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# One Chance

By Justin Zackham

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY

Where a CHURCH CHOIR comprised of ordinary Welsh faces, begins a medley of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"... The chirpy rendition continues over the following scenes...

INT. PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL, EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

The doors fly open as a team of EMS WORKERS wheels in a YOUNG PAUL POTTS (9) lying on a gurney. His parents ROLAND and YVONNE POTTS follow.

DR. THORPE (29) a new intern meets the team along with a NURSE...

**FEMALE EMS :**

Male, nine years old, possible ruptured eardrum.

**YVONNE :**

His name's Paul.

DR. THORPE

Right. Room three, please.

He follows the gurney into a triage room, while the nurse waylays Roland and Yvonne with her clipboard.

**NURSE :**

You're his parents?

**YVONNE :**

That's right.

**NURSE :**

I'll just need to get some basic information from you.

**ROLAND :**

(to his anxious wife)

He'll be alright.

**NURSE :**

(filling in a form)

Right, so it's Paul...last name please?

**ROLAND :**

Potts. P, O, double-T, S.

2.

**NURSE :**

Paul Potts. Like the Cambodian dictator who massacred all the--?

**YVONNE :**

(for the millionth time...)  
Not at all like the Cambodian dictator.

**NURSE :**

Right.

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Shots of the choir... Four rows deep... First and third rows leading the song; rows two and four following several bars behind... All eyes on the peripatetic CHOIRMASTER... Several rows behind the fourth row, Paul stands alone, singing with gale-force might...

**YOUNG PAUL:**

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy. O tidings of comfort and joy.  
Several members of the fourth row wince at the decibel level as-

INT. TRAIGE ROOM THREE - DAY

The gurney is locked into position as the medical team takes over. Yvonne wrings her hands in the doorway.

DR. THORPE

How long since it occurred?

**YVONNE :**

About an hour. They said he just collapsed after his solo.

**ROLAND :**

Miracle he hasn't ruptured our eardrums from all his hooting and hollering.

**YVONNE :**

(elbowing her husband)  
He's a passionate singer.

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Where Paul sways as he solos with eyes fervently shut, hands clenched, voice like a wind throughout the cathedral...

3.

**YOUNG PAUL:**

Fear not then said the angel, let nothing  
you affright. This day is born a Savoir  
of a pure Virgin bright. To free all  
those who trust in Him-

**CHOIR:**

--from Satan's power and might. O tidings  
of comfort and joy.

A distinct THUMP is heard... The members of the fourth row  
look over their shoulders to find Paul is vanished from  
sight.

CHOIR (CONT'D)

Comfort and joy. O tidings of comfort and  
joy.

INT. EMERGENCY HALLWAY - DAY

As Paul is wheeled into surgery. Young Dr. Thorpe, now in  
gown and gloves, meets his parents at the door...

DR. THORPE

--got some fluid build-up in the middle  
ear. Not to worry, we'll have him right  
as rain in no time.

**YVONNE :**

So you've done this sort of thing before?

DR. THORPE

Of course. Well, not with anyone still  
breathing...

(realizes the faux pas)

I'm still new, but rest assured, live or  
dead, the bits are all the same once you  
start digging around inside.

(now they're freaked)

Cafe's just down the hall.

He heads into surgery... As the doors swing shut-

**ROLAND :**

(arm around his wife)

He'll be just fine.

**MATCH CUT TO:**

EXT. POTTS HOUSE - DAY (SEVERAL DAYS LATER)

A two-story row house adjoined on either side and

identical to the sixty other homes on the block.

4.

The door slams behind Paul, who stands on the landing, carrying his school bag.

He pats the large bandage mummifying his repaired ear, then looks both ways before descending the steps to the sidewalk.

He checks his surroundings again before venturing out the gate and turning down the road.

**MATTHEW :**

There he is! Get 'im!

Paul runs as a flock of screaming YOUNG BOYS crosses the road, hot on his heels... Their screams blend into the continuing choral medley as we return to...

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY

Where the same Welsh choir-faces, several years older now, continue the song with undiminished fervor over-

EXT. PORT TALBOT, WALES - DAY

Establishing shots of this gray, industrial steel-town huddled on the edge of the Celtic Sea.

From above the city, we see Paul, a lone figure running down the center of a road...a moment later the group of boys appears in close pursuit until they catch him and start punching...

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY

Reveal that the rows behind the choir are empty... And yet, Paul's voice rises above the rest, though it sounds impossibly far away...

EXT. PORT TALBOT STREET - DAY

Paul tears around a corner, the lead pursuers close behind him... He's slightly older now, closer to thirteen or fourteen with a few extra pounds...

He cuts across a busy intersection, narrowly avoiding a lorry which momentarily cuts off his pursuers...

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

Paul weaves through pedestrians. He's aged again, nearing eighteen, and puffing even harder with the extra weight. The boys chasing him appear older, larger, and there are more of them than before and they're gaining on him.

5.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Paul turns down the empty alley, losing his schoolbag to the clutching hand of the closest pursuer...

Near the alley's end, Paul veers wide to the left in anticipation, then cuts right, barely fitting his belly through a narrow pedestrian opening...

The lead boys miss the turn, smacking into the alley wall and crumple...

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY

Paul's hidden voice is somewhat louder now as the CAMERA looks down on the choir from above...

EXT. OPEN STREET - DAY

Paul looks back to see his lead has widened. He smiles then turns forward an instant too late to avoid the newly constructed scaffolding on the sidewalk...

He opens his mouth to scream...

**CUT TO:**

EXT. OPEN STREET - DAY

Where Paul lies on the ground, mouth bleeding, bullies standing over him, laughing. MATTHEW, the toughest of the lot, leans forward and allows a stream of spit to dribble onto Paul's cheek where it mixes with the blood from his ruined mouth.

INT. PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL, EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

As Paul is brought in on another gurney where he's met by, a slightly aged Dr. Thorpe.

DR. THORPE

What've we got?

**CHOIR:**

Among your friends and kindred that live  
both far and near.

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY

CAMERA PULLS OUT of the shattered mouth of PAUL, now in his twenties, singing, with reckless fervor through the shards of two badly broken front teeth...

6.

CAMERA CONTINUES pulling back to reveal he is alone, in the upper choir loft, a good twenty feet above the rest of the choir.

CHOIR (V.O.)

That god send you a happy new year, happy  
new year. That god send you a happy new  
year.

INT. ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH - DAY

The Choirmaster's fists clench shut, silencing the choir.

**CHOIRMASTER :**

That's very nice indeed.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Walls lined with various phones and phone accessories.

BRADDON (34), painfully thin with spiky hair, bad skin and elvish ear-extensions, hits on a FEMALE CUSTOMER.

**BRADDON :**

Now this one comes with customizable ringtones and dual vibrating mode, which can come in quite handy in certain situations.

The bell jingles as Paul walks in quietly.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

And what situations would that be?

**BRADDON :**

(leaning closer)

What've you got in mind?

FEMALE CUSTOMER

I'd like a word with your manager.

He shows her his employee badge, that reads "MANAGER" just below his name, "BRADDON MELLINS".

**BRADDON :**

What seems to be the problem, Miss?

FEMALE CUSTOMER

They should lock you up.

**BRADDON :**

Bondage? Naughty, cheeky, but presto, you talked me into it.

7.

She storms out...

BRADDON (CONT'D)

Come see us again soon.

...passing Paul who offers a tentative, closed-mouth smile to Braddon.

**PAUL :**

Better luck next time.

**BRADDON :**

It's quantum algebra, mate; if I offer my personal services to twenty women, one point three of them are certain to shag me blind.

**PAUL :**

How many have said yes so far?

**BRADDON:**

(calculating)

S'about... I'm still tinkering with the approach, but erection is the mother of invention, yes? Right, what can we do ya for? Something compact, 'round five-hundred minutes a month with unlimited text and a free shaving kit?

**PAUL :**

Actually, I was wondering if the position's still open.

**BRADDON :**

The position?

**PAUL :**

The job.

**BRADDON :**

You want to work here, what in god's name for?

**PAUL :**

Because I love mobile phones?

**BRADDON :**

Lying will get you everywhere.  
Hands him an application, then snatches it back...

BRADDON (CONT'D)

Have you got a girlfriend?

8.

**PAUL :**

Yes? Well, sort of-- Not really.



Braddon snatches the application back again...

**BRADDON :**

Boyfriend then?

**PAUL :**

Oh no, she's definitely a girl, I'm sure of it.

**BRADDON :**

Okay, as long as you're sure.

Paul takes the application and gets to work.

EXT. PORT TALBOT STREET - NIGHT

Paul walks home from the interview, passes a pub, The Forge Tavern, from which numerous UNION MEN have spilled out onto the sidewalk.

Paul lowers his head and gives the men a wide berth, until one DRUNK man stumbles into him and "accidentally" drops his beer.

**FIRST DRUNK :**

Watch where you're going, Martha.

**PAUL :**

Sorry.

He tries not to break stride, but the man grabs his arm threateningly...

**FIRST DRUNK :**

Sorry ain't gonna pay for a new pint, is it?

Suddenly, the drunk is jerked backwards and ends up on his ass.

**ROLAND:**

(standing over him)

I'll thank you to leave him alone now, Peter.

**FIRST DRUNK :**

'Not my fault he can't walk straight.

**SECOND DRUNK :**

Probably 'cause his teeth are all

crooked.

9.

**THIRD DRUNK :**

Or it's that enormous ass of his.

**ROLAND :**

One more word.

**SECOND DRUNK :**

And what?

**ROLAND :**

And your next shift will be in the queue  
at the unemployment office.

Finally, they all back down to his seniority. Roland helps  
the First Drunk to his feet-

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Now come on Bill and apologize to-

But Paul is gone.

EXT. QUIET STREET - NIGHT

Paul walks down the center of the road. Roland jogs after  
him.

**ROLAND :**

All right?

**PAUL :**

I'm fine, dad.

**ROLAND :**

Pete's a good lad, he's just in his cups  
is all.

Paul doesn't respond. They walk for a moment.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Maybe if you joined a fitness club.

Lifted some weights.

**PAUL :**

Yeah?

**ROLAND :**

I'm just saying... Maybe losin' a few  
stone you wouldn't provoke them as much.

Paul looks away; not the first time he's heard this brand of logic from his father.

**PAUL :**

I got a job.  
10.

**ROLAND :**

What, that bloody musical down the community centre?

**PAUL :**

Mobile phone shop in Bridgend.

**ROLAND :**

Oh... Well done... So, you'll be getting your own place then?

**PAUL :**

Actually, um, I've been saving up for opera lessons...in Italy.

**ROLAND :**

You're twenty-nine years old, Paul.  
Singing lessons can wait.

They turn up the path to their home. Paul hesitates a moment letting Roland go up the steps ahead of him. Furious, he opens his mouth to speak, but loses his nerve...

Music is heard - Pavarotti singing "Che Gelida Manina" from La Boeme.

**CUT TO:**

AN LP COVER; PAVAROTTI IN FULL CLOWN (CANIO FROM PAGLIACCI)

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

TRACK ACROSS walls plastered with posters and downloaded print-outs of images from the opera world: The Three Tenors; Caruso; a program from La Traviata in Rome; and finally a virtual shrine to Pavarotti, his great hero...

**ENDING ON:**

A PAIR OF KNITTING NEEDLES

Pointed skyward, quivering slightly in anticipation...

Then slicing and waving through the air as Paul angrily "conducts" the music as the refrain kicks in. Gradually, Paul is enveloped and the thrashing needles slow and subside and finally slip to the ground as, panting, he stops the record, revealing a muffled BANGING coming from downstairs.

11.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

As Paul makes his way down the stairs and into the kitchen where Roland is already at the table.

**ROLAND :**

Always with the bloody violins. Won't shed a tear when they've packed and gone.

**YVONNE:**

(serving dinner)

What do you mean gone? Paul, are you going somewhere.

**PAUL :**

Venice.

**ROLAND :**

Oh no, this singing rubbish has gone on long enough. He's got a job, he can get his own flat.

**YVONNE :**

Pish-posh.

(to Paul)

Stay forever darling. Here you are.

As she places an enormous plate in front of Paul.

**ROLAND :**

Christ, Yvonne, He can hardly fit through the door as it is.

**PAUL:**

(to Roland)

Look, I get it. I'm never going to be a professional singer. I just... It's the only thing that makes me-- Let me go to Venice and I'll move out when I get back.

Yvonne looks at Roland, eyes pleading Paul's case.

**CUT TO:**

INT. STIARWELL - DAY

As Paul, gasping and sweating and carrying two moving boxes, climbs several flights up the increasingly narrow staircase until he reaches the top floor and the door to-12.

INT. A TINY STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Where he drops the boxes alongside several others. The room is partially unpacked with his pictures of Pavarotti and Toscanini already hung with prominence, and his computer has been set up atop a "desk" made from several other boxes.

A CHIMING/BOUNCING MESSAGE is seen on the screen... Paul clicks on the message revealing a kitty-kat avatar, which expands into a Chat Invitation from "julzRulz".

**JULZ :**

(typed)

How did it go?

Paul TYPES his response...

**PAUL :**

How did what go?

**JULZ :**

Job? Italy? Job? Italy?

**PAUL :**

Job, yes. Smallest apartment in Britain, yes. Italy, no. How are you?

**JULZ :**

I'm so sorry, Paul. I guess you'll have to settle for visiting me in Bristol.

**Hint. Hint. ;) :**

A beat as Paul flushes... He types...

**PAUL :**

I'd love to, but the job starts tomorrow and until I get the cast off my leg, it's too difficult for me to get around.

Paul grimaces at the lie.

**JULZ :**

(after a beat...)

Right.

**PAUL :**

If I ask you something, promise not to get offended?

**JULZ :**

Anything?

13.

**PAUL :**

You are a girl-(

deletes the word girl,

replaces it with...)

--a woman, right?

He sighs with relief at her response and continues "chatting."

BRADDON (O.S.)

I could feel the firming of her breasts as she pressed them into me.

**CUT TO:**

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Where Braddon is in mid-soliloquy as he and Paul stock shelves with bluetooth ear-pieces...

**BRADDON :**

"Be gentle," said she. "Unicorns are not meant for human love." "But lady," said I, "I am only half human." And I laid her down and took her there, amidst the moss and leaves of the forest floor.

**PAUL :**

And that was your weekend?

**BRADDON :**

In a nutshell. Yours?

**PAUL :**

Sorry, but... Did you say you shagged a horse?

**BRADDON :**

It's a game, role-playing, like Dungeons & Dragons but for real.

**PAUL :**

So she was a girl, pretending to be a horse.

**BRADDON :**

A unicorn!

**PAUL :**

Right... Sorry. And you were--?

**BRADDON :**

A half-elf wizard from the Black Mages Guild of Quilanthum.

14.

**PAUL :**

Right.

**BRADDON :**

When's the last time you had a bit of fluff?

**PAUL :**

Em, well...

**BRADDON :**

Right.

**PAUL :**

She is a girl, by the way. My girlfriend.

**BRADDON :**

When shall we double-date then?

**PAUL :**

Um, she doesn't really live here.

**BRADDON :**

Where's she live, then?

**PAUL :**

Bristol.

**BRADDON :**

Bristol? That's miles from-- You have actually met her, haven't you?

**PAUL :**

Well, we chat all the time...

Shows Braddon his phone-chat which shows a lengthy text-thread between he and julzRulz.

PAUL (CONT'D)

She keeps inviting me up for a visit, but...

**BRADDON :**

But what?

**PAUL :**

Well, she looks like Cameron Diaz and...

**BRADDON :**

And?

Suddenly Paul sees something over Braddon's shoulder and darts through the curtains into the back of the store.

15.

BRADDON (CONT'D)

What's crawled up his-

He turns to the storefront where Matthew enters belligerently, wearing a blue janitor's uniform and carrying a smashed cell phone...

**MATTHEW :**

The service on this phone is total crap!

**BRADDON :**

It can't be bad as all that. I can see quarter crap, or maybe even half-

As Matthew dumps the smashed cell phone on the counter.

BRADDON (CONT'D)

Right, the thing is, in order for the



service to actually work, the phone itself should really be in no more than three or four pieces.

**MATTHEW :**

(threatening)  
It's under warranty.

**BRADDON :**

Of course, but-

**MATTHEW :**

How 'bout you gimme a phone that works properly and I won't cram this one down your throat. Yeh?  
Braddon glances at the cel phone Paul left on the counter, then at the curtains at the back of the store.

**BRADDON :**

Excellent.

**CUT TO:**

EXT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT  
Paul and Braddon lock up for the night.

**BRADDON :**

Oh, nearly forgot.  
Flips Paul his phone.

**PAUL :**

Oh, right. Thanks.  
16.

**BRADDON :**

I took the liberty, while you were cowering in the back...

**PAUL :**

I wasn't cowering, I was-- Took the liberty to do what?

**BRADDON :**

This Saturday, Swansea Railway Station.  
She's on the nine fifteen train.

Walks off leaving Paul dumbfounded...

EXT. SHOPPING ARCADE - NIGHT

As Paul catches up with Braddon.

**PAUL :**

What did you do?

**BRADDON :**

It's a bit difficult losing your  
virginity someone a hundred miles away.

**PAUL :**

You invited her here?

**BRADDON :**

You did. As far as she knows. And what's  
this rubbish about a broken leg?

**PAUL :**

I told her that so-- She said she looks  
like Cameron Diaz!

**BRADDON :**

How awful.

**PAUL :**

It is!

**BRADDON :**

In what universe could that be-  
(realizing...)

You told her you look like someone famous  
as well?

**PAUL :**

A bit, yeah.

**BRADDON :**

Robbie Coltraine? Jack Black? Madonna?

17.

**PAUL :**

Worse.

**BRADDON :**

Worse than Madonna?

**CUT TO:**

A PHOTO OF BRAD PITT - TORN FROM A MAGAZINE

INT. TINY APARTMENT - DAY

Taped to a mirror-frame in which Paul is seen not coming within a million miles of emulating Pitt's hair-style. Finally, he gives up and tears the photo from the mirror.

EXT. SWANSEA RAILWAY STATION - DAY

Where Paul waits nervously as the train arrives. He practices several nonchalant leans against a pole before giving up entirely.

PASSENGERS flood from the train as the doors open. Paul searches through them, looking for a Cameron Diaz clone. The train pulls away and the crowd thins until Paul is alone on the platform. His heart sinks a little - she stood him up.

JULZ (O.S.)

Brad?

He turns around and has to hide his smile...

**PAUL :**

Cameron?

JULIE-ANNE "JULZ" COOPER, cute but short and thoroughly relieved that she's not the only one who exaggerated her appearance, smiles back at him.

They smile at each other for a moment...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Um, welcome to Port Talbot.

**JULZ :**

(laughing at him, but in a good way)

Thank you.

They turn and walk towards the far end of the platform, each taking turns stealing glances at one another.

18.

At one point, their hands touch and Paul's fingers close around hers... The continue walking, neither speaking.

**CUT TO:**

EXT. PORT TALBOT HIGH STREET - DAY

Still holding hands, Paul and Julz walk amidst shoppers.

**JULZ :**

You're leg's much better.

**PAUL :**

(touching his left leg)

Yeah, thanks. Ship-shape.

(off her look)

What?

**JULZ :**

I thought it was your right leg?

**PAUL :**

Oh, right. Um...

YVONNE (O.S.)

Paul, is that you darling?

**PAUL :**

Oh god.

Yvonne appears through the crowd, carrying bags of food from Sainsbury's and an incredulous look on her face.

**YVONNE :**

Well, bless my soul. Hallo, I'm Paul's mum.

Paul dies a little inside as Julz has to wrest her hand from his to shake Yvonne's hand.

**JULZ :**

Lovely to meet you. I'm Julz.

**YVONNE :**

Paul, you didn't tell me you were... Oh you must come for dinner. My husband would love to-

**PAUL :**

Thanks, mum, but Julz has to be back to the station by-  
19.

**JULZ :**

(seeing Yvonne's

disappointment)

It's alright. I'd love to come. Can we help you with these?

She takes several of Yvonne's bags.

**YVONNE :**

Thank you dear. Aren't you lovely?

Julz looks at Paul. Mouths the word, "Okay?" Paul can't help but nod and smile/grimace. Julz sticks her tongue out at him before Yvonne pulls her onwards...

YVONNE (CONT'D)

Now then, tell me everything about yourself.

**CUT TO:**

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Where the four of them are packed around the small table loaded with food.

**JULZ :**

--but then I thought to myself, I haven't got the slightest interest in die-cast aluminum figurines. So I got a job in the pharmacy at Boots.

**ROLAND :**

Good retirement benefits at Boots.

**JULZ :**

Not so good as Car Phone Warehouse.

(to Yvonne)

That's lovely, thanks.

Yvonne has piled a towering stack of green-beans on Julz' plate.

**ROLAND :**

And your parents? What do they do?

**PAUL :**

Dad.

**JULZ :**

It's alright. Mum's a-  
20.

**PAUL :**

Her mum's a seamstress and Dad's on disability from the chemical plant.

**ROLAND :**

Smithsons the one in Bristol?

**JULZ :**

That's right. And I hear you're the foreman down the steel mill? And you, Yvonne, are said to make the best bread pudding in all of Europe.

**YVONNE :**

I am somewhat celebrated for it.

**JULZ :**

(nudging Paul)

Not the only celebrity in the family.

**ROLAND :**

What? Him?

**JULZ :**

He's going to be a wonderful singer.

**ROLAND :**

I thought you two only met this morning?  
Julz takes Paul's hand under the table.

**JULZ :**

Nonsense. How could I be his girlfriend if we'd only just met?  
Paul brightens at this news, as does Yvonne.

**YVONNE :**

They've been chirping on the Internet for quite some time, dear.

**PAUL :**

It's not chirping, mum, it's-

**JULZ :**

We've been chirping for almost a year.

**ROLAND :**

With all the chirping and singing, it's no wonder he's so undeveloped.

Paul's eyes fall to his lap...

21.

**JULZ :**

You think Paul is undeveloped?!

**ROLAND :**

I wish my mum did all my washing when I was twenty-nine.

**PAUL YVONNE :**

I can't stop her. You just try and stop me!

Everyone's taken aback by Yvonne's ferocity...

**YVONNE :**

Now then, who's for a sweet?

EXT. POTTS HOUSE - DAY

Yvonne kisses Julz several times goodbye.

**YVONNE :**

I mean it. Even if Paul's not here, we can go for a ladies lunch or have our hair done.

**JULZ :**

Sounds wonderful.

Roland appears, palms a packet of condoms into Paul's hand.

**ROLAND :**

Can't be too careful.

Paul pockets them quickly.

**PAUL :**

Bye then.

Forces his parents inside and pulls the door closed on them. Yvonne is heard yelling at Roland.

YVONNE (O.S.)

Condoms?! Are you out of your bloody

mind?!

**JULZ :**

(to Paul)

He didn't?

ROLAND (O.S.)

Who knows what her intentions are!

22.

**PAUL :**

(flushed, shows her the  
condoms)

I'm sorry. I-

**JULZ :**

What kind of a tart does he think I am?

YVONNE (O.S.)

(to Roland)

She's a lovely girl.

ROLAND (O.S.)

My point exactly. What's a girl like that  
want with the likes of him, then?

YVONNE (O.S.)

(sarcastic)

She's after his inheritance! All twenty  
pounds of it. Hurry, we must hide the  
Picassos.

Julz watches Paul's face, feeling badly for him.

**PAUL :**

Dad fell on his head when he was a child.

Or last week perhaps.

**JULZ:**

**(re:**

Well, you won't be needing those, just  
so's you don't have any ideas.

**PAUL :**

I don't! I swear. The thought hasn't even  
crossed my-

(he's gone too far)

I mean. It has, but... I mean...



She puts her finger to her lips. Offers her hand. He takes it and they walk off.

EXT. FINNEGAN'S PUB - DAY

Paul and Julz sit outside over pints of cider.

**JULZ :**

He was just mean, really. Shagged my former best friend, then told me it's because I was getting too-

(eyes reddening)

It doesn't matter.

23.

**PAUL :**

(taking her hand)

He was a tosser.

**JULZ :**

An enormous tosser. But I'm well past it... I don't need that much love, I don't expect it anyway, not coming from where I do. But, nothing ventured, nothing gained as they say... You've got to take chances now and again, though it'd be brilliant if it was on something actually worthwhile for change.

Paul smiles... He wants to tell her he's worthwhile, but knows it isn't something you say... Instead, he traces outlines with his thumb across the back of her hand until-

**PAUL :**

If you could be one person, who would you be?

**JULZ :**

Well, seeing as I'm a dead ringer for Cameron Diaz...

(flutters her eyelashes)

Then again, she's got her own career, famous boyfriends, and an ass I'd sell my mum for. What about you?

**PAUL :**

I'd be me.

**JULZ :**

'Can't be yourself. Have to be someone else.

**PAUL :**

I don't want to be someone else.

**JULZ :**

That confident, are we?

**PAUL :**

On the contrary. But, if I were someone else, I wouldn't be here with you.

**JULZ :**

You'll get a kiss later for that one...  
Okay, what if you could meet anyone? Now that I've met Brad Pitt, I'll have to say...Nelson Mandela.  
24.

**PAUL :**

Pavarotti.

**JULZ :**

He's your true role model then?

**PAUL :**

It used to be him and Han Solo, but then I realized Han Solo wasn't actually real.

**JULZ :**

Crushing was it?

**PAUL :**

Horrible scars on my psyche.

**JULZ :**

He's Italian? Pavarotti, I mean.

**PAUL :**

He lives in Monte Carlo now, but he's on the board of an opera school in Venice.

**JULZ :**

That's where you want to go, isn't it?

**PAUL :**

I'm not good enough to sing professionally, I just like singing for people. It'd be nice to learn properly. Maybe someday.

**JULZ :**

Would you sing for me?

Paul flushes red. Smiles shyly but is clearly uncomfortable...

**PAUL :**

It's not that I-

**JULZ :**

Someday, then?

**PAUL :**

Someday.

**JULZ :**

One foot, then the other.

Suddenly, the door bursts open and Braddon emerges along with HYDRANGEA, an ethereal looking girl with blonde hair and a unicorn shirt.

25.

**BRADDON :**

What do you mean platonic? How can you be-

Hallo Paul. What you doing here?

(sees Julz)

Is this-- This is! You are!

**JULZ :**

I am?

**PAUL :**

She is.

(to Hydrangea)

And you must be-

**HYDRANGEA :**

Hydrangea.

**PAUL :**

Right.

**(re:**

Is that a unicorn?

Braddon signals desperately for him to shut up.

**HYDRANGEA :**

Have you signed up for the contest?

**PAUL :**

Just the cider.

**BRADDON :**

Just as well, I've got the blue ribbon in the bag.

**JULZ :**

What bag is that?

**HYDRANGEA :**

Third annual Halloween costume karaoke competition. Three thousand pound to the winner.

Pulls a flyer off the wall, hands it to Paul.

**PAUL :**

(stunned)

Three thousand pound?

**BRADDON :**

Mind you, it's no amateur night. They get some pretty tough customers in here.

(bangs his bird chest)

It's sure be a blood-bath.

26.

**JULZ :**

You're a singer, then are you?

**BRADDON :**

(as if it's obvious...)

I've got a gorgeous singing voice.

(kissing Julz hand)

Lovely to meet you.

(kisses Paul's hand)

And you.

Tries to kiss Hydrangea's hand, but she flicks him in the forehead.

**HYDRANGEA :**

Come on, Sinatra. You can wash my motor-scooter.

**BRADDON :**

It that code?

(off her look)

Oh. Right.

She drags him away, leaving Julz looking at the embarrassed Paul with raised eyebrows...

**PAUL :**

Actually, he's my boss.

**JULZ :**

You're joking?

**PAUL :**

The less you think about him the better.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Only slightly progressed since last time. The boxes are gone and yet it feels even smaller.

Julz marvels at the collection of opera posters and flyers.

**JULZ :**

Wow. I knew you were into opera, but I didn't know you were completely mad for it.

**PAUL :**

I'm not fanatical about it or anything.

(off her look)

Okay, maybe just a little bit.

Julz looks at a yellowed, framed newspaper article...  
27.

**JULZ :**

What language is this?

**PAUL :**

Portuguese. It's the-

**JULZ :**

You speak Portuguese?

**PAUL :**

Not at all. I had it translated though.

It's the story of Toscanini's first  
performance in 1886...

Realizes he's probably boring her.

**JULZ :**

Go on.

She glances at his knitting needles on the bedside  
tables... He's relieved when she doesn't ask...

**PAUL :**

He was a cellist in an Italian opera  
company that was touring South America.  
(points to the date)

One night in 1886, their conductor was  
booed by the audience and literally  
forced to leave the podium. In  
desperation, the singers suggested their  
assistant Chorus Master take over because  
he knew the whole opera by heart.

**JULZ :**

That's a lot to memorize, is it?

**PAUL :**

Um, yes it is. And though he had never  
conducted anything before, Toscanini  
threw aside the score and led a  
sensational, two-and-a-half hour  
performance completely from memory. He  
was nineteen.

**JULZ :**

And then he became quite famous, didn't he?

She's seeing his deepest desires on his sleeve. He realizes he's gotten carried away.

**PAUL :**

Sorry.

28.

**JULZ :**

For what? I wish I loved something that much.

**PAUL :**

There must be something?

**JULZ :**

Not yet, anyway.

He smiles as he realizes she means him.

JULZ (CONT'D)

Best get to my train.

EXT. SWANSEA RAILWAY STATION - DAY

Paul and Julz stand side-by-side, still holding hands as her train pulls in, neither wanting the day to end.

**JULZ :**

I had a lovely day.

**PAUL :**

I had a lovely day.

An awkward beat. Paul has no idea what to do as the train stops.

**JULZ :**

Sooo, I'll see you when you get back then.

**PAUL :**

From where?

**JULZ :**

Venice, of course.

**PAUL :**

I told you, I'm not going to Italy.

**JULZ :**

You are. You're going to win that karaoke competition and if the next time we speak you're not ringing me from a Venetian gondola, I mightn't think you can sing at all.

Then she kisses him, deeply, soundly, with just a bit of tongue.

29.

**PAUL :**

(gobsmacked)

Right.

**JULZ :**

See ya Brad.

**PAUL :**

Bye Cameron.

Almost without thought, he pulls her to him and kisses her again. Gradually realizing he might have been too forward, as evidenced by the shy look on his face as their lips part...

The smile that blooms in her mouth and eyes says otherwise as she opens one of the train doors and climbs aboard.

He follows her down the train until she finds a seat. He waves and smiles and she closes her eyes and kisses the window between them. The glass steams from her breath and she draws a heart around the imprint of her lipstick.

The train pulls away leaving Paul alone but brimming on the platform.

**CUT TO:**

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Shots of BUS PASSENGERS staring at something in the back of the bus...

Reveal Paul, dressed in a puffy, white clown costume with large neck ruffles, grapefruit-sized pom-poms, a fake beard and white face paint with black, vertical lines bisecting his eyes.



He feels the stares and tries to look as if he doesn't notice them.

BRADDON (O.S.)

Have you gone completely up the pole?

EXT. FINNEGAN'S PUB - NIGHT

Paul looks down at himself, embarrassed.

**PAUL :**

It's Pavarotti... As Canio... It's really that bad?

**BRADDON :**

You look like a dead marshmallow.

30.

**PAUL :**

Oh. So that's-- What's your costume, then?

**CUT TO:**

A STACK OF RENTED PA SPEAKERS

INT. FINNEGAN'S PUB - NIGHT

The opening beats and squeaks of George Michael's "I Want Your Sex" blare...

Braddon jumps into frame, wearing nothing but a thin pizza box around his waist...

**BRADDON:**

There's things that you guess. And things that you know. There's boys you can trust. And girls that you don't. There's little things you hide.

(indicates his groin)

And things that you show.

(turns, showing everyone his butt)

Sometimes you think you're gonna get it.

But you don't and that's just the way it goes.

The audience is stunned, but some are laughing, and Hydrangea, dressed in shimmering white robes with a tiny nub of horn atop her forehead, sings along to the chorus as Braddon thrusts his pizza box at her.

**UNICORN GIRL:**

I swear I won't tease you. Won't tell you no lies. I don't need no bible. Just look in my eyes.

**CUT TO:**

INT. FINNEGAN'S PUB - NIGHT

Braddon does an awkward split as the song ends.

**BRADDON:**

C-c-c-c-c-c-come on!

The audience cheers and laughs as he climbs to his feet, trying to hold the pizza box together. Hydrangea hugs him and pulls him into the crowd next to Paul who's still in shock.

31.

**PAUL :**

Well done.

**BRADDON :**

Yeah thanks, mate. It's a gift from-  
Kisses his finger then points to heaven... Over by the karaoke equipment, the EMCEE reads from his list.

**EMCEE :**

And now, singing... Blimey...

(squints)

Vesti la goober. The vocal stylings of Paul Poots.

Braddon and Hydrangea clap wildly, shoving Paul onto the stage. The audience quiets for a moment, taking in his costume, until the music starts, violins and cellos... Paul opens his mouth to sing, but the crowd immediately ignores him, beginning to chatter amongst themselves. Paul begins to sweat as the music continues to play. Braddon and Hydrangea spur him on...

**BRADDON :**

Go on!

But the crowd are getting rowdy with themselves. Paul's nerves are getting the better of him. The emcee stops the music. Starts it again.

Braddon chews his thumbnail nervously as Paul begins to

sing...

**PAUL:**

Vesti la giubba, e la faccia infarina. La  
gente page, e rider vuole qua. E se  
Arlecchin ti'invola Colombina, ridi,  
Pagliaccio, e ognun applaudira.

No one's listening. The the music swells and his voice  
rises above the crowd, not necessarily great, but far  
above average and very loud...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Tramuta in lazzi los spasmo ed il pianto  
in una smorfia il singhiozzo e 'l dolor,  
Ah!

Conversations begin to tail off and people have no choice  
but to watch and listen to Paul. Braddon can't believe his  
ears...

32.

**BRADDON :**

Bloody hell.

...as Paul launches into the aria.

**PAUL:**

Ridi, Pagliaccio, sul tuo amore infranto!  
Ridi del duol, che t'avvelena il cor!

The song ends and the pub is deathly quiet... Paul  
realizes he's made a complete fool of himself...

UNTIL THE CROWS ERUPTS

**CUT TO:**

**CHEERING VOICES:**

EXT. FINNEGAN'S PUB - NIGHT

As Paul exits the pub with a sulking Braddon and Hydrangea  
and dozens of well-wishers who continue to congratulate  
Paul and clap him on the back.

With a nudge from Hydrangea, Braddon half-heartedly  
congratulates Paul.

**BRADDON :**

Well done, I suppose. I still reckon the  
fix was in.

**PAUL :**

There's always Christmas.

**BRADDON :**

(brightening)

Bloody well right.

**HYDRANGEA :**

Congratulations.

**PAUL :**

Good night.

They walk off with Braddon singing a scratchy "operatic" Good King Wenceslas. He puts his arm around Hydrangea, but she shrugs it off.

Paul smiles then pulls out an envelope revealing...

A CHECK FOR THREE THOUSAND POUNDS

He allows himself a two-step jig before tucking the check back inside the envelope when suddenly...

33.

He's jerked roughly backwards by his collar and slammed down onto the pavement.

**MATTHEW :**

Well, if it isn't everyone's favorite circus freak. Hallo Potsy.

He and another HOOLIGAN stand over Paul.

**PAUL :**

Get off me.

He tries to stand, but Matthew kicks his ribs. Paul buckles.

**MATTHEW :**

What've we got here then?

He snatches the envelope from Paul's hand. Paul lunges for it, but Matthew sidesteps and Paul's face hits the curb.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Bloody hell, have a look at this.

**HOOLIGAN:**

(eying the check)

What's an obese clown doin' with this kind of dosh?

**PAUL :**

Give it back.

With surprising speed he finds his feet and SMASHES Matthew in the face with all his might...

Matthew blinks, but appears otherwise unfazed. He holds up the check...

**MATTHEW :**

You're gonna pay for that.

He puts the check in his pocket and is about to lay into Paul when suddenly Braddon leaps onto his back, letting out a war cry-

**BRADDON :**

May the Flame of Arveron sustain me!

Matthew recovers his balance and struggles to free himself from the clinging, scratching, screaming Braddon, finally dumping him on the pavement next to Paul, who has been held down by the Hooligan.

34.

**HOOLIGAN :**

Here.

He tosses Matthew a brick. Matthew raises it over his head, about to smash Braddon, when it suddenly falls out of his hand as his face goes limp and he falls to the pavement revealing-

**HYDRANGEA:**

Standing behind him, wielding a cricket bat.

HOOLIGAN (CONT'D)

Where the hell'd you get that?

**PARTYGOER :**

From me.

The Hooligan turns to see a group of PARTYGOERS dressed in various sports costumes: football (aka soccer), rugby, cricket, etc.

PARTYGOER (CONT'D)

She's welcome to it as long as she likes.

**RUGBY PLAYER :**

Or we can use it for her.

The Hooligan runs. Braddon and Paul help each other up.

**BRADDON :**

All right?

**PAUL :**

Yeh. You?

**BRADDON :**

(to Hydrangea)

You saved us.

**HYDRANGEA :**

You'd have done the same for me.

(handing the bat back)

Thank you.

**BRADDON :**

(on one knee)

I am your servant.

**HYDRANGEA :**

You already were my servant.

35.

**BRADDON :**

I was? I was! Yes mistress. Command me, mistress. I'm not worthy. May I lick your ankles please?

Hydrangea rolls her eyes as Paul reaches into Matthew's pocket and removes his check. Matthew's eyes open.

**PAUL :**

(offers his hand)

Truce?

**MATTHEW :**

(whispered)

I'm gonna get you for this.

**PAUL :**

Why?

Matthew doesn't answer just stares balefully...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

JULZ SMILING FACE

INT. JULZ' PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

As she watches a video on YouTube -- the infamous monkey who scratches his butt then smells his hand and falls out of his tree.

She laughs to herself, then answers her RINGING mobile phone.

**JULZ :**

Hallo?

PAUL (O.S.)

What's so funny?

**JULZ :**

(her expression darkens)

Who is this?

PAUL (O.S.)

It's Paul.

**JULZ :**

I knew a Paul once.

PAUL (O.S.)

You're cross with me.

36.

**JULZ :**

Three weeks goes well past playing hard to get.

EXT. FERRY - DAY (INTERCUT)

Paul stands on the sunny prow of a vaporetto (water taxi), talking on his mobile.

**PAUL:**

(actually worried)

It's been nineteen days. And I was just following your instructions.

**JULZ :**

Instructions to what?

**PAUL :**

You said not to call you until I was settled in Venice.

A white, basilica appears behind Paul as the vaporetto merges into the Grand Canal, revealing the splendor of Venice.

**JULZ :**

You're joking?

**PAUL :**

Check your e-mail.

**JULZ :**

Hang on.

She turns to her computer and opens an e-mail from Paul then scrolls through a series of PHOTOS detailing Paul's last few weeks...

Still in his clown-costume, face scraped but smiling with his check.

Buying his first suitcase.

Boarding an Al Italia plane.

Arriving at the Opera School.

In his room, smiling beside the window and the view of the city.

And finally one taken moments ago aboard the vaporetto.

JULZ (CONT'D)

I don't believe it.

37.

**PAUL :**

Can hardly believe it myself.

**JULZ :**

Tell me everything.

A BARITONE SINGS A SUSTAINED NOTE...

**CUT TO:**

INT. BASEMENT CONSERVATORY - DAY

A tall, GANGLY STUDENT pumps the sound from his lungs, eyes widening as he runs out of steam, but fighting to keep the note alive at the behest of SIGNORA FIORENTINO, their fierce istrutrice.

PAUL (V.O.)

The school is brilliant. It's in an old sixteenth century palazzo, which floods twice a day with the tide.



Paul and the others stand in "Wellies" (galoshes) in a foot of water, singing their hearts out. Even the legs of the piano wear rubber boots.

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

Every morning starts off with four hours of intensive Italian.

INT. PALAZZO STAIRCASE - DAY

As Paul, running late, runs up the first floor stairs... He slows a bit at the second floor... Walks the third... And limps up the fourth, stopping to gasp for air...

INT. LANGUAGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Affords a beautiful view of the city. Paul sits in the back row, drenched in sweat but conjugating verbs out loud with the rest of the class as the LINGUISTIC TEACHER points them out on the board...

**CLASS :**

Vado, vai, va, andiamo, andate, vanno.

PAUL (V.O.)

Which I find comes quite easily.

Paul reaches into his bag for a handkerchief, still speaking the verbs without looking at the board.

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

In the afternoons...

38.

EXT. PALAZZO COURTYARD - DAY

Where Paul stands at a music stand before an ASST. CONDUCTOR who uses his violin to take Paul up and down the scales...

PAUL (V.O.)

We learn to read music.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(singing)

Do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-la-la...

The Asst. Conductor repeats "la" bowing back and forth on the violin until Paul gets it right.

PAUL (CONT'D)

La-la-si-si-siiiiii.

The Asst. Conductor winces at the last note.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Where Paul stands on stage wielding a long baton with padding on the end. GERHARDT, a blonde German student, faces him with a similar baton as a FIT PROFESSOR watches with the rest of the class...

PAUL (V.O.)

Or practice stage combat.

**FIT PROFESSOR:**

E ora, con molta attenzione.

("And now, very carefully.")

Paul swings and knocks Gerhardt into the orchestra pit.

**PAUL :**

(moving to help him)

I'm so sorry.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Where Paul's back is to us as he does something to his face. The MAKEUP TEACHER enters, clapping her hands.

**MAKEUP TEACHER:**

Ok, mi permetta di vedere voi.

("Okay, let me see you.")

PAUL (V.O.)

Or basic hair and makeup.

39.

The students turn, revealing their faces, made-up for a scene from Madame Butterfly.

Paul turns mournfully; he looks more like Clarabell the Clown than a Japanese warlord.

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

Which isn't my strongest subject.

Julz laughs as she scrolls down to a self-portrait photo of Paul, smiling through his disastrous makeup.

**JULZ :**

Is the food gorgeous?

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Where Paul loads his tray up at the sumptuous buffet table...

PAUL (V.O.)

Heavenly. Home made pastas. Soups. And the bread...

Then turns to face the room, tables filled with chattering students and teachers...

JULZ (V.O.)

What about the people? Have you made loads of friends?

He walks amongst them, spotting an empty chair next to

ALESSANDRA, a pretty young Italian woman who smiles briefly at Paul before Gerhardt slips into the chair ahead of him.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Where Paul sits at the end of a table, eating alone.

PAUL (V.O.)

Oh yes, loads. Everybody's quite friendly.

He hears laughter, but refuses to look up at a group of students, including Gerhardt, laughing at the amount of food on his plate before Alessandra scolds them..

INT. ECHOING CHAMBER - DAY (INTERCUT)

Where Paul whispers into his cell phone.

40.

EXT. WELSH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY (INTERCUT)

Julz walks her Cairn Terrier "Candy Floss" through the hills above the city.

**JULZ :**

Have you had a gondola ride yet?

EXT. VENICE CANAL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

As Paul steps onto a narrow gondola, loses his balance and pitches over the other side, headfirst into the canal.

INT. ECHOING CHAMBER - DAY (INTERCUT)

**PAUL :**

Uh, no. Haven't tried that yet.

**JULZ :**

And what about the city? Is it breathtaking?

Paul comes to a stop and grows silent as he looks up, slightly awestruck, at Titian's towering masterpiece, "The Assumption of the Virgin".

**PAUL :**

It is.

Reveal him standing before the apse of the Basilica Santa Maria Gloriosa Dei Frari, the famous Gothic choir stalls and rood screen behind him.

**JULZ :**

Do you miss me?

INT. PAUL'S SLEEPING CHAMBER - NIGHT

Paul lies in bed, talking with the phone plugged into its charger.

**PAUL :**  
Terribly.

**JULZ :**  
Good.

**PAUL :**  
Good night.

**JULZ :**  
Good night.  
41.

He hangs up. Taking a moment to stare at Julz picture which he's made the splash-screen on his phone.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

ALESSANDRA; BEAUTIFUL AND FROWNING...

INT. THEATRE - DAY

As she and Paul are handed the libretto for La Boheme as Signora Fiorentino explains that they will be...

SIGNORA FIORENTINO

...effettuare insieme l'apertura duetto di Mimi e Rodolfo.

("...perform together the opening duet between Rodolfo and Mimi.")

Alessandra smiles at him kindly, though clearly not thrilled. Paul only meets her eyes for a moment, then looks down, flushed and nervous. Gerhardt glowers in the background...

**CUT TO:**

INT. BASEMENT CONSERVATORY - DAY

**PAUL :**

(singing as he reads)

O soave fanciulla, o dolce visio di mite  
circonfusa alba lunar. In te vivo ravviso  
il sogno. Ch'io vorrei sempre sognar!

Signora Fiorentino cuts him off-

SIGNORA FIORENTINO

Non, non, non... Okay, this is um, 'ow  
you say, the spark... The moment of love  
creation.

(speaks the words from  
memory)

O soave fanciulla, o dolce visio, Oh!  
Lovely girl, oh sweet face. In te vivo  
ravviso il sogno. Ch'io vorrei sempre  
sognar! I see you in a dream I will dream  
forever... Look at her, she is beautiful,  
non?

**PAUL :**

(without looking)

Yes.

42.

SIGNORA FIORENTINO

Look. With your eyes.

Paul looks at Allesandra, flushing again.

**PAUL :**

She's very pretty.

SIGNORA FIORENTINO

(to Allesandra)

E voi, guarda su di lui.

("And you, look at him.")

Paul offers a hopeful, broken-tooth smile. Her eyes widen  
at the sight of his teeth. She tries to cover, but he  
knows what he isn't...

SIGNORA FIORENTINO

(CONT'D)

Egli . molto...eh... Ha un cuore puro,  
no?

("He is very...um... He has  
a pure heart, no?")

He looks down again...

**ALESSANDRA :**

(Italian accent...)

Is okay.

**PAUL :**

Sorry, I...

She takes his face in her hand and turns it so she can

really see him. Finally, she smiles...

SIGNORA FIORENTINO

Buono. Dream only of each other... Allow  
all other thoughts to slip away.

She begins to play again on the piano as we...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

EXT. OPERA SCHOOL - MORNING

Paul emerges with his suitcase, reading from a guidebook  
to Lake Como when-

ALESSANDRA (O.S.)

Paolo?

She follows him out of the doorway.

43.

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)

You are travel for the...fine settimana?

**PAUL :**

Oh, the weekend. Yes, I'm on my way to  
Lake Como.

**ALESSANDRA:**

Da soli?

("By yourself?")

**PAUL:**

Si.

**ALESSANDRA :**

You want see Italia while you here?

**PAUL :**

As much as I can.

**CUT TO:**

FLORENCE; SEEN FROM SEVERAL THOUSAND FEET

INT. SMALL AIRPLANE - DAY

Where Paul stares out the window, watching the DUOMO slide  
past before they cross the Arno River towards the vineyard  
encrusted hills of Tuscany.

Alessandra sits in the co-pilot seat, talking animatedly  
above the engine noise with her brother MANU. Paul snaps  
some pictures. Click. Click.... And on the final  
picture...

BOOM!

**CUT TO:**

EXT. PIAZZA DEL CAMPO, SIENA - EVENING

CANON FIRE, as TEN HORSES AND RIDERS, resplendent in a dazzling array of silks and colors, launch over a starting rope and begin racing around the square, which is filled with THOUSANDS OF SCREAMING SPECTATORS.

Paul and Alessandra stand on a balcony overlooking the square, along with the rest of her obviously well-off FAMILY.

The horses round a very sharp turn and thunder almost beneath the balcony.

44.

**ALESSANDRA :**

They have race this race since sixteen hundred fifty-six. Two every year. One horse represent one, eh, neighborhood of Siena. My family live Chiocciola, the Snail. We have second most win, but Oca, the Goose have win the most times.

The horses circle the square and head for them again. One of the jockeys shoves a competitor off his horse.

**PAUL :**

What do you get if you win? Di cosa hai vinto?

She thinks a moment, then touches a fist to her chest.

**ALESSANDRA:**

Orgoglio.

**PAUL :**

Orgoglio?

(shakes his head)

Non capisco.

Alessandra leans to her FATHER who turns and smiles at Paul...

**FATHER :**

Orgoglio means pride.

His eyes linger on his daughter, who raises her chin in mock defiance before he kisses her.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Is your father not proud of you?

Paul struggles to respond, then mercifully-

**ALESSANDRA :**

Qui vengono!.

("Here they come!")

As the horses appear once more and churn towards the finish line. Taking the sharp turn, one of the horses stumbles, tossing the jockey into the crowd which ROARS... The rest of the horses cross the finish line and the family erupts into CHEERS!

**DISSOLVE TO:**

45.

INT. BASEMENT CONSERVATORY - DAY

Weeks of practice later, Paul and Alessandra sing the duet together...

**PAUL ALESSANDRA:**

A! To sol commandi, amor! A! To sol commandi, amor!

("Ah! Love, you rule ("Ah! Love, you rule alone!") alone!")

Fremon nell'anima, Oh! Come dolci scendono,  
("Already I state in ("How sweet his spirit,") praises,")

Le dolcezze estreme, Le sue lusinghe al core...

("the heights of ("enter my heart")  
tenderness!") Tu sol comandi amore!

Nel bacio fremere amor! ("Love, you alone  
("Love trembles at our rule!)  
kiss!")

An orchestra joins the soundtrack, supplanting the piano as the duet continues over the following MONTAGE:

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Where Paul and Alessandra are on-stage with a director, who has Paul put his arm around Alessandra. Both are uncomfortable until Paul makes a face and she laughs.

**DIRECTOR :**

Attenzione!

EXT. PALAZZO COURTYARD - DAY

Where Paul and Alessandra sing in each others arms. The Asst. Conductor stops them, pushes them apart and has them



hold hands.

ASST. CONDUCTOR

Prova di nuovo.

("Try it again.")

INT. LANGUAGE CLASSROOM - DAY

More verbs on the board. Paul sits in the back, eyes closed, right hand gently waving/conducting the music from the scene which we hear on the soundtrack and he hears in his head.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Where Paul and Alessandra sit together, surrounded by other students but oblivious to all others as they discuss a part of the libretto.

46.

Unconsciously, she leans an arm on his shoulder as they argue over the same passage. The gesture is lost on Paul, but Gerhardt notices.

INT. BASEMENT CONSERVATORY - DAY

As Paul and Alessandra sing while holding hands, Signore Fiorentino places her hands on the small of their backs and pushes them together.

SIGNORA FIORENTINO

Molto meglio.

("Much better.")

INT. PALAZZO - DAY

Alessandra is venting her frustration with all of the backand-forth...

**ALESSANDRA :**

Apart. Together. Hold hand. No hold hands. What it matters so much?

**PAUL :**

Well sod them.

**ALESSANDRA :**

"Sod them?"

**PAUL :**

It means... Fino loro asini.

("Up their asses.";

Alessandra nods in agreement)

Che cosa volete fare?

("What do you want to do?")

**ALESSANDRA :**

I don' know.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

The final performance... On stage, Paul and Alessandra perform the duet in costume with props and light makeup.

**PAUL:**

Dammi il braccio, mia piccina.

("Give me your arm, my  
dear.")

**ALESSANDRA:**

Obbedisco, signore!

("Your servant, sir.")

47.

The fatal moment comes and Paul takes charge, grabbing her roughly around the waist and pulling her to him.

**PAUL:**

Che m'ami di'

("Tell me you love me.")

His hand gently holds her face, turning it to him just as she had done with him... She almost laughs with joy.

**ALESSANDRA:**

Io t'amo!

("I love you.")

**PAUL ALESSANDRA:**

Amore! Amor! Amor! Amore! Amor! Amor!

(Behold! My love! My love!)

**CUT TO:**

EXT. PIAZZA SAN MARCO - NIGHT

Where Paul and Allessandra run into the square, hopping and yelling and bouncing for joy.

**ALESSANDRA:**

Questo . stato incredibile!

("That was incredible!")

**PAUL:**

Siamo i campioni di Venezia!

("We are the champions of  
Venice!")

**ALESSANDRA :**

Di tutto il mondo!

("Of the whole world!")

Alessandra leans in and kisses him. He's stunned as she pulls away, a new expression on her face before she kisses him again, deeply. His eyes close for a brief moment, before he pulls away.

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)

You are okay?

**PAUL :**

Yes, sorry I...

**ALESSANDRA :**

What is wrong?

**PAUL :**

Nothing, I just...

48.

**ALESSANDRA:**

Li ha fatto l'amore, prima, si?

("You have made love before,  
yes?")

**PAUL:**

(beet red at the suggestion)

Of course I have, but... Actually I haven't, but that's not-

**ALESSANDRA :**

You have a friend-girl at home?

**PAUL :**

Um, well, yes. A girlfriend.

**ALESSANDRA:**

. lei il tuo primo?

("Is she your first one?")

**PAUL :**

Lei . l'unico.  
("She is my only one.")

**ALESSANDRA :**

There is a difference.

**PAUL :**

There is.

**ALESSANDRA :**

Signore Fiorentino was right. You have a  
very pure heart.  
She kisses him firmly on the mouth then smiles at him. She  
turns quickly away and speed dials her cell phone as she  
walks down the square towards the Basilica.

ALESSANDRA (CONT'D)

Ciao, Papa.

He watches for a moment, then walks the other way. Dials  
his own phone.

INT. POTTS HOUSE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

Where Roland watches "The Bill" while Yvonne snores softly  
on the couch beside him.

**ROLAND :**

Yeah, hello?

**PAUL :**

Oh, um hi, Dad.  
49.

**ROLAND :**

(to Yvonne)  
Oy, it's the eye-talian.  
(to Paul)  
What's good, son?

**PAUL :**

Oh you know, lots of studying and  
singing.

**ROLAND :**

(sarcastic)  
Sounds grand.

**PAUL :**

Actually we, my scene partner and I, we just won a scene competition and-

**ROLAND :**

Hang on, yer mum's on the snore again.

(adjusts Yvonne's head)

Tucked into the sherry again this evening. So did you win anymore pocket money?

**PAUL :**

No, but even better, they told us we get to sing for-

**ROLAND:**

(listens)

Well that's not bad. He's no Willie Nelson, mind you.

**PAUL :**

Right.

**CUT TO:**

INT. JULZ' PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

Jaw dropping as she hears the news...

**JULZ :**

Sod off!

EXT. GRAND CANAL - NIGHT

Paul sits on a stone wall, feet dangling over the edge as he watches the lights of the city shimmer over the waters.

**PAUL :**

It's true.

50.

**JULZ :**

You're not takin' the piss?

**PAUL :**

I swear I'm not.

**JULZ :**

I don't believe it. Paul! What're you going to sing?

**PAUL :**

The duet, I suppose.

**JULZ :**

Oh. Right. 'Course you are.

**PAUL :**

And thinking of you the entire time.

**JULZ :**

There's a good boy... Nervous?

**PAUL :**

Off the charts.

**JULZ :**

Maybe open with a joke or something, let the air out a bit.

**PAUL :**

A joke? In front of-- Have you gone mad?

**CUT TO:**

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Arguably the 20th century's greatest tenor sitting in the first row, dabbing his upper lip with a scented handkerchief while listening to Alessandra sing an aria. Paul watches from the wings as her final note diminishes, applauding along with the audience. Pavarotti is on his feet, eyes devouring Alessandra as he claps. She feels his ardor and smiles shyly.

He beckons her to sit beside him as the Asst. Conductor brings him a teacup of hot water.

ASST. CONDUCTOR

Maestro.

51.

**PAVAROTTI:**

Grazie.

He follows Alessandra until she's next to him, and begins whispering/congratulating her.

In the wings, a pair of students stare at Paul.

STUDENT #1

I wouldn't want to follow that.

STUDENT #2

Me neither.

**PAUL :**

Thanks.

He sets his jaw and heads for the center-stage microphone.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Good evening.

(paralytic fear)

It uh, must be bargain night, it only costs one tenner to get in, instead of the usual three...tenors.

A smattering of laughter from the crowd. Pavarotti notices him for the first time, but seems less than amused.

Paul begins to sing; Rodolfo's, "Che Gelida Manina", the same aria Paul "conducted" in his room at his parents' house.

He's singing well, better than we've ever heard, eyes tightly closed as he focuses on his breathing and pitch. Finally his eyes open...and what he sees seems to deflate his entire being, even as he continues to sing...

HIS POV; where Pavarotti's full gaze is on Alessandra, who although flattered, tries to turn his attention to Paul, but to no avail.

Finally, the aria ends to polite applause. Ignoring Paul completely, Pavarotti rises to leave until the Asst.

Conductor whispers in his ear.

**PAVAROTTI:**

Ah, si.

(turns to Paul; obviously hasn't heard a word)

You inhaled after in te, vivo ravviso il sogno. Rodolfo would not have run out of breath there.

52.

Paul is about to speak, but Pavarotti's back is to him and he's heading for the door, arm in arm with Alessandra leaving Paul alone on stage, destroyed...

Paul stands for a moment, then slowly turns and walks off  
as we...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

EXT. PORT TALBOT - DAY

Gray as ever. A bleak contrast from the vibrancy of Italy.

ROLAND (V.O.)

I hates to say it, but I did warn you.

INT. POTTS FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Where Paul and his parents are just finishing Sunday  
dinner. Paul stares at his plate.

**YVONNE :**

Put a sock in it, Roland. At least he had  
the nerve to have a go.

**ROLAND :**

Which has left him where?

**PAUL :**

Thanks, mum. That was lovely.  
He takes his plate to the sink.

**YVONNE :**

There's treacle tart and strawberries.

**PAUL :**

I've got work in an hour.  
Kisses her goodbye.

**YVONNE :**

When's that lovely girl coming to visit  
again?

**PAUL :**

See you guys.

**ROLAND :**

Oy. Hang on a second.  
He follows Paul out the front door.  
53.

EXT. POTTS HOUSE - DAY

Paul works the combination lock to his bicycle which is  
chained to the iron railing at the base of the steps.



**ROLAND :**

There's an opening down the mill. The wait list's a kilometer long, but, how'd you like to come work with me?

**PAUL :**

No thanks, dad.

**ROLAND :**

It's time to grow up now, son. You've had your great adventure, which is more'n I ever had, but singing didn't work out so-

**PAUL :**

I know, dad.

**ROLAND:**

(grabs his arm)

No you bloody well don't! You think you're too good to work the mill. Well I've got news for you, boy, you're the one's not good enough.

**PAUL :**

(after a beat...)

I'll be late.

Roland lets him go. Paul pedals out onto the road.

**ROLAND :**

Just what the world needs, more bloody mobile phones!

EXT. PORT TALBOT - DAY

As Paul cycles stoically to work.

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Where Paul rings up a sale for an ELDERLY COUPLE...

**ELDERLY WOMAN :**

Right. Now how far away from the house will the telephone actually work?

**PAUL :**

As far as you'd like.

54.

**ELDERLY MAN :**

Nonsense. The cord on our last telephone didn't even reach to the back door.

**PAUL :**

But this hasn't got a cord.

**ELDERLY WOMAN :**

We don't take kindly to bullshitters.

**PAUL :**

That's because you're bloody insane.

He walks away, despite their protestations. Braddon sees this and, after throwing a look at Paul, goes to help the elderly couple.

**BRADDON :**

(shouting)

Good afternoon! May I help you?!

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE, BACK ROOM - DAY

Paul puts together a cardboard display stand. His phone buzzes. He sees Julz picture with a text message: "?" He taps it, revealing the "text thread"; a series of "?" and "!" and "?!?!?!?" stretching back over a week. He switches his phone off just as Braddon enters.

**BRADDON :**

Not quite the pinnacle of customer service, I'd say.

**PAUL :**

Sorry.

**BRADDON :**

Perhaps you're confused...see you're the diffident, jolly one, whilst I'm the edgy, mysterious bloke with bubbling cauldrons of danger and pizzazz.

**PAUL :**

Right.

**BRADDON :**

It's bad as all that is it?

(off Paul's look)

Right... Come on.

Pulls Paul to his feet.

55.

**PAUL :**

Where we going?

**BRADDON :**

Desperate times call for naked dancers.

**CUT TO:**

INT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Where Paul and Braddon sit at the edge of the stage,  
framed between the legs of a gyrating dancer.

Braddon's smile is ear to ear as his head bobs and swivels  
to the music... Paul still looks miserable.

EXT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Braddon follows Paul out of the club where they unchain  
their bicycles from the pole holding up the marquee.

**BRADDON :**

There you are. All better now?

**PAUL :**

(not at all...)

Yes, loads. Thanks.

**BRADDON :**

D'you know, I think I could headline  
there. The first step on my career to pop  
superstardom.

**PAUL :**

That's your dream is it?

**BRADDON :**

When I was younger. Before x-box payments  
and chest hair and whatnot.

**PAUL :**

You haven't got chest hair.

**BRADDON :**

'Course I do. Gallons of it... It's just very blonde.

**PAUL :**

Right... And what about now?

**BRADDON :**

Dreams? Honestly?

56.

**PAUL :**

If possible.

**BRADDON :**

Be nice to have a family of my own. Oh and one day go to New Zealand. Hire a car and do the Lord of the Rings tour. See where the hobbits live.

**PAUL :**

That's it?

**BRADDON :**

Well, yeah. The lower your expectations, I find, the greater your general level of happiness.

**PAUL :**

(agreeing)

Right.

They pedal off down the road...

**BRADDON :**

Then again, a threesome wouldn't be the worst thing that could happen.

**PAUL :**

Obviously.

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Paul hops off his bike and pushes it towards the entrance where Julz stands with several large suitcases.

**PAUL :**

Hi.

**JULZ :**

Hi.

**PAUL :**

How did you--?

**JULZ :**

Mum drove me. She waited as long as she could but...

**PAUL :**

Right. Um... Sorry, did we?

**JULZ :**

You stopped ringing me back.  
57.

**PAUL :**

Yeah.

**JULZ :**

Playing hard to get again?

**PAUL :**

Just feeling sorry for myself.

**JULZ :**

Always flattering on a man.

**PAUL :**

He didn't even know I was there.

**JULZ :**

(shrugs)

He's a celebrity.

**PAUL :**

Sorry?

**JULZ :**

He may be a great singer, but anyone that famous can't be anything but an ass of

intergalactic proportions.

**PAUL :**

It's lovely to see you.

**JULZ :**

Is it?

**PAUL :**

I'm an enormous idiot.

**JULZ :**

You are. And?

**PAUL :**

I'm truly sorry.

**JULZ :**

And?

**PAUL :**

I'm an ass of intergalactic proportions?

**JULZ :**

Well said. Lucky for you, I've decided to take you up on your offer.

**PAUL :**

You have?

58.

**JULZ :**

I have.

**PAUL :**

Em, which offer exactly?

**JULZ :**

Seeing as your self-esteem's down the loo, and we're never going to have a proper go at a relationship living so far apart, I decided to accept your offer to...move in together. To give it, you know, a proper go. Nothing ventured...

**PAUL :**

Nothing gained.

**JULZ :**

So...?

Paul stares dumbfounded... Realizes she's hanging herself out there for him...

**PAUL :**

Oh right! Yes, of course. That would be, um...

**JULZ :**

What?

**PAUL :**

Wonderful.

**JULZ :**

(smiling)

And?

**PAUL :**

I'm an ass of intergalactic proportions.

**JULZ :**

Yes, though there's still hope for you.

He reaches down to carry one of her suitcases but can't even lift it off the ground.

JULZ (CONT'D)

I packed a few things.

**PAUL :**

We may need a bigger flat.

**CUT TO:**

59.

EXT. ABERAVON BREAKWATER - DAY

An immense seawall jutting out into the gray water.

Surfers and wind surfers brave the cold waters alongside as Paul and Julz walk hand in hand.

**JULZ :**

So, maybe the joke wasn't the best idea.

**PAUL :**

He was so goggly-eyed over Alessandra, I could've pulled me trousers down and he wouldn't've noticed.

**JULZ :**

That beautiful was she?

**PAUL :**

Oh yes. Very.

(realizing)

But in that Italian sort of way; all dark and... Not my type at all.

**JULZ :**

Mmmm. It's not the end of the world, you know. There are loads of other operas. They reach the end of the wall and sit, legs dangling over the waves.

**PAUL :**

Not for me. I went to Italy to... Somewhere in there I got a bit outside myself. Just because I won some silly competition, I started to think... Anyway, I've got my expectations well back in line.

**JULZ :**

Ridiculous.

**PAUL :**

Really, I'm done with singing.

**JULZ :**

So you say.

**PAUL :**

I'm serious, Julz.

**JULZ :**

I believe you, darling, but I know



better...

60.

**PAUL :**

Oh do you?

**JULZ :**

The first time we ever chatted on-line.  
Do you remember how you introduced  
yourself?

**PAUL :**

As Paul, I imagine.

**JULZ :**

You said you were a singer.

**PAUL :**

It was more impressive than saying I  
worked in the produce department at  
Tesco's.

**JULZ :**

I don't care where you work. I care that  
you're happy, and that you'll always love  
me back.

**PAUL :**

(she just said she loves  
me...)

I will, you know.

**JULZ :**

Good.

(standing)

Besides, as I recall, you promised you'd  
sing for me.

**PAUL :**

"Someday."

**JULZ :**

Someday when?

PAUL (V.O.)

(singing)

I love you as you love me, in the evening  
and the morning,

**CUT TO:**

EXT. ST. CYNWYD CHURCH - DAY

A small, stone church at the heart of Llangynwydd, an ancient hilltop village, one of the oldest Christian settlements in all of Wales.

61.

PAUL (V.O.)

Nor was there a day when you and I did  
not share our troubles.

Guests arrive in suits and dresses, picking their way  
across the grassy cemetery which surrounds the church with  
eroded headstones.

INT. ST. CYNWYND CHURCH - DAY

The chapel is nearly full of FRIENDS AND FAMILY. Paul  
stands alone before the altar.

PAUL (V.O.)

And when we shared them, they became  
easier to bear;

Everyone stands as Julz appears, resplendent in a white  
dress with veil, escorted by her FATHER.

Paul sees her and begins to choke up. She smiles at him,  
telling him he's going to be fine...

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

You comforted me in my distress, and I  
wept in your laments.

Julz reaches the front, kisses her father after he lifts  
her veil and stands to face Paul before the altar.

The VICAR gives his benediction and they exchange rings...

Paul finally loses his composure and Julz kisses him to  
pull him out of it.

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

Therefore, may God's blessing be upon  
you.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Where Paul sings the English translation of Beethoven's  
Ich Liebe Dich (I Love You) to Julz before everyone.

**PAUL :**

You, my life's joy. God protect you, keep  
you for me, and protect and keep us both.

Now it's Julz turn to cry. He kisses her as everyone stands and applauds, many people wiping their eyes.

**JULZ :**

(through tears)

So you can sing after all.

62.

Braddon is a disaster as rivers of tears stream from both eyes. He turns to hug Hydrangea who bears him up for a moment, before reaching back and removing his hand from her ass.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Paul and Julz whirl and twirl at the center of the crammed dance floor. Finally, the song ends...

**PAUL :**

D'you want a drink?

**JULZ :**

Champagne please.

**PAUL :**

Back in a flash, Mrs. Potts.

**JULZ :**

Why thank you, Mr. Potts.

He weaves through the crowd to the bar where Roland is holding court with a coterie of his friends from the mill.

**PAUL :**

Hello, Dad.

**ROLAND:**

(far from sober)

Paul, you remember Charlie and Bill from down the mill.

(he and Bill share a laugh at the rhyme)

And this here's Matthew, the new chap.

Paul stops as he sees Matthew, his nemesis grinning coldly at him. Matthew offers his hand.

**MATTHEW :**

Paul and I went to school together.

Felicitations an' all that.

**PAUL :**

(tentative)

Thanks.

**MATTHEW :**

Maybe you'll sing us a pretty song as well?

The others laugh hysterically.

63.

**PAUL :**

Maybe you'll get knocked out by a girl again.

Matthew goes cold. He'd love to take a swing at Paul but knows better. Instead, he just smirks portentously until Paul turns away from them.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(to the bartender)

A champagne and a lager, please.

**ROLAND :**

Matthew's only joking, Paul.

**PAUL :**

How could you invite him?

**ROLAND :**

I paid for half this bender, I can invite who I like. Besides, he's a good lad, and a hard worker.

The implication being that Paul is not.

**PAUL :**

(getting his drinks)

Thank you.

**ROLAND :**

What's wrong with Matthew?

They're interrupted by Paul's former Choirmaster (from the opening montage).

**CHOIRMASTER :**

I say, young man. I don't know where you found it, but your vocal control has improved by light years.

**PAUL :**

Thanks very much, sir. I was in Italy for a while, but I don't really sing-

**CHOIRMASTER :**

I'm commissioned to conduct a production of Aida in Bath. And you, sir, would make a wonderful Radames.

**PAUL :**

Really?

64.

**ROLAND :**

No no, he's all finished with that nonsense. He'll be getting an honest job, earning an honest wage.

**CHOIRMASTER :**

There's no pay, I'm afraid.

**PAUL :**

I'll take it.

**ROLAND :**

Bloody hell.

**CUT TO:**

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

As the door handle turns, then flips back to its original position... After a beat, it turns again, finally opening as Paul and Julz, she in his arms, spill into the room...

**JULZ :**

No, no, on the bed. I couldn't stand another second in these torture devices. He deposits her on the bed and helps her remove her shoes, to her great relief.

JULZ (CONT'D)

Oh, that's lovely. I shall never dance

again.

**PAUL :**

Famous last words.

**JULZ :**

Reminds me of someone I just married.

**PAUL :**

The lead tenor in Aida. I still can't believe it.

**JULZ :**

This is the best wedding day ever...

Which reminds me.

She jumps to her feet and opens a cabinet, revealing a beautiful antique gramophone and a mylar bag which she hands to Paul.

**PAUL :**

What's this?

65.

**JULZ :**

I got sparklies-(

flashes her rings)

--this makes it even.

**PAUL :**

Not unless you'll be paying this off for the next ten years.

**JULZ :**

Open it.

He removes a thin sleeve bearing a photo of-

**PAUL :**

Puccini.

**JULZ :**

That's an original recording from the premiere at...

(grabs a slip of paper)

...La Scala, Milan on April twenty-fifth-

**PAUL :**

Nineteen twenty six. Conducted by  
Toscanini himself, but how-

**JULZ :**

E-bay, how else?  
She places the disc on the gramophone and sets the  
needle... The tenor, Miguel Fleta, begins to sing...

**MIGUEL FLETA:**

Nessun Dorma.

**JULZ :**

This was recorded before Pavarotti was  
even born.  
She sits on the bed next to him and kisses him as the aria  
unfolds...  
JULZ (CONT'D)  
What is he saying?

**PAUL :**

Nessun dorma. None shall sleep. Calaf has  
been rejected by the woman he loves, a  
princess.  
Kisses him again as she starts removing her dress.  
66.

**JULZ:**

What's it always have to be a princess?  
Why can't checkout girls have great love  
stories written about them?

**(re:**

Give us a hand.

**PAUL :**

If she can guess his name by dawn, she  
gets to call off the wedding and chop his  
head off.

**JULZ :**

I like that bit.

**PAUL :**

(translating)

...my secret is hidden within me. None will know my name. On your mouth I will say it when the light shines.

She removes her undergarments and stands before him, naked.

PAUL (CONT'D)

And my kiss will dissolve the silence that makes you mine.

**JULZ :**

So kiss me.

**PAUL :**

I've never done this before.

She nods, knowingly, then helps him remove his shirt.

**JULZ :**

So what happens to them?

**PAUL :**

Well, she tortures all of his friends who refuse to reveal his name, but when dawn comes, he kisses her and she falls-

**JULZ :**

--madly in love with him.

She pulls him down onto the bed as we linger on the gramophone and...

FADE TO BLACK.

67.

INT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER - DAY

Where an impressive Egyptian temple backdrops the stage filled with PERFORMERS in ancient Egyptian and Ethiopian costumes.

Paul appears at the center of the company, carrying his own with great gusto.

The Choirmaster conducts the orchestra, very pleased with what he hears. A pastiche of music from the opera plays over...

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Paul hangs a poster for the opera in the front window, indicating two weeks until the premiere. Welcomes a



CUSTOMER with a smile and spring in his step and begins discussing various phone options.

EXT. PORT TALBOT - EVENING

Paul rides his bicycle home, arms spread wide as he belts out a soaring high C5 note. A passing car honks in reply.

INT. PAUL & JULZ TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Where they sit over dinner, talking happily. She says something flirty and he dives over the table to kiss her, not a trace of shyness.

INT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER - DAY

Paul sings the aria Celeste Aida. A DIRECTOR offers him some stage direction, which Paul executes beautifully. At the end, he takes a deep breath, scratches his side.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Paul makes another attempt at stage makeup, but he's still hopelessly crap.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Where Paul and the other leads sing into microphones as the Choirmaster and DIRECTOR huddle with an ENGINEER.

EXT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER - NIGHT

Paul leaves through the Artists' Entrance, laughing with his fellow performers.

He passes a flyer taped to a streetlight pole: "Two Days To Premiere."

68.

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Paul enters the empty store.

**PAUL :**

Hallo? Brad?

He hears sniffing in the back. Passes through the curtain to-

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE, BACK ROOM - DAY

--find Braddon, dressed in full elfish wizard regalia taking slugs from a bottle of bright green alcohol in between chest-heaving sobs.

**PAUL :**

What's happened?

**BRADDON :**

It's over. I'm finished with the lot of it.

**PAUL :**

Your ears are coming off?

**BRADDON :**

What? Oh.

Off Paul's gesture, he pulls his half-hanging, pointy elvish ears off and throws them in the trash.

**PAUL :**

Shall I leave you alone?

**BRADDON :**

So there I am, right in the heart of Morgol Forest, having blasted my way through an army of Hobgoblins using a spectacular array of spellcraft. When whom do I see with her tongue down the throat of some bloody hippogriff?

**PAUL :**

Oh no.

**BRADDON :**

As if unicorns and hippogriffs could ever be together. You can look it up, it's genetically impossible!

**PAUL :**

I believe you.

69.

**BRADDON :**

(offering the bottle)

Creme de Menthe?

**PAUL :**

The show opens tomorrow.

**BRADDON :**

Rejected again.

**PAUL :**

All right. Just a nip then.

He takes a small swig, wincing as it goes down, holds his

hand to his side which burns...

**CUT TO:**

INT. PAUL & JULZ TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Julz enters, wearing her pharmacy uniform.

**JULZ :**

Hal-oo? Radames? Wherefor art thou?

She sets some shopping bags down on the tiny kitchen counter. Sees the television's on, so he must be home...

JULZ (CONT'D)

Paul?

Suddenly, Paul emerges from the bathroom, doubled over and clutching his side in enormous pain...

JULZ (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

**PAUL :**

Something's wrong.

**CUT TO:**

INT. PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL, EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

The doors fly open as a team of EMS workers wheel Paul in on a gurney with Julz following nervously behind them.

Dr. Thorpe is almost completely gray.

DR. THORPE

What've we got?

(recognizes Paul)

What, you again?

70.

**PAUL :**

Bloody Creme de Menthe.

**EMS WORKER :**

Lower abdominal pain. Fever. Nausea.

DR. THORPE

Appendix. Triage two, please.

(to Paul)

You might qualify for our frequent flier membership.

INT. PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Where Julz waits with Yvonne as Dr. Thorpe enters.

DR. THORPE

Well, the good news is, it's got nothing to do with the Creme de Menthe.

**JULZ :**

And the not good news?

**CUT TO:**

INT. TRIAGE ROOM TWO - NIGHT

As Dr. Thorpe flips on a lightboard, revealing an x-ray of Paul's abdomen.

DR. THORPE

The appendix hasn't ruptured, yet.

**YVONNE :**

Thank god.

DR. THORPE

Yes definitely, although it'll have to come out I'm afraid.

**JULZ :**

When?

DR. THORPE

How's four o'clock suit you?

**PAUL :**

I can't.

**JULZ :**

His opera opens tomorrow night.

DR. THORPE

Oh, fantastic. Which one?

71.

**PAUL :**

Aida.

DR. THORPE

Oh, is that the Madonna one? Wonderful performance that. I'm afraid singing's quite out of the question.

**PAUL :**

I'm the lead. They're counting on me.

DR. THORPE

An appendectomy is invasive surgery. If

we leave it in it's sure to rupture and he could die. Take it out and any great effort, like singing for instance, you're liable to burst the stitches and cause irreparable damage to the kidneys or diaphragm.

**PAUL :**

How irreparable?

DR. THORPE

It's possible that singing...wouldn't be possible.

**YVONNE :**

Well, that's that then.

Paul and Julz exchange looks.

**CUT TO:**

EXT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER - NIGHT

Lit up with banners and posters displaying the names of the cast including Paul.

INT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Where Paul warms up his vocal chords while bathing them in the output from a clothing steamer.

**PAUL :**

Neeee, nayyyy, nahhhh, noooo, nuuuu.

(up an octave)

Neeee, nayyyy, nahhhh, noooo, nuuuu.

He removes his shirt revealing an enormous post-surgical bandage across his stomach.

72.

INT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER - NIGHT

As Julz, Yvonne and Roland take their seats.

**ROLAND :**

It's right stupid, if you ask me.

**YVONNE :**

Do shut up, Roland. The least we can do is support him, no matter how insufferably daft he's being.

**JULZ :**

I'll thank you both not to talk about my husband that way.

**YVONNE :**

Yes, you're right, dear. It's just so--  
Really, why can't he just put himself first for a change?

**JULZ :**

Because then he'd be just like everyone else. And he's not is he?

**YVONNE :**

(kisses her cheek)  
You're a very lovely girl.  
She takes Julz' hands in hers...

**ROLAND:**

(rolling his eyes)  
I'd trade both me ears for a pint about now.  
Despite his bluster, he's just as nervous as they are. The Choirmaster takes his place in the orchestra pit and the lights go down and the Prelude begins to play...  
The trio watch nervously as...  
Paul appears on-stage, resplendent in the costume of an Egyptian military commander. He sings his opening lines, a discussion with RAMFIS, the high priest.

**JULZ :**

His first aria's right at the top.  
Ramfis exits the stage and Paul steps forward...  
The TRANSLATION CRAWL appears on-screen, above the stage.  
73.

PAUL TRANSLATION

Celeste Aida, forma divina. Heavenly Aida, divine form.  
Mistico serto di luce e Mystical garland of light  
fior. Del mio pensiero tu and flowers. You are queen  
sei regina. Tu di mia vita of my thoughts. You are the  
sei lo splendor. splendor of my life.  
Julz mouths the words with him, squeezing the life out of Yvonne's hands...  
JULZ (CONT'D)  
He's doing it. He's all right.

They clutch each other, while Roland stares transfixed at the stage in utter disbelief. He looks around at others in the audience to see if they're equally stunned then is physically moved as Paul hits a powerful high note.

INT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER, STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Paul comes off stage during the transition, hands on his stomach and wincing in pain as he waits beside a stagehand.

**STAGEHAND :**

Y'okay?

**PAUL :**

Yeah, fine.

**STAGEHAND :**

Sounds bloody marvelous.

**PAUL :**

(appreciative but hurting)

Thanks.

INT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER - NIGHT

Scene II is underway, the PRIESTS and PRIESTESSES of the temple pray to the spirit Phtha... And then something seems wrong. A priest repeats his line...

**YVONNE :**

What's wrong?

One of the other priests steps up and sings Paul's line.

**JULZ :**

That's supposed to be-(

then she's up)

Excuse me please.

74.

Pushing her way through to the aisle, then running out to the lobby.

EXT. BATH UNIVERSITY THEATER - NIGHT

Julz runs around to the Artists' Entrance where an ambulance is just pulling up.

**JULZ :**

Oh God.

Paul emerges, tunic soaked with blood from his broken

stitches, arms around the shoulders of the Stagehand and a BACKGROUND PLAYER as the EMS WORKERS take him.

**PAUL :**

(seeing Julz)

I'm okay. I'm okay.

Yvonne arrives, followed by Roland who carries a lager in a paper bag as Paul's loaded into the ambulance.

**ROLAND :**

What did I tell ya?

**CUT TO:**

INT. OPERATING THEATER - DAY

Where Paul lies unconscious as a team of SURGEONS operates on him.

**CUT TO:**

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Paul sleeps with Julz curled around him. She whispers as she strokes his hair.

**JULZ :**

They found tumors on your adrenal glands. I know you're frightened, and not singing again is more than you can bear, but I just want you to know that if you never sing again, I'll do everything in my power to fill that void with as much happiness as I can possibly manage. She closes her eyes and holds him tighter.

**CUT TO:**

75.

EXT. FINNEGAN'S PUB - DAY

As Julz' car pulls up and she runs around, opening the passenger side door for Paul, who looks uncomfortable and miserable.

**JULZ :**

You sure you don't want to wait in the car?

Paul shakes his head. Whispers that he has to go to the loo, even talking clearly hurts...



JULZ (CONT'D)

That you can do on your own.

INT. FINNEGAN'S PUB - DAY

As Paul enters to an uproarious-

**EVERYBODY :**

SURPRISE!!

The entire opera company is there along with his Yvonne and Braddon. They all begin to sing, opera-style...

EVERYBODY (CONT'D)

For he's a jolly good fellow. For he's a jolly good fellow. For he's a jolly good fellow! Which nobody can deny!

**BRADDON :**

("auditioning")

Can de-nyyyyyyyyyyy.

Ends in a coughing fit. Paul is touched and perplexed as the Choirmaster steps forward.

**CHOIRMASTER :**

For bravery and the rather thick-headed willingness to sacrifice himself for his fellow man, and woman, and those undecided... Bath Opera is proud to present you with the first Golden Appendix award, in hopes for a clean bill of health, and a speedy return to the stage.

**BRADDON :**

Hip-hip.

**EVERYBODY :**

Hooray!

76.

**BRADDON :**

Hip-hip.

**EVERYBODY :**

Hooray!

Paul accepts the Golden Appendix award, an amorphous lump of clay painted gold, and starts to speak softly.

EVERYBODY (CONT'D)

What's that? Speak up then.

He smiles bashfully then leads into Julz ear, whispering.

**JULZ :**

You've no idea how much this means to me.  
My whole life I never even had one true  
friend, much less an entire company. From  
the bottom of my heart, thank you. And  
much as I'd love to continue talking  
through my wife, you'll all be very upset  
with me if I don't use the loo  
immediately.

Everybody cheers as he hustles quickly off towards the  
back. Drinks are ordered and the Choirmaster hugs Julz.

**CHOIRMASTER :**

So how's he doing?

**JULZ :**

He's heartbroken, of course. Time will  
tell.

**CHOIRMASTER:**

(hand her a cassette)

This'll guarantee he can have his voice  
back whenever he likes.

**CUT TO:**

INT. PAUL & JULZ TINY APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY

Paul looks in the mirror as he checks the fresh bandages  
around his mid-section, poking and prodding them. So far,  
so good.

He licks his lips and, building his determination, tries  
to hum a single note but nearly collapses in pain.

He hears the front door open...

**JULZ :**

Hal-oo? I've got some lovely vichyssoise.

77.

He hurriedly buttons his shirt, but not in time...

JULZ (CONT'D)

Freeze, Jack!

(he drops his hands)

How many times--? Would you enjoy an infection then? Perhaps another surgery, like Dr. Thorpe warned you about?  
(he hangs his head; pouting)  
Didn't think so. Help me with me groceries.

He kisses her cheek then takes several plastic shopping bags off her hands and carries them into the kitchen.

**CUT TO:**

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Paul helps a seven year-old GIRL and her MUM program her first mobile phone. He's lost several stone of weight and his hair's shorter indicating the passage of some time...

**PAUL :**

Or you might like the dancing frog ringtone, which is quite popular.

**GIRL :**

What kind of an idiot wants a dancing frog on their phone?

Suddenly, a DANCING FROG ringtone is heard. Braddon runs from the back and answers his flashing phone.

**BRADDON:**

(suddenly black...)  
Yeah? What up B-Dog. For reals? Yo, that's off the chain, yo, yo.

**PAUL :**

(to the girl)  
Excellent point.

**BRADDON :**

Much love. Mad respect. Peace out.

**PAUL :**

I didn't know you were a rapper.

**BRADDON :**

Oh, that's just my boss up at HQ in Croydon. He's mah boyy.

78.

**GIRL :**

You don't look African.

**BRADDON :**

The outside may be vanilla darlin', but the inside's chocolate through and through.

**GIRL :**

Have you got a large penis?

Braddon's about to respond, but a murderous look from the girl's mum freezes his tongue.

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE, BACK ROOM - DAY

Paul comes in to find Braddon doing a pathetic breakdance celebration.

**PAUL :**

What's got you all chuffed up?

**BRADDON :**

I just got a raise.

**PAUL :**

That's fantastic, well done.

(surprised...)

If you don't mind me asking, um, why exactly?

**BRADDON :**

What d'you mean, why? I'm a stupendous manager. I feel a sudden urge to sing.

**PAUL :**

Oh, please don't. Actually, no offense or anything, and this is no reflection on my feelings towards you personally, but you're actually kind of a crap manager, if you really look at it.

**BRADDON :**

Well you that, and I know that, but... If you must know, our little shop had the highest sales in all of Wales over the

last two quarters.

(singing)

The highest sales in all of Waaaaaaaales!

**PAUL :**

That's wonderful!

(realizes...)

(MORE)

79.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You mean over the six months since I got back from surgery?

**BRADDON :**

Yes, but-

**PAUL :**

During which time I actually kept the shop open between the hours of ten and six?

**BRADDON :**

Well yes but-

**PAUL :**

And put my singing on hold because-

**BRADDON :**

Because you're a sissy.

**PAUL:**

(ignoring him)

And put the ads in all the local papers?

And--

**BRADDON :**

Alright, blimey. You're getting a raise as well.

**PAUL :**

I am?

**BRADDON :**

Couple'a quid an hour.

**PAUL :**

You serious?

**BRADDON :**

(singing again)

The highest sales in-

**PAUL :**

--all of WAAAAAAAAAALES!

So powerful Braddon takes an inadvertent step back and trips over an unopened box. He glares up at Paul from the floor.

**BRADDON :**

Bastard!

80.

**PAUL :**

(stunned)

I can sing.

**BRADDON :**

These cost me ten pound down the-

**PAUL :**

I can sing! I can-

**BRADDON :**

Don't!

**PAUL :**

(whispering at first)

The highest sales in-(

belting it out)

--ALL OF WALES!

Braddon goes down again...

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING, LOBBY - DAY

Where Julz removes the mail from the postbox, and flips through as she heads for the stairs. Suddenly she stops at a letter and tears it open, reading hungrily.

**JULZ :**

Dear Mrs. Potts we are in receipt of your

cassette...and would very much like to...

YEAH!!

**SMASH CUT TO:**

THE DANCING FROG RINGTONE

EXT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

As Paul, strapping on his bicycle helmet, answers his mobile phone.

**PAUL :**

Julz?

**JULZ PAUL :**

You'll never guess what-You'll

never guess what-JULZ

You first.

**PAUL :**

I can sing.

81.

**JULZ :**

I know.

**PAUL :**

No, I can sing. Now. Again.

**JULZ :**

Oh, thank god.

EXT. BRIDGEND SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Paul coasts out of the parking lot on his bicycle, pumping his fists in the air.

JULZ (V.O.)

Promise you won't be cross with me.

PAUL (V.O.)

Cross is the last thing I'm going be with you when I get home.

JULZ (V.O.)

You don't know the half of it.

EXT. WELSH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Various shots of Paul singing "The Highest Sales in All of Wales" with both fists thrust in the air as he pedals through the rolling hills with their ancient stone walls.

PAUL (V.O.)

What've you done, Julz?

JULZ (V.O.)

Do you remember the cast recording of Aida, before it opened?

PAUL (V.O.)

Julie-Ann?

JULZ (V.O.)

Well, I made some copies of it and sent them 'round to a few agents in London.

PAUL (V.O.)

You what?

JULZ (V.O.)

Someone had to do something to get you off your bum.

PAUL (V.O.)

But, what if it turned out I couldn't sing?

82.

JULZ (V.O.)

Remember when I first met your mum and dad and told them what a wonderful singer you were.

PAUL (V.O.)

Load of bollocks as far as you knew at the time.

JULZ (V.O.)

I believed in you... And it turns out I'm not the only one. You've got an appointment tomorrow in London with a music agent who thinks you're quite good.

PAUL (V.O.)

You're joking.

JULZ (V.O.)

I'm not.

**PAUL :**

YAHOOOOO!!!

Paul WIPES FRAME, riding away from us down a mountain road, whooping as he goes until-

A CAR APPEARS FROM NOWHERE-

AND SMASHES INTO HIM HEAD ON-

PAUL IS THROWN FROM HIS BIKE, BOUNCES OFF THE WINDSHIELD, OVER THE HOOD AND LANDS ON THE PAVEMENT A DOZEN YARDS AWAY...



**DISSOLVE TO:**

EXT. PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Where Julz is seen walking angrily/terrified towards the entrance.

INT. PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL, EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

She walks up to the nurses' station.

**JULZ:**

(stammering)

I'm um... My husband, Paul... There was an accident?

83.

DR. THORPE

Hallo, Julz. Right this way... You know we're thinking of building you two your own entrance.

He sees she's only barely holding it together. Puts his arm around her and leads her into-

INT. TRIAGE ROOM ONE - NIGHT

Where Paul lies encased in a plaster cast that covers his upper torso and left arm which juts out in front of him at a right angle, supported by a metal pole.

His face is cut and stitched in several places and supported by a thick neck brace.

DR. THORPE

His collar bone's shattered and he's got severe whiplash.

**JULZ :**

But he's not-

DR. THORPE

He won't be running a marathon anytime soon, but he's not in any great danger.

**PAUL :**

(slightly drugged)

Hello, Cameron.

**JULZ :**

(kissing Paul's face)

You have got to stop doing this to me.

**PAUL :**

I was singing again.

**JULZ :**

Go to sleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

**TITLE:**

EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER

INT. PAUL & JULZ TINY APARTMENT - DAY

Where a radio plays a commercial for BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT, "searching for the next singing, dancing or other talent sensation" and a hundred thousand pounds to the winner.

84.

The ad is followed by Andrea Bocelli's rendition of Con te Partiro. Paul reaches out and switches the station to Coldplay.

He's reclining on an orthopedic chair while surfing the internet for debt consolidation information. He's gained weight again and his hair is unkempt.

The doorbell rings and he hoists himself to his feet with a grunt, and shuffles his way over to the door which he opens to reveal Braddon.

**BRADDON :**

Are you Paul Potts?

**PAUL :**

No.

**BRADDON :**

Perfect, then you're just the man I'm looking for.

Paul lets him in.

**PAUL :**

What you been doing?

**BRADDON:**

(looking around)

More than you I'd say. Christ, how much moping can one man do?

**PAUL :**

I'm not moping. I'm just...

**BRADDON :**

Not doing anything... Like working.

**PAUL :**

I told you, I'm still not up to--  
Braddon tosses Paul a Car Phone Warehouse "Manager" name tag and a set of keys.

**BRADDON :**

Too late.

**PAUL :**

What's this?

**BRADDON :**

Feast your eyes upon the South Western  
District Sub-Manager for Carphone  
Warehouse.  
85.

**PAUL :**

You are not!

**CUT TO:**

EXT. STEEL MILL - DAY

Paul shuffles along beside Braddon as they walk along the road outside the mill and its towers of belching steam.

**PAUL :**

What'd you do, cook the books again?

**BRADDON :**

I'm quite capable of honest advancement,  
thank you very much.

**PAUL :**

Somebody died?

**BRADDON :**

The former South Western District Sub-  
Manager. Cholera. On safari or something.  
Anyway, I start Monday in Croydon.

**PAUL :**

(fumbling with the keys)

Honestly, I don't really think I'm up to it.

**BRADDON :**

Bollocks. You're on disability for over a year, they've cut up most of your credit cards and poor Julz-

**PAUL :**

Do you have any idea how many pills I have to take every day? I didn't choose this!

**BRADDON :**

Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.

**PAUL :**

What?

**BRADDON :**

Henry James...or Mighty Mouse, I'm not sure which.

They arrive at Braddon's new/used motorcycle, barely standing what with the various cases and bags strapped to it at all angles...

86.

**PAUL :**

You're leaving now?

**BRADDON :**

Commerce waits for no man. Gonna miss you, laddie. You're me best mate. There, I said it.

**PAUL :**

Rubbish. Uber-district-sub-under-managers don't have time for such emotions.

**BRADDON :**

It's District Sub-Manager, and I'll be

poppin' round every now and again to check up on ya. Make sure there's no funny business goin' on.

**PAUL :**

You couldn't spot funny business if it was tattooed to your eye-lids.

**BRADDON :**

You know that, and I know that, but-

**PAUL :**

Give us a ring when you're settled.

**BRADDON :**

I'm told the women in Croydon shag like wild ferrets.

**PAUL :**

Might want to think about a rabies shot.

(Braddon considers this before they hug)

Thanks, Brad.

**BRADDON :**

Give the missus a good squeeze for me.

**PAUL :**

No, but I'll tell her you said bye.

Braddon kicks-starts the motorcycle which ROARS powerfully to life...

**BRADDON :**

May the-

...then stalls immediately. He tries to start it again...

BRADDON (CONT'D)

May the-- Crap. May the-

87.

**PAUL :**

Bit more clutch, maybe.

Braddon scoffs until the bike roars to life.

**BRADDON :**

May the-

The bike suddenly jerks forwards, zooming him out of earshot.

**PAUL :**

--flame of Arveron sustain you.

He watches Braddon's motorbike teeter away down the road, before turning and shuffling back home.

EXT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Looking in through the windows as the lights come on inside. Paul walks to the window, looking up at the gray Welsh sky that's reflected in the glass and on his face as he pulls the chain on the neon "OPEN" sign.

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

He turns to face the store which is, predictably, in shambles.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

THE NEON SIGN; BEING SWITCHED OFF

EXT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - EVENING

As Julz waits patiently at the front door as Paul locks up.

**JULZ :**

Good first day?

**PAUL :**

(unenthusiastically)

Yeah. Brilliant.

She walks slowly as he shuffles along the arcade of shops.

**JULZ :**

Any luck with the hiring?

**PAUL:**

(distracted)

Only a few applicants. Be better once we get an ad going in the paper.

88.

She follows his eyes as they linger on a display in the music store window, a life-size stand up of Palacido Domingo, promoting a new album.

She takes his hand as he looks away, sensing her pity but not wanting to talk about it...

PAUL (CONT'D)

How was your day?

**CUT TO:**

INT. FISH BAR - NIGHT

Where Paul and Julz sit over baskets of skate & chips with Yvonne and Roland.

**ROLAND :**

...pressure caused a the number five furnace to literally split down the side.

**YVONNE :**

Oh my lord.

**ROLAND :**

Bunch'a the molten steel got out. Eighteen hundred Celsius, damn near melted half the machinery before we got the fire out.

**JULZ :**

Was anyone hurt?

**ROLAND :**

Billy Watkins almost got incinerated, but lucky for him Paul's friend Matthew managed to hoist him out of the pit before the soup got 'im.

**PAUL :**

He's not my friend.

**ROLAND :**

He's a bloody hero.

**PAUL :**

Good for him.

**YVONNE :**

(diverting...)

Anything exciting down at the shop?

89.

**ROLAND :**

Hang on, love.

(to Paul)

What ever disagreements you had when you were in school, don't you think it's time you-

**PAUL :**

Disagreements? Do you see that, Dad?

He shows him a scar starting just at the edge of his hairline.

PAUL (CONT'D)

That's from a bicycle chain, wrapped around his fist while two of his droogs held me down. I was twelve.

**ROLAND :**

I don't remember that happening.

**PAUL :**

What was it you told me, dad? Maybe if I lost a few stone, I wouldn't provoke them.

**ROLAND :**

Look just because you've had a run of bad luck... You've had plenty of opportunities to sort yourself out.

**PAUL:**

(not backing down)

All those years wasted on that singing nonsense.

**ROLAND :**

You're not singing now, are you?

**YVONNE :**

Roland.

**ROLAND :**

You're wife's working two jobs to pay your hospital bills and all you do is mope about.



**JULZ :**

He's back at Car Phone Warehouse.

**ROLAND :**

Oh, well, that's a step in no direction, isn't it.

(MORE)

90.

ROLAND (CONT'D)

We may not have a lot in common, but you're my son and I've never been prouder of you than when I heard you perform in Bath. That was heroic. You want to give it up, anyone would understand after what you've been through...but you haven't have you. You're afraid to sing, but you're afraid to move past it. That's not life.

Julz and Yvonne stare at their hands, trying to hide their agreement...

INT. PAUL & JULZ TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul sits at the computer, pouting while working on their pitiful finances while Julz watches Coronation Street on ITV.

**PAUL :**

Three hundred pounds paid, another thirty-seven thousand to go.

**JULZ :**

We'll be all right.

**PAUL :**

How do you know.

**JULZ :**

It's just money, isn't it. As long as we've got each other.

**PAUL :**

And Coronation Street.

**JULZ :**

Well, yeah.

Paul turns back this his computer as a series of pop-up advertisements appear.

**PAUL :**

Bloody pop-ups.

He closes several of them, then stops on the last, an ad for Britain's Got Talent.

**JULZ :**

(attention on the TV)

What's that darling?

91.

**PAUL :**

Nothing, just... There's this new contest. A hundred-thousand quid to the best performer in Britain.

**JULZ :**

Robbie Williams'll win that for sure.

**PAUL :**

It's for amateurs.

**JULZ :**

Too bad you don't sing. You'd've won it laughing.

Paul stares at the window then minimizes it... After a moment, he brings it back up on the screen and starts entering his details...

**PAUL :**

It's cheaper than a lottery ticket.

**JULZ :**

Are you seriously giving it a go?

**PAUL :**

You're right. I'm such a plonker.

**JULZ :**

No, do it!

**PAUL :**

It's stupid.

He moves to close the window when-

**JULZ :**

Heads or tails?

**PAUL :**

Ay?

**JULZ:**

(with a 50p coin)

Heads you forget all about it, tails you push send.

**PAUL :**

Julz.

**JULZ :**

I was at work today, chatting with my girls, who asked after you as they do now and again. And do you know what I said?  
92.

**PAUL :**

That I'm a tiger in bed?

**JULZ :**

Aside from that... I said I can't really say how my husband is, because, to be completely honest, I can't remember the last time he laughed.

**PAUL :**

(after a beat)

Maybe my dad's right.

**JULZ :**

Sod your dad. What do you want?  
Paul takes this in...

**PAUL :**

Heads.

Julz flips the coin...

INT. PAUL & JULZ BEDROOM - NIGHT

Where Paul lies on his side, Julz nuzzled up behind him as he's lost in thought...

**JULZ :**

What?

**PAUL :**

I was just thinking... It would be nice to sing for an audience again. I think I could let it go after that.

He looks over at the bedside table where the 50p coin sits, showing the profile head of Queen Elizabeth II.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Probably won't even get an audition anyway.

**JULZ :**

(drifting into sleep...)

Mmmmmmm.

**CUT TO:**

INT. PAUL & JULZ BEDROOM - MORNING

Where the 50p coin reflects the sliver of sunlight into Paul's closed eyes, which snap open.

93.

He frowns at the coin and jostles the bedside table, trying to shift it out of the sunlight. The coin doesn't move.

Paul reaches out for his clock-radio and tries to use it to shove the coin aside and instead ends up knocking everything off the table, waking Julz.

**JULZ :**

What's happening!?

**PAUL :**

Sorry.

INT. CAR PHONE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Where Paul looks over a job application. He's smartened up and has the shop back in order.

**PAUL :**

Right, so where you answered "maybe" to

the question, "Have you completed secondary school?" would you care to elaborate on that?

A PUNK GIRL, with a huge pink mohawk and numerous piercings both in her face and her leather jacket, stares at him vacantly.

**PUNK GIRL :**

Not really, no.

**PAUL :**

Right.

(as the phone rings)

Just a second. Car Phone Warehouse. This is Paul speaking.

INT. PAUL & JULZ TINY APARTMENT - DAY (INTERCUT)

Where Julz is taking off her coat.

**JULZ :**

Is this Paul Potts the singer?

**PAUL :**

I'm a bit busy now, darling.

**JULZ :**

Oh right. Too busy to come with me to Cardiff on Friday.

**PAUL :**

Cardiff, what's in-  
94.

As Julz hits play on their answer-phone. The voice of a FEMALE PRODUCER is heard.

FEMALE PRODUCER (O.S.)

Yes, Mister Potts. Is that right? Paul

Potts. Oh my. Sorry, I'm calling from

Britain's Got Talent. We've received your application and .mp3 audition and-

Paul listens as he watches the Punk Girl remove a safety pin from her nostril... He turns away.

**JULZ :**

(as the message ends...)

Well?

**PAUL :**

Um, brilliant.

**JULZ :**

What?

**PAUL :**

This Friday?

**JULZ :**

That's what the lady said.

**PAUL :**

That's not nearly enough time.

**JULZ :**

Well, that's all the time you've got. See you at seven.

Paul hangs up, terrified. He turns to see the Punk Girl is using the safety pin to pick at a large scab on her forearm.

**PAUL :**

Start Friday?

The Punk Girl looks up, surprised.

**CUT TO:**

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING, STAIRCASE - DAY

Where we hear Paul long before we finally see him, huffing and puffing and sweating his way up the stairs until he collapses in a heap halfway up the final steps.

**CUT TO:**

95.

EXT. CARDIFF - DAY

The largest city in Wales is seen in the distance as Julz drives Paul and Yvonne.

INT. JULZ' CAR - DAY

Where Yvonne sits in the back seat reading over materials regarding the show, including photos of the judges, AMANDA HOLDEN, PIERS MORGAN, and SIMON COWELL.

**YVONNE:**

Right, so these are the judges.

(sees Simon smiling)

Now he looks like a very warm fellow. It says here, the auditions are going to broadcast live on ITV. Did you know that Paul?

**PAUL :**

(blanching)

You're joking?

**JULZ :**

(suddenly nervous for him)

Shouldn't you be rehearsing or something?

**PAUL :**

I can't. No telling what shape my vocal cords are in after so long. Better to just warm up properly then see what comes out rather than risk overdoing it now.

**JULZ :**

Right... But then how will you know if you sound any good?

**PAUL :**

Trust me, babe. At best it'll be crap.

**JULZ :**

As long as you're confident.

He smiles nervously, staring out the window as the terror builds...

EXT. WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE - DAY

Where THOUSANDS have queued up outside the building, hoping for a walk-on audition. The queue seems endless as they drive past...

**YVONNE :**

Are you meant to wait in that line?

96.

**PAUL :**

I think maybe this was a bad idea.

**JULZ :**

(putting her hand on his)

They liked Paul's song so much, he  
doesn't have to audition.

Paul watches the faces blur past as his apprehension  
grows...

INT. WALES MILLENIUM CENTRE, ARTIST ENTRANCE - DAY

Where Paul and the ladies are escorted through a swarm of  
people by a harried PRODUCTION ASSISTANT brandishing a  
clipboard and walkie-talkie.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

--complete cock-up I'm afraid. All of a  
sudden Simon "has" to be on a plane to  
Dubai at three so everything's been  
bumped up.

**PAUL :**

Just as long as I've got time to warm up.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

How long do you need?

**PAUL :**

Twenty minutes should be plenty.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Take away ten minutes from that and  
you're perfect.

**PAUL :**

You mean I'm on in-

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

S'actually about nine and a half minutes,  
yeh?

(handing passes to Julz and  
Yvonne)

These should get you seats in the reserve  
section. Right through there.

(to Paul)

You're with me.

**PAUL :**

(turns to Julz)

This was a mistake.

97.



**JULZ :**

You can warm up in ten minutes, can't you?

**YVONNE :**

Nine and a half.  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
We really must get-

**PAUL:**

(to Julz)  
It's been proven I'm not good enough.  
Let's just go home and-

**JULZ :**

Good enough for who? Bloomin' Pavarotti?  
If you want a final go on-stage, then here's your chance. Or, if you really want to have a go at being a professional singer, here's your chance.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
(into her walkie)  
We may have a problem.  
(to Paul)  
Nine minutes, yes or no.

**YVONNE :**

Eight forty-five, actually.  
(off their looks)  
Sorry.

**JULZ :**

What would Toscanini do?

**CUT TO:**

INT. WALES MILLENIUM CENTRE, BACKSTAGE - DAY  
Where the Production Assistant leads Paul to the wings.  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
Just wait here for the pre-interview.

**PAUL :**

Pre-interview?  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
Who are you? Why're you here? Just take a

few minutes. Back in a sec.

98.

She hustles off leaving him standing amidst several other

**performers:**

WOMAN with a HOWLING TERRIER.

Paul realizes he's not in Kansas anymore and starts to warm up, just as a CAMERA CREW barrels in along with the hosts ANT and DEC who are fed background by the Production Assistant.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

(CONT'D)

--works at Car Phone Warehouse. He's married. Teeth are all bashed up and sings opera.

**ANT :**

Opera?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Paul, this is Ant and Dec. Three minutes.

The camera light comes on and blinds him.

INT. WALES MILLENIUM CENTRE, AUDITORIUM - DAY

Where a YOUNG GIRL over-performs "It's a Hard Knock Life" on-stage. Julz and Yvonne are led to their seats, high in the nose-bleed section.

**JULZ :**

This is the reserve section?

**YVONNE:**

(screaming into the phone)

I don't know if there's a delay, just get your puckered old bum to a telly, do you hear me?!

(hangs up; to Julz)

Honestly! If he weren't such an exquisite lover, I'd have to leave the man.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Paul stares nervously through a gap in the curtain at the myriad cameras and the enormous crowd as the imposing

**judges:**

before him, a YOUNG GIRL.

**SIMON :**

That was absolutely excruciating. It was like a little kitten had been trapped in a box and was shrieking for its mum to come rescue it... Only mum's too busy plugging her ears, isn't she?

99.

The young girl walks off the stage, failing to hold back her tears.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Julz and Yvonne sit way in the back.

**YVONNE :**

He isn't very nice at all.

**JULZ :**

I think Paul's next.

The lights come down as an image of Paul appears, projected on a screen.

ANT (V.O.)

For the next contestant, the world of showbiz seems a million miles away. It's Paul. A mobile phone salesman from South Wales.

We Paul watches the young girl lets out a huge SOB as she runs to her MOTHER.

**STAGE MANAGER :**

(to Paul)

I wouldn't want to follow that.

**PAUL :**

Thanks.

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

(on-screen)

By day, I sell mobile phones.

Paul walks away from the Stage Manager, trying not to hyperventilate as he passes behind a pair of PRODUCERS.

PRODUCER #1

Who's this chap?

PRODUCER #2

Joke contestant. The chubby opera fella.

PRODUCER #1

Oh, he'll be good for a laugh.

Paul hangs his head. Finally, the truth of it...

PAUL (O.S.)

(in the interview)

By day, I sell mobile phones.

(MORE)

100.

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

My dream was to spend my life doing what  
I was born to do.

He sighs, giving up once and for all...

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Paul is seen on the screen.

**PAUL :**

Confidence...is...has always been sort of  
a difficult thing for me... I always find  
it a little difficult to be completely  
confident in myself.

**JULZ :**

Oh dear.

She starts texting furiously into her phone.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

The Stage Manager runs up to Paul...

**STAGE MANAGER :**

You're on.

Motions for him to take the stage, but Paul doesn't move,  
his eyes find the exit door.

**DEC :**

Paul Potts everyone.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Julz sends the text then prays to everything she can think  
of. The audience begins to murmur. Julz senses his  
hesitation...

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Paul's checks his buzzing phone... Reads the text from

**Julz:**

NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED.

PS. PAVAROTTI'S AN ASSHOLE.

LOVE CAMERON.

Paul smiles...

101.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

**JULZ :**

(as a mantra)

One foot, then the other.

And then Paul steps self-consciously onto the stage, walks to the microphone, not looking at anything, keeping his teeth hidden...

**PAUL :**

Good afternoon. I'm Paul.

Several thousand PEOPLE look on from the audience. His entire physicality seems to apologize for being there.

**AMANDA :**

What are you here for today, Paul?

**PAUL :**

To sing opera.

Simon and Piers exchange an "oh crap" look. The audience murmurs, this is going to be terrible. Paul tries to ignore them.

**SIMON :**

(annoyed)

Okay. Ready when you are.

The opening strains of Nessun Dorma begin. Simon leans back and sighs, putting his pen in his mouth, wishing Paul were back in Wales.

Paul stares at a point above the audience until he finds Julz, which allows him to shut everything else out...

**PAUL:**

Nessun dorma. Nessun dorma.

Simon looks up, chews his pen, suddenly interested as Paul begins the first crescendo...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Ma il mui mistero e chiuso in me.

Suddenly the audience cheers. Julz and Yvonne react, clutching each other again... Amanda takes a deep breath, stunned as are Simon and Piers.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Il nome mui nessun spara, No no. Dilegua,

o notte! Tramontate, stelle! Tromontate  
stelle! All'alba vincerò!

102.

Simon's mouth hangs open. Amanda actually begins to cry as the audience rises to it's feet.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Vincerò. Vincerò!

The audience are on their feet, roaring... Julz and Yvonne hug each other, bouncing up and down...

Even Simon applauds and smiles as the music ends... He looks back at the thundering audience, and actually laughs out loud.

Paul takes a deep breath, happy to be finished then just stares at the floor, face tight, expecting the worst.

**SIMON :**

So you work at Car Phone Warehouse and you did that. I wasn't expecting that.

**AMANDA :**

No, neither was I.

**SIMON :**

This was a complete breath of fresh air. I thought you were absolutely fantastic. Paul smiles, somewhere between relief and vomiting.

**PIERS :**

You have an incredible voice. I think, if you keep singing like that, you are going to be one of the favorites to win this competition.

**CUT TO:**

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Paul nods and smiles shyly at the congratulations from SHOW STAFF and other CONTESTANTS. He heads out the back door just as Julz runs up to embrace him...

He hugs her and begins to sob, burying his face in her neck as his entire body is wracked with spasms as the pain of the last three years flows from him in tears of joy.

**JULZ :**

It's all right. It's all right.

**CUT TO:**

103.

**INT. THE FORGE TAVERN - NIGHT**

The grimy after-work men watch silently as Paul sings on each of the several televisions.

As he begins the final high note, the men erupt into laughter, clapping Roland on the back as tears run down his face.

Matthew watches, hating Paul all over again because he's brave enough to be different.

The First Drunk from the beginning leans over to Roland.

**FIRST DRUNK :**

Bloody wonderful that.

Matthew stands behind Roland, talking with several of the other men.

**MATTHEW :**

What kind of poof sings opera?

Roland turns to face him.

**MATTHEW (CONT'D)**

Not exactly a chip off the old block, is he?

**ROLAND :**

A bicycle chain?

**MATTHEW :**

What?

**ROLAND :**

Is it true?

**MATTHEW :**

Um, well, we were only kids.

Roland snarls and levels Matthew with haymaker. Matthew goes down, out cold.

**ROLAND :**

Get this pile'a dung outta my sight.

Two men pick up Matthew and carry him to the door, passing Paul, Julz and Yvonne as they enter. A cheer goes up as they're recognized.

EXT. THE FORGE TAVERN - NIGHT

Paul and Roland stand outside, waiting for their wives.  
104.

**ROLAND :**

I want to tell you something... I haven't  
been the best...

Chokes up. Paul puts his hand on his shoulder...

**PAUL :**

Dad, you don't have to-

**ROLAND :**

Shut up.

(deep breath)

The only real measure of a father's  
success is by how far his children end up  
surpassing him in life. I'm not good with  
words...but you should be very, very  
proud of yourself.

**PAUL :**

Orgoglio.

**ROLAND :**

What?

**PAUL :**

Nothing.

**CUT TO:**

PAUL - TAKING A DEEP BREATH

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

He's standing back stage in a new tuxedo.

**JULZ :**

Nervous?

**PAUL :**

Always. Think I should open with a joke?

**JULZ PAUL :**

Probably not. Yeah, probably not.



**JULZ:**

If this ended tonight, I'd still love you forever.

**PAUL :**

D'you wanna make a run for it?

**JULZ :**

Up to you.  
105.

**PAUL :**

Best not. See what happens.  
Julz kisses him and puts something in his hand.

**JULZ :**

For luck.  
Paul looks down to see the 50p coin and the face of Queen Elizabeth II.

**CUT TO:**

THE ACTUAL FACE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II  
INT. EMPIRE THEATER, LIVERPOOL - NIGHT  
Sitting beside the DUKE OF EDINBURGH in the royal box as Simon, Amanda and Piers are on-stage.

**SIMON :**

Now, of course, that was Paul Potts who went on to become the deserving winner of the whole competition. Since then, his first album has already sold over two million copies and he's been number one in fifteen different countries. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very proud to introduce Paul Potts.

**TITLE:**

EMPIRE THEATER, LIVERPOOL, DECEMBER 3, 2007  
A flute plays as an enormous video screen shows images of Paul's audition and subsequent victory in the finals of Britain's Got Talent.  
The screen rises and Paul walks out on stage alongside an entire orchestra and begins to sing...  
Paul's nervousness gradually subsides and he looks out at

the crowd, seeing the Queen and, several rows behind her, Braddon standing with a very pretty GOTH WOMAN. Braddon smiles and makes a ferret face, nodding over at the woman. Paul smiles and continues the song as the CAMERA ORBITS around him, revealing him singing:

At the Sydney Opera House...

106.

**TITLE:**

PAUL'S DEBUT ALBUM "ONE CHANCE" OPENED AT NUMBER ONE, OUTSELLING THE REST OF THE TOP-TEN COMBINED.

On the Oprah Winfrey Show...

**TITLE:**

HIS SOLD-OUT TOURS HAVE CIRCLED THE GLOBE FIVE TIMES

Before 70,000 fans in Germany...

**TITLE:**

IN 2008, HE HAD THE THIRD SURGERY OF HIS LIFE

**CUT TO:**

A PHOTO OF PAUL SMILING; HIS TEETH NOW CAPPED AND PERFECTLY

**STRAIGHT:**

**DISSOLVE TO:**

A PHOTO OF THE REAL PAUL AND JULIE-ANN POTTS; BOTH WEAR TSHIRTS SAYING "BRAD" AND "CAMERON" RESPECTIVELY.

**CUT TO:**

THE FAMOUS VIDEO OF PAUL'S ACTUAL AUDITION FOR BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT PLAYING ALONGSIDE THE END CREDITS...