forget to switch it off, afterwards. Did you light the cooker? Tiffany? Tiffany? Dear, are you still there?

Tiffany jumps up. And sits up in the bed.

TIFFANY

Sorry, mum. I just dozed off again. You were talking about some birds.

KATIE

Oh, for goodness sakes, Tiffany. Look, I've been reading up and the jetlag experts say, the sooner you get yourself oriented to the new time zone, the better. You have to force yourself, luv. It's 4:00 now. I've got an errand to run, so we'll meet up at the entrance of the Kensington High Street, Whole Foods at 6:00, OK.

TIFFANY

That sounds good. I'll Google it. You know that's a US store brand.

KATIE

Really! No wonder it's massive. And please take along my black and white polka dot carrier. It's in the attic room, you'll see it, it has wheels.

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

It's for the groceries, OK. I don't want to tote bags, like yesterday.

TIFFANY

OK. Oh! Can I take the bus there? Without too much trouble, that is? I want to start taking pictures. I promised Dad, I'd send him some, too.

KATIE

Yes, if you'd like. The No. 52, to Victoria Station, check the route, on tfl.gov. They'll be loads of traffic, though. You'll be going into central London. And there's nice areas, along the way. And when you want to go to the centre of town, Oxford Street, Hyde Park, take the 98 bus, OK.

TIFFANY

OK. I'll get myself up and get ready. BTW what's the cat's name?

KATIE

What cat, luv?

TIFFANY

Not the one from downstairs, yesterday. The red tabby.

KATIE

I've never seen a cat in that house. And what's a red tabby?

TIFFANY

There's a cat that lives here. A female, striped white and red, very friendly. So it must belong to someone, in here.

KATIE

I haven't the slightest. You know I don't ask around on cats, or anything else that I don't own or pay for, in that house. Anyway, those ones, we call them ginger, dear. Although, I have heard that gingers, are now complaining about us calling them gingers; and now want to be identified as redheads. So I'll have to give you that one. Since red as a hair colour is now considered politically correct. But not that it would matter to the cat.

TIFFANY

I think I'll ask her.

KATIE

Ask whom, dear?

TIFFANY

The cat.

KATIE

OK. Now you're taking a piss, at me.

They both laugh.

TIFFANY

Good-by Mum.

KATIE

Good-by luv. I need to get back. Oh, and don't forget to top up, I meant, add money to your Oyster card. There's several stores along the way to the bus stop, where you can get that done. Just look for the blue and white, Oyster ticket signs, posted on the storefronts, OK. But, we'll have to figure something out with a bank account in your name ASAP. Cause if you run out of Oyster credit you can use a bankcard. I wouldn't want you to get stranded with no way top up. And they don't accept cash on the buses anymore, since recently. So, keep an eye on your credit.

TIFFANY

Maybe I can do it now? Going to the bank.

KATIE

You don't have enough time. Most all the banks close at 4:30.

TIFFANY

What! 4:30. You're kidding?

KATIE

I know. Your father use to complain about that, too. When you were living with me, you know, before. So, we'll have to sort that another day. I'll take you to my bank, on Saturday, OK. You'll need an account, as soon as you start working anyway.

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

We don't do payroll checks, over here either. So the sooner the better. OK.

TIFFANY

OK. Cheers. Bye.

KATIE

Good-by, dear. See you in a bit.

Both disconnect.

EXT. WILLESDEN HIGH STREET. EN ROUTE TO NO. 52 BUS STOP.

Tiffany at the health food shop, just done buying some snacks, she puts the snacks in her rucksack and exits the shop, to the No. 52 bus stop, carrying the bag and her rucksack with camera in it. She stops at a small grocery store, checks for the Oyster sign and then enters and stands at the counter. She sees the Oyster card reader, then hurries to find her card, gets it; then looks for her wallet and money, she finds a £10 note. The grocer is staring at her, as a queue is forming, in the small shop.

GROCER: 20s, Asian, with London accent, average build and looks, unassuming, impersonal, impatient.

TIFFANY

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm still new to this.

Tiffany places her card on the reader.

GROCER

How much?

TIFFANY

£5, please.

Tiffany hands him the money. And then takes her card from the reader.

GROCER

What did you do that for!? I haven't topped it up, yet. Now, I have to do it all over again. I hope this doesn't mess up my tally. Put it back!

Tiffany places her card back on the reader. The grocer proceeds to complete the transaction.

GROCER (CONT'D)

OK. Now its done. You can take it.

Tiffany takes her card. And is about to walk off.

GROCER (CONT'D)

Wait a minute!

Tiffany looks at him, puzzled. The grocer, extends his hand to Tiffany, holding a fiver.

TIFFANY

What now!

GROCER

Your change, madam.

Tiffany is very put off, takes the note, puts it in her wallet, then puts the wallet in her rucksack, puts the rucksack on her back, picks up the carrier and exits.

EXT/INT. LATER. BUS NO. 52 - EN ROUTE TO HIGH STREET KENSINGTON.

Tiffany is sat on the bus, behind the space for wheelchairs and prams, taking pictures along the way. A woman, pushing a pram with a baby in it and a little girl, enter the bus at the side exit. Tiffany moves her carrier aside to make more space. The woman wrestles to get the pram in, she tells the little girl to sit down, in a foreign language, the girl remains stood, near Tiffany. The mother goes to the front of the bus and touches her Oyster card on the reader. The little girl is very curious about Tiffany's camera. The mother returns to the little girl and scolds her about not sitting down. The little girl touches, Tiffany's camera's lens. The mother sits down, and quickly puts the little girl on her lap then scolds the little girl and holds her hands.

MOTHER: mid-20s, very pretty, tall slim, Eastern European, impersonal.

LITTLE GIRL: 2/3 years old, very pretty, very friendly, Eastern European.

BABY: boy, 3 months, Asian.

TIFFANY

Please, don't worry. It's OK. She can't hurt it.

MOTHER

(speaking in a London accent)

Oh, you don't know this one. She'd destroy this bus, if I'd let her go.

They all laugh.

The woman's mobile rings. She answers the call and chats, in the same foreign language that she spoke before. The little girl remains curious. The baby awakes.

The mother tends to the infant. Tiffany looks out of the window and takes pictures along the route, people walking along in Notting Hill. The odd antique car on the road, a doubled deck city tour bus, shops along Bayswater Road, she thinks about a tour, later on. The woman exits, with the little girl, Tiffany takes a picture of her. Tiffany exits the bus, on Kensington High Street. And takes pictures of the US brand retailers on the street, a flower stall, then the church bell rings on the hour. She sees London Metro police walk by, carrying AK-47s and is a bit disturbed, but takes a picture, whilst the police are not looking. Then she walks toward Whole Foods and takes a picture of the entrance, from across the street. She sees her mother walking up from the opposite direction, High St. Kensington tube station. She takes pictures of her mother whilst she's walking to the store, unbeknownst to Katie. Her mother stops at the store's entrance, then Tiffany crosses the street to meet her mother.

TIFFANY AND KATIE SHOPPING FOR GROCERIES AT WHOLE FOODS MARKET. THEY STOP AT THE SEASONING AND SPICES AISLE. TIFFANY PICKS UP A BOTTLE OF CAJUN SEASONING, IN GREAT SURPRISE AND SHOWS IT TO HER MOTHER. THEY LAUGH IN DISBELIEF.

INT. LATER. WHOLE FOODS - RESTAURANT.

Tiffany and Katie are sat eating dinner. The carrier and Tiffany's rucksack are filled with groceries. Tiffany is showing her mother the pictures that she took whilst en route. Katie is holding the camera.

KATIE

I'm truly proud of you luv. You've done right by yourself and your dad. I'd always thought that you'd take after Darren. Being you were with him, most all of your life. But, maybe there's a bit of me in there, too. You're very organised, like me. Not your dad.

They both laugh. Katie hands the camera back to Tiffany.

TIFFANY

You're right about that one. Poor thing, he needs a new assistant, now that I'm over here. Don't forget he's coming for Thanksgiving.

KATIE

No, I haven't forgotten, luv.

Katie looks up from the camera and smiles, then looks back at the camera.



TIFFANY

Dad and me, should come here to shop, for the dinner, they have most everything. They already have the place decorated for turkey day.

KATIE

Yes, I saw that.

Katie hands the camera back to Tiffany. Tiffany butts it away, in her rucksack.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Well, you certainly have a good eye for taking pictures. I'm no expert, but you definitely capture the moment and the emotion.

TIFFANY

Well! Come on, mum. Some of my earliest memories were holding a camera and standing on a chair watching photos come to life, in dad's darkroom. Helping Dad with setting up and props and all that stuff. Posing for test shots. And, helping customers get ready for the photo sessions. We had to calm some of them down. You know, breathe with them. Some people get so nervous in front of a camera, they're petrified, especially in a proper studio setting. They act like their scared to death.

KATIE

Its simple, like taking selfies.

TIFFANY

Not really, not for a professional photographer. Portrait photography is grossly underrated, these days. But, for the subject, it is. Them ones that aren't professional models or actors or performers, because they are trained, in the art of facial expression. You know how people say, "that's a terrible picture of me, I don't like it." Well, like Dad told me, it's self-deprecating. People think they're smiling or have a great look, on their faces, but actually they don't - cause they can't see themselves, at the moment.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

You have to make them FEEL good about themselves and the moment, calm them down, laugh and joke with them. In other words, entertain them, be a clown. It takes a lot of work, especially with kids.

KATIE

Yes, I can imagine.

TIFFANY

Then you'll get fantastic portraits. It's so much more involved than just pressing a button.

Tiffany illustrates.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

That way, they relax, look natural and bring out their inner beauty. Instead of looking like turkeys or the deer in the headlight look. Like he said, "It's all in the eyes. You smile with your mouth - but the feeling is in the eyes."

Tiffany poses.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

And then you get the money shots. That's what Dad calls them. And they buy every single one.

KATIE

My, I had no idea so much was involved in a great photograph.

TIFFANY

Yeah. Like the one of you, on top your dresser...

KATIE

Your father took that one of me.

TIFFANY

Yes, I know he has one just like it, too.

KATIE

It's the best picture, (pause) I've ever had taken.

TIFFANY

You know why. Because at the time it was taken, you were having a wonderful time, you were in love, all good energy.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

That's why wedding pictures come out so good. Well, if there isn't, like ah, "shot gun wedding" that is. It's all about the experience - living in the moment. (pause) You'll treasure that picture, forever. That's why people get so upset when they lose pictures, like that. It means everything.

Katie resigns to the fact that Darren did an excellent job in bringing up Tiffany.

KATIE

And all for an 8 x 10. Your dad taught you loads. And now, you're ready to take on the world of business and finance.

TIFFANY

Yeah. Enough of goofing off. Time to get serious. The party is over.

KATIE

Tiffany, I hate to pressure you luv. And I know you just got here; but these things do take time. So, I really need for you to start job hunting. It's too difficult for me to handle everything alone. London is very expensive city. And, as I told you, money is so tight with me right now. Come to think of it, it always has been, just can't manage to get ahead of things.

TIFFANY

I already had a long vacation anyway. After graduation, me and some friends from school, I meant uni, went to the Bahamas for 3 months. When I got home, my British passport, finally arrived. Then I helped Dad, with taking the pictures for the kids, in the school district, that was in September and now its October and I'm here. Ready to get to work.

KATIE

Sounds like you had a great summer, luv! But, how did you afford the Bahamas, staying there, all that time?

TIFFANY

We all worked on this guy's big, I meant massive, tour fishing boat.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

We slept on it as well. So, no hotel bill. They fished and I went diving for sea shells and sold them, on the dock, for pocket money.

Katie reminisces.

KATIE

Did you're dad tell you about how he bought me these beautiful shells on the day that we finally, well shagged?

TIFFANY

Yes, he did. And how you guys nearly got swept away by the tide.

They both laugh.

KATIE

Yes, he's right. The tide was the last thing on our minds. We were too busy, making you, luv.

They both laugh.

TIFFANY

Oh, mom! That's kinda embarrassing, you know.

KATIE

Well, that's how it goes. Innit! Anyway, I was so heartbroken afterwards. About losing the shells, I mean. I didn't even have the money to buy them, in the first place. As soon as, I got paid, every two weeks; I spent that money on partying, in port, that is. On board everything, well, the booze was on the cheap. And the spa, but that was pricey, even with a crew member discount. I loved the spa on board and they did everything, from head-to-toe. You know, dancers are always in pain. But, your dad, about the shells. The very next week, he went back to the same fishermen and bought the exact ones, same amount, same shapes and colours and markings. I don't know how he remembered all that.

TIFFANY

He's a photographer, Mum. He sees things - as images, and then frames it. They are set, in his mind, so he doesn't forget them.

KATIE

Well, that's interesting, never thought of him, in that way. Anyway, he put them in a hand-carved, black velvet lined wooden box, and presented them to me like, like - The Magi. I'll never forget that.

TIFFANY

Do you still have them?

KATIE

Probably. In storage with the rest of my stuff. And I never bought him a thing, in return. Like I said I never had money. That's partly why I couldn't keep you. And that's why I never visited, couldn't afford it. I just couldn't ask him, either. And mostly felt out of place with your father's well-to-do, southern family. They were dead set against him going to work on board the cruise ship in the first place and not too keen on me. They would have made life hell for me. I was glad that I wasn't - well, never got to know any of them, really. I'm just being honest. But, I had to do what was best for you. I don't know what he's told you all these years, but even if I'm repeating the story, or what I say may not be to your liking. I want you to hear this directly from me.

TIFFANY

It's all right, mum. I want to hear your side of it.

KATIE

Going back to work on board the was totally out of the question, leaving you for 6 to 8 months at a time, impossible. And I couldn't very well, ship you off to my family in northern Ireland. Then I got lucky, part of the original London cast in: Lords of the Jig.

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

No other mixed race Irish dancer in the entire company, but me, so was I proud. You were about 8 months old then, just learning to walk. And my mum agreed to come and stay with you at my tiny flat, in Kilburn. The show was going along brilliantly. We were booked for three years '96-'98 and on opening night, here in London. I had that stupid fall. And everything came crashing down. Just when you have everything all sorted out. Someone comes out of nowhere and blind-sides you with a cricket bat, at full swing.

FLASHBACK: KATIE PERFORMING A VERY ATHLETIC DANCE ROUTINE DURING REHEARSAL, SHE TAKES A BAD LANDING. BARELY MANAGES TO COMPLETE THE ROUTINE, OFF STAGE IN PAIN, COLLAPSES. EVERYONE RUSHES AROUND HER, A REPLACEMENT IS SENT IN, BY THE DIRECTOR. THEN AT THE DOCTOR'S SURGERY, LOOKING AT X-RAYS. BAD PROGNOSIS. SHE RETURNS TO DANCE THEATRE ON CRUTCHES, TO COLLECT HER THINGS AND SAYS GOOD-BY TO THE COMPANY.

BACK TO: SCENE

Tiffany is not convinced.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I had no choice, Tiffany. My career as a dancer was over, finito. I couldn't afford: you, my myself and my mother. Look, my family barely survived on benefits, my dad lost his factory job in Belfast, shortly after he and mum had me. We lived in council housing. You call them housing projects. But not here, in northern Ireland. You think that's OK, here; but, in northern Ireland, a mixed race family, forty years ago. Oh, my God. I was lucky that I qualified for a bursary. Cause I worked my arse off to get it. So that I could get the hell out of there.

Tiffany sad, put agreeable.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I'll take you to Belfast, one of these days, so you can see for yourself. Up north and Ireland are nothing like London, Tiffany.

TIFFANY

Yeah, that will be an eye opener,  
I'm sure.

KATIE

I went into a very deep depression,  
after your dad came and took you  
away - took you with him. I was at  
home alone: you were gone, my  
mother went back to Belfast, she  
hates London, anyway. And my  
dancing was gone. I had to sell my  
flat and most all of my things. I  
felt hopeless, everything ended,  
all at once. The doctor said, even  
with physiotherapy all those torn  
ligaments would take a year to mend  
as best they could, the damage was  
permanent. And if I didn't rest,  
I'd need surgery. I was drinking a  
bit too much. But, my leg mended,  
as good as expected. So, I pulled  
myself together and got things  
sorted out, as best I could. Found  
teaching jobs, here and there. But,  
more than anything, I felt as if I  
let you down, I was truly  
disappointed in myself and, as a  
mother, likewise.

TIFFANY

Don't beat yourself up about it  
Mum. I can see how all of it hurt  
you. I'm glad you recovered, all in  
one piece. Especially, with turning  
away from alcohol.

KATIE

That. It was so hard to cope.  
Suffering from physical and  
emotional pain at the same time.  
You'd just had your first birthday.  
I was so torn.

TIFFANY

I can't even imagine.

KATIE

And for your sake, I hope you'll  
never have to. That one, the drink,  
that was a battle, to say the  
least.

TIFFANY

Did my father know?

KATIE

Oh, no! I never told him. He had his hands full already. Not with raising you, really. He always said you were, how did he put it, easy. Except for the occasional, break ups, with boyfriends, that he didn't like anyway. That was normal, everyone goes through that sort of thing. But, it was with his parents and his entire family, really. Honestly, they were mostly closet racists, as he told me. Except for his father, he was blatant.

FLASHBACK: DARREN'S FAMILY HOUSE, 4TH OF JULY - BACKYARD BARBECUE, DISTANT RECEPTION TOWARD KATIE. LATER ARGUMENT BETWEEN DARREN AND HIS FATHER. DARREN AND KATIE LEAVE ABRUPTLY.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Darren is definitely the black sheep in that bunch. I spent one 4th of July, partly with them. All of them, except his mum, starred at me the entire time. Then, toward the end of the festivities, he and his father had words, to put it lightly. We both needed to get back to the ship anyway. How were they toward you, really, Tiffany?

TIFFANY

Well let's just say - they were kind. We had Thanksgiving and Christmas, and all my birthdays, till I was 16. That's when grandma died. And always at their house and just relatives.

KATIE

I guess the whole thing was her idea.

TIFFANY

Probably. Dad is great, he's been a wonderful father. I always wondered why you two never really got together. After you got back on your feet.

KATIE

Well, let me tell you, the kind of person I was - WILD. To say the least. The two guy dancers in our company, were gay.

(MORE)



## KATIE (CONT'D)

But, there were so many straight blokes on board, And of them - well, let's just say, English wasn't their first language. So I played it safe, with your father. And being I was a dancer, working at night, rehearsing one day a week; I had loads of time on my hands. He didn't have as much time off from work as I did, but we managed.

## TIFFANY

Dad said, he loved you from the first time he saw you, one morning in Cancun, when you were with your dancer friends and stopped to take a picture, before going off into town and he was stuck at work. You were the life of the party.

## KATIE

We were not in a serious relationship, Tiffany. We were just mucking about. We only knew each other a few weeks, before we "hooked up." Tiffany, listen - a guy sees a girl and he thinks he's in love and she's attracted to him, he's good-looking, nice body, thick hair, adventurous and intelligent, artsy, but grounded, he speaks English, no less. And wham! Next thing I know, I'm sick, throwing my guts up in the head. I went to see the doctor, in New Orleans and find out, I'm preggers, so I have a week to get back home. Or be forced into a situation, that maybe deep down neither of us truly wanted. Your dad was new to ship life, I on the other hand, was already working onboard for nearly four years, and had already been to nearly every major port in the world, and then some. When I left Ireland, I came to London; the plan was, for a month. Well, I couldn't get cast in a pantomime, much less a West End show. So I signed up, with a cruise ship talent agency. I went to interview one week and got called the next day. All I wanted to do was dance, I loved it, still do. So my bags were packed and ready, to go wherever, it didn't matter, but not back to Belfast.

TIFFANY

But things might have worked out,  
between the two of you, mum?

KATIE

Anything is possible, luv. But, I  
knew my 20 something year old, very  
young and carefree self. I was not  
about to be saddled to a husband.  
You, were my priority.

Tiffany is not convinced.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I'd seen this happen before. So  
many times, Tiffany. These ship  
board romances, ship wrecked lives.  
Most of them do not work. A couple  
that I knew, one from South America  
the other from Eastern Europe, OK.  
So they got married in amazing  
Hawaii, on one cruise. His six  
month contract just started, her's  
ended a month later. And they never  
got back on the same ship together.  
Talk about two ships that pass in  
the night or never. They finally  
got divorced years later. But, some  
don't even bother with that much.  
One young woman I knew got married  
to this bloke on-board, they had a  
son; that she left back home for  
her mother, more like entire  
family, to raise. Again she and the  
husband could never get back  
together, their schedules were  
totally opposite.

TIFFANY

Can't the cruise lines do  
something?

KATIE

Why should they care? So, she meets  
another guy, a passenger no less  
(and that's suppose to be a huge  
"no-no") anyway a year later, he  
proposes and she has to hunt up the  
husband to sign the divorce papers,  
so she can marry the new guy and  
finally have a family. Mind you her  
son was already 10 years old at the  
time. It's a job, luv, not a life,  
for a family, anyway.

Tiffany reasons on her mother's side.

TIFFANY

Even dad said, "ship life is no life, only adventure." For people without responsibility or that have absolutely no choice. Did they ever get together - the woman with the son?

KATIE

I have no clue. They transferred me to another ship, the one I met your Dad, on. But, he's right. For some crew it's the best, honest work, they can find. And as soon as I told your dad about my accident; he got off the god damn ship and stayed home, then started his own studio. And without any help from any of that racist, family of his.

TIFFANY

He never asked them for a dime.

KATIE

Well, good on him. So he never felt like he owed them anything. But, like he assured me, he was going to raise you up, his way, not theirs. Not with that narrowed minded mentality or snobbery, otherwise. And to his credit, we have the fine young woman that you are. And we all have the chance to be apart of each other lives, from now on. Yours at the start and mine, well - in the middle, of everything.

They both smile.

The restaurant is closing. The staff is tidying up.

KATIE (CONT'D)

My goodness, look at the time! We need to get going! So, I've said all that, to say this. I will help you however I can financially, but I don't have the deep pockets that your father has. And now that you're over here independent of him, you will have to...

TIFFANY

Earn my keep.

KATIE

Spot on! And Luv, in order to get out of that shack of a house and live like proper Londoners we both need to be working. Like I said no pressure, being your very first job and all that. However, I know the kind of lifestyle you're use to and living on High Street, Willesden, ain't it, innit?

They both laugh. Tiffany collects her rucksack and camera. Katie her carrier and exit.

TIFFANY

Yeah, you're right. I'd just need to get myself insync and I'll be good to go, Mum.

KATIE

I think we'll make good house mates for each other, after all.

TIFFANY

Yeah, if you'd quit talking - in your sleep. You scare me to death.

KATIE

I do not! No one's ever told me that.

TIFFANY

No! No one. Not even Dad?

KATIE

No. What do I talk about, then?

TIFFANY

Arguing with the director. And shouting: turn, hold it, bend, straighten, extend. Do you two fancy each other?

KATIE

Tiffany, come on. He's gay. (pause) It's the dancers - I must be talking to them, in my sleep. I'm so worried about them. The routines are very athletic. Like Kevin Bacon, in Footloose. And they are mostly all teenagers. I don't want them to be careless and get injured.

The conversation fades out.

KATIE (CONT'D)

But we need the best from them at the same time, but if they're not...

INT. BEDROOM. NEXT DAY - LATE MORNING.

Tiffany in bed. Cat curled up sleeping beside her. She wakes up, confused and disoriented. Looks for her phone, finds it on the floor, picks it up and sits up in bed, then checks the date and time. The cat wakes up and rubs on her, she pets and talks to it.

TIFFANY

It's Friday, 11:00. I left New Orleans on Tuesday morning. By the time I got here it was Wednesday afternoon. Yesterday, Thursday and now Friday, the weekend, already. I don't even know what Friday feels like, over here. You know how certain days, just have a certain feeling about them.

She puts the cat aside and gets up, the cat stretches it's paws on the window sill. Tiffany goes to the window and draws up the shade, then looks out at the cloudy weather.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Well, at least it's not hot. New Orleans, is still an oven. I think I'll go on one of those London bus tours, today. So I can get a better idea of the layout of the city. How about that, kitty?

The cat comes to rub on her legs. Tiffany picks the cat up and holds it, both of them are looking out of the window.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I really don't know where the hell I am. Is Buckingham Palace that way or that way? And the London Eye, is it there? Or there? I bet you do, though. What's your name, by the way?

The cat meows.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

What was that? Didn't catch that one? Anyway, I'll have to think of a good name for you. And you need proper food, not from the rubbish or the junk that girl feeds you downstairs. Have you tried vegan?

The cat meows.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
 You haven't? Maybe you should,  
 you'd live longer. I don't know  
 about you, but 9 lives seems a bit  
 too short. Don't you think?

The cat meows.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
 Glad you agree. Now, let me get  
 myself sorted and have a look at  
 London, OK.

Tiffany takes a couple of sniffs.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
 They're at it again. Reefer  
 madness. The last thing I need is  
 something to chill me out. I'm  
 already a zombie. And no wonder  
 you're such a happy cat.

Tiffany puts the cat down and collects her vegan toiletries,  
 etc for a shower. There's a note on the door from her mother.  
 Tiffany stops to read it, it says, "Tiffany. Don't forget you  
 promised me red beans n' rice, for dinner tonight. Mum."

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
 No, I haven't forgotten, I'll soak  
 them before I go. And feed the cat.

The cat rushes out of the doorway.

EXT. EARLY AFTERNOON. CITY TOUR BUS - MARBLE ARCH.

Tiffany, with her rucksack and camera, runs across Park Lane  
 at Marble Arch to get on the mostly full, tour bus. She buys  
 her ticket and gets on board, then goes to have a seat on the  
 upper level, then chats with other tourist on the bus, walks  
 around touring and takes photos: on the bus and as she stops  
 at various sites off the bus, gets something vegan to eat and  
 she takes the River Thames boat cruise. She finishes the tour  
 and walks across Park Lane at Marble Arch, where she began.

INT. EVENING. HOUSESHARE - KITCHEN.

Sound: bedroom door opens and slams shut, someone talking on  
 the telephone in a Far East Asian language, telly playing  
 loud downstairs, someone in the shower.

Tiffany is cooking a vegan dinner for her mum and herself.  
 The space is so small and cluttered, no room for anything.  
 The situation is chaotic, pots and pans are full. And Chef is  
 also cooking at the same time.

THE CHEF

I must eat, before work. Why don't you wait and cook later. You don't work.

TIFFANY

No, I don't work, but my mother does, and she'll be home and starving in 30 minutes. So, I'm not waiting until later. Why don't you eat at the restaurant where you work? Besides, it won't be long until I start working, too.

THE CHEF

What! I don't eat that food, it's rubbish. And it's not even Italian. It's British, with a name that sounds like Italian, but it isn't, it's Sardinian or Sicilian. Totally fake. My mama would curse me, if she ever found out I eat, that shit.

TIFFANY

Well, look. The two of us can't work in here at the same time. I'm vegan, so I always cook my own food.

THE CHEF

Vegan, eh. That's vegetables.

TIFFANY

And, vegan is no diary, too. No cheese with milk from animals. There's milks and cheeses but, none from animals, only plants.

THE CHEF

Well, I'm cooking the minestrone.

TIFFANY

No! That's not vegan, it has meat.

THE CHEF

No! What you eat is the fake, British version.

TIFFANY

I'm from America.

THE CHEF

Oh, God. Even worse. So you're British and American. The two worst tasting foods of the world.

TIFFANY

No! Not where I'm from in America.

THE CHEF

So where's that, New York?

TIFFANY

No, New Orleans, Louisiana.

THE CHEF

Well, why didn't you say so, in the first place. I've heard about this Louisiana Cajun and creole food. Some Sicilians, from some village in Louisiana, came to my restaurant one time; and told me about your spicy food and Louie Prima this famous Italian singer from New Orleans, his parents were Sicilian. This guy even started singing old Italian songs with the band. Good voice. But, what a show off, he was. I would like to try this food.

Tiffany scoops up a spoonful of red beans and rice and hands it to chef.

TIFFANY

Here! Please, taste it.

The chef takes the spoon and eats.

THE CHEF

Oh! Madre mia. This is good, a bit spicy, but good.

TIFFANY

Grazi.

The chef gets a spoon and scoops up a spoonful of minestrone and hands it to Tiffany.

THE CHEF

Prego. Taste.

Tiffany takes the spoon and eats.

TIFFANY

Oh! Madre mia. This is good, not as spicy, but so fresh.

THE CHEF

Thank you. Take more. And some for your mama, too. I have plenty.

Chef gets plastic containers for his food and starts tidying up the kitchen.



THE CHEF (CONT'D)

How about you and I make a deal. We both know how to cook, right? We are both hungry around this time and so is your mama, right? When, we are both cooking vegan, we cook together and share food. And when I'm not cooking vegan, I wait until you are finished.

TIFFANY

I totally agree. Sounds fantastic! What's Italian vegan food?

Chef packs up his dinner for later, at work.

THE CHEF

We have loads, of dishes: *frittata con le patate* - that's a potato fritter, *aranchini* - fried rice balls, *rigatoni ai carciofi* - with artichokes, not the briny ones, fresh ones. You like artichokes?

TIFFANY

Do I like artichokes? I'm from New Orleans. Come on, are you kidding! What else?

THE CHEF

And my speciality: *purea di fave con cicorica* - fava beans puree with chicory leaves. Anything with milk or cheese; we substitute your vegan ones.

TIFFANY

It all sounds so wonderful. If they're anything like your minestrone, well - I won't be disappointed.

THE CHEF

Oh! Trust me. You won't be. I love to cook. We might even put a bit of your special Louisiana seasoning in them; just to kick it up a notch. Bam!

They both laugh.

TIFFANY

So, you know Chef Emeril, too?

THE CHEF

Not personally. No. But, I've watched, The Food Network. Brilliant programme.

(MORE)

THE CHEF (CONT'D)

With our favourite Italian chef;  
Giada de Laurentiis. She came to my  
restaurant, once.

TIFFANY

Ah! The Barefoot Contessa. I know  
her. I love her. She's American.

THE CHEF

But she was born in Roma, like me.  
So, you know Giada! You Americans  
you know everybody.

TIFFANY

No, not personally; just from the  
show. I watch it, too. Maybe one  
day, you'll be on there, too.

The chef, a bit depressed.

THE CHEF

I don't know, maybe one day.  
Because serving fake Italian food,  
in a fake Italian restaurant isn't  
my reason for coming to London.

TIFFANY

I'm so glad to meet a fellow  
foodie. And another European,  
besides my mother, that knows that  
all southern US food is not all  
greasy. Like that disgusting, soggy  
fried chicken or fish and chips,  
crap they serve, around here,  
everywhere. For goodness sakes;  
doesn't anyone over here know how  
to fry anything properly. Lightly  
battered and crispy.

THE CHEF

I think not, except for Italians.  
Hey! Maybe we can help each other  
out. We look out for jobs for each  
other, OK. So we can both find what  
we need?

TIFFANY

Sounds like a plan. It's a deal,  
Chef.

THE CHEF

Chef, I like it. But, it's David.  
David Blasi.

Housemate No. 2 enters and straightaway, collects his laundry  
from the washing machine. He's trying to chat Tiffany up, at  
the same time. Chef continues tidying.

HOUSEMATE NO. 2

Hi. So what's your name?

TIFFANY

Tiffany.

HOUSEMATE NO. 2

Tiffany. Nice name, I like it. So, you're American, yes? I like Americans. Rap music, beat box, street dancing. Legalising marijuana. That one is not good for business. I came to London, from Cordova, to improve my English.

TIFFANY

I am from the US. And I'm Irish, as well. I was born in London.

HOUSEMATE NO. 2

So that British woman, she's your friend or something?

TIFFANY

No. She's my mother. And she's Irish.

HOUSEMATE NO. 2

Madre mia! Your mother. No! But how come?

TIFFANY

It's a long story.

HOUSEMATE NO. 2

And you speak like an American. I understand you so much better, than British people.

TIFFANY

More predominate, more people and more exposure, in the media. You know: music, films, telly. Even over here.

HOUSEMATE NO. 2

I don't go to work for a few hours. Why don't you come downstairs and we can chat about your long story.

Housemate No. 2 exits, downstairs, then talks to his friend about Tiffany in Spanish. Tiffany turns and talks to him as he's running down the stairs.

TIFFANY

No. No, story time for you.

Chef is finished tidying up and putting his food away.

THE CHEF

Tiffany, you are smart girl. Both of them work in the restaurant with me. Pot washers and pot smokers. They hear your American accent, and chat you up, then they want a hook-up with you, hoping to get a one-way ticket to the US and then dump you, like rubbish. I hear blokes like them, at the restaurant, talking about their scheme, all the time. When American girls come to the restaurant to eat.

TIFFANY

I totally get where you're coming from Chef.

THE CHEF

Good. I need to get ready for work now. But, Sunday, no work. In the morning, for breakfast, we'll cook: a frittata con le patate, OK.

TIFFANY

All right. See you.

THE CHEF

Ciao. Tiffany.

Chef exits with his plastic containers.

Katie enters downstairs.

KATIE (O.S.)

(speaking loudly)

This house reeks of pot. I already told Gilberto about you two. And he's done, not one damn thing about it. Are you all working for him, or what? Cause, if he is your boss; I'm just telling you, you're being cheated. Because he's taking at least, 10% extra, from the top.

HOUSEMATE NO. 1

*Senora, por favor.* Chill out!

KATIE (O.S.)

Look! You work at some mindless job in some smelly old kitchen, in Soho or somewhere or another, so you smell, anyway. I don't. And I don't want people standing next to me sniffing. Besides, I don't care if you burn up your brain cells.

(MORE)

KATIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But I need every brain cell I've got, to do my job. So, go and smoke - outside.

After a pause. Two guys argue in Spanish and then the door slams. Katie walks, slowly up the stairs. Tiffany peeks out of the kitchen door and sees her mother coming up the stairs, they meet at the landing.

TIFFANY

Hi Mum. Dinner's ready, I'll bring it up, right ah, I meant straightaway.

KATIE

Hi, Tiffany. All right. Thanks so much, luv. I'm so hungry, no time for lunch. But of course, John always has his, and leaves us, working whilst he enjoys a two hour lunch, including dessert and an digestif. We settle for a Snickers bar, if we're lucky.

Katie slowly walks up the second set of stairs. Tiffany remains stood on the landing.

TIFFANY

Well, the red beans n' rice are ready. And, I have a treat for the two of us.

KATIE

You do, do you. What's it, luv?

TIFFANY

Authentic Italian, minestrone.

KATIE

Well, that's OK, by me; but what are you going to eat; besides the beans, that is?

TIFFANY

Minestrone. The real one has no meat in it. I found that out from Chef, today.

KATIE

Really!

TIFFANY

He cooks other vegan Italian dishes, too. Did you know that Chef's mama taught him how to cook. He's very good. He wants to be on The Food Network, one day.

KATIE

I don't know a damn thing about Chef, or anybody else in this house; and I don't want to.

Tiffany goes back in the kitchen and plates up the food, places it on a serving tray. The House Mate No. 6, is on the phone is arguing in Tagalog. Tiffany reacts to the conversation. Picks up the tray and exits the kitchen to the landing, just as another house mate in the bathroom and almost makes her spill everything. Tiffany stops short.

HOUSEMATE NO. 5: female, Indonesian, petite, very nervous, chatty.

TIFFANY

For God sakes! Watch out!

HOUSEMATE NO. 5

Sorry, I'm so sorry. I'm very late for work. No time to chat now. I need to go. Chat later, OK. *Bon appetitto!*

HOUSEMATE NO. 6

(shouting from bedroom)  
Hurry up! You're making us late.

TIFFANY

Thank you.

INT. LATER. HOUSESHARE - BEDROOM.

Katie is laying on her back, stretched across her bed with her shoes off. Tiffany enters the room. Katie gets up, sits on the edge of the bed and pulls up a small table to set the tray with the food on. Tiffany hands Katie a plate, Tiffany takes hers and they start eating.

KATIE

Wow! This is so nice; to have you cook some real New Orleans food, Tiffany. I haven't had this, since (pause) before you were even born.

TIFFANY

It's nothing. Dad and me, cook all the time. He adds regular cheese or meat or seafood, though. He's tried several times, but can't stay vegan for more than a couple of days. Have you ever been vegan, Mum?

KATIE

No, but I was vegetarian and then pescevegetarian for awhile, when I was your age. Now, I'm just too lazy. I have no other reason.

TIFFANY

Well, as long as you admit it.

KATIE

I rarely even cook. That kitchen is too small. I can't cope with it. And besides, chef's always in there. But, he keeps it tidy. And then those two girls, they're decent, but too much - stuff, all over the place. The Spanish, they always leave behind such a nasty mess, and all that, just for pizza or pasta, likewise for that Italian girl. I don't have a clue about that Polish couple, they're gay - guys. I never see either of them. I don't even know their names. Come to think of it I only know, Chef's name, he's David. Never even met the guy he shares a room with, don't know where's he's from either, he's new anyway. I don't bother, they come in and out of this messy house. It's a revolving door. I've been here two years, too long.

TIFFANY

Maybe, I'll be the lucky one, to actually know or meet everyone, in here.

KATIE

Gliberto has signs posted everywhere, "clean up, wash up or I'll charge all of you extra." Bullshit he doesn't bother. An empty threat. Neither do them messy ones. They're so irresponsible. So, use to their *mamas* cleaning up after them. If your father would have raised you up like them, I would never forgive him.

TIFFANY

I wonder what their bedrooms look like?

KATIE

Pigsties, I guess.

Katie gets up, to close the bedroom door.

KATIE (CONT'D)

After I sold my flat. I found a cheaper, but nice one in Wembley, near the stadium. But, then my hours at the dance studio, got cut. Tango is a complex dance, patience required. Everybody wants to learn street dance and popping, nowadays. And I'm in absolutely no condition for teaching, that. So, I had to scale down and move in this dreadful place.

TIFFANY

Don't worry, Mum. We'll be outta here in no time.

KATIE

Yes, let's hope so. I started looking at other places, already. But, don't tell any of them, we have plans to move. Cause, they'll harass us to no ends; about when we're moving out. They're always looking to move into a new place, hoping they can tag along and for you give them some kind a deal on low rent. Letting out your sofa, in your, nice new flat.

TIFFANY

Renting out a sofa? You're kidding?

KATIE

No, I'm not. People do it. Most foreigners are looking for the cheapest way, to live close to central London. They come for the work. Some of them are here for short term work contracts and don't want to settle in. Others can't stand the place, hate the weather, constantly complain about it. And for what. They really don't want a place of their own. And these ones, too lazy to look for a nice place of their own.

TIFFANY

OK. I get it.

KATIE

I hear them, talking about all of this. Or they'll want this room, up here. It's better than all the rest, or so he tells me.

(MORE)



KATIE (CONT'D)

And don't mention anything to, Gilberto. If he hears about us moving - he'll suddenly turn into a pest. Otherwise, he's never around. I make my complaints in messages via text. For the record. Good thing. Cause if you tell him to his face, he conveniently forgets. And I leave the rent money in my pillow, for him to collect it. I sure as hell, don't sit around here on Sunday afternoons, waiting for that thief, like the rest of these ones.

They both laugh. The cat opens the door, enters and sits on the window sill.

TIFFANY

Well, the only one that will know is kitty, I promise. That girl downstairs is gonna kill her with all that junk food. We should take the cat with us, Mum.

KATIE

Yeah, cause she's the only charity case in here. And we don't want her with a little pail around your neck, panhandling, on High Street, once we leave. Like in New Orleans, with those kids, on the streets tap dancing for money.

TIFFANY

You remember those little boys?

Tiffany laughs.

KATIE

Of, course. I'm a dancer. So, did you have a nice time touring London, today?

TIFFANY

Oh! Did I. Loads of pictures. All the landmarks and the people, and the traffic. But, I love it.

KATIE

Well, it's a big city.

TIFFANY

Not quite crazy as New York, though. But, overall, the people are much nicer. But, not as friendly as the people of New Orleans.

KATIE

Definitely, the southern charm you know. Yes, I guess you're right; New Yorkers are a bit, abrupt to say the least. When I was on the ship, before the New Orleans to Mexico run. I did a transatlantic cruise, from Southampton to New York. We stayed in Manhattan for a few days. That was so much fun. I'll have to find the pictures and show you. Me and some friends; we even went to see Cats. It was amazing. Walking down Broadway, the Great White Way. It was like a dream come true for us dancers. Yeah, it was nice, very nice. You'll have to come and see the show when it opens. It looks fantastic. (pause)

TIFFANY

I'd love to come and watch rehearsals.

KATIE

Sure, come by anytime you'd like. So, what else did you see?

TIFFANY

The river cruise, was the absolute best. And the weather held up, the entire time. But, it looked like it was on the verge, any minute. Is that the way the weather is, here?

KATIE

Unfortunately, yes. Sometimes it can look just brilliant in the morning and then in the afternoon rain. But not the kind of deluge rain that you have in New Orleans. Sometimes it's heavy and the streets flood a bit, but not much, it might rain until evening and then stop and then it's clear and breezy again. Very rarely do we get lighting and thunder, like you're use to.

TIFFANY

So the power doesn't go out.

KATIE

That would be more like some problem, other than from the weather.

TIFFANY

Like a generator failure or something.

KATIE

It doesn't happen often. Anyway, other times it's what we call, "spitting rain" with the wind blowing. It rains so light, the wind blows it every which a way. So forget the umbrella, just put your hood on and tuck your head down. You'll see broken umbrellas littered about, all over the streets, turned inside out. But always carry an umbrella with you. Cause sometimes it rains and it's not too windy, but most times it is.

TIFFANY

Sounds confusing.

KATIE

Believe me, luv. It is. I've been living here, longer than I lived in Belfast, and I still don't get it, no one does. Anyway, I have loads of them in the room, just there.

TIFFANY

Loads of what?

KATIE

Umbrellas, luv. For the rain, when it's not, too windy. And we need to get you a pair of wellies, I meant rain boots. What do you call them?

TIFFANY

Goulashes.

KATIE

We say wellies. After some Lord or other that had some made for his hunting or something like that. Cause if it's raining when you leave in the morning, it's bound to be raining all day or most of it. And we do so much walking here, your feet will get soaked. Not having a car, to get around, like you're spoilt to.

TIFFANY

Mum, I ride a bicycle. Do you say, spoiled or spoilt?

KATIE

Spoilt, we say spoilt not spoiled.

TIFFANY

So I'm spoilt to not walking. But, the transit system in New Orleans is no comparison.

KATIE

I loved the trolley on St. Charles Avenue, though.

TIFFANY

Yeah. They have them on Canal Street, too. That's since you were there. But it's too slow, for tourists mostly. I go faster on my bike. But, I couldn't imagine, bothering with a car, around here, anyway. The traffic alone, would drive me insane.

KATIE

We say mad, luv. Don't say insane. That's for proper psychologically disturbed persons, under the doctors care.

TIFFANY

But first, I need to understand the traffic rules here. Many of the road signs are very different. And we don't have all those pedestrian crossings. You cross at the traffic light, or otherwise, take your chances. And some of these foreign drivers, they just don't bother, do they? They think cars, rule. But, I will look into it. Cause I want to get a bike and start cycling again.

KATIE

I've never had a driver's licence or rode a bike on the streets. So I haven't got a clue, about all that. Cycling is popular though and the city is big on cycling awareness, with the drivers. We should rent some bikes in Hyde Park, this weekend.

TIFFANY

Oh! Now you're talking, Mum. That sounds like fun. And, I want to go to Portabello Market, this weekend. I met this American couple on the tour bus;

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

we hung out for awhile and they told me how much fun it is.

KATIE

Sure. We can go on Sunday afternoon, if you'd like. In fact, we can do both things on Sunday, they're near each other. But, we really need to get your bank account done on tomorrow. We'll do that straightaway. I'm still teaching at the dance studio, two nights a week, on Friday and Saturday evenings. I took off this Friday, since you just got in. That's, till we see how the show works out.

TIFFANY

You won't be too tired then, on Sunday?

KATIE

Yeah, most likely. But, this is the last bit of good weather, till the spring. And I haven't done either of them fun things, in years. It will be great. If it doesn't...

TIFFANY

Rain.

KATIE

Yep!

Tiffany gets up to hold the cat and then looks out of the window at the rain.

TIFFANY

In New Orleans its still like a sauna now, anyway. But, good thing, I didn't move here for the weather, 'eh.

She turns and smiles at her mother.

KATIE

So, what do you think of your Mum, so far?

TIFFANY

Well, although I've known of you all these years, I didn't really understand your reasons, for doing the things you did. Like sending me to live with Dad. But, that wasn't a bad thing, after all.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

But, now I'm getting to know more about you, how things have been going for you. Your ups and downs. And I really appreciate you being honest with me, especially about your financial situation. The way you felt about Dad and things, when you were my age. And I get all that, now that I'm older, that all makes sense, to me. But, when I was younger - and I'm just keeping it real, so don't be put off; Mum, none of it made sense. And I didn't even want to speak to you, whenever you called. Dad forced me to, most of the time.

KATIE

And when you wouldn't, he made excuses for you, didn't he?

TIFFANY

Yes, he did. I was angry at you.

KATIE

I totally understand that. And I don't blame you, in the slightest bit. I knew that you'd feel that way. That's why I felt so guilty. I was so torn, in letting you go. And I'm truly sorry that things weren't the way that ...

Katie starts to cry. Tiffany puts the cat down and sits next to her mother and consoles her.

TIFFANY

Well, Mum. Who knows. Maybe you and Dad, might have made it or maybe not. Maybe we would have been a family altogether or fell apart. One thing's for sure, I'm thankful that I do have both of you. And I'm here, in these amazing city, with you. And ready to give our relationship a chance.

KATIE

Can't think of anything else I'd rather us do together. Including moving out of this house. Where we can truly be ourselves.

The cat meows, in agreement.

MONTAGE: TIFFANY (TAKING PICTURES) AND KATIE OUT AND ABOUT, LONDON ON THE CHEAP. PORTABELLO MARKET, HYDE PARK, OXFORD STREET, MUSEUMS, BRIDGES. CHARITY SHOPS: BUYING CLOTHES FOR TIFFANY, FOR WORK AND COLD WEATHER, TRYING ON SEVERAL PAIRS OF WELLIES, THEY DON'T FIT HER NARROW FEET AND HURT. TIFFANY AT HOME ON THE INTERNET LOOKING FOR WORK, ON THE PHONE SETTING UP INTERVIEWS, FINALLY ADJUSTED TO GMT. HER MOTHER ENCOURAGING HER TO KEEP LOOKING. KATIE SHOWS TIFFANY JOB ADS THAT SHE'S NOT INTERESTED IN. TIFFANY SHOPPING FOR GROCERIES, COOKING WITH THE CHEF. KATIE COMPLAINS, SHE AND TIFFANY ARGUE ABOUT HOW MUCH THE ORGANIC FOOD AND VEGAN PRODUCTS, TOILETRIES COST. WEARING LEATHER OR ANIMAL WOOL.

TIFFANY BECOMES FAMILIAR WITH FELLOW HOUSE MATES. ARGUING WITH THE HOUSE MATES NO. 1 AND NO. 2 ABOUT SMOKING WEED IN THE HOUSE. SCOLDING HOUSE MATE NO. 3 ABOUT FEEDING THE CAT JUNK FOOD AND LITTERING. GETTING TO KNOW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, SHOPPING AT THE HEALTH FOOD SHOP AND LEARNING HER WAY AROUND LONDON. GETTING CAUGHT IN THE RAIN WITH NO UMBRELLA OR WELLIES. TIFFANY TRYING TO PERSUADE KATIE TO GO OUT ON HALLOWEEN KATE ISN'T INTERESTED. TIFFANY, KATIE AND SOME OF THE HOUSE MATES DRESSED IN COSTUMES AND GO TO THE DUNGEON FOR HALLOWEEN, OUT ON THE TOWN TILL LATE. HER MUM FALLS ASLEEP ON THE BUS ON THE WAY HOME. TIFFANY GOES ON TWO INTERVIEWS, NOT HIRED, FEELS REJECTED. MEETING HER MOTHER AT WORK WITH REHEARSALS AND AT THE DANCE STUDIO ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY EVENINGS. ON HER WAY TO THE THEATRE TIFFANY PASSES A BUSINESS CALLED: "ACME MOVERS & SHAKERS," WITH A SIGN POSTED ON THE DOOR, THAT SAYS: "PROCESSING CLERK POSITION AVAILABLE, NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED, APPLY WITHIN." TIFFANY ENTERS THE OFFICE, THEN FILLS IN AN APPLICATION, EXITS. DOESN'T GET A REPLY.

Caption: nearly a month later

INT. MORNING. TRADITIONAL OFFICE BLDG - FINANCIAL OFFICE, SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM.

Financial investment consultants office. Very old school. Very quiet. Pretentious staff.

FINANCIAL EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWER: Female, 40s, average build, very intelligent, stoic, race: white.

INTERVIEWER

Well, your CV is quite impressive. I'm familiar with your Alma mater, Tulane's AB Freeman School of Business, is one of the top post graduate programmes in your country; with several multimillionaires, business leaders and entrepreneurs to it's credit. Plus you read in, marketing and e-commerce retailing.

(MORE)

## INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

However, we do encourage our homegrown institutes of higher learning and our own people, as well. Here at The Investment Group Ltd. It's a shame that you didn't come to London for an internship, instead of Paris. Although, in itself, that is a great plus. However, if you had come here, we'd be more familiar with you; and been able to observe how you'd get on with us Brits and the way we carry on business. We have an outstanding partnership between our two countries, but we do handle things quite differently, in matters - financial, that is. We would have groomed you in the sort of high yielding return investment companies; of the solid and stable, tried and tested, low-risk sort that our clients' financial portfolios are well established with. You'd observe and understand from personal experience, that our lifestyles are very different as well as, well our proper, well different terminology over here. If you decide to stay in the UK, that is. Why don't you give me a call in, let's say, 6 months.

The interviewer stands. Tiffany pushes away from the conference table and stands.

## TIFFANY

Well, as they say, follow the buying trends and you'll find good investments, much sooner, than later. I definitely see good evidence of dominant influence from the US, but on a much smaller scale, what is it now, 5-to-1; in popular culture over here with the clothing and fast food brands, music, films, telly, fitness, even organic megastores and last but not least DIY storage units. And your love affair of Ford automobiles, well that's been going on for decades. Seems like Britons are doing their best - turning into rather conspicuous consumers, with no place to store your junk, just like Americans.

(MORE)



## TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Why, when I walk down streets and in the shopping centres of London, I feel right at home, shopping at TJ Maxx, sorry, renamed TK Maxx for you guys. And ASDA which is, US Wal Mart, No. 1 retailer in the world. And there's No. 2, Primark. But credit is due Dublin, for that one, innit. That would be your, British slang. And it's a pity your UK brands just don't cut it, in America or worldwide, by and large. But, I really don't take sides. I can't split hairs. However, I don't make an issue of the cultural differences thing. If you would have bothered to read my CV, you would have known that, despite my accent, I am both: father born in the US and mother born in the UK, Irish, from Belfast. I was born at St. Mary's Hospital. So, I'm leaving, now I am.

Tiffany collects her things and walks out, very pleased with herself, but very put off.

INT. LATER. WILLESDEN GREEN TUBE STATION.

Tiffany exits the carriage far from the stairs. Enrico is at the first few steps and is walking towards her, through the crowd of people walking up the stairs to the way out. He reaches the bottom of the stairs, notices her and hurries to meet up with her.

ENRICO

Tiffany, Tiffany.

Tiffany hears him, but ignores him and carries on, to the way out. She's still put off by the interview, from earlier and doesn't want a conversation.

ENRICO (CONT'D)

Hello, Moto. Hello, Moto.

She stops near the bottom of the stairs, and looks up at him, trying to be polite, but dismissive. She remembers what The Chef said about guys trying to chat her up, being an American, she's a bit distant.

TIFFANY

Oh, hi. How are you?

ENRICO

I'm well. How about yourself?

TIFFANY

I'm OK.

ENRICO

Are you sure? You don't look so, OK. That is, not like on the day we met. In fact, we are stood in the same spot; when you finally told me your name, with a big smile.

TIFFANY

Yeah. It was, right about here. Wasn't it.

ENRICO

So what's happened, since then? Nearly a month ago. Problems living with your Mum? I know, what's its like. I live with my Uncle Er Manzo, since I was 21, that's 7 years, here in London. I moved from Rome, after my father died. So, how's your mama?

TIFFANY

Oh! Sorry that you lost your father.

ENRICO

Thank you, for the condolence.

TIFFANY

My mother - she's fine. We have our moments. But its, OK. After all we're finally getting to know each other and living together, at the same time. Well, its not easy, but we're managing. Look, I should really be going. I need to cook dinner.

Tiffany walks up the stairs, Enrico follows her.

INT. LATER. TUBE STATION - TICKET HALL.

ENRICO

You cook?

TIFFANY

Yes.

ENRICO

So do I. Well, I - I'm not a cook. Am a professional chef!

TIFFANY

Really. Haven't I heard that one before.

ENRICO

How could you, I never told you that.

TIFFANY

No, I meant. Oh, never mind.

ENRICO

What are you cooking? Tell me and I will advise you, and I guarantee if you do what I say, the food will turn out even better.

TIFFANY

I doubt that seriously.

ENRICO

(very insulted)  
Why! You think I'm lying.

TIFFANY

Yes, I think you are. And furthermore, I'm vegan; so I doubt very much, that you can offer me any advice on vegan cuisine.

ENRICO

Actually I can. I'm not a vegan chef, but I do know about cooking vegetables properly and cooking without meat. Why don't you come when we open the restaurant and I will cook vegan, especially for you.

TIFFANY

You're, opening a restaurant? Really! Now, I've heard it all.

ENRICO

Yes, with my Uncle Er Manzo, who is also a professional chef. And ...

TIFFANY

So, it's your uncle that's a chef, at a restaurant.

ENRICO

And, I am too, at the same restaurant. And no, you haven't heard it all. We are ...

TIFFANY

Where? I'll go there and eat dinner tonight. The restaurant, where?

ENRICO

What! I don't eat that food, neither does he. It's rubbish. And it's not even Italian. It's British, with a name that sounds like Italian, but it isn't, it's Sardinian or Sicilian. Anyway, it's totally fake. My mama would curse me, if she ever found out I eat, that food. Anyway, you said you are going home to cook. So who's lying to who, whom?

TIFFANY

I'm not lying. I've been vegan all, well most of my life and I cook my own food, most of the time.

ENRICO

And how many years is that?

TIFFANY

10 of my, 25 years.

ENRICO

Well, I'm impressed.

TIFFANY

You should be. And I've cooked more Italian vegan food than you ever have, Chef.

ENRICO

Like what?

TIFFANY

Minestrone, *frittata con le patate*, *lasagne bianche: con carciofi, funghi e besciamella*. But with vegan cheese.

ENRICO

Now, I'm really impressed. You must have learnt about these dishes from one of those cooking shows, on telly in America.

TIFFANY

No. My Italian house mate. Only in the past few weeks.

ENRICO

Who's he, this Italian? What academy did he attend?

TIFFANY

He's waiter, at some fake Italian restaurant, like yours. No academy. He learnt from his mama. Maybe you both work at the same restaurant, with your uncle Chef, Er Manzo?

ENRICO

I doubt it. Besides there's loads of fake Italian restaurants in London.

TIFFANY

Yes, so I've been told; by Chef.

ENRICO

Why are you calling him a chef when he's not a chef. I don't understand.

TIFFANY

That's the nickname Mum gave him. His name is David Blasi, from Roma.

ENRICO

Well, I'm a professionally trained graduate of the Italian Chef Academy of *Via della Camilluccia*. One of the most famous cooking schools in Italy. The staff has been training chefs for centuries, like my uncle and me.

TIFFANY

Where's that?

ENRICO

In Roma. Where else. So how did you learn to cook vegan?

TIFFANY

I taught myself really.

ENRICO

So where are you from?

TIFFANY

New Orleans.

ENRICO

Well, why didn't you say so, in the first place. I know about this Cajun and New Orleans creole food. I like it. Some tourists, they came for a class at the academy and they cooked some for us. *Delicioso*.

(MORE)

ENRICO (CONT'D)

It was fish, blackened fish, nearly burned, but - so *delizioso*.

Tiffany looks at Enrico, displeased.

ENRICO (CONT'D)

But, I know, you're vegan. So when you and your mum, come to "The Taste of Italy" for Christmas Eve for *La Vigilia di Natale cena*. I will cook vegan just for you and her.

TIFFANY

We're having Thanksgiving dinner, an American tradition; but cooked New Orleans style. You should come over, next Thursday, at 2:00.

ENRICO

I'd love to. Set a place for me.

TIFFANY

But, about my mum. She's not vegan. She use to be a vegetable and seafood eater. But not anymore she eats anything. Anything I cook, cause she's hates cooking.

ENRICO

Not your food, because it is *fantastico*! But cooking, in general.

TIFFANY

Yes. So when are you opening this restaurant?

ENRICO

1st of December. So by Christmas, everything will be all sorted. That's why I want you to wait until then, OK. But, if you want to come by sooner. I'd love to see you there. It's in Holborn. And don't worry about the bill. It'll be my honour, you will all be my guests. And my mother is coming from Roma, also.

TIFFANY

Well, we might just take you up on that. My father will be coming to London next week, too. I'm hoping he'll stay until after New Year's. He and I cook together, but he's not vegan. Can I bring him along?

Enrico hesitates.

ENRICO

The entire family, for Christmas.  
Sure, why not!

Enrico searches in his pocket for something. Pulls out a small stack of business cards for the restaurant. Poorly done graphics and photograph. It has a picture of him and his uncle on it; he hands one to Tiffany.

ENRICO (CONT'D)

I almost forgot I had these. Please take it. You are my first hand out. Uncle Er Manzo told me to start passing them around. I'm not good at that sort of thing only cooking, that's my speciality.

TIFFANY

Thank you. Grazi.

ENRICO

Prego.

TIFFANY

That's my speciality. Business and marketing.

ENRICO

Doesn't surprise me, for a minute. I can tell you're a smart cookie. So tell me, why the long face at first?

Enrico looks at Tiffany all dressed in a business suit and holding a portfolio.

ENRICO (CONT'D)

No job, yet.

TIFFANY

You know the drill. Too young, no experience, no job, not British.

ENRICO

But, you are British and at least you do speak English.

TIFFANY

Well, the jury is still out on that one.

ENRICO

Wait! I don't understand.

TIFFANY

Never mind. Don't bother. It's a British and American, sort of thing, and I'm in the middle of it.

ENRICO

OK. You Americans, always kidding around. But, that was always a problem for me, and Tio, the English. And he's been living here for 20 years. So that's why me and him decided to start this restaurant business together. After saving for years.

A train passes by without stopping. Makes too much noise, they stop the conversation till it passes.

ENRICO (CONT'D)

I don't understand this way about the British. After all, we Romans put this place, Londonium, on the map. And they changed the name, by the way. London, so plain and ordinary sounding. Londonium, so much better.

TIFFANY

So, you have someone to handle marketing and finances?

ENRICO

Well, Tio Er Manzo can handle the taxes and has loads of experience in managing a restaurant, the cooks and waiters. But, we don't know anything about marketing. We both worked very hard, for years, he more than I, to save up the money to do this.

TIFFANY

So that put you guys ahead, then.

ENRICO

But, the restaurant needed better appliances, the ones they had before were crap. So, we had to borrow some money, from the bank. The day I met you and your mother; we had to go to the bank and arrange the money. So it was a sign of good luck then, meeting you.

TIFFANY

Maybe.

The train is approaching.



ENRICO

But, we can't afford to pay you.  
 But, you can use the experience,  
 right? And I will supply you with  
 all the vegan food you can eat and  
 take away and bring to your mama.  
 Let me talk it over with Tio Er  
 Manzo. And I'm truly sorry, I must  
 leave you, again. I need to get  
 going. I have to go to my old job.  
 This is our last week there. And  
 it's all the way in Holborn. Good-  
 by Tiffany. We will talk soon.

The train stops. The carriage doors open, passengers exit.  
 Enrico turns to board the train.

TIFFANY

Wait! Here! Take my CV. It has all  
 my details, so you can show your  
 uncle and contact me, OK.

ENRICO

Of, course. Good thinking. Ciao!  
 And enjoy your vegan dinner  
 tonight. *Bon appetito*.

TIFFANY

Thank you. Ciao.

Train doors close and disembarks. Tiffany walks to the exit.

INT. LATER. HOUSESHARE - BEDROOM.

Katie is working late. Tiffany is eating her dinner and looking at an e-mail from her father about his arrangements to come to London in one weeks time, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving Day. She also receives a text message from a mobile number that she doesn't recognise, she opens it. Its from Acme Mover's and Shakers, asking, "When can she come into the office for orientation and when can she begin work?" She replies, "I can come into your office on tomorrow at 4:00 pm and start 2 weeks later, my father is in London for a visit."

INT. MORNING. OFFICE - MOVERS & SHAKERS.

The office is small, modest, narrow and straight through, with an aisle down one side. It looks a bit dated; neatly kept, but not too tidy, large city of London and UK maps on the walls. With small reception area, a counter, placed a distance past the entrance, that runs across, up until the aisle, then 4 desks and chairs where: Grace, Abigail and Tiffany work (with an open desk for whomever needs it) then a 5'-6" high partition behind them, where Mike and another desk and bookshelves and cupboard.

A kitchen, toilets and warehouse/shop are behind the main office and client storage is upstairs. Lucinda's office is downstairs toward the rear.

Tiffany's all bright eyed and bushing tailed, at her first real job, as a processing clerk. She's the newbie at Acme Movers and Shakers in Central London, a small courier and parcel delivery service company and office furniture moving and shipping company, owned by Lucinda Mayes who inherited the business from her first husband. Lucinda only hires very attractive, not to bright men (except for Mike) and not as attractive women to work in her office. Except for Tiffany who's both very attractive and smart.

GRACE/owner's assistant: mid 30s, arrogant, clever, average looks, build and intelligence, race: any ethnicity.

ABIGAIL/processing clerk: early 30s, arrogant, clever, more witty than Grace, average looks, build and intelligence, race: any ethnicity

TONY/furniture packer & occasional mover: early 30s, handsome, tall dark, muscular build, handyman-type, over sexed, cheeky and cheap, race: any ethnicity

TOM/furniture packer & occasional mover: early 30s, handsome, tall blond, muscular build, handyman-type, over sexed, chatty, race: any ethnicity

MIKE/office manager, processing clerk, outside London & abroad: early 40s, handsome, tall & slim build, witty & sharp, well-dressed, never wears a uniform, high maintenance, race: any ethnicity

MALCOLM/runner-courier small parcels and documents/mover: early 20s, very boyish, cute, curly hair, naughty, small build, shy, clumsy, a bit of a loafer, race: any ethnicity

AL/logistics manager: late 40s, tall, strong, uber cool, in control, barely gives a damn, van driver & mover, race: any ethnicity

OFFICE BLOKE/former newbie: mid-20s, very, handsome, bad boy, but also feminine looking, looks fantastic in half-naked and in drag, race: any ethnicity

LUCINDA MAYES/business owner: early 50s, average build and looks, very vane, self-absorbed, preoccupied with her personal life and keeping up appearances, regularly at the office, on the telephone mostly, race: any ethnicity.

Grace has showed Tiffany her desk, explained her duties, filled in forms, etc, given her the company's work shirts, done a tour of the office, met available personnel.

GRACE

Well, you've met everyone, except for the boss lady, Lucinda and Al, the driver. It's Friday afternoon, so Lucinda will definitely not be coming in, its her spa day. And God only knows about Al. He's probably at his favourite watering hole, downing a pint or two.

ABIGAIL

Or more. Nah! He's off today. Had an appointment with his new girlfriend to look at some new flats, in east London. She says, they have to move house. Bedbugs.

GRACE

He's got bedbugs! Why didn't you tell me.

Mike comes from around the cubicle.

MIKE

Or the rest of us. My word! We could have an infestation.

ABIGAIL

Well, he said there not in their place, not yet anyway. She has insectophobia. So he'd rather be safe than sorry. He doesn't want her going looney on him. Besides she's allergic, so she'll most probably swell up anyway, and get those spots, that take years to fade away.

Mike exits, back to his cubicle.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Not a pretty picture. No, not at all.

ABIGAIL

So, we'll see you, first of the month, then. At 9:00. Did Grace tell you how we leave at 5:30, since we take a half-hour for lunch.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

But, its never just a half-hour.

Mike enters, walks by Grace and Tiffany, then sits at the free desk.

MIKE

It is, if Lucinda is around. But, bring along your lunch, Tiffany. Food is really expensive around here.

TIFFANY

Thanks. Mike. Anyway, I'm vegan, so I'll be bringing my lunch, everyday.

Mike gets up and walks up to Tiffany.

MIKE

Really! So we have genuine 21st century, conservationist working with us. A bike rider and a vegan. Finally someone that's broken out of the Cro-Magnon, Hunter Gatherer Age, besides myself. But I don't do the biking thing. With these crazy drivers; you are taking you life into you own precious hands, luv. But, welcome, fellow vegan; to the dog-eat-puppy world of back biters.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

And brown nosers.

MIKE

I was going to say decent people, like myself; looking for a leg up and out of this dump.

TIFFANY

Sorry, that I can't start any sooner, but my father is coming to town, so we all can celebrate Thanksgiving together. And show him a good time in London. He's never been here before.

Grace, Abigail and Mike look at Tiffany very bored and uninterested.

MIKE

I'm sure it'll be wonderful, luv. Especially having Daddy, around.

TIFFANY

It looks like quite a group, you guys have here. And you all get on with each other so well.

Tiffany holds her laugh and looks around.

MIKE

Well, I do. But, I can't speak for the rest of these canines, male or female.

TIFFANY

I really need to get going. I'll see you guys, in a few weeks, OK.

MIKE

Not to worry dear. Your first lunch will be on me.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Falafel and pita bread; with a side of Moroccan humus. How's that?

TIFFANY

Thanks, Mike. Sounds brilliant. Looking forward to it. Good-by.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Happy Thanksgiving!

TIFFANY

Thank you.

Tiffany exits.

ABIGAIL

There you go, brown nosing already Mike.

MIKE

Look, I'm just trying to give the poor dear a proper London welcome. She's a long way from home, first job. Between the two of you'll give Britons a bad name.

ABIGAIL

Her mum, is Irish.

MIKE

Well, there you go. That's what I'm talking about.

Mike walks to his desk and sits down, but continues speaking.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Besides, she's the very first American I've ever met and from New Orleans, no less. I've heard so many stories about that place. And the guys.

Mike peeks over the partition.

MIKE (CONT'D)

But, whatever you do, don't talk about her accent, or the weather. I'm sure she's had enough of that, and with Hurricane Katrina, and all. She might open up a whole new world for me.

MONTAGE: TUESDAY, BEFORE THANKSGIVING. DARREN ARRIVES AT THE AIRPORT, HE HAS ANOTHER SUITCASE FULL OF TIFFANY'S THINGS. TIFFANY IS THERE TO GREET HIM, SHOW HIM THE DRILL WITH THE OYSTER AND TUBE, HE GETS CHECKED INTO THE GUEST HOUSE. HE'S SO TIRED HE COLLAPSES ON THE BED AND GOES TO SLEEP, TIFFANY LEAVES HIM A NOTE SAYING, "SHE'LL COME BY IN THE MORNING AT 9:00, FOR BREAKFAST, THEN TAKE HIM AROUND TOWN AND SHOP FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER." NEXT MORNING THEY VISIT CAMDEN, WATCH THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE, WALK ALONG THE RIVER THAMES, THE LONDON EYE, THE CHARD, QUEEN ELIZABETH OLYMPIC PARK; DARREN TAKING PICTURES. TIFFANY AND DARREN ON THEIR WAY BACK TO WILLESDEN ON BUS NO. 98 CARRYING GROCERIES FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER. TIFFANY LOOKS OUT OF THE BUS WINDOW AT A BIKER, THAT'S MAKING BETTER PROGRESS ON THE ROAD, THAN THE BUS; THROUGH THE TRAFFIC, THERE'S A MASSIVE BLOCKAGE.

DARREN

So, you miss your bike, huh.

TIFFANY

Yeah, Dad I do. I want to get a Brompton. So I can take it on the tube in case the weather is too bad or too cold.

DARREN

You can take a bike on the tube?

TIFFANY

Yeah. It's a folding bike. But very strong.

DARREN

Heavy?

TIFFANY

Well, it weighs about, 10 kilos. That's 22 pounds. Not too bad. But the titanium ones weight about 16.

DARREN

Much lighter. Better. Is it comfortable?

TIFFANY

Yeah, I've tried it out. Well, it's comfortable enough. I'm not riding that far. From around here to work, in Holborn; is about 7 miles, that's about 30 minutes. Mum's jobs are in the same neighbourhood.

DARREN

But, then you need the new gear and all. Oh, by the way. Don't let me forget to give you, your helmet and gloves, they're in my suitcase.

TIFFANY

I'll should get some weather-proof suit or something; for the cold and rain, like Mum said.

DARREN

Do you know your way around well enough, yet?

TIFFANY

To work and back. No prob. And I can get a satnav. It's just all this traffic. So much more than I'm use to, back home.

DARREN

Yeah, well; it's London . You should have a respirator, too. Like her.

Darren shows Tiffany another biker, stopped at the traffic light with her respirator. The bus moves along a bit.

TIFFANY

Good idea.

Tiffany points out a bike shop on the High Street.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

And there's the bike shop that I've been to. That's where I checked the Bromptons out.

DARREN

Well, anyway it'll take time to figure the place out. But, everything seems relatively close though.

TIFFANY

And actually it is. The city, that is everywhere that's within M25, that's the interstate that circles London; is only 45 miles wide, west to east.

DARREN

Really. Like, twice across Lake Pontchartrain, north to south. Not bad.

TIFFANY

You'll learn your way around in no time, Dad.

DARREN

Well, I did decide on an open ended plane ticket, at the last minute.

TIFFANY

You did!

DARREN

I just want to make sure you're settled in; all right; before I go.

TIFFANY

Well, me and Mum will be fine. After, we move out, that is. I absolutely hate this house sharing deal. The only nice one is Chef, that's his nickname. His real name is David.

DARREN

Sounds splendid.

TIFFANY

I know. But, we are going out to dinner together tonight, right.

Darren non-committal look.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

OK. Don't get that look. Like that Dad.

DARREN

What look?

TIFFANY

Like you're about to turn and run. This is just a meet and greet - again, kinda thing. No pressure, OK.

DARREN

Come on! I'm nervous about the whole thing. It's only been, what - over 20 years, since I've seen your mother, face-to-face. Weren't you nervous when you saw her for the first time, a few weeks ago?

TIFFANY

Yeah. But for me it's different. I'm just the daughter.

DARREN

Yes, I'm coming. Are you sure it's, OK?

TIFFANY

Yeah. Why not. Mum hasn't said one bad thing about you, since I got here.

(MORE)



TIFFANY (CONT'D)

And don't be nervous or worried, she isn't dating anyone and her boss is gay. So you can go for it, Dad.

DARREN

How does she seem toward me, Tif. Tell me, and be honest, now.

TIFFANY

She's mentioned some things that happened between you guys and I can tell she got a bit, well. Nostalgic.

DARREN

Nostalgic? Aha, what's that suppose to mean?

TIFFANY

They were very pleasant thoughts.

DARREN

And how can you tell?

TIFFANY

By the look on her face, Dad. Come on! You know that picture, the one.

DARREN

Yeah.

TIFFANY

She keeps it on top her dresser. And I gave it a thorough going over, the day I got here. And no dust on it, whatsoever; even in the nooks and crannies of the frame, which by the way is gorgeous. So you know what that means; she cherishes it.

DARREN

All right. So that sounds promising.

TIFFANY

Right now she's so preoccupied with the show and worried about moving out of that house. Making sure it all turns out well and all that; and making sure it pays off. She's been through so much, financially, all downhill. This is her chance to finally get out of the ditch and onto level ground and hopefully uphill, from now on.

DARREN

You know, I'd help in anyway I can.

TIFFANY

She wouldn't want any of that kind of help, Dad. Anyway, that's why I want you to stay until after New Year's. Cause that's when the theatre company will know if it's a big hit and they're really making money. And she'll be more at ease and more likely to focus on a - relationship, maybe?

DARREN

So you've sorted it, then.

TIFFANY

Just being my usual very observant, keeping it real, self. Come on, Dad. You know, me.

They both laugh.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

And we have tickets to opening night, not the good seats though, in the wings.

DARREN

Really! That's the best place to be. Where all the action and energy is.

TIFFANY

Well, I've seen some of the rehearsals and it's going to be a fantastic show. It's brilliant! I mean truly brilliant. An original! The dancing is - amazing! They're like Cirque du Soliel, mets Flashdance meets Footloose. I love it!

Darren very relieved.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

And we already have an invitation for Christmas Eve dinner.

DARREN

So I don't have to eat vegan again? Where's it gonna be?

TIFFANY

A chef/owner/friend/client is opening up a new Italian restaurant, in Holborn.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

He's coming for Thanksgiving dinner, BTW, he wants the full T-day food experience. He even knows a bit about New Orleans cooking.

DARREN

Really! Fast work, Tif. And who is this chef/owner/friend/client? A bloke, I presume? Should I like him or not?

TIFFANY

Well, Mum's met him already. And not too crazy looks, from her. You know how she gives these looks, when she doesn't like someone. That's the way she looks at all the people in the house.

DARREN

Yeah. That's the look she gave my family, when she met them.

TIFFANY

Anyway, I'm suppose to help them, Enrico and Uncle Er Manzo; next week, after they get off work, at the restaurant to discuss what they expect and what I can do for them.

DARREN

Well, just be careful.

TIFFANY

Why?

DARREN

Enrico, that sounds, OK. But Er Manzo, I don't know sounds, odd. Not like a regular name.

TIFFANY

Maybe it's a family nickname or something. But, I get you. Don't mix business with pleasure. But, I'm not getting paid. It's for the experience.

Darren looks a bit confused.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I can't get a position in business, until I fully understand the way things work over here, in the UK.

Darren looks agreeable.

DARREN

I got it.

Tiffany looks in her handbag for "The Taste of Italy" business card, then hands it to her father.

TIFFANY

What do you think? They need a complete redo, right?

DARREN

I'd say - from head-to-toe. Even styling.

TIFFANY

Maybe you'd like to come along? We can work on it together? You could handle all the graphics and design. If you stick around long enough, that is?

Tiffany gives a cheeky smile.

DARREN

(posh accent)

Why Tif, my dear, haven't you heard, I'm on holiday.

MONTAGE: TIFFANY, AT WORK, GETS A CALL FROM ENRICO TO MEET UP WITH HIM AND HIS UNCLE AT THE TASTE OF ITALY. TIFFANY CALLS HER DAD TO MEET UP. SHE RIDES TO THE RESTAURANT ON HER BIKE. TIME PASSES, DARREN IS LATE, HE'S LOST, CAN'T FIND THE STREET NAME, BUT HE'S NEARBY, TIFFANY GETS ON HER BIKE AND GOES TO FIND HIM. THEY BOTH ARRIVE, DARREN STEERING THE BIKE, TIFFANY ON THE HANDLEBARS. THEY ENTER, DARREN AND TIFFANY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, WITH THAT "IT'S WORSE THAN I THOUGHT LOOK," DISCUSS AND SHOW ENRICO AND TIO IDEAS ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS FOR MARKETING AND GRAPHIC/DESIGN WITH ENRICO, TIO IS BUSY WITH SUPPLIERS AND IN THE KITCHEN TESTING OUT THE NEW EQUIPMENT. KATIE AT WORK WITH REHEARSALS, LEAVES WORK, GOES TO HER STORAGE UNIT TO LOOK FOR OLD PHOTOS THAT SHE TOLD TIFFANY ABOUT DURING HER NYC VISIT, FINDS THEM AND COMES ACROSS THE BOX THAT DARREN GAVE HER WITH THE SHELLS, TOO. DARREN SHOPPING FOR TIFFANY'S BIKE, GETS LOST AGAIN. FINALLY FINDS HALFORD'S ORDERS IT WITH: TITANIUM UPGRADES, PRE-ASSEMBLED (DELIVERED TO THE GUEST HOUSE WHERE HE'S STAYING) AN ENTIRE NEW KIT FOR CYCLING, INCLUDING A LONDON "RULES OF THE ROAD" CYCLISTS HANDBOOK. TIFFANY AND KATIE SHOPPING INDEPENDENTLY FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS. TIFFANY AND ENRICO SHOPPING: AT WH SMITHS' CAREFULLY SELECTING BOOKS FOR HER FATHER (PHOTOGRAPHY) AND MOTHER (DANCE) AND AT THE CLEARANCE SECTION FOR HER COLLEAGUE. SHE JOINS ENRICO AT THE ITALIAN COOKING SECTION, HE'S LOOKING AT A COOKBOOK, THEY FLIRT WITH EACH OTHER. KATIE: LOOKING AT A COUPLE OF 2 BEDROOM FLATS, IN A MORE UPSCALE NEIGHBOURHOOD, THEN SHOPPING AT JESSOPS, BUYING A GIFT FOR DARREN. DARREN BUYING A GIFT OF BEAUTIFUL SHELLS, FOR KATIE.

INT. EVENING. THEATRE - WINGS AND BACKSTAGE.

Curtain call for the musical, very exciting and celebratory. Katie, the Director, cast, producer, VIPS; congrats, hugs & kisses all around. Tiffany, Darren stood by enjoying being part of the celebration. Katie and Darren accidentally hug and kiss, but neither of them mind.

INT. LATER. RESTAURANT: THE TASTE OF ITALY - AFTER PARTY. CENTER OF MAIN DINING ROOM.

The restaurant is very stylish, but contemporary Italian style (amazing photos of Rome). Everyone is sat at a long dinner table, listening to the director, toward the end of his speech.

DIRECTOR

And now! Last - but, of course; by no means least. The dancing - the choreography.(pause) Well, at first it was only an idea that tossed and turned, fought and struggled way too hard. So, exhausted it fell asleep and became, nothing. But, then one day it awoke in a haze and blurry daze, until finally a lovely lady...

He turns to Katie and raises his glass. Katie big smile and a bit teary eyed. She's sat between, Tiffany and Darren.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

came along and shook it to it's senses.

He acknowledges how difficult he has been. Everyone chuckles.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

She carefully bent it and twisted it and brilliantly shaped it, into a magnum opus.

He looks at all the cast, then bows to them.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Tonight, tonight - it was fully awakened, it stood and twirled on it's feet, into a beautiful dream and funny nightmare, called: Spooky.

Big applause and cheering all around. Waiters enter with food and drink. The two chefs enter and stand at the end of the table.

EXT. LATER. RESTAURANT: THE TASTE OF ITALY.

Light snow on the ground, snowflakes are falling lightly. All the guests have left the restaurant. Staff tidying up. Tiffany, Katie and Darren are stood outside waiting for Enrico as he stands in the door, telling his uncle, stood near him, good-by.

UNCLE

Don't worry. I'll take care of everything. Go home, please. Well done tonight. They ate everything. Nothing left. The way I like it.

ENRICO

And for Christmas; don't forget, more minestrone. And with this weather, they'll love it. Ciao! Tio Er Manzo.

Enrico exits. Uncle stands in the restaurant door.

UNCLE

(to everyone)

*Buona serra!* Till Christmas Eve. My speciality *La Vigilia di Natale cena*. Ciao!

Everyone waving.

EVERYONE

Ciao! Good night.

Katie and Enrico walk together, then Tiffany and Darren. They stop at a "don't walk" traffic light. Enrico turns back to talk to Tiffany and Darren.

ENRICO

Oh, by the way, I went to the kitchen equipment shop last week; the owner, she's an old friend of Uncle Er Manzo; and I told her about how you guys helped us out with the marketing and styling, and all that. She said that, they're loads of restaurant owners, some old and new ones; that ask about promoting their business. Well, she didn't know of any at the time. But now that she does, after the holiday, she'd like to meet you guys and chat about, maybe referring you to her customers.

KATIE

Well, that's fantastic Enrico. Thank you. I'd love it. What do you think, Dad?

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

We could build a business together - become partners, again.

DARREN

It sounds promising. I'll think about it or, should I say, have a think on it.

Everyone laughs.

DARREN (CONT'D)

No but, seriously. I will consider it.

KATIE

By the way, Enrico, what does Er Manzo, mean? The what?

ENRICO

Oh that! It's his nickname. Only for the family. It means a male cow.

Everyone laughs.

KATIE

Really! Guess we shouldn't be laughing, though.

ENRICO

It's a compliment. He's a chef. Come on! It's nothing. Give me another 20 years, and I'll look just like him.

TIFFANY

Oh, no. You better not. Especially if you turn vegan, like me.

ENRICO

Look! You've already converted your mum, your dad and now, you're trying to work on me.

Enrico, New York accent.

ENRICO (CONT'D)

Ain't gonna happen, lady. Fuhgeddaboutit!

Everyone laughs.

INT. AFTERNOON. OFFICE: MOVERS & SHAKERS.

Tiffany just started about 3 weeks before Secret Santa, the office Christmas gift exchange tradition and party. She is

already fed up and bored with the job. It's the day before Christmas Eve. The boss/owner's birthday is on Christmas Day, this year also happens to be her 50th, so it's a triple whammy. The boss's name is drawn twice, so that she'll get a birthday and Christmas gift. However, there is so much brown-nosing at this office; that most workers shower the boss with gifts (hoping that she will return the kindness with pay increases, favours or time off, free storage space, etc) and ignore the name that they've drawn. It's the afternoon of the day, a few hours before the event. Tiffany has overheard other colleagues talking about their gift shopping for the boss, but she's puzzled. Because, at this office, they only give gag gifts (double entendres) as presents. Tiffany queries Grace & Abigail.

FLASHBACK.

Tony is stood alone with a spotlight on him, as if doing a monologue without an audience. He's very excited, holding an unmarked box containing a guybrator, hurries to open it and do a big reveal. He seductively draws the phallic looking, synthetic prop out, caresses it.

TONY

She'll love it!

He gives it a big sniff and breaths deeply.

TONY (CONT'D)

The smell of rubber really turns her on!

AL (O.S.)

And how would YOU know what lights a spark under, her ladyship.

Al puts the prop down. Looks inside the box and pulls out the instructions, drops the box and reads the instructions.

TONY

See it says right here, on these instructions. "For them that are tired of the same old, up-and-down motion."

MIKE (O.S.)

I think you've got that one mixed up mate. That's for blokes.

Tony picks up the prop.

MIKE (CONT'D)

But I wouldn't mind you leaving that around my yuletide log, Secret Santa.



Al crumbles up the instructions and tosses them, then walks away very put off.

BACK TO: SCENE

TIFFANY

I ignored him, thinking it was some inside joke. Or some British thing. Besides, he's mental anyway.

Grace and Abigail laugh, sarcastically.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

A British thing.

GRACE

Oh, that's no joke. He's been trying to get under Lucinda's skirt, since he started working here.

TIFFANY

How long has that been?

ABIGAIL

A year.

GRACE

He's trying to hit her up for free storage for his model planes.

TIFFANY

An entire year. For God's sake, he should give that a rest. Don't you think.

Mike stands up from behind, Tiffany, Grace and Abigail; then leans his head over the partition, he's been eavesdropping.

MIKE

(whispering)

As you said, he's mental.

TIFFANY

And then Al said...

FLASHBACK.

Al is stood alone with a spotlight on him , as if doing a monologue without an audience. Al's holding several packages of Primark hand wipes. And a gallon of economy brand/generic hand sanitizer. He mocks Lucinda's voice.

AL

I'm so tired of the Boss Lady saying, "there's never any wipes in the lunchroom." You know what a germaphobe she is. I went over to Primark this morning and bought a ton of hand-wipes and I found this gallon of hand sanitizer, out back in the shed, before we moved house.

Al blows the dust off of the container of sanitizer.

AL (CONT'D)

So, this is her "bonus gift."

Al pulls his sun glasses off. And unloads his feelings, like at a therapy session with a psychologist.

AL (CONT'D)

And, I am so tired of putting up with woman with these phobias. I getting panic attacks. I feel hopeless and confused. I can't cope with it anymore. For God's sake. Sorry. I had got wound up there, for a moment. But, now that's over. Everything is cool.

Al puts his glasses back on and exits.

BACK TO: SCENE

GRACE

He's trying to hit her up for storage space, too. Shit for his motorcycles.

ABIGAIL

Well - at least it's something useful. I know he acts like he can't be bothered, but he runs everything around here, anyway.

TIFFANY

By the way, where is "Boss Lady" Lucinda?

GRACE

In the kitchen, "testing" the punch with Jack Daniels. She stays plastered the whole week before Christmas. She says that's the only way she can cope with the holidays, family, shopping, parties and in-laws. I'm sure it'll be even worse, now that she's turning 50, too.

TIFFANY

50? Why bother?

ABIGAIL

She loves all the attention. From these handsome hunks, around here.

GRACE

Tony got her The Birthday Cake, I assume?

ABIGAIL

Yes.

GRACE

You saw it?

ABIGAIL

Yes.

GRACE

What does it look like?

ABIGAIL

It's round. It's got all grey icing.

GRACE

Grey. Good.

ABIGAIL

Yeah. Of all different shades, swirled around.

GRACE

Really! What does it say?

ABIGAIL

It has a big, five inch. 50 on it, in black. Right smack in the middle. And 50 black candles lined up around the edge of it. Like little soldiers. Just like we planned.

TIFFANY

OK. So, is this another British thing or what?

GRACE

Yeah. For that book: *50 Shades of Grey*. About that very naughty man that does some very naughty shagging to one of his employees. Tony read it, loved it and gave it to Lucinda.

(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

Guess he thought that it would,  
inspire her and get things going  
between the two of them.

ABIGAIL

Didn't work. She ignores him, most  
of the time. Tony is a handsome  
bloke, but if you see her partner,  
you'd know Tony is not her type.

TIFFANY

Really! What does her husband look  
like?

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

An A-donis!

Sound: (OS) cupboard door banging in the kitchen. Lucinda  
cursing.

LUCINDA (O.S.)

These cupboards are bare. Whose  
been nicking my liquor.  
Malcolm! Malcolm! Where are you?

The girls look toward the kitchen momentarily then continue  
talking.

GRACE

We better check that cake. Cause  
knowing Tony...

ABIGAIL

Yeah! Always on the cheap.

GRACE

He might have made it out back - in  
the shop, from cardboard, with  
icing from a tin of paste.

ABIGAIL

And pocketed all our money.

TIFFANY

Or used it, to pay for that Pulse  
he bought her.

Sound (OS): Loads of loud noise from Malcolm in the shop,  
sorting out the office's wretched bicycle that's entangled.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Speaking of A-donis!

Grace and Abigail laugh.

LUCINDA

(shouting)  
Malcolm!

(MORE)

LUCINDA (CONT'D)

Be a darling and buy more Jack Daniels whilst you're out buying my last minute birthday present. Would you. And don't forget that package needs to be delivered to 666 Grave's End at 13:00.

Sound (OS): Clanging stops. Squeaky bike noise. Rear door slams shut.

Mike stands up from behind, Tiffany, Grace and Abigail then leans his head over the cubicle panel, he's been eavesdropping.

MIKE

So, if you want to hit her up for a raise, now's the time. Later on, she'll be pissed, that's drunk, to us, not mad - like to you say.

Malcolm (very clumsy) hurries past them, toward the exit pushing the wretched bicycle.

MIKE (CONT'D)

There goes Malcolm. Cute - but clumsy. He always waits until the last possible minute.

MALCOLM

(to Mike)

Shut your - whole!

MIKE

With what! I dare you.

Malcolm exits, very frustrated.

GRACE

Like I always say, you buy the worst gifts, that way. But, he just doesn't listen.

MIKE

Now he's running off to Poundland, around the corner, hoping to find Tom Jones Greatest Hits, on the cheap. He can't compete with me.

Mike sits back down.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Another brown nose; but he sure is eye candy.

ABIGAIL  
 (very seductively,  
 pointing to her crotch)  
 Everything just right size.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
 (very seductively,  
 pointing to her crotch)  
 And in all the right places.

ABIGAIL  
 I have first choice on him.

GRACE  
 No, you don't! I have seniority  
 around here.

TIFFANY  
 Who's Tom Jones?"

Mike peeks over the cubicle.

MIKE  
 My word!

ABIGAIL  
 You don't know who, Sir Tom Jones  
 is!

MIKE  
 Only the sexiest man alive, dear.

Mike sits down.

TIFFANY  
 Really! When was that?

GRACE  
 Come on Abigail. We're all too  
 young to really know who Tom Jones  
 is; except for Mike. We just know  
 him from watching The Voice. But,  
 back in the '60s; when he was  
 massive, women use to toss their  
 knickers at him, on the stage.  
 That's what my nan says anyway.

TIFFANY  
 The 60s - that's prehistoric.

Tiffany gives her this look of disbelief.

Mike stands up from behind, Tiffany, Grace and Abigail then  
 reaches over the cubicle panel, he's been eavesdropping.

MIKE

For you - maybe. But Sir Tom's  
still got the moves and the voice,  
baby.

Mike then stands on top of his desk (from head to waist shows) gyrates and deepens his voice as he sings a couple of verses of "Deliah." Tiffany, Grace and Abigail watch in marginal interest.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Why, why, why Deliah! So before  
they come to break down the door.  
Forgive me Deliah I just couldn't  
take any-more...

GRACE

I'm surprised Lucinda didn't rush  
in here to join him.

ABIGAIL

Yeah. The dynamic duo. Headed  
straight for No. 1 on The Voice.

MIKE

I heard that!

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

We know!

TIFFANY

So that's whose music I've been  
hearing all week.

MIKE

Let me turn my music back on. So I  
can get her to let me go early  
tomorrow. I have plans for  
Christmas Eve. With this waiter  
I've been seeing. He works at this  
Italian restaurant down the street  
and he cooks the best: *purea di  
fave con cicorica*. That I've ever  
tasted.

GRACE

Since it's Lucinda's favourite,  
he's been playing his songs, all  
day long. Malcolm hates his  
singing.

TIFFANY

Whose - Mike's.

ABIGAIL

No! Tom Jones.

Mike's telephone rings. He nearly falls down. He answers the call. Tiffany, Grace and Abigail continue to talk about Mike, in a whisper.

TIFFANY

Mike plays it too loud anyway.

GRACE

That's so Lucinda can hear it, in her office, way back there. Whenever she comes out here, humming to the music. His brownie points have been scored.

Mike disconnects. Then walks around to Tiffany, Grace and Abigail. Feeling proud of himself, carrying his CD player and fiddling with the buttons, puzzled at it not turning on and storms down the aisle.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Well - when he left yesterday, his music was still on. So Malcolm took one of his tennis balls and threw it at his CD player so hard, it fell off his desk. It's broken now. Mike doesn't know it yet.

MIKE (O.S.)

Malcolm! I told him hands off my music! This is the second time. Are you ready for a fight, Malcolm! As soon as I...

Door slams.

TIFFANY

Shouldn't you say something.

GRACE

No, I don't bother. I love to see them two go at it.

ABIGAIL

I don't know who he's talking to. Cause he saw Malcolm go out - for the booze - and his gift.

GRACE

Last Christmas we had to call the police, on account of those two. They both had bloody and broken noses.

ABIGAIL

Cuts and bruises. So they spent Christmas Eve in the A&E.

Grace and Abigail laugh.



TIFFANY  
Those two? A fight?

Grace and Abigail laugh.

ABIGAIL  
No, not really! They tripped and fell on a customer's, priceless, hand-blown glass table. Broke the damn thing - bits flying everywhere. God awful thing, it was. Honestly, these customers don't have an ounce of good taste. But, them two will be paying for it, till next Christmas.

TIFFANY  
So why did you call the police?

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
Just to take a piss. Not to wee on them, but ...

TIFFANY  
To annoy them. Yes, I know that one.

Tiffany preoccupied with paperwork.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
And besides we love men in uniform. Don't you?

GRACE  
And there went the Christmas spirit. Maybe if we're lucky, they'll start in on each other, when Malcolm comes back. We'll call the police again, and then we won't have to bother with this bloody birthday, secret Santa nonsense.

Grace and Abigail laugh.

TIFFANY  
I'm all for that.

ABIGAIL  
Scrooges!

GRACE  
Honestly after you turn 30, what's the point in celebrating turning older. I never buy her anything. I'm the one saddled with the job of getting her to her sister's house, for another birthday party after this one, all in one piece.  
(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

I do it as long as she doesn't get sick in my car. And I get every other Saturday off.

ABIGAIL

Me, too. But me neither. I can't be bothered, spending any money on her; since I have to get her back to the office in the morning. Just my luck, since I live nearest Mayes Manor. Honestly, do I look like Morgan Freeman - driving Miss Daisy, to you. And I get nothing off. And I work on every other Saturday.

GRACE

What are you talking about. She lets you have that storage locker upstairs, for free.

ABIGAIL

Don't say anything. She doesn't know I'm using it.

Tiffany laughs.

TIFFANY

That's the duties you get - cause you two don't know how to brown nose properly.

GRACE

It's not funny.

ABIGAIL

Not at all.

GRACE

As long as I've been employed here none of these brown nosers get any special favours out of her. It's a waste of time. She could care less.

TIFFANY

Why can't the husband collect her?

GRACE

He has driving phobia.

Mike enters and slams his music player down on his desk, bits fall to the floor, he curses, then exits.

TIFFANY

She should do us all a huge favour and just stay home.

ABIGAIL  
We should be so lucky.

GRACE  
She's such a workaholic.

TIFFANY  
You mean, meant, an alcoholic, at work.

GRACE  
FYI: we don't bother her until way past lunch tomorrow. She'll be so hung over, she won't know who she's talking to.

TIFFANY  
(sarcastically)  
Really!

GRACE  
A newbie. Not you. A bloke.

ABIGAIL  
He quit.

GRACE  
Anyway he went into her office to ask her for something, the morning after...

FLASHBACK.

Bloke is stood alone with a spotlight on him, as if doing a monologue without an audience. BLOKE stomps up to Lucinda's office, enters, closes the door and exits, made up like a woman, wearing sexy, women's lingerie with very long feathers, garter and stockings and satin slippers with very long feathers, so long he trips on them, but doesn't fall.

BLOKE  
Go and fetch my dressing gown and slippers! What the hell do I look like, a bloody chamber maid?

BACK TO: SCENE

GRACE  
She must have thought she was talking to her husband.

ABIGAIL  
He does all the cooking, cleaning and everything else, at The Manor.

TIFFANY  
Including the fetching.

Tiffany laughs.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
Lucky bitch.

ABIGAIL  
She ties the purse strings.

GRACE  
And he ties on the apron strings.

TIFFANY  
When I get married I WANT A HUSBAND  
LIKE THAT!

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
Don't we all.

Mike enters and is looking for something around his desk.

MIKE  
Wouldn't we all!

GRACE  
Do you think Malcolm is more of a  
Poodle or a Great Dane?

ABIGAIL  
Neither, more of a French Bulldog,  
I'd say. Powerful - yet adorable.

MIKE  
A bulldog. Now, look at who has no  
taste.

Mike laughs, then exits, tossing a tennis ball up-and-down.

TIFFANY  
You, two. Really! He hasn't the  
least bit interested in either of  
you two.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
And what on Earth makes you say  
that?

TIFFANY  
(very matter-of-factly)  
Oh, just something I saw that fell  
out of his pocket.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
Well! Out with it! We're not  
sitting here, waiting on the  
Hammersmith & City Line.

TIFFANY  
A flyer. For one of those clubs.

ABIGAIL

Which one? Is it around here?

TIFFANY

No, not one of those kind of clubs. It's for one of - those kind of clubs - you know the ones.

Grace and Abigail, look of disappointment.

GRACE

And all this time - hoping.

ABIGAIL

Well you the one after him.

GRACE

What do you mean! Like you're not!

TIFFANY

The both of you need to buy ourselves a gaydar for Christmas.

Grace and Abigail, look at Tiffany puzzled.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

A gay, radar. So you can at least tell if a man is outwardly gay, cause you're clueless.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Where do you buy one?

TIFFANY

OMG! You don't buy one. It's an American word for being clued in about gay men. So you don't look stupid, pointlessly flirting with one. You just learn how. But, at your age, the both of you should have one already.

Tiffany laughs. Grace and Abigail are embarrassed.

ABIGAIL

I thought it was something I could buy at Argos, for £39.99. You Americans come up with all those clever gadgets, anyway.

TIFFANY

Actually, we farm all that sort of stuff out to Asia. Just like the British do.

GRACE

Oh, well. Maybe Malcolm and Mike will fancy each other.

ABIGAIL

Yeah! This office could do with a bit of romance.

TIFFANY

Are you kidding, they hate each other. What about Tony and Al? Maybe they'll get something going, since they have such bad luck, sorry poor luck with women.

ABIGAIL

No, no. Tony and Al - that's what you Americans call a...

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Bro-mance.

Everyone laughs.

GRACE

(flirtatiously)

Speaking of romance. What did you buy, tall, blond and handsome, Tom?

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

We know you fancy him.

ABIGAIL

The things he does to my knickers. And he's not even laid a hand on me.

TIFFANY

No, I don't. I drew his name.

ABIGAIL

(flirtatiously)

Yeah, and he fancies you, too. I think that's the true romance novel being written around here - you two.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Now, who needs a radar!

GRACE

And, he's the only one so lucky to be getting a gift this year. Besides the boss.

Grace and Abigail laugh. Tiffany ignores the teasing.

TIFFANY

No. I don't like him, like that. It's a proper gift. Like most people give each other at Christmas, that are colleagues.

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

God! I wish I'd known this entire Secret Santa thing, is nothing but a gag.

GRACE

Cause next year you'll be brown-nosing, just like the rest of these ones around here. Trying to buy Lucinda to get time off, especially Saturdays and Sundays.

Grace and Abigail laugh.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

So what is it then?

TIFFANY

What?

ABIGAIL

We're not sitting here waiting on the No. 98 bus. Come on, out with it.

Tiffany puzzled.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

The gift, for Christ sake.

TIFFANY

Ian Fleming's, *Commandos*. It was in the reduced section at WH Smith's. He's always telling me about the latest spy book he's read. And the plot and what not.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

Ian Fleming! 007!

TIFFANY

Well, I found out that we are both massive James Bond fans.

ABIGAIL

Of course we are; we're British.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL

But, a book? Tom?

Grace and Abigail laughing hysterically.

GRACE

Nothing untoward you dear. But Tom hasn't read a book since ...

ABIGAIL

No, his mother is the only person that's read him, a book.

TIFFANY  
You're kidding!

ABIGAIL  
He probably got all that stuff off  
the internet.

GRACE  
He just wants to impress you.

TIFFANY  
(disgusted)  
Impress me!

Tiffany quickly grabs the book, her handbag, wrestling to get her coat on and her bike. Whilst storming toward the door.

GRACE AND ABIGAIL  
Where are you going?

TIFFANY  
(angry shouting)  
To WH Smith's. To exchange this  
for: *T'was The Night Before  
Christmas*, pop-up edition. That's  
something he can read all on his  
own.

INT. CHRISTMAS EVE. RESTAURANT: THE TASTE OF ITALY ALL DECKED  
FOR CHRISTMAS, ITALIAN STYLE, WITH CAROLERS.

Very festive mood, lively conversations. Tiffany, Enrico, Katie, Darren, Mike, David Uncle Er Manzo, Enrico's mother are all dressed up for Christmas dinner, seated at a table round table eating dinner. Enrico and David are discussing Christmas traditions in Rome, and how good it is to share with friends, when you away from home and Darren's extended stay in London and hoping that he'll agree to go into a partnership with Tiffany to help restaurant owners market their business.

ENRICO'S MOTHER: 50ish. Very beautiful. Sexy. Dark-olive complexion. Dark hair. Think, Sophia Loren.

CHEF/DAVID  
For us Italians, we still have 12  
more days of Christmas to go.

ALL ITALIANS  
Si!

ENRICO  
We're not so into all the crazy  
shopping, big lights and all that.  
Its more about visiting with  
friends and friends.



Enrico's mother stands and raises her glass to make a toast.

ENRICO'S MOTHER  
Si. La familia.

EVERYONE  
La familia!

MIKE  
And friends.

Enrico's mother raises her glass again.

ENRICO'S MOTHER  
And friends.

EVERYONE  
And friends.

Enrico's mother sits down.

UNCLE  
You can't want to miss all of this,  
Darren.

DARREN  
I've made my decision.

Everyone looks at Darren with baited breath.

DARREN (CONT'D)  
Six months on this side of the pond  
and six months on the other. Spring  
and summer here. Autumn and winter,  
there. And...

Enrico's mother very frustrated.

ENRICO'S MOTHER  
Madre mia! After all that, hype.

DARREN  
As I was going to say, except for  
Thanksgiving and Christmas, here in  
London, with you guys.

Everyone cheers.

KATIE  
And in the midst of all of that we  
have good old fashioned London, New  
Year's Eve.

TIFFANY AND DARREN  
So, what's that like?

KATIE, ENRICO, UNCLE, DAVID AND MIKE  
What's that like? Well!

EXT. EVENING. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - WITHIN EYE SHOT OF BIG BEN.

The massive crowd Tiffany and Enrico, Katie and Darren, Mike and David counting down till midnight. Stroke of midnight: fireworks, bells pealing, whistles blowing, horn honking, crowd noise. Mike and David look at each other and think about a kiss, but opt for a bear hug. Tiffany and Enrico kiss. Darren gently takes Katie in his arms, dips her and they kiss.

FADE TO BLACK.

EPILOGUE.

EXT. MORNING. WINTER, VERY SUNNY. NICE NEIGHBOURHOOD, QUIET STREET.

Katie and Tiffany stood at the front of the house. Which has a beautiful, well kept, winter garden. There's a flat they're going to have a look at, on the first floor. Tiffany is very excited, she looked it up the advert on gumtree. Katie not enthused.

LANDLADY: 60+, average build, a bit odd but in a unique likable way, very artsy, carefree, friendly, London accent. Think Jane Fonda.

KATIE

Tiffany, I don't trust those online adverts. I'd rather go through an agent, this time.

TIFFANY

Oh, come on, Mum. It's faster. You look at as many adverts, as you want, online by yourself. And this one has immediate, move in. The pictures look fantastic! You'll see!

Katie gives this look.

KATIE

They could be fake.

TIFFANY

They're not photoshopped, Mum. It's this one here. Absolutely stunning!

Tiffany opens the gate, let's Katie in, Katie stands, then Tiffany enters and closes the gate behind them. Tiffany proceeds to the stairs to the front door. Katie is still stood at the gate.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

(pointing)

Flat 2B, street view. With the flower boxes. So lovely, isn't it. You know how we both love gardens. Well, it said, private patio - shared. That one put me off a bit. But, who uses the patio, these days.

KATIE

Smokers.

TIFFANY

Well, it's my favourite. So, I had to show you this one first. I know you'll absolutely love it. Besides it's the only one in this neighborhood we could afford.

Tiffany rings the buzzer.

LANDLADY

Tiffany and Katie Wells?

TIFFANY

Yes, its us.

Sound: Buzzer, to open the door.

Tiffany, then Katie enter and walk up the stairs. Very clean, freshly painted, new flooring in hallway.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Well, everything looks good, so far.

KATIE

Yes. No pigs.

They reach the door. Tiffany knocks.

LANDLADY

It's open. Come in, please.

Tiffany slowly opens the door. Tiffany then Katie, slowly enter. Lounge of flat: beautiful window and sheer white curtains, loads of sun, smooth light celadon green walls and white wood trim, mahogany stained wood floors, with Oriental rug, matching contemporary mahogany furniture, luscious fabric upholstered sofas and ottomans, massive wide screen telly, cupboards and closets, accessories and lighting, brand new. Potted plants.

Katie looks around cautiously and sniffs, discreetly.

KATIE AND TIFFANY

Hello. Good Morning. How are you?

LANDLADY  
Good morning. How are you?

KATIE AND TIFFANY  
Fine, fine.

The landlady extends her arm to welcome them in. Katie still sniffing.

LANDLADY  
Well, please have a look, about the place. You can move in any time you'd like. If you decide to go with it, that is. Take your time.

TIFFANY  
Gumbo, will just love that window sill. I can just see her staring out, all day.

LANDLADY  
Oops! I just need to run down to the patio, I forgot something. Be right back.

TIFFANY AND KATIE  
OK.

Landlady exits.

Tiffany and Katie walk about the flat, thoroughly inspecting it. Katie sniffs her clothes and about the rooms. She and Tiffany meet up in the lounge again, Katie sniffs Tiffany's clothes.

TIFFANY  
You OK, Mum?

KATIE  
Do you smell that?

TIFFANY  
What? I don't smell anything.

KATIE  
You're noise is numb. You've gotten use to it.

TIFFANY  
Use to what? I don't smell anything.

KATIE  
It's the landlady - she's a hop head. I thought she looked a bit odd. Too "chilled out." For a women of her age.

TIFFANY

Oh! Come on, Mum. She's a pensioner.

The landlady enters a bit out of breath. Smells of marijuana. Both Tiffany and Katie recognise the smell.

LANDLADY

Just got this place refreshed. My new investment is finally paying off, it's risky. But, at my age - why not go for it, I said. So I finally got this place done up. I forgot my cigarette. Wouldn't want to burn it all down, now, would I.

Katie and Tiffany look at each other.

THE END.