

SHABBY

"Ordinary World"

by

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SCENE 1: EXT. MANOR HOUSE - MORNING

Opening credits - DURAN DURAN'S *ORDINARY WORLD* plays.

A worn-out 17th century English stately home at the end of a gravel driveway, to its left a two-storey stable block.

SCENE 2: INT. PERCY'S LAIR - SAME TIME

The low-lit, tired first floor of the stables is an open-plan apartment. A futon bed at the end wall is beseeched by a stack of Batman comics, a 1920s Bauhaus lamp, and a 1995 Nintendo Virtual Boy games console. A handful of human-sized, abstract sculptures dominate the room.

A stack of canned beef chilli sits alongside a camping stove in the kitchen area. Although everything is neatly in its place.

PERCY SHABBINGTON-SMYTHE (54), short, tired, overweight, balding and naked, dries off and limps to his wardrobe, to put on his everyday outfit: a prized 1950s smoking jacket, classic '80s band tee (Duran Duran today), camo cargo shorts, black socks, and a pair of Birkenstock sandals.

Slipping a vaporiser into one jacket pocket, and a family-sized bag of trail mix in the other, he goes to exit.

PERCY

Of course...

He turns to a chest of drawers, upon which sits a gold-gilded framed photo of young Percy and an older, Tweed-clad man, standing in front of the manor house.

He opens the top drawer, inside which is a neon-pink 1990s Tamagotchi in a straw nest. It BLEEPs irritatingly as he 'feeds' the egg-shaped digital pet.

PERCY (CONT'D)

(cooing)

Sh-Sh-Shhh...

Lamb shank today!

Percy turns to the stairs, descends, then mini-trips. He looks back to see CHURCHILL (6), cat, cantankerous, giant, ginger, intransigently perched on the step.

CHURCHILL

Meow.

PERCY

A loss to the espionage world you  
are, Churchill. Can of chilli in  
your bowl there.

(winks and waves)

Churchill wears a 'zero fucks' face as Percy exits.

SCENE 3: EXT. MANOR HOUSE FRONT - SOON AFTER

A group of school kids and their teacher file through the front door of the main house, past a tired brass sign on the wall that reads 'SHABBINGTON HALL'. Percy lingers on the gravel driveway, hitting his vape, hard.

SCENE 4: INT. SCULLERY - SOON AFTER

The kitchen's tired, but immaculate. JOSIE (34), pocket-sized, red-haired housekeeper, wearing an oversized peach cardigan, cleans frantically. Percy enters.

JOSIE

(thrusting food at him;  
thick Northern Irish  
accent)

Toast and fresh jam... Better than  
that canned shite.

PERCY

Closest I'm gonna get to the taste  
of Texas over there in my little  
clubhouse, Josie.

JOSIE

It's shite.

Ignoring her, Percy eats his toast.

PERCY

(animated)

T'would've warmed the bellies of  
cowboys on cattle trails... Propped  
up gunfighters at old saloon  
bars...

(triumphant)

The true flavour of America's Wild  
West!

JOSIE

Well here are some wild bills and another letter from Health & Safety... Likely *not* better than that shite out of a can.

Percy shoves a half-eaten slice of toast into his mouth and sifts through various envelopes bearing red 'LATE' and 'DO NOT IGNORE' warnings, opening the H&S letter.

PERCY

Jesus that's soon.

JOSIE

After you again?

PERCY

Like farmers after a fox. And you know which I am.

Percy points to a picture on the wall. It's him aged 6, in a fox costume, at a Roald Dahl party.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Apparently they're coming round at the end of the month. They were only here two weeks ago! I'd best fix that leak upstairs pronto.

JOSIE

Sure, that's a good idea? Remember what happened last time you got your spanners out.

PERCY

Oh, his leg was already broken! Apparently. Where's green fingers Fernando? He can give me a hand.

JOSIE

He's off again.

Shot of a topless elderly Spanish man, sweating in the sun. He's so weak he can barely lift the shovel.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

He's so tasty... I'd like to turn him inside out and lick him like a crisp packet...

(pause)

He's got a swinging case of the blues.

PERCY

He's upset?

JOSIE

Worse. He's joined a Led Zeppelin tribute band.

Same shot of the elderly man, but now he's clad in black leathers, holding an electric guitar.

PERCY

Let's hope he's a better musician than he was a landscaper. Churchill demonstrates more design flair in his litter tray.

JOSIE

Churchill's lack of opposable thumbs won't have him driving a tractor any day soon though.

A beat.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

We need a new gardener. Especially if we're entering this year's open garden.

PERCY

I've told you Josie, it's not happening.

JOSIE

Why on Earth not? You can't let bloated windbag win again.

PERCY

Sometimes the best way to win is to not play at all. Besides... I can focus on finding us a Capability Brown.

JOSIE

Who's th—

PERCY

18th-century landscaping legend. Knew his way around an English estate like a butcher with a sirloin... Fernando was alright, but did he design 170 national English parks...? No madam, he did not. Right... I'm off to fix this leak.

JOSIE

Miranda's in a foul mood this mornin'. Yer in for a treat.

PERCY

(sighs)

I don't know what's more painful: Miranda's take on the family history, or my blimmin' gout!

JOSIE

Flarin' up again?

PERCY

Like a blow-torch. Never regretted anything as much as my love affair with cheese. And port. I love port... And cheese...

SCENE 5: INT. UPSTAIRS - SOON AFTER

MIRANDA (50), pencil skirt and cardigan, bobbed grey hair, round glasses, Victorian headmistress scowl, stands next to a portrait of a mustached man in a highly-decorated WWII military uniform. A group of wittering children surround her.

MIRANDA

(projecting with authority)

And so...

The children's sudden silence makes her smile.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

... As Prime Minister Winston Churchill planned the D-Day attack, England's last hope against Hitler.

(pause)

Leftenant Colonel Clifford Shabbington-Smythe, a decorated member of the War Cabinet, wrote an open letter to a national newspaper...

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

(looks away from the picture)

... The Sunday Sport.

A picture of the February 2nd, 1940 issue of the Sunday Sport. A photo of a black and white cat. Headline reads: 'MY CAT LOOKS LIKE HITLER.'

MIRANDA (CONT'D)  
(looks back to the  
picture)

The Lieutenant Colonel called for Churchill to re-evaluate his "*ludicrous plan*" – which would, according to Shabbington-Smythe – "*undoubtedly fail.*"

Percy peers around the doorframe. Miranda watches as he gives an excited two-thumbs up gesture. Unfazed, she watches him sneak away, a tool-belt now around his smoking jacket.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)  
That was where things got tricky for old Clifford.

Back to Clifford's portrait.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)  
The D-Day plan was, of course, an unequivocal success. Meanwhile, Clifford's name was dragged through mud by the nation's media, who referred to his misguided musings as "*The Dunce-Day Letter.*"

A picture of the June 7th, 1940 issue of the Sunday Sport. Photo of Clifford putting 'twos' up in the back of a car. Headline reads: '*LOONY LORD DUCKS OUT, DISGRACED.*'

SCENE 6: INT. ATTIC - SAME TIME

A damp, tired attic room illuminated by a small lamp. Percy takes cautious yet creaky side steps around the floorboards.

SCENE 6: INT. UPSTAIRS - SAME TIME

MIRANDA  
Lambasted–

Interrupted by a noise above, she stops and looks to the ceiling.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)  
Lambasted, forced into a life of near-exile, Cliff attained the rather unceremonious nickname of "*Old D-Day.*" Unfortunately for the Shabbington-Smythes, the jokes didn't end there.

With a CRASH, Percy falls through the floorboards and into the room below. He's clutching his vape in one hand and a spanner in the other.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, Clifford's grandson, Percy Shabbington-Smythe. Owner and resident of Shabbington Hall. Lord of the manor. Or rather, duke of the dustbin flat above the stables.

The children snigger. Percy gets up, dusts himself down.

PERCY

(forcing a smile)  
Hello, yes. Enjoy the tour.

More sniggers. "Dickhead." Percy waves and exits rapidly.

SCENE 7: INT. SCULLERY

Clearly dishevelled, Percy casually strolls in.

JOSIE

Ye gods! What happened?

PERCY

Nothing to worry about. Few planks out of place, is all.

JOSIE

You said that last time.

PERCY

(thoughtful)  
Think I might need a hand with this one... I'm off to Ted's.

SCENE 8: EXT. MANOR HOUSE FRONT - SOON AFTER

Heading to the stables, Percy enters the downstairs door.

SCENE 9: INT. PERCY'S WORKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

A well-lit workshop, filled with mesmerising sculptures, abstractly based on the human form. The detail and quality of the art is astounding.

Milling through them slowly, Percy approaches his prized road vehicle - a white 1985 Sinclair C5 electric velomobile.



Sun-rays illuminate his trusty steed, he rolls his hands tenderly over the vehicle.

PERCY

Ah Shadowfax... You are a true vision.

SCENE 10: EXT. MANOR HOUSE FRONT - MOMENTS LATER

Percy's C5 cruises out of the garage, albeit slowly. Its tall, red safety flags bob and flap as the vehicle picks up (relative) speed.

Miranda waves off the kids as they board a tour coach.

Wincing and wishing for more power, Percy inches past various kids faces and rude finger signs, through the coach windows.

KID #1

(from inside the coach)  
Pahaha-it's hurting my eyes!

KID #2

(from inside the coach)  
Nice flags, loser!

He dials up the volume on a 2001 first-gen iPod, hacked into the C5's sound system. Duran Duran's - ORDINARY WORLD.

SCENE 11: EXT. MANOR HOUSE DRIVE CROSSROADS - SOON AFTER

Shabbington Hall in the distance, Percy's C5 bobs along a back road, struggling to handle the country terrain. Car horns BEEP furiously as he takes a turn into the farm entrance next door.

Rolling in, he spots a selection of domes being erected.

Percy parks by a blue transit van with roof-rack and ladders. The van's lettering reads 'GHOSH & SON.' Squeezed on the end of the logo are the words '(& Daughter).'

Percy spots TED (53), rosy cheeks, giant mop of shaggy silver hair, kind eyes, surveying the land with his Border Collie ROSS (6).

TED

Morning Shabs.

PERCY

Tedster, you old bag of bat bones!  
(at the dog)  
(MORE)

PERCY (CONT'D)

And good morrow, young Ross. What's going on here then?

TED

I'm diversifying.

PERCY

Dome rearing?

TED

Everyone wants yoga retreats, silent fasting weekends, gravy-making workshops, and glamping, dude. And it all starts next weekend; got the folks from *YogaMeNow*, *FinishMeLater* coming. Hence the geodesic domes.

PERCY

Geo-what-now? "*Dude*"?

TED

Hemispherical structures based on geodesic polyhedrons. Energy-efficiency through air circulation. Absolute dream to insulate. Be rammed with yogis this time next. You should come, bring Josie if you want. Or that lass you dated.

PERCY

Miranda's the last person I'd be inviting anywhere, Ted. Good for you though, riding the winds of change.

(pause, ponders)

Yoga eh? Feels like a young-gun's game, and we are, after all, a couple of knackered old stags on our last tour of the riviera.

TED

Who's rattled your badger trap then?

PERCY

The aforementioned 'lass'... Should never have said yes to that tantric weekender. I was leaking essential oils for weeks. See a different side to people with all that Karamel Sutra stuff. And...

(whispers, gesticulates)

She's got very rough hands.

TED

Karma Sutra.

PERCY

Not now. Shame really, I liked her.  
But I'm not in the right place for  
it.

TED

But you're lord of the manor!

PERCY

Might not be for much longer...  
(looks into the  
distance)  
Roof's fallen through like the  
backside of an ageing weight-  
lifter. Any chance you could come  
over and take a look? Got a Health  
& Safety visit at the end of the  
month. They'll have my pants down.

TED

Normally I'd be all over it, but  
I've been ripping this little  
blighter into next week.

Ted GESTURES to a freshly juiced bong.

TED (CONT'D)

We could ask this lot though, if  
you'd like?

Two men and a woman (all Indian) approach. RHODRI GHOSH (56),  
bearded, jolly, rotund. ARWYN GHOSH(25), female, Bollywood  
beautiful, and DAFYDD (25), Arwyn's equally handsome twin.

RHODRI

(Welsh accent)

Sorry Ted, our lunchtime meditation  
ran over. Dafydd hit a couple of  
geometric mind blocks, so we had to  
chip in and help.

TED

Time is just a construct, Rhodri!  
This is my friend Percy.

Rhodri heads straight over to the C5.

RHODRI

(Welsh accent)

Back to the Future, eh?

PERCY

If only she could manage 88 miles per hour!

RHODRI

I'm Rhodri Ghosh, and these are Arwyn and Dafydd. We're Ghosh & Son & Daughter – *'Building with a surprise.'*

PERCY

What's the surprise?

RHODRI

You never know...

PERCY

(bemused)

Sometimes a surprise is just the ticket.

RHODRI

Aye, surrendering to the flow of life is all we can do in the end.

The two men contemplate the roofer's sage wisdom for a beat.

PERCY

Wise words, Rhodri, wise words. As it goes, my roof's surrendering to the flow. Any experience in that department?

RHODRI

Anything wood-related and you're in safe hands, my friend.

PERCY

Excellent! Might you have time today? I'm literally next door.

RHODRI

The Stuart period. Always fancied a look inside there.

PERCY

Right on the nose. Knock on the door to the left of the house and you'll find Josie. She'll show you what's what.

Percy climbs into the C5.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Oh, Ted. One more thing. Fernando's packed up the gig. Probably for the best. Any ideas for a decent replacement?

TED

Have you looked on your phone?

Percy holds up his Nokia 3310.

TED (CONT'D)

*Eesh!* How about the Shabbington Grapevine?

PERCY

Ah yes, the frontal lobe of local society. Need to visit anyway as it goes. New batch of 'Tropical Explosion' in. As you were, all.

RHODRI

You'll be in for a surprise - place has had a facelift!

PERCY

(non-plus)

As you were, all.

Giving an almost regal wave, Percy slowly cruises away.

SCENE 12: EXT. VILLAGE HIGH STREET - DAY

The C5 invites bewildered looks from drivers and humans alike.

Percy parks awkwardly outside 'CORNERCINO', the village store-cum-coffee shop.

SCENE 13: EXT. CORNERCINO - SOON AFTER

A typical village corner shop, crowded with birthday cards, stationery, and limited groceries. One (tiny) half has been converted to a coffee shop.

Entering, Percy scans the various post cards pinned to the 'SHABBINGTON GRAPEVINE' bulletin board. The first: 'NO JOB TOO BIG OR SMALL. PROBABLY. GHOSH & SON (& DAUGHTER). BUILDING WITH A SURPRISE.'

PERCY  
(chuckles, mumbles)  
You never know...

The second: *'MALADJUSTED BALLCOCK? I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR THAT. WHITEOAK PLUMBING.'*

Percy hears a woman's voice.

NAT (O.S.)  
Yes, Chicken Kiev. Nice one dad.  
Yup, Mrs Grenner came in for her  
dog perfume, and Dr. Porteous  
picked up the fajita kit an hour  
ago... There's one more, for a  
Percy Shattington—  
*Shabbington?! Same as the vill—*

Percy peers his head around a shelf-end.

PERCY  
Hello?

NAT MONKFORD (46), second-generation Nigerian, portly, jet black & blonde explosion of afro hair, sits by a paddling pool full of chicken kiev's and ice. She's on the phone while simultaneously fishing for a pack.

Seeing him, she puts the phone and rod down and approaches, wearing a snorkelling mask and waders.

NAT  
D'you always creep up on women like that?

PERCY  
When I can. Everyone's taken around here though, and one wrecked home's enough for me.

NAT  
Sorry?

PERCY  
Never mind. I'm Percy Shabbington—

NAT  
Smythe! Shabbington-Smythe... Ooh, I like saying that.  
(impersonates)  
Mr Shabbington-Smythe Esquire, at your service.  
(giggles)  
Gets better every time.  
(MORE)

NAT (CONT'D)

(lowers her voice)  
Shabbington-Smythe...

PERCY

Gift that keeps on giving. Angling  
contest started early this year  
then?

NAT

Sales promotion's the way ahead.

PERCY

Would've thought a chicken kiev  
sells itself? Good for you though.  
I'm here for th—

NAT

Tropical Explosion E-liquid  
flavouring? Naughty.

PERCY

Nail, head. Vape, yes.

NAT

Here you go my liege... Or should I  
say, "milord"? I've seen Downton  
Abbey, I know what you lot get up  
to in your fancy houses.

(curtsies ironically)

Your secrets are safe with me.

PERCY

All the drink, drugs, double-  
crossing and debauchery starts with  
this parcel. So when I'm eventually  
sent down, you'll have played your  
part... And so I know who to send  
the coppers after: your name is...?

NAT

Ohh yeah, you'll need one of those.  
I'm Nat. First and only daughter of  
the mighty...

(points upstairs)

He's got measles, so I'm down from  
capital city to whip the place into  
shape.

PERCY

Won't London miss you?

NAT

Not for the time being; I'm a—

LEVINGTON  
(bombastic)

D-Day!

A big bear of a man crashes a hand into Percy's back, nearly sending him flying.

LEVINGTON BARKSTON-ASH (62), tweed jacket, black roll-neck, huge quiff of untamed salt & pepper hair, grins obnoxiously.

LEVINGTON (CONT'D)  
Percy, you tragic old fart! How're tricks?

PERCY  
Actually, it's not been the best of—

LEVINGTON  
Brilliant! Good to see you've not cashed in your chips just yet.

He immediately turns his attention to Nat.

LEVINGTON (CONT'D)  
Well, hello there... I'm Levington, you must be new. How's Old Man Measles?

NAT  
He's not doing so—

LEVINGTON  
Fantastic! Ya sell nail guns?

NAT  
Does it look like we sell nail guns?

LEVINGTON  
This place sells all sorts of random rubbish, doesn't it, Percival?

PERCY  
Please don't—

LEVINGTON  
Certainly does.  
(cockily slaps a hand on the counter)  
Need one for prep.  
(to Nat)  
(MORE)



LEVINGTON (CONT'D)

You're looking at the fifteen-year streak winner of the Inter-Village Open Garden Contest, my darling. Word from the bird is Travis Perkins've put a bit of pelf behind it. FIVE GRAND for the winner, which will be me.

LEVINGTON (CONT'D)

Course it's not for the money; wouldn't even put my eldest through a term at Steiner.

(laughs barbarically)

Just a bit of fun, isn't it?

PERCY

Five grand?

LEVINGTON

His lot used to win all the time before I rocked up.

(turns to Percy)

Safe to say you won't be entering! You couldn't enter a car park - especially not in that bath-on-wheels.

(sneers through the window at the C5)

Nat in turn peers out at the bright, white velomobile.

NAT

Well I rather like it.

LEVINGTON

I'm sorry...?

NAT

His plastic play mobile. And no, we don't sell nail guns, so bye.

LEVINGTON

(straightens, surprised)

Suit yourself.

(to Percy)

As you were, D-Day.

Levington leaves.

NAT

*Levington?* That's not a real name is it? Don't they make hairdryers?!

PERCY

As real as the air we breathe, but not as important. He's a real lump of sugar.

NAT

Why did he call you "D-Day"?

PERCY

Long story.. Thanks for the package.

(on his way out)

And remember, mum's the word on the scandal!

SCENE 14: EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY

Exiting the shop, Percy is limping to the C5 when his phone rings. It's Josie.

JOSIE (V.O.)

Rhodri just left. Five grand's worth of repairs and he can start next week.

PERCY

(shouts)

Five grand?!

JOSIE (V.O.)

Aye, we couldn't muster five grand in 30 years the way this place operates. What you going to do?

PERCY

Honestly, I have no idea. Best give him the green light. (decidedly unconvincing)  
The universe will deliver.

JOSIE (V.O.)

(tentative)

There's always your sculptures?

PERCY

I've told you it's just a hobby, Josie. Doubt I could even give them away.

JOSIE (V.O.)

Maybe sculpt yourself a money printing machine then, so we don't wind up on our arses.

(MORE)

JOSIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(pause)

You could ask Rupert when he comes over later.

PERCY

(contemplative)

Asking my younger, successful barrister brother for money to keep our family home-cum-failing tourist attraction open is bad business, Josie.

A shot of Percy's brother's legal advertisement: *'RUPERT SHABBINGTON-SMYTHE Q.C., JUST BECAUSE YOU DID IT, DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE GUILTY.'*

PERCY (CONT'D)

(straight)

Besides... Already asked him. Grovelled actually. More than once. Says I should stop inviting drama, sell up and move to Bali.

JOSIE

Bali? What's there then?

PERCY

Vegans, drunk Aussies, and men on the run. Speaking of drinks. Be back soon.

Hanging up, he turns 90 degrees to the Badger & Dragon pub, literally as the red & white 'CLOSED' sign flips to 'OPEN'.

SCENE 15: INT. THE CAT & BADGER PUB - DAY

A dimly lit village pub. Traditional wooden beams with antique blunderbusses and stuffed pheasants, hovering above a red and gold Axminster carpet.

Posters adorn the walls, one reading *'BRING GF 5% OFF, BRING WIFE 10% OFF, BRING BOTH, FREE MEAL!'* KEITH (43), Chinese, thick spectacles, striped shirt (rolled up sleeves), pressed trousers, is cleaning glasses behind the bar.

KEITH

(thick cockney accent)

Set the boys up if you fancy flippin' a few.

Percy spins to see a readied dominoes game.

PERCY

Those wonderful bones... Begging to be shuffled, flipped and played long into the afternoon...

KEITH

Fancy some food?

PERCY

(grabs a fistful of trail mix from his pocket)

No thanks Keith, gotta get back to base to unravel today's nightmare. Plus there's a Quiche Lorraine with my name on it. Just time for a quick one.

KEITH

Usual?

Percy awkwardly manages a wink.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Triple Malibu & coke coming up.  
(chuckles)  
Pervert's drink, this...

The wall behind the bar bears old photos of Percy, Keith, and a handful of others, all playing dominoes.

KEITH (CONT'D)

What's the nightmare? Bogs blocked again?

Keith places the dark drink on the bar in front of Percy.

PERCY

That'd be a dream in comparison... Need to find five grand for roof repairs or the old place might well shut down.

Percy sinks the Malibu & coke.

KEITH

Shit Perc... Haven't seen you knock one back like that since you rolled Shadowfax into Waitrose' window.

(pause)

Like a scene from Days of fackin' Thunder, that was.

PERCY

I had to swerve for a cat.

KEITH

"Swerve"? PAHA! What's top speed?  
10 miles an hour?

Percy stews.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Sorry to 'ear about the money mate.  
Anything short of a loan, I'm happy  
to help.

PERCY

As it goes, I'm looking for a new  
gardener.

KEITH

Now *that* I can help with.

PERCY

Really?

KEITH

Absolutely. Jasper over there's got  
hideously green fingers. Worked for  
the council man and boy.

PERCY

Jasper? I don't know a Jasper.

KEITH

Keeps himself to himself.

PERCY

Could he handle a period property?

KEITH

Like a rally driver handles a  
hairpin. Ask him, he's over there.

Percy looks around the haggard venue. A solitary old man  
nurses a pint in the corner.

JASPER

Hello. Yes.

Doubtful, Percy looks back at Keith.

KEITH

Jasper, you on for a little  
gardening job down at Shabs Hall?

JASPER  
Gardening. Yes.

PERCY  
Excellent! Fancy taking a look at  
the place now?

JASPER  
Look, yes.

PERCY  
Alright then, let's kick it.

Jasper and Percy go to leave.

KEITH  
Percy, don't forget - championship  
next week.

PERCY  
Our shot at regaining the  
championship from those old  
antiques in Swinderford! Wouldn't  
miss it for the world.

SCENE 16: EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Coursing through the country roads at 15mph, suddenly the C5  
dies. Percy sighs at a flashing red LED in the cockpit.

He pedals, but winces at his gout-filled feet and stops  
again.

PERCY  
(flustered)  
Blimmin' goouuuut!

Percy climbs out the C5, Jasper does the same.

Perspirant, he removes his smoking jacket, a car approaches.

BEEP-BEEP. Nat sits in a blue Nissan Qashqai.

SCENE 17: INT. MOVING CAR - SOON AFTER

Nat drives as Percy stares awkwardly out the window. Jasper's  
in the back.

NAT  
Decent bit of rubber you burnt  
there mi'lord. Could smell it from  
the shop.

PERCY

Should fire the pit crew really.  
Can't believe they're sending me  
out like that.

NAT

(chuckles)

Extreme ownership Percy. If you put  
the suit on, you've got to own  
it... Or just don't put the suit  
on. Or, don't put *that* suit on...  
*What is it again?*

PERCY

Shadowfax is a Sinclair C5. The  
love child of Sir Clive Sinclair's  
long-running interest in electric  
vehicles. 19 miles of battery  
power, which I clearly did not  
charge.

NAT

Who's your mate?

JASPER

Yes.

PERCY

Jasper's a highly recommended  
gardener.

(gestures to the  
Shabbington Hall  
driveway)

Just here.

NAT

(stops the car)

What... The...?

A car behind BEEPS its horn.

NAT (CONT'D)

You live *here*?

PERCY

Pretty much.

More BEEPING.

NAT

Well I never...

Nat drives through the large open wrought iron gates.

NAT (CONT'D)

I was on my way to get dad's meds,  
but I can't miss this. Make the  
tour quick though. Only got a few  
hours until his throat expands to  
the point of asphyxiation.

She moves to unbuckle her seatbelt but Percy stops her.

PERCY

Whoah, whoah... No.

NAT

Eh?

PERCY

It's just... You know, I—

NAT

You leave the chambermaid tied up  
somewhere?

Jasper chuckles.

PERCY

Of course not, but—

NAT

(getting out the car)  
Lighten up, Percy.

Nat closes the door and stoops her head through the window.

NAT (CONT'D)

You coming or what? Look alive  
Jasper.

JASPER

Alive. Yes.

SCENE 18: EXT. MANOR HOUSE FRONT - MOMENTS LATER

Nat and Percy walk up the drive to the main house. Nat  
swirling, clearly impressed with Shabbington Hall; Percy,  
stern-faced.

PERCY

Have a look around the grounds,  
Jasp, and let me know what you  
think.

JASPER

Grounds. Yes.



Percy and Nat walk towards the scullery entrance.

SCENE 19: INT. SHABBINGTON SCULLERY - DAY

Nat's perched atop the work surface. Percy fumbles around the fridge.

NAT

Why did that crumpled up crisp packet call you "D-Day" earlier?

Percy spots a note on the side: 'A DELIGHTFUL CHILD'S BLOCKED THE UPSTAIRS TOILET AGAIN, MIRANDA.'

PERCY

Long story...

NAT

Well I've got half a cup of coffee left. Unless you need to go rescue your motorised wheelie bin?

Percy shuts the fridge. Straightening up, he gestures for her to follow him.

PERCY

Okay then. This...

Percy opens the double-doors.

PERCY (CONT'D)

... Is the once-great Shabbington Hall.

SCENE 20: INT. SHABBINGTON DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Walking the hallway, Percy lectures while Nat sips coffee.

PERCY

People from all over the globe would come to see the pièce de résistance of my distant ancestor. Even Swindon.

They arrive at an open door, to a large study. He ushers her in.

SCENE 21: INT. SHABBINGTON STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

The pair stand, regarding a large portrait of a painting of a man standing proud in 17th century costume. He looks surprisingly similar to Percy.

PERCY

Syngeon Shabbington-Smythe - Oliver Cromwell's right-hand man. Crommers gave him this gold-plated bear trap as a thanks for that business with Charles the First.

Both turn to regard a large, shiny, wall-mounted bear trap on the adjacent wall.

NAT

Your ancestor helped Cromwell overthrow the King of England?!

PERCY

Rugby-tackled the treasonous blighter himself.

PERCY (CONT'D)

The big OC made Syngeon Britain's first Minister of Cheese.

NAT

Min—What?!

PERCY

(nods)

Crommers had a thing for Mature Cheddar apparently.

(absently)

Syngeon called him "Crumbles"!

Leaning in, Nat squints at a beautifully engraved inscription on the trap: *'TO MY MINISTER OF CHEESE'*.

NAT

Checks out.

PERCY

The Shabs family used to be legends, until things went a bit downhill.

SCENE 22: INT. SHABBINGTON HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The tour continues as they walk further down the hallway.

PERCY

A slalom of sad happenings in fact.

They stop at the framed D-Day letter.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Grandpapa Cliff wound Churchill  
right up.

Leaning in, Nat reads the letter.

PERCY (CONT'D)

After that, he rented a lump of the  
estate to farmers. But the labour  
dried up like a cheap prune.

They stop outside a door, with a freestanding brass sign  
which reads *'TEMPTED BY TECHNOLOGY'*.

PERCY (CONT'D)

When Cliff popped his clogs, papa  
Huw stepped in. Had a hold of  
things at first, but then he  
started investing.

SCENE 23: INT. SHABBINGTON TECHNOLOGY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Percy waves a disenfranchised arm at the room packed full of  
gadgets and technology from a bygone era – all catalogued and  
sign-posted, behind a brass and rope barrier.

PERCY

Et voila. The family misfortune.

Excited, Nat runs straight over to the Nintendo Virtual Boy.

NAT

Fuck me, I thought these were all  
dead! And look – that weird little  
thing you drive around in. *And* a  
Seiko UC 2000!

(picks up the ugly  
calculator-watch)

PERCY

Got this lot to thank for the  
family's economic ruin. He lost a  
load on that lumpy watch. Promised  
mum he'd make it all back, but he  
blew another chunk backing the  
electric bike. That was the straw  
that broke the camel's back.

(MORE)

PERCY (CONT'D)

Which is ironic, given mum left him  
for a rug dealer from Marrakech.

A beat.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Old pops' attempt at reinvention  
actually meant investing in some of  
the biggest technological failures  
in UK history. Tragic and  
beautiful, really.

(contemplative)

Like a John Grisham novel.

NAT

So you keep it all around to  
remember him?

PERCY

Probably not what he had in mind,  
but it amuses the visitors... Ahead  
of his time he was. Misunderstood.

(pause)

The legacy of the Shabbington-  
Smythes. In one room. And to make  
matters worse, I need to find five  
grand for roof repairs in 30 days,  
or Health and Safety will probably  
shut us down.

Nat curiously inspects the ingredients of a can of Thirsty  
Dog Beef- Flavoured Pet Water.

NAT

What about that open garden  
competition your mate was talking  
about? Five big ones for the  
winner.

PERCY

I've more chance of making a mint  
from my auctioned body parts. Shame  
though...

(looks out of the window  
at the grounds, Jasper  
strokes a hedge)

She's got real promise.

SCENE 24: EXT. MANOR HOUSE FRONT - SOON AFTER

Nat and Percy leave the house.

NAT

Sounds like this place is all  
you've got left of your old man,  
and that competition sounds  
bloomin' perfect.

PERCY

Opportunity will knock. I know it.

Nat heads toward her car

NAT

Suit yourself... Well, thanks for  
the coffee. See you soon for more  
Tropical Paradise.

PERCY

Explosion. I thank you.

Nat gets into the car and drives away. A regal wave from  
Percy as he heads toward his studio.

SCENE 25: INT. MOVING CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Nat exits the crossroads. She notices Percy's jacket and vape  
in the passenger footwell as her car absent-mindedly passes  
an Aston Martin convertible, heading up the drive toward the  
house.

SCENE 26: INT. PERCY'S WORKSHOP - SOON AFTER

Percy's in blue overalls and a welder's mask, when RUPERT  
SHABBINGTON-SMYTHE (45), athletic, tall, handsome, appears.

PERCY

God's teeth-Piccadilly bloody  
Circus today!

RUPERT

Who was that leaving?

Percy picks various sculpting tools out of a box.

PERCY

Never mind, brethren.

RUPERT

Okey-dokey. What's the C5 doing out  
on the lane? Fire the pit crew I  
say!

PERCY

(amused)

Exactly.

Rupert absent-mindedly examines a small sculpture of a breasted man.

RUPERT

So who was that then?

PERCY

(sighs)

'That then', was a woman, Rupert. Surprisingly – and more importantly, rarely – they turn up here from time to time.

RUPERT

You old detritus!

(moves in closer)

She fixing the roof? Jose told me all about it.

PERCY

If you must know, she was offering a hand for the Inter-Village Garden contest. The five grand prize might keep the old place above water after all.

RUPERT

Ah, the place is shagged! Tourist attraction? Fatal attraction, more like... Listen, I love Shabby Hall as much as you, but isn't this another sign to get out there and do something... Well, you know... Proper?

(pause)

I can't keep watching you living in dad's shadow Perc. Let's get Shabs fixed & flogged.

PERCY

"Proper"? Look at the state of me Rupes. I haven't slept a wink in years; been wearing the same clothes since I was 25, and I can't even limp through my house without being bullied by lippy kids. Besides, this is our home. Dad's home.

RUPERT

Always the rescuer, brother, ever since we were nippers. You can't fix everything.

PERCY

Where there's a will, there's a way.

RUPERT

But *why* is there a will? Dad made his bed, we slept in it. Isn't it time we got out.

PERCY

You got out just fine.

RUPERT

The past is the past. Saving this place won't change anything.

PERCY

You sound like a new friend of mine.

RUPERT

And you sound like you need a slither of Josie's Tofu Wellington.

Percy immediately perks up.

PERCY

Crumbs. Is it Tuesday already? A perfect slice of the east, right here in Shabby Hall...  
I can't argue with that.

Rupert opens his arms and hugs Percy. He breaks from the hug.

RUPERT

Hey, little Tom's in 'Cats' tonight. Drama teacher said he was "*too big for acrobatics*," but she changed her tune after I threatened her with weight discrimination. Fancy tagging along? He bagged the lead!

PERCY

Thanks, but 3D Tetris and late-night quiche are calling.  
(winks)

RUPERT

After some Tofu Wellington, eh?!

Percy forces a smile.

PERCY

Perhaps you're right Rupe. Maybe it is time to sell the old girl...

(pensive pause)

You go in; I'll pack this lot up.

Rupert smiles warmly and leaves.

SCENE 27: INT. PERCY'S WORKSHOP - SOON AFTER

Nat enters. Surprised, she observes the wondrous collection of sculptures. Sparks fly, with flashes of light. Percy is spot-welding.

NAT

Hello again.

Removing his mask, he looks exposed and embarrassed.

NAT (CONT'D)

Nat holds up the jacket and vape.

NAT (CONT'D)

Left these in the car.

Percy puts the welding gear down.

PERCY

No one really comes in here.

NAT

I didn't mean to intrude. Damn glad I did though - you're world-class!

Nat walks around gleefully inspecting the sculptures.

PERCY

Pops used to say that... It's just a hobby. Meditation maybe.

NAT

"Hobby"? Percy, you've got serious talent!

(pause)

You say "opportunity will knock," do you really believe that?



PERCY

I do.

NAT

Bollocks. There's taoism, then there's just plain fear. The past is the past, Percy. If you want the family name rescuing from the bin, you've got to reach in and pluck it out yourself. Spruce up that Victorian garden out there; pepper a few of these beauties around it... We'd win that contest easy!

PERCY

"We?"

NAT

Did you not see the hyacinths and baskets outside the shop?

Rummaging in her purse, Nat produces something which she hands to him. It's a crumpled business card. Which reads: *'NATALIE MONKFORD. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.'*

NAT (CONT'D)

I'm not convinced old Jasper's quite up to the task.

As she looks out of the window, Percy follows her gaze. Jasper's taking a bath in the water feature out front. He's still wearing his flat cap.

PERCY

(sighs)

I'm touched Nat... but I can't. You can't. We can't.

NAT

Your dad may've failed, but at least he tried. I wonder what he'd say now...

Palpable silence.

PERCY

"Tried?" He had more tries than the New Zealand rugby team, and it got him nowhere.

NAT

(sighs)

That guy you were just speaking to is probably right, annoyingly.

PERCY

You were listening?

NAT

If you've got no intention of keeping this place, then fix the roof and sell. But if you change your mind and decide you wanna make a stand for yourself, you've got my number.

(nods at the card)

One thing we can agree on: this place has a boatload of potential. I'll drop Jasper home.

Nat leaves Percy in quiet contemplation.

SCENE 28: INT. SHABBINGTON HALL - NIGHT

Percy sits on a bench playing his red Nintendo Virtual Boy. The dark hallway is illuminated by the dim red glow of the head-set pressed to his face.

Putting the game down, he switches on his head-torch. Perspirant, he sits in the silence.

Enjoying a mouthful of Quiche Lorraine he hits his vape almost simultaneously.

Chewing, smoke pours from his mouth like a waterfall. Directly opposite is a painting of a cheerful, middle-aged man, sitting in a Sinclair C5 (the same chap from the photo in our opening scene).

Percy sighs.

PERCY

This might just be the end, old boy... God knows you managed to dodge it enough times.

(pause)

Who? Nat? Only just met her... Yes she's fun... You think? Not if I don't find this five grand...

(pause)

You'd do it in a heartbeat wouldn't you.

Walking down the hall, Percy's head-torch lights up various ancestral portraits. He stops by the Dunce-Day Letter. Voices start to whirl in his head.

LEVINGTON (V.O.)

*D-day! Good to see you've not  
cashed in your chips...*

RUPERT (V.O.)

*When will you realise you can't fix  
everything...?*

NAT (V.O.)

*At least your dad tried.*

The voices get faster and faster.

RUPERT (V.O.)

*The past is the past.*

JOSIE (V.O.)

*Lick him. Lick him like a crisp  
packet!*

RUPERT (V.O.)

*Dad made his bed...*

Shaken, sweaty, Percy pulls his Nokia 3310 from his pocket and punches a couple of buttons. Two rings of the dial-tone later:

NAT (V.O.)

*Hello?*

PERCY

*Nat, it's Fontleroy. I'm game.*

END OF EPISODE