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SF PERUSALS

ALL MOD CONS

by Erica Murray

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

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ISBN 978-0-573-11647-6

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United Kingdom and World
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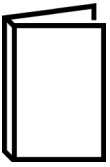
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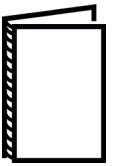
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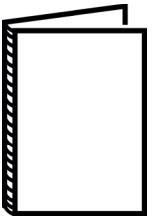
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Erica is originally from County Limerick, Ireland. She holds an MFA in Playwriting from the Lir Academy, Trinity College Dublin. She was a member of the Soho Young Writer's Group and the New Playwrights Programme at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, where she developed *All Mod Cons*. This year she is one of the recipients of the Channel Four Playwrights Scheme bursary award supported by The Peggy Ramsay Foundation. Her first play, *The Cat's Mother*, was long-listed for the Verity Bargate Award, it premiered in 2018 and toured to Underbelly at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Dublin Fringe Festival, where it won the Fishamble Award for Best New Writing.

DIALOGUE

/ means the next line of dialogue overlaps here.

—means an interruption or an unfinished thought.

"Mam" is a colloquial Irish term, please change as suits the production.

SETTINGS

The play is set in a fictional city.

The action takes place in **JEAN** and **GARY**'s mother's house; 98 Linton Avenue, and numerous average properties that are for sale.

The set should be non-naturalistic so the play can change between places easily.

ALL MOD CONS

All Mod Cons premiered in Belfast on 22 May at the Lyric Theatre in the Naughton Studio.

CAST (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

JEAN	**MARIAH LOUCA**
IAN	**CHRIS McCURRY**
LAURA	**SOPHIE ROBINSON**
GARY	**MICHAEL SHEA**

CREATIVES

WRITER	**ERICA MURRAY**
DIRECTOR	**RONAN PHELAN**
SET AND COSTUME DESIGN	**DIANA ENNIS**
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGN	**KATIE RICHARDSON**
LIGHTING DESIGN	**SARAH JANE SHIELS**
DIALECT COACH	**BRENDAN GUNN**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	**JIMMY FAY**
PRODUCER	**BRONAGH McFEELY**
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	KERRI McGIMPSEY
	SOPHIE THOMPSON
COSTUME SUPERVISOR	**GILLIAN LENNOX**
COSTUME ASSISTANT	**ERIN CHARTERIS**
SENIOR TECHNICIAN	**IAN VENNARD**
TECHNICIANS	**ADRIAN WALL**
	CORENTIN WEST
	TIGHEARNAN O'NEILL
FIGHT DIRECTOR	**IAN McCRACKEN**

CAST

MARIAH LOUCA
JEAN



Mariah Louca recently graduated from Guildford School of Acting. Her previous credits include: *The Interview* (The Biscuit Factory) and *Julius Caesar*, *Playing for Time*, *A Dream*, *The Sheffield Mysteries*, *20 Tiny Plays About Sheffield* (Crucible Theatre). She will appear in the upcoming short film *Re-Displacement* (Rural Media/ The Sheditors) opposite BAFTA-nominated Nico Mirallegro released in 2019.

All Mod Cons is Mariah's professional debut since graduating GSA.

CHRIS McCURRY
IAN



Chris was born in Belfast and currently lives in London. He was a member of the Lyric Drama Studio in 2012 and is a graduate of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Previous Lyric Theatre credits include: *The Comedy of Errors*, *55 Days*, *The Long Road* and the 2016 co-production of *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* with Headlong and the Abbey, directed by Jeremy Herrin. Chris performed in *Operation Crucible* at the 2018 Brits Off Broadway Festival and its subsequent transfer to the Davenport Theatre, where it was named a *New York Times* Critics' Pick. His screen credits include *The Woman in White* (BBC), *Krypton* (SyFy/E4), *Torvill and Dean* (ITV) and the feature film *Trautmann*, released in 2019.

SOPHIE ROBINSON
LAURA



Sophie was born in Belfast and has trained at LAMDA. *All Mod Cons* will be Sophie's first appearance at the new Lyric Theatre.

Other theatre credits include: *The Yalta Game*, *The Father*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Gate Theatre, Dublin); *Twelfth Night* (Abbey Theatre); *Juno and the Paycock* (Abbey Theatre/National Theatre London); *The Seagull*, *The Heretic* (The Lowry, Manchester); *The Lady in the Van* (HullTruck UK Tour); *Electric Dreams* (Battersea Arts Centre). Film, TV and radio credits:*The Good Christian Women's Writing Group*, *Rebellion* (RTE); *Pick Your Own* (SeeHerePictures Ltd); *The Seedlings*; *Fifteen* (th2ing Production Company); *Mayday* (BBC Radio).

MICHAEL SHEA
GARY



Michael is a relatively recent graduate of LAMDA and comes from Northern Ireland.

Theatre credits include: *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Royal & Derngate), *Desire Under the Elms* (Sheffield Crucible), *Half a Glass of Water* (Theatre 503). Film and television credits include: *Derry Girls*, *Doctors*, *Two Angry Men*, *The Last Letter*, *Marcella*. Radio Credits include: *Trials of Saint Patrick*.

CREATIVE TEAM

ERICA MURRAY – WRITER

Erica is originally from County Limerick, Ireland. She holds an MFA in Playwriting from the Lir Academy, Trinity College Dublin. She was a member of the Soho Young Writer's Group and the New Playwrights Programme at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, where she developed *All Mod Cons*. This year she is one of the recipients of the Channel Four Playwrights Scheme bursary award supported by The Peggy Ramsay Foundation. Her first play, *The Cat's Mother*, was long-listed for the Verity Bargate Award, it premiered in 2018 and toured to Underbelly at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Dublin Fringe Festival, where it won the Fishamble Award for Best New Writing.

RONAN PHELAN – DIRECTOR

Ronan Phelan is Associate Director at Rough Magic Theatre Company.

Previous directing credits include: *The Drowned World* (Lir Academy, Dublin); *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Rough Magic/ Dublin Theatre Festival); *Merrily We Roll Along* (Lir Academy, Dublin); *Twelfth Night* (LAMDA); *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play* (Rough Magic SEEDS); *Annie* (Cork Opera House); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Lir Academy, Dublin); *The Effect* (Rough Magic); *Inhabitance* (Glassdoll Productions); *To SPACE* (Niamh Shaw); *Assassins* (Rough Magic SEEDS); *LAMBO and Clear_the_Air* (Underscore_Productions); *BROADENING* (Glassdoll Productions); *Pocket Music* (Dublin Fringe 2011, Winner Little Gem Award) and *Durang Durang* (Brazen Tales Theatre Company). He has also directed a radio production of *LAMBO* (RTE Drama On One) which won the PPI Radio Awards Best Drama 2014.

Ronan is a former participant of the Rough Magic SEEDS programme and is a graduate of the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. He completed a year as Resident Assistant Director at the Abbey Theatre.

DIANA ENNIS – SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

Diana worked for many years as a Costume Designer before going back to gain her masters in Set Design at the Bristol Old Vic in 2010. She has a long-standing relationship with the Lyric, designing her first show *The Hypochondriac* on the Lyric stage back in 2007. She returned to Northern Ireland in 2011 and has worked extensively in the North, returning to the Lyric many times.

Recent theatre credits include: Costume Design for *Lady Magma* (Premiered in Atelier du Paris touring, choreographer/ director Oona Doherty), Set and Costume for *Bouncers* (The MAC, dir. Zoe Seaton), Set and Costume for *The Elves and the Shoemaker* (The MAC, dir. Paul Mc Eneaney).

Her film credits include: Costume Designer on *Shooting for Socrates* (New Black Films, dir. James Erskin), *Stumpy's Brae* (Six Mile Hill, dir. Chris Baugh) and *The Music Room* (Big Fish Productions, dir. Mick Gordon).

Upcoming projects include: Set and Costume for *Miami Show Band* (Grand Opera House touring, dir. Ruth Carney); Set and Costume for *Space* (The MAC/ Birmingham Rep and tour, dir. Paul McEneaney).

KATIE RICHARDSON – COMPSER & SOUND DESIGN

Katie is heavily involved in the arts as a musician, composer, musical director and facilitator currently based in Belfast. She recently starred in the Lyric's production of *Good Vibrations* as well as being the onstage musical director.

Other previous theatre credits include (as Composer/Musical Director): *Beauty and the Beast* (Lyric Theatre); *The Man Who Fell to Pieces*,*Ubu the King*, *Huzzies* (Tinderbox); *Hatch* (The Mac); *Flesh Dense*, *Kissing Marigolds*, *Dinner*, *The Weein* (Red Lemon). (As an actor): *Guidelines for a Long and Happy Life* (Tinderbox); *Jack's Last Puff*, *Dinner*, *Kissing Marigolds*, *Tart* (Red Lemon). Katie makes her own music under the name "Hex Hue" (previously Katie and the Carnival/Goldie Fawn) and

was a member of Choice-nominated 'Pleasure Beach.' She has supported artists such as BellX1, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, Van Morrison, All Saints, Jesca Hoop, Foy Vance, Duke Special and many more. Katie currently directs several choirs and is in development for a number of new theatre and film projects to be produced and performed in 2019 and beyond.

SARAH JANE SHIELS – LIGHTING DESIGN

SJ began designing lighting in Dublin Youth Theatre, completing a BA in Drama and Theatre Studies 2006 (Trinity), and the Rough Magic SEEDS 3 programme 2006–2008. From 2010–2017, she was co-artistic director of WillFredd Theatre.

Lighting designs include: *Sure Look It, Fuck It* (This Is Pop Baby); *Close Quarters* (Out of Joint/Sheffield Crucible); *FRNKNSTN*, *Mr Foley the Radio Operator* (Theatre Lovett); *Dolores*, *Soldier Still*, *Dusk Ahead* (Junk Ensemble); *East Belfast Boy/Everyday I Wake Up Hopeful* (Prime Cut); *Radio Rosario* (Little John Nee); *Jimmy's Hall, The Remains of Maise Duggan, Town Is Dead* (Abbey Theatre); *Dublin Oldschool* (Project Arts Centre), *Woman Undone, This Beach*, *Have I No Mouth*, *The Blue Boy*, *Silver Stars* (Brokentalkers); *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Effect*, *Everything Between Us*, *The Critic*, *The House Keeper*, *Plaza Suite* (Rough Magic); *PALS* (Winner Irish Times Theatre Award Best Lighting 2015); *The Boys of Foley Street*, *Laundry*, *World's End Lane*, *Basin* (ANU Productions). Set and Lighting Designs include: *BEES!*, *Jockey*, *CARE*, *Farm*, *Follow* (WillFredd Theatre); *How to Keep an Alien* (Sonya Kelly/Rough Magic); *It Folds* (Junk Ensemble/Brokentalkers, Winner Irish Times Theatre Award Best Lighting 2015).

We are delighted to work with Erica Murray to bring the world premiere of her play *All Mod Cons* to the stage.

Erica is the Lyric's Artist-in-Residence for 2019 with the support of the Channel 4 Playwrights' Scheme sponsored by Channel 4 Television and by The Peggy Ramsay Foundation. She is also a previous participant of the Lyric's New Playwrights Programme and a recipient of Fishamble's New Writing Award at the Dublin Fringe.

As a theatre committed to new writing, it's our job at the Lyric to seek out the most exciting new voices in contemporary theatre and provide them with a platform to have their work produced on a national stage.

All Mod Cons has been developed with the support of the Lyric's New Writing department, led by our Literary Manager, Rebecca Mairs. Through the New Playwrights Programme, it provides the next generation of writing talent with the opportunity to develop their work professionally; creating an inviting, dynamic, and inspiring space for new artists to thrive and offering them the support they need to create bold and exciting new work.

Over the past sixty-five years, the Lyric has established itself as Northern Ireland's leading producing theatre, honouring the rich theatrical canon and also premiering the works of playwrights such as Stewart Parker, Martin Lynch, Marie Jones and Christina Reid. We have showcased the talents of Northern Ireland's finest actors, including Adrian Dunbar, Conleth Hill, Stella McCusker, Ciarán Hinds, Frances Tomelty and the Theatre's Patron Liam Neeson, and more recently Aaron McCusker, Rachel Tucker, Seamus O'Hara and Niamh Perry.

The Lyric Theatre is a playhouse for all. We are a shared civic space for artists and audiences alike; a creative hub for theatre-making, nurturing talent and promoting the critical role of the arts in society. Our mission is to create, entertain, and inspire, and it is our great honour to work with Erica to bring her fantastic new play to the stage at the Lyric.

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WITH THANKS TO

Des Kennedy, Rebecca Root, Kerr Logan, Adele Gribbon and Seamus O'Hara for producing a brilliant first reading of this play and for scrutinising it and asking questions when I really needed it. Thank you.

Thanks to Barley for being very patient while I was madly redrafting and Bean for always being on the other end of the line. Huge thanks to Anna and Jo for putting me up and being so kind.

Thank you to my agent Jessica Stewart and Independent Talent for always being very supportive and positive.

To all staff at the Lyric for making me feel so welcome from the moment I started the residency and before that too. Thanks to Bronagh, Kerry and Clare for being so lovely and letting me distract you in the office and to everyone on the Marketing team and Creative Learning, thanks for making me feel at home. Jimmy Fay for being a champion of new work and supporting this production.

Thank you to Richard Eyre, all of the Channel 4 Playwright Scheme Panel and The Peggy Ramsay Foundation for believing in my work and allowing me the best year ever.

A huge thank you to Steven, Emma, Felicity and Charlie and all my friends at Samuel French.

To the wonderful cast and designers – cast: Sophie, Mariah, Michael and Chris; designers: Katies, Diana and SJ – it has beenbeen a pleasure to work with each of one of you and I cannot thank you enough for investing in the world of *All Mod Cons* and making it come alive with such talent and skill.

Thank you to Ronan, working with you is a dream come true and this play cut and run in together would be nothing without your talent and encouragement. It has meant the world to me.

And Rebecca Mairs; without you this would not be happening. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for seeing the potential in this play during the New Playwrights' Programme and believing in my work, for being always hugely supportive and interested and for slipping me a Kinder whenever I needed it.

For my family –
Tommy, Anne, Jack and Luke.

CHARACTERS

GARY – mid-20s, male.
JEAN – 30s, Gary's older sister, transgender woman.
IAN – mid-20s, male, their real estate agent and Gary's old friend.
LAURA – late 20s/early 30s, female, one of Ian's other clients.

1.

2C Mount Pleasant Plaza

A very small kitchen-cum-living space in a shoddy two-bedroom flat. Late afternoon.

We open on a long silence as **LAURA** *is surveying the space around her carefully. She's unimpressed.*

IAN *is eagerly watching her, trying not to impose or seem too eager. He briefly tries to glance at his watch.*

Eventually...

LAURA Yeah...

IAN *looks hopeful for a moment. Then the silence returns as* **LAURA** *goes back to examining the room. She is struggling to find the right words.*

It just feels very /cramped?

IAN Cosy?

A beat.

IAN Other people have suggested it's "cosy".

LAURA Have they now?

IAN They have.

She looks around hopelessly again.

Take all the time you need.

After a moment of surveying, her eyes land on him again.

LAURA You really remind me of someone.

IAN Do I?

LAURA Yeah, where would I know you from?

IAN Don't think you would.

LAURA It's annoying me now.

IAN Some people say I'm very like that actor, with the hair, you know /him.

LAURA No, it's not him... It'll come to me.

She looks around again. **IAN** *checks his watch again while she's not looking.* **LAURA** *lets out a tired sigh.*

Do you have anything smaller?

IAN *(hopeful)* Yes! We do, in fact, lots!

LAURA I was being sarcastic, Ian.

IAN Ah...good one.

LAURA Look, I don't want to take my business elsewhere...

IAN What? No! No, me neither.

LAURA But this really isn't what I'm looking for, is it?

IAN It has a certain charm, and you said you wanted somewhere with character—

LAURA I think we both know asbestos isn't what I meant by "character", is it?

IAN It doesn't have...

LAURA *starts shaking her head and* **IAN** *mirrors her.*

No.

LAURA No. And I told you on the phone how I really wanted a bath. Is that fair? Do you think that's fair?

LAURA *starts nodding her head and* **IAN** *mirrors her.*

IAN Yes, of course, I do, but—

LAURA Because none of the flats you've shown me today had one, had they?

IAN No. But—

LAURA And I really don't think that's too much to ask for, is it?

IAN Trust me, Laura, I'm showing you exactly what's on offer in your price range.

LAURA What's the asking on this?

IAN One-sixty. Cash.

LAURA *nearly chokes.*

LAURA Cash? That's insane. I mean that's, that's, that must be a joke?

IAN It's, no, it's not a joke.

LAURA That's literally impossible.

IAN For a location this ideal—

LAURA WE'RE RIGHT ABOVE A FIRE STATION! Sorry. Sorry, for shouting.

IAN That's okay. Safe space.

LAURA But, come on, you can hardly call that "ideal".

IAN It would be if anything were to happen? Like, a hair straightener being left on, or an oven, combusting into flames! You'd be glad of the *ideal* location then.

LAURA I thought there was no oven?

IAN Yes, you'd have to buy one.

LAURA So, it could combust?

IAN Eh—

LAURA Is there an electrical fault, or something?

IAN No, no, no, nothing like that. Not that we know of, anyway!

LAURA Right...

IAN I just meant, you would be very safe if, and that's a big if, *if* anything were to happen.

LAURA I know you're trying to be nice here, but it sounds quite threatening.

IAN I, I don't mean to be, I'm—

LAURA Christ. One-sixty. Cash. How have you sold anything lately?

IAN People always need places to live, I suppose.

LAURA At least I'm not the only fool looking to buy these days.

IAN Not at all, there are lots of you.

LAURA *glares at him.*

Lots of people looking to buy, I mean.

LAURA And you feel comfortable exploiting them?

IAN I wouldn't say I'm *exploiting* anyone.

LAURA Really? One-sixty. Cash.

IAN I just do as I'm told!

LAURA I don't know how you people live with yourselves. I really don't. I'd be long gone from the property game now, if I was you.

IAN Well, it's a family business, so...can't let the side down!

He gives a lack lustre punch into the air.

LAURA Christ. I think I'd murder my father if I worked for him.

IAN It's my mother's business, actually.

LAURA Oh, of course, sorry. Yeah. Don't know why I...

LAURA *is annoyed at herself for assuming that.* **IAN** *checks his watch.*

Do you have somewhere to be?

IAN No! No…em. Maybe have one more look around and we'll call it a day?

She slowly looks around. Her mind wanders elsewhere…

LAURA The flat with the lino in the kitchen…

IAN Yes. The first one this morning?

LAURA Could we have a look at that one again?

A beat.

IAN Now?

LAURA Yeah?

IAN You mean the one on the other side of town?

LAURA Yes… Is that a problem?

IAN *(it clearly is not okay)* No problem at all!

2.

98 Linton Avenue

JEAN *is sitting across from* **GARY** *in the living room of their mother's house.*

JEAN It was really, really beautiful.

GARY Thank you.

JEAN You did an amazing job.

GARY I don't know about that...

JEAN You did, you spoke so eloquently.

GARY That's good.

JEAN Who helped you with the speech?

A beat.

GARY No one?

JEAN Really?

GARY You sound surprised.

JEAN No, no, I'm just... It was brilliant, it just...it didn't sound like you.

GARY What does that mean?

JEAN In a good way, I mean!

GARY How is that good if my mother's eulogy doesn't sound like it was written by me?

JEAN *Our* mother.

GARY Sure...whatever...

JEAN I just didn't realise you had so many...

GARY Feelings?

JEAN I was going to say "words".

Pause.

GARY I might have used the synonym function a few times.

JEAN "Her *dogmatic* views on the world".

GARY There's only so many times you can use the word "stubborn". You try writing a eulogy, fucksake, see how you get on.

JEAN I was just trying to make you laugh. She would have been so proud of you, Gary, okay? For doing that today. I was so proud of you.

GARY I don't need you to be proud of me.

JEAN Okay, sure.

GARY But...yeah, thanks.

JEAN It was a really beautiful speech, honestly.

GARY So, you think people liked it?

JEAN I think people loved it.

GARY I mean, I tried my best... There's only so much you can... Like, words can only get you so far, you know? There's a lot more I...

He covers his face in his hands.

Sorry.

JEAN Oh, Gary...come here.

JEAN *gets up and tries to comfort him.* **GARY** *recoils.*

GARY No, no, please don't...

A moment between them, a hesitation.

I just need some space. I'm, I'm fine.

JEAN Sure.

GARY Thanks though.

A silence.

JEAN It's freezing in here.

GARY I suppose we could turn the heating on? Now that she won't know...

JEAN Would you mind?

GARY No. No, not at all. I've been dying to do it for years!

They sort of smile, shared experiences.

JEAN I guess that's one plus side.

GARY *stops smiling.*

Sorry. That was insensitive. I'll go turn it on.

GARY *is on his own. He looks at the chair his mother used to sit in.* **JEAN** *returns.*

That felt sort of symbolic.

GARY I was going around inside wearing a scarf and gloves last winter.

JEAN I can imagine.

JEAN *casually sits down in their mother's chair. This freaks* **GARY** *out.*

GARY Em. Can you not? Can you not sit there?

JEAN Here?

GARY Yeah, eh, it's just...it's freaking me out a bit.

JEAN Why?

GARY That's her chair!

JEAN Right, of course. Sorry!

GARY No, no, absolutely fine, I'm sorry. Eh, sorry to be weird.

JEAN *has moved seat. A silence again.*

JEAN You know…the priest said "John" after the eulogy. Survived by her two kids; Gary and John. And I was wondering if–

GARY I didn't know he was going to say that. I told him, Jean.

JEAN I just wanted to check.

GARY No, I know, I was going to say that to you…em. Later. But I did think it at the time.

JEAN It's alright. I mean…

GARY I'll have a word with him.

JEAN There's no point, honestly, it was embarrassing, but look. Won't happen again.

GARY I'll call him tomorrow. Make him apologise.

JEAN You don't need to threaten a priest, Gary!

GARY I never said threaten, did I?

JEAN It's fine, honestly. I sort of braced myself for it coming back here.

GARY You know, people are more accepting here than you think.

JEAN Really?

GARY It's a very different country now than it was when you left.

JEAN I hope so.

GARY Honestly, people here are cool with…whatever. Anything!

JEAN Well, I'll be the judge of that.

GARY And if you do get any hassle, like, you let me know. I'll sort them out.

JEAN I'll be fine, Gar. Thank you.

GARY Honestly. I mean that.

JEAN Hopefully that won't be necessary. Although in this area... Christ, who knows.

GARY You should feel safe in your own home.

JEAN Not everyone has that privilege, I guess.

GARY Well, they should.

A pause.

Look, I have to show you something.

GARY *pulls out a tin of biscuits from under their mother's chair.* **JEAN** *looks confused.*

Me and Mam had been saving up some money over the years. Bit by bit, like.

JEAN And you splashed out on a tin of biscuits?

GARY Listen to me, Jean. I'm being serious.

JEAN Sorry.

GARY There's in or around twenty-five grand inside of this tin. In cash.

JEAN What?

GARY Twenty-five grand. In or around...

JEAN Wait, no. You both saved money in a tin of biscuits?

GARY Do you want to judge, or do you want to listen?

JEAN Sorry, sorry. Em...okay, this is a lot of money.

GARY I know.

JEAN How the hell did you manage to save that much? *In cash?*

GARY I might have done a few odd jobs cash in hand, and I used to give her some rent money, but she obviously tucked it away in here. Plus, her not turning on the heating, that kind of thing.

JEAN Can I have a look?

GARY *nods solemnly.* **JEAN** *approaches and* **GARY** *lets her peak inside.*

Wow. That's, that's in or around twenty-five grand alright.

GARY That's what I said.

JEAN So, what are you showing it to me for?

GARY She wanted me to use it to buy a new place. Not...

JEAN For the two of you?

GARY For myself. She always said she wanted me to own my own home, eventually. You know, like she owned this one. It was important to her.

JEAN Okay.

GARY So, I was thinking...now that you're back. We could maybe buy somewhere. Together. If you were up for it? I could pay the deposit and we could use your salary to pay the mortgage.

A pause. **JEAN** *considers.*

JEAN Really?

GARY Only if you wanted to, like.

JEAN I... It's just a big thing to ask.

GARY Yeah, like I said, only if you wanted to, I don't care either way.

JEAN You'd really want to move from here?

GARY That was always the plan and now... Look, I don't think I can keep living here with her gone. The last few days I just... I think I need, you know...

JEAN A fresh start.

GARY Yeah, that. And I know you don't like being back here either—

JEAN It's not that I don't like it, it's more...

GARY Jean.

JEAN Yeah, no, I really don't like it. It's weird.

GARY Well, then.

He waits.

What do you think?

JEAN I think... I think that makes sense.

GARY It does.

JEAN But is it not too soon?

GARY I want to be out of here as soon as I can.

JEAN Are you sure? It seems sudden.

GARY I'm very sure. If you'd be ready, that is?

JEAN I was ready eight years ago.

GARY So...

JEAN So...yes. Yeah. Let's do it!

GARY Great. Great! It's happening.

JEAN It's happening. Exciting!

A pause. Neither of them really knows what to say next...

GARY So, what do you think we should do first?

JEAN Honestly, the first thing would be to put that money in the bank. I feel uncomfortable even being around it in a bloody biscuit tin. By the way, how did you both have the restraint to not eat through the first layer?

GARY Too stale.

JEAN Right.

GARY She bought it second-hand.

JEAN Second-hand biscuits?

GARY Don't ask... Actually, do you want a cup of tea? All this talk of...

JEAN Sure. I can make it.

GARY No, no, I'll do it.

GARY *gets up to go to the kitchen.*

We only have almond milk, is that okay?

JEAN That's perfect.

GARY I can go to the shop and get some normal if you?

JEAN No, no, honestly. Almond is /fine.

GARY Cool.

JEAN I'm just surprised! This is coming from "the chicken nugget monster".

GARY I haven't eaten a nugget in a long time. I'm actually a vegetarian most days. And I'm avoiding lactose.

JEAN Why? Is it awkward between you two?

GARY *rolls his eyes.*

Of course. Sorry, it's just funny, because when I left you were on about two McFlurries a day and now—

GARY That was a long time ago.

JEAN I know it was, I'm not saying that—

GARY People change. Especially when you don't see them for a long time.

JEAN Of course, of course they do, eh, sorry.

GARY *turns to go. Then –.*

GARY Jean?

JEAN Yeah?

GARY Look, thanks. For coming back, like.

JEAN We're going to make this work, Gary, okay?

GARY Yeah, no, I, eh... *(clears throat)* I am glad you're here. After all.

3.

2C Mount Pleasant Plaza

The same kitchen-cum-living area we first met **IAN** *in. Evening time.*

GARY *is shamelessly studying the room in front of* **IAN**.

GARY So this is one of your flats?

IAN I've been showing it all week, it's a fucking nightmare., isn't it?

GARY No, no, it's eh...it's cosy.

IAN Thank you! Yes, that's what I've been telling them. You sure you don't want a beer?

GARY Positive. Trying to stay off alcohol, keep the old head clear.

IAN Good for you.

GARY Thanks for, eh, meeting me here.

IAN Not at all, it's good to see you out and about. How have you been?

GARY Ah, you know...

IAN *thinks he might elaborate but* **GARY** *lets this vague comment hang for a few moments.*

IAN I was so sorry to hear about your poor mam, Gary.

GARY Yeah, yeah... One of those things...

IAN I had no idea she was sick even?

GARY No. No one did.

IAN And are you feeling…?

GARY Keeping the head above water. What more could you ask?

IAN Right, yeah.

GARY I mean, what can you do? Circle of life, and all that…

IAN Yeah, totally. What goes around comes around.

GARY That's a different thing.

IAN Oh, yeah.

GARY You're just naming a song?

IAN Yeah, no, ignore me. Sorry.

GARY S'grand.

IAN *gears himself up to say this –.*

IAN But look, man, if you ever want to talk to someone, I'm always here if you need me.

A silence. **GARY** *ignores him and is intent on staring at something imaginary on the floor.*

GARY Sure look, go on then, I might have one of those beers.

IAN That's the stuff.

IAN *goes to retrieve two beers.* **GARY** *composes himself.* **IAN** *brings them over and hands him one.*

GARY Good to see you, man.

IAN You too, man. Get that into you now.

GARY Men!

IAN Men!

They cheers and drink. This strange exchange is probably something their friends have done since their underage drinking days.

GARY *is about to drink again but stops when* **IAN** *says –.*

I like your man bun.

GARY It's just a "bun", Ian. You don't need to say the "man" part, that's old-fashioned.

IAN Right, gotcha.

GARY Just a hairstyle, like. No big deal.

IAN I was thinking of getting an earring, myself.

GARY What? Ian. Don't do that.

IAN Why not?

GARY You'd look like a fuckin' gangster wearing that suit with an earring. You couldn't pull it off. You'd never sell a house again looking like that.

IAN Ah, you're probably right.

He drinks. Resigned to his life with no piercings.

So, you back working?

GARY Sort of. I'm on a kind of freelance-part-timey-contract-yoke. So, bits of stuff, yeah.

IAN Cool, cool. Well, now that I have a professional around what do you think of the electrics in here?

GARY *half-heartedly looks up and around at the light fixtures, as if he's asked this all the time.*

GARY Look good to me.

IAN Good!

GARY I'll have to charge you for that now.

IAN Ha, yes. Send me the invoice! Ha, good one.

GARY *smiles but doesn't keep the joke alive.*

I'd say you get loads of women calling you up, do you?

GARY What do you mean?

IAN Asking you how to fix their tellies or screw in a lightbulb, that kind of thing.

GARY *does not get what* **IAN** *is trying to imply.*

GARY Not really. I'm contracted by a company, so they just call me into their office when something needs to be sorted.

IAN Right, yeah.

GARY I'd say it's probably sixty-forty, men to women.

IAN Nice.

GARY Who work there, like.

IAN Course.

GARY And I don't fix televisions.

IAN Gotcha.

IAN *has a guzzle of beer to fill another silence.*

I haven't seen the lads in ages.

GARY No? A lot of them were at the funeral.

IAN You got my messages about that, right? I was trying to get there on time, I really was, but I was stuck with this client all day and by the time I got rid of her I knew it would be over.

GARY Honestly, don't worry about it, it was a small thing anyway, intimate.

IAN Beautiful. Did you have to say anything?

GARY I did yeah... Did the whole eulogy, and eh, it sort of brought the house down.

IAN You're great at that stuff. Remember when you did that poem standing up in front of the whole school? The one about the frog?

GARY It was nothing like that, Ian. /This was a serious thing.

IAN Yeah, no, course not.

GARY Even caught Jean wiping away a few tears.

IAN Jean? Jean. Yes. Yes! How is that?

GARY It's fine?

IAN So they're back?

GARY Now you're making it sound like there's two of her.

IAN Sorry! I don't know the correct way to…

GARY Think of it this way: she is a she. No confusion. Easy to remember.

IAN Right, yeah, no, of course. It's cool. I actually have an uncle in San Francisco who has a friend who is…

He thinks the better of going down this road.

I understand, honestly!

GARY Good.

IAN So have the lads met her?

GARY She's the same person, Ian!

IAN Right, sorry, I know.

GARY S'grand.

IAN And had your mam met Jean before she…

GARY Yeah, yeah, Mam went over for a weekend to Berlin sometime last year.

IAN That's nice.

GARY Yeah, I think that gives Jean a lot of comfort.

IAN Course. So, she's back living here? For good, like?

GARY Yeah, well, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. Because we're looking to buy somewhere. A place to live, like.

IAN Right. At the moment?

GARY Yes and we need someone to advise us. We need help. We'd like you to be our...

IAN Real estate agent?

GARY Person. Yeah. If you're too busy or whatever, it's grand.

IAN Not at all! I'd be happy to assist in any way I can. And you know, things are bad out there, but they aren't...bad, bad! People talk it up.

GARY What do you mean?

IAN I mean, you know, people are hesitant, at the moment, to buy.

GARY Why's that?

IAN Have you been keeping up with the news lately?

GARY I've been kind of busy, Ian?

IAN Of course! Never mind all that. We'll find you somewhere. Leave all that to me.

GARY I'm thinking we want to move fairly soon too.

IAN Alright, very cool, what's your timeline?

GARY Say, a month? Two months?

IAN You've never done this before, have you?

GARY Why?

IAN That's basically impossible. Six months would be doing really well.

GARY Six months it is so.

IAN Alright, challenge accepted! To six months!

Cheers.

GARY Men!

IAN Men!

They drink. The beers are dwindling.

So, what's happening to your mother's house?

GARY We're going to keep it until we find somewhere new. Then sell it on.

IAN Well, if you need someone.

IAN *points to himself.*

GARY One thing at a time, I think. Let's take it easy.

IAN So, was this Jean's idea or what?

GARY No. Why?

IAN I just can't imagine you living anywhere but that house.

GARY Well, it was my idea. Moving out.

IAN Good for you!

GARY Yeah, I just don't like being there when Mam's gone.

This is accidentally too deep for the two of them to handle. **IAN** *breaks it.*

IAN What about this place? It's a two-bed?

GARY I thought you just said it was a fucking nightmare?

IAN Did I say that?

GARY I don't want to live over a fire station, Ian. Do you understand me, here?

IAN I do. I'll look after you two, Gary. Trust me. And can I just say: thank you for giving me this opportunity.

GARY Jesus, you're not pissed after one beer, are you?

IAN Sorry, I didn't mean to sound so corny. Ah! Just thanks. Thanks for giving me a shot.

GARY *downs the rest of his beer.*

GARY Ah listen, Iano, it's all good. Right, I'm going to head off but see you...

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