

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE. BEDROOM/BATHROOM. EVENING.

John and Marie are dressing to go out; he has a smart suit laid out, she a party dress. They aren't talking. One comes into the bedroom, the other goes into the bathroom; when they pass in a doorway it's awkward. They do not look at each other. There is much irritation as they get ready, with earrings, with combs, the wrong pair of shoes, the wrong tie. John looks at himself in a full length mirror; he's paunchy and sagging, definitely the worse for wear. Marie, going past, looks at him with disdain. He tries pulling on the trousers of his suit, but they won't go round his waist; he forces his trousers on and the zip breaks.

JOHN

Fuck it.

Marie comes into the bedroom, looks at him hard, switches on the radio, goes back into the bathroom. Pretty Christmas tunes come out of the radio.

JOHN

What?

He follows her through to the bathroom; she's putting make-up on in the mirror.

JOHN

I said what?

MARIE

Look at you.

He looks down at the trousers around his ankles; hoists them up, goes back into the bedroom.

MARIE

(Under her breath.) Fat pig.

He comes back into the bathroom; staring at her in the mirror.

JOHN

If you've got somethin to fucking say -

Marie laughs.

JOHN

What the fuck is there to laugh about?

MARIE

(Spins round, throwing a lipstick at him.)
Fuck fuck fuck! That's all I hear
from you. Only the more you say it the less you can do
it, now why is that?

They stare at each other.

MARIE

Don't look at me like that you scare me.

She moves to walk out of the bathroom but he's barring her way.

MARIE

What are you going to do beat me up?!

She chops at his arm until he moves out of her way. She walks through to the bedroom, he follows her, trousers still round his ankles.

MARIE

(Turning on him.)

What? What! What do you want?

He starts kissing her; it's passionate but ugly and difficult. Twice she stops him, coming up for air. She's partly excited by his brutalism, partly disgusted by it. They fall onto the bed, him on top savagely biting her neck while she drags her fingernails down his back. He starts humping, crudely; saliva dribbling down his face: she transformed animalistic. They are making a lot of noise, drowning out the radio. It's over quickly. They fall apart, lie glistening with sweat, listening to some Phil Spector oldie. Marie gets up and starts dressing again. She sees herself in the mirror. Stops.

MARIE

I can't look at you. I want the lights out. That's not right. Not normal. What's wrong with happy sex? What's wrong with being happy?

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INT. POLICE CLUB. NIGHT.

Policemen in suits dancing ludicrously to 'Saturday Night Fever', spraining muscles as they try to recreate those old Travolta moves. Pan across to the bar where John, Trevor, Eddie and Charlie sit slowly getting pissed. They are reflected in a long mirror behind the bar.

EDDIE

We can go up I tell you.

Admittedly Nolan wants to buy a couple of players.

CHARLIE

Can't afford the bus fares let alone the players.

EDDIE

You go bargain hunting in the lower divisions, find some likely lads on the YTS. Look at Kasanu.

CHARLIE

Yeah look at him, not playing for us is he.

TREVOR

Best player we ever had.

EDDIE

Fancy it though, the Tigers in the First Division. Playing at Anfield, Old Trafford, Highbury...!

CHARLIE

(Singing the Everley Brothers tune.)

Dreeeeeam, Dream dream dream...

JOHN
Fuck off Charlie Bowers.

Stef and Jaq come up behind them. They pull Charlie and Eddie backwards off their bar stools.

JAQ
I'm not some creeping wallflower.

CHARLIE
No, more like poison ivy.

STEF
Come away from that bar now or it's the Fred Flintstone's for you tonight.

EDDIE
(All grins, to the lads.)
Isn't she lovely, and she's mine, all mine.

TREVOR
The Fred Flintstonels, Ed?

EDDIE
Goes to a door, starts beating on it.)
Wil - MAAAA!

Charlie and Eddie go off to the dancefloor, laughing. Trevor chuckles manfully, turns back to the bar. John's face, reflected in the mirror, scowling behind the bottles.

TREVOR
Having another, John?

John shoves his empty glass across the bar.

BARMAN
What's it to be, boys?

JOHN
You should fucking know you've been serving us all night.

TREVOR
Whiskey, mate. Doubles. Have one yourself. There's no need for it, John.

JOHN
Course not, Trev.

The drinks arrive.

TREVOR
Ta. Here's to it. Marie's looking nice tonight. Did I tell you Moira left me? We should never have sold Kasanu.

JOHN

(Knocks back his drink in one.)
What d'you reckon? Couple more here for appearance'
sake, then I'll drop off Marie and we get down The Dog.

TREVOR

It's Christmas Eve, John, perhaps you and Marie should
....

JOHN

Are you up for it or what?

John looks at Marie in the mirror. Leaning over her table and making conversation with her while staring at her cleavage is the Chief Insp., the only person dressed in full uniform. Marie knows that John is watching her, and starts flirting with the Chief - puts her arm around his neck and slinks up against him. John grimaces and holds up his glass to the barman.

65 INT. THE DOG. NIGHT.

A knock on the door. A BOUNCER opens a letterbox peephole and looks through it, immediately opening the door to John and Trevor, now in their terrace clothes again. They shake hands with the Bouncer, and move through the thronging room towards the bar, shaking hands, slapping backs, and getting their eyebrows singed by Puff. It's loud and smoky and wonderful. The decor consists of blown-up condoms for balloons and Shadwell scarves tied across the ceiling for p aper chains. The drinks are waiting at the bar.

JOHN

(Beaming at Lynda with his beer.)
Who did the decorations, you?

66 EXT. LYNDA'S FLAT. DOORSTEP. NIGHT.

John and Lynda are kissing in the doorway, draped in tinsel and mistletoe. John tenderly kisses up her neck; she holds onto his head with anticipation.

LYNDA

You're not like the rest.

He stops kissing her. Looks at her.

JOHN

Why'd you say that?

LYNDA

(John's staring at her.) Don't go loopy on me now.

JOHN

Lynda, you're lovely, really lovely, I -

LYNDA

You're not staying?

JOHN
I can't. How can I.

LYNDA
Off you go home then don't waste no more of my time.

JOHN
This ain't me. I'm not like this.

LYNDA
You staying or going?

She opens her front door. She turns. The light inside is warm and inviting.

JOHN
Sorry.

LYNDA
Merry Christmas, John.

She closes the door. John stares at it, still wanting to go in. He breaks the spell and steams off down the road, muttering and swearing to himself, kicking cans and dustbins. All the windows glow with Christmas lights.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE. DAY.

John and Marie at the dining table with piles of food. They wear paper hats and sullen faces. They pull a cracker. The prize falls into John's glass of lager. He stares at it.

CUT TO/ John asleep in bed. Marie sits up, looking into the dressing table mirror. She's crying.

TREVOR (VOICE OVER)
Good Christmas John?

JOHN (VOICE OVER)
Will you fuck off.