

Four

By

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FADE IN:

INT. CAR - DUSK

LOUISE, a pale skinned woman with short blonde hair, late thirties, is at the wheel.

PAUL, a handsome, muscular, blonde man of a similar age with piercing blue eyes, sits beside her.

The stereo is on at a low volume.

Louise glances towards Paul, taking her eyes off the road briefly.

LOUISE
You look nervous.

She takes one hand off the steering wheel and places it on his thigh.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Are you sure you want to do this?

Paul turns his head away from her and looks out of the side window. His voice sounds distraught.

PAUL
I'm not sure. What if it fucks everything up?

He sighs.

LOUISE
How is everything gonna get fucked up? We know them, they're good friends. I thought this had always been your fantasy?

He turns towards her.

PAUL
It has, but I'm just thinking that sometimes fantasies should stay as fantasies, ya know?

LOUISE
Don't worry babe, it's just nerves. A few drinks to loosen you up and you'll be fine. Trust me. You'll be in your element.

Paul forces a smile back to her and turns up the volume on the car stereo.

He turns to look out of the windscreen at the road ahead.

EXT: COUNTRY LANE- DUSK

Their aging, red Jaguar speeds away into the distance.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE- DUSK

At the front of the house, a 4x4 and an Audi stand on the drive. The Jaguar pulls up beside them.

Louise exits the car, shortly followed by Paul.

She hands the keys to Paul, he presses the key fob and locks the doors.

They link arms and walk slowly towards the door.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- KITCHEN/DINING ROOM

There is a flurry of activity as AMANDA, a strikingly tall, average looking brunette in her late thirties, and GREG, a middle aged, averagely built man with greying hair, flit between the kitchen and the dining room.

They prepare the huge table, which is set for four people, pour the wine and making last minute checks that everything is perfect.

GREG

Are you not even a little bit worried, then?

AMANDA

Why should I be worried? It's going to be a good night, isn't it?

GREG

Yeah, I suppose. I've got butterflies, that's all.

AMANDA

You? Butterflies? I never thought I'd hear you say that in my lifetime.

GREG

Yeah. I'm just being stupid. You're right, it *will* be a good night.

AMANDA

Of course it will.

They hear a knock on the door in the distance, look at each other and smile.

GREG

I'll get it, you finish what you're doing.

He leaves the dining room.

Amanda checks her breath by cupping her hand over her mouth and nose.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- CORRIDOR

A long corridor with framed pictures on the walls.

Greg walks towards the frosted glass door, through which the blurred silhouette of two people can vaguely be seen.

He runs his fingers through his hair and opens the door to greet Paul and Louise.

GREG

Louise, you look stunning.

He leans towards her, and kisses both her cheeks.

LOUISE

Thank you Greg. Mmm, you smell delicious!

GREG

(Laughs)

Thank you Louise. I think it's the one you got me for my birthday actually.

Greg steps aside allowing Louise to walk past, and down the corridor.

He leans towards Paul and offers out his hand.

The handshake turns into a awkward hug.

GREG (cont'd)
 Good to see you again, buddy.

Paul slaps him on the back three times, and they part. He steps in past Greg as the front door is closed and bolted.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- NIGHT

It is now twilight.

The house is in darkness apart from a lantern emitting ambient light next to the front door.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE-DINING ROOM

The hosts and their two guests are sat at the dining table finishing off their meals.

Paul picks up his wine glass and downs the remains.

AMANDA
 More wine I think, or would you prefer gin, Louise? I love a drop of the old 'mothers ruin', personally!

GREG
 Just a drop? That's you all over, Amanda. Ever the conservative!

Amanda scowls at Greg's comment.

LOUISE
 No, wine will be lovely, thanks.

AMANDA
 Greg, go and get another bottle of red from the cellar please.

She gestures towards the cellar.

Greg, following orders, goes off in search of more wine.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
 Lets go through to the living room, or shall we...cut out the middleman?

The remaining three laugh nervously.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE-BEDROOM

The bedroom is lavishly decorated, with vases of fresh flowers on the dresser, and a huge bed in front of the windows.

The Venetian blinds are closed by Amanda.

Paul and Louise perch awkwardly on the side of the bed.

GREG (O.S.)
Where are you?

AMANDA
(shouting)
We're up here. Bring the wine.

Greg ascends the stairs, his footsteps grow gradually louder until he enters the room.

GREG
Here you are!

Greg offers the open bottle of wine to the guests, their empty glasses are swiftly and clumsily filled.

He passes the remains of the bottle to Amanda. She pours herself a drink and sets the now empty bottle on the dresser.

Greg fumbles around in his pocket, producing a lighter. He circles the room, igniting the many candles scattered around.

Amanda sits down next to the others on the bed as Greg turns off the lights, and the room is bathed in a warm, soft glow by the candlelight.

He approaches Paul, raising his glass.

GREG (cont'd)
Happy birthday, my man!

AMANDA
And many more.

Paul raises his glass towards Greg.

PAUL
Thanks. Thank you.

Greg heads to the side of the room and switches on the Hi-Fi. He swiftly makes a selection from the neat pile of CDs at the side.

Easy listening music fills the room.

As he returns the bed, he sees that Paul is now semi-naked.

Louise and Amanda, also stripped down to their underwear, kiss Paul's neck and face from both sides, both competing with their hands to roughly grope his chest.

Paul smiles as the women caress him noisily. He looks towards Greg, and winks, still smiling.

Greg hurriedly takes off his top, and hops about trying to remove his trousers, stumbling.

The two women pull Paul backwards, he lies flat on the bed.

Kisses travel down from his neck, over his chest and stomach, slowly working down.

Greg climbs on the bed to get himself amid the action.

MONTAGE:

Brief, blurry images of the sexual liaison.

FADE OUT

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- MORNING

In the early morning light birdsong can be heard in the trees around the house.

The three cars are still parked on the drive.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE-BEDROOM

Various items of discarded clothing, used condoms and empty wine glasses litter the floor.

Amanda, Louise and Greg are still soundly asleep and entwined in each other.

Paul is wide awake and staring blankly at the ceiling.

We move closer to a lingering shot of Paul's face as he fixes his eyes on the ceiling, trying to make sense of the whole situation.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

The front door opens and Paul and Amanda step outside, blinking, into the sunlight, closely followed by Greg and Louise.

Paul unlocks the car with the key fob which is already in his hand, ready for a quick getaway.

He opens the driver's side door, and enters the car silently, leaving Louise with the hosts.

LOUISE

Thanks again for a great night, the meal was to die for...And the dessert!

Louise walks towards the car, and Amanda and Greg follow.

AMANDA

You're more than welcome.
(laughing)
It was *OUR* pleasure!

Louise opens the passenger door.

Greg walks to the driver's side and gestures to Paul to wind the window down.

Paul starts the ignition and the engine purrs, he opens his side window, and turns towards the vague direction of Greg, squinting in the sun.

GREG

Thanks for that, you'll have to...ahem come again!

PAUL

(half-heartedly)
Yeah... I might just do that.

GREG

Well it's my birthday coming up soon. Be a nice present..?

Paul nods and smiles as he rolls the window back up.

Greg walks back to join Amanda, putting his arm around her waist.

The car reverses, turns, and heads away from the house.

INT. CAR

Louise turns around as best she can to wave goodbye to the couple, who are still waving enthusiastically.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE

Greg and Amanda, still waving as the car pulls away. They speak without looking at each other.

AMANDA
That went down well.

GREG
(laughing)
I always do, given the chance!

Amanda groans, pulls Greg's hand away from around her waist, and continues waving.

INT. CAR

Paul shifts his focus to the rear-view mirror without moving his head, to take a final glimpse of the couple, before they join the road, and are away out of sight.

Louise turns to Paul.

LOUISE
Well?

Paul responds to the question without taking his eyes from the road.

PAUL
Well what?

LOUISE
Did you enjoy yourself? Was it
everything you imagined?

PAUL
Yeah, I guess.

He leans over and turns on the stereo, turning up the volume.

EXT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE- DAY

A semi-detached house in a pretty little suburban area.

Two large baskets hang either side of the front door, their flowers and foliage spilling out, decorating the wall.

On the front yard there is a blue mini, and space for another vehicle.

The Jaguar pulls in beside the mini and Paul and Louise get out.

Paul locks the car and they head towards the front door in silence. He fumbles through his keys until he finds the right one and unlocks the door.

Louise enters, followed by Paul, still in complete silence.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE-KITCHEN

A granite island stands in the middle of the room with bar stools around it, and a fruit bowl in the centre.

Paul drops the keys into the fruit bowl, which is devoid of fruit, to join a pen and the other set of keys already in there.

He grabs the kettle, and approaches the sink.

PAUL
(shouting)
Do you want a drink?

LOUISE (O.S)
Yes please, babe.

He stares out of the kitchen window whilst the kettle is filling, lost in thought.

The kettle overflows. It takes a few seconds for Paul to register what has happened.

PAUL
SHIT!

He switches off the tap, and empties a little of the water from the kettle and carries it back and continues making the coffees.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE-LIVING ROOM

Louise is curled up on a large leather sofa, reading a magazine. The television is on in the background.

Paul enters, placing Louise's drink down on the coffee table in front of her, silently.

She reaches for her mug and takes a gulp.

 LOUISE
 (disgusted)
 My God! How many sugars have you
 put in this?

 PAUL
 Umm, one I think.

 LOUISE
 Taste it. There's loads in here,
 it's undrinkable!

Paul takes the mug from Louise.

He takes a sip and replies without any obvious reaction.

 PAUL
 Yeah, I must have given you mine.

He goes back into the kitchen and returns with another mug.

She takes a sip, and relaxes back onto the sofa with her magazine.

Paul goes through into the hallway, leaving the other drink on the table and heads up the stairs.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE-BATHROOM

A large minimally furnished bathroom with tiled walls and floor and a big white roll-top bath in front of the window.

Paul enters and walks over to the bath, and turns on the tap. Holding his hand under the running water until it turns warm, he then puts in the bath plug.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE-LIVING ROOM

Louise watches a documentary about crime scene investigations.

Hearing a muffled melodic beeping noise, Louise gets up and retrieves her handbag from the coffee table.

Sitting back down, she searches through her bag, and pulls out her mobile phone.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

The screen reads 'One new message'.

Louise presses a button and reads the text message. She smiles to herself, looks around suspiciously and breaks into a huge grin.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

We see the text message which had given Louise such delight. It reads 'Can't stop thinking about you. Need you. Want you. Meet me soon. Just us xx'.

Still smiling to herself, she types her response with a fevered urgency.

Louise, still smiling, places the phone back into her bag, and lies back on the sofa.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE-BATHROOM

Paul lies in the bath, only his face sticks out of the water, again he is staring into the distance, lost in himself.

A vibrating noise startles Paul from the trance.

Sitting up, he looks towards his trousers, which are in a heap on the floor with the other discarded clothes.

He strains to grab them without getting out of the bath, and pulls them along the floor towards him.

Blotting his hands dry on the fabric, he takes the phone out from his trouser pocket, lifting it up towards him.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

The screen reads 'One new message'.

Paul slowly reads the message on his phone, and his face turns to a look of sheer panic.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

The message reads 'Loved last night. Want to see you again. Never felt like this. Text back x'.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

Both vehicles are parked in front of the house.

A cat basks in the sun, lying on a chink of light on a shadow on the ground cast by branches of a tree.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

The living room is huge, with white walls adorned with paintings and lots of expensive looking antiques scattered throughout.

Greg and Amanda sit on separate sofas; He on a two seater, she reclining on a full size.

A plasma television hangs on the wall commanding their attention. As they watch the trashy daytime television programme, Greg suddenly stands up.

AMANDA

Where are you going?

Greg turns to Amanda.

GREG

I'm gonna go to the gym for a bit.

AMANDA

O.K. honey, what time will you be back?

Greg looks up towards the clock on the wall, seeing that the time is 16:32, then turns back to Amanda.

GREG

Dunno, about seven-ish, is that O.K.? I really can't stomach anymore daytime telly!

Amanda cranes her neck around to check the time, then resumes watching television.

AMANDA

Yeah, fine. Will you bring me a
bottle of gin on your way home?

Greg stoops to pick up his mobile phone from the chair arm,
and heads to the door.

GREG

No probs...Later.

He dashes upstairs to get his gym bag. He gets his kit and
heads away.

AMANDA

(shouting)

Bye.

She picks up the remote control for the television, turning
down the volume, and strains to hear the front door bang
shut, followed shortly by the car door.

She smiles to herself and takes her mobile phone from out of
her trouser pocket.

The annoying little beeps can be heard as Amanda searches
through the address book.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

The fumes are spilling out of the exhaust of the 4x4, and
the engine is ticking over.

INT. 4X4- CONTINUOUS

Greg fiddles with with his phone. He finds the number he is
looking for, and holds it up to his ear.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM- MOMENTS LATER

Louise is interrupted from her viewing by her phone ringing
from within the bag on the coffee table. She springs into
life, jumping up to retrieve it.

She answers clumsily, almost whispering.

LOUISE

Hel...Hello?

(beat)

Yeah I can talk, he's in the bath.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S BATHROOM

Paul has a white bath towel tied around his waist, he wipes the steam from the circular shaving mirror above the sink using his hand.

He fills the sink with water, and applies shaving foam to his face.

His moment of calm is interrupted by his mobile phone bursting into life, vibrating the tiles on the floor where it is placed, near the bath.

He wipes the water and cream from his hand on the towel covering him, picks up the phone and holds it away from his face, to avoid it getting covered in shaving foam.

PAUL

(quietly)

Hi.

(beat)

Yeah I got your message, I was in the bath.

(beat)

She's downstairs watching T.V.

(beat)

I don't know...I'm not sure how I'm feeling.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Amanda is still sitting on the sofa, television on muted volume. She is talking into her phone.

AMANDA

Do you wanna meet up? Greg's out for a couple of hours.

(beat)

Yeah, the gym. You're only twenty five minutes away, we could always meet midway.

(beat)

I know it's only been a few hours, but I need to see you, every time I close my eyes you're there. Just want to talk about it.

INT. 4X4

Greg continues his conversation as he drives along one handed.

GREG

Look, I've told her I'm going to the gym 'til seven, meet me, we can talk things through.

(beat)

I know it's fucked up, but talking isn't a sin.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM

Louise is still on the phone, she stands up and heads towards the kitchen.

LOUISE

O.K., a quick chat. THAT'S ALL.

(beat)

I'm gonna leave him a note.

She tears a piece of paper from the notepad next to the house phone in the living room, and walks through to the kitchen.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S KITCHEN

Louise enters the kitchen and grabs a pen out of the fruit bowl, still holding the phone to her ear.

She writes 'Gone to Mum's, Back at 8'.

LOUISE

Right, I'm on my way.

She presses a button, places the phone in her pocket, and leaves.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S BATHROOM

PAUL

(still whispering)

How can we even meet up?

Paul struggles to dress himself using only one hand, whilst continuing the conversation.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Look, I'll see if I can make an
excuse. I'll text you back.

He hangs up the call without saying goodbye, and heads off
out of the bathroom back downstairs.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM

Paul enters the room, and sees that Louise is no longer on
the sofa.

He looks around and notices the television is still turned
on.

PAUL
(Loudly)
Louise?

He walks over and switches off the television, and through
to the kitchen, returning with Louise's note in his hand.

He reaches into his pocket and produces his phone.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

The words appear letter by letter as he types the message
into his phone 'She's out. Meet you at nature reserve car
park'.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

The house is still drenched in sunlight, a cat stalks its
imaginary prey on the drive, which is now devoid of cars.

EXT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE- DAY

Paul and Louise's house stands empty. Both cars missing from
the front.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. OFFICE- DAY

The office is a hive of activity, as phones ring, faxes are received and smartly dressed people type onto their computers. Greg is one of these office workers.

He is in mid flow entering data onto a spreadsheet as the desk phone makes him lose his concentration with a shrill ring.

He stops typing and picks up the phone.

GREG

Hello, Greg Ford speaking.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Amanda, in her usual position on the sofa, T.V. on and magazines sprawled on the table. She speaks into the phone.

AMANDA

Hi Greg, it's only me. Can you pick a take-away up on your way home? I haven't had time to go shopping.

INT. OFFICE- DAY

Greg looks incensed that his wife had interrupted him with such a trivial matter.

GREG

(annoyed)

Yeah, sure. Indian or Chinese?

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Amanda looks pleased at the response.

AMANDA

Errr Chinese. Oh and can you pick me up a bottle of Gin please.

She bites her bottom lip, unsure of the reaction.

INT. OFFICE- DAY

Greg rolls his eyes at the request.

GREG
Yes. Bye Amanda.

He slams down the phone before Amanda could even bid farewell, and goes back to filling in the spreadsheet, hitting the keys heavily.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE- DUSK

The sun is just setting as the Jaguar swerves from the road to pull up alongside the Mini.

The engine is turned off and Paul emerges from the car, slams and locks the doors, then walks towards the front door.

He walks in through the entrance hall and into the living room.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE-LIVING ROOM

Louise lies on the sofa watching T.V.

PAUL
Hi.

Amanda stays focused on the television, as she half-heartedly responds.

LOUISE
Hi.

Paul approaches the sofa, and gestures for Louise to move her feet so he can sit down, which she grudgingly does.

He sits, and Louise puts her feet back into the position they were in previously, laying them heavily over Paul's legs.

There is a long awkward silence as they both stare at the television.

PAUL
What's for tea?

LOUISE
Lamb casserole, it's in the oven,
be ready in twenty minutes.

PAUL
Have I got time to jump in the bath
then?

LOUISE
Yes, if you're quick.

Paul scoops up Louise's legs and swings them down from his lap, gets up, and disappears to the bathroom.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Amanda, sprawled out on the sofa, watches television and flicks through trashy magazines.

Greg returns from work, paper bag filled with steaming food in one hand, and a large bottle of gin in the other.

GREG
Are we having trays or eating at
the dining table?

AMANDA
Just get trays. I can't be bothered
to set the table.

Greg walks through towards the kitchen as Amanda stays focused on the T.V.

GREG (O.S.)
Haven't you even got the plates and
cutlery out? What the fuck do you
do all day?

Amanda heaves herself off the sofa and stomps towards the kitchen.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- KITCHEN

Greg unpacks the food from the paper bag as Amanda enters the room and notices the gin on the work surface.

She pushes past him and opens the cupboard, takes out a glass, and slams it down next to the bottle.

Greg watches her, a look of anger growing on his face.

GREG

Oh yes. See to yourself. I thought you were actually coming to help, but no, not when there's alcohol to be had.

Amanda tips the bottle and fills the glass nearly to the top.

AMANDA

Go fuck yourself!

GREG

(angry)

I might as well go fuck myself, I'm not getting any from you. Gin. That's all that matters to you.

AMANDA

(snarling)

I don't know how you dare. The first thing you do when you come in is pour yourself a Jack Daniels, but that's okay I suppose?

Greg hurls down the carton of food onto the floor, which bursts leaving a steaming pile of noodles on the tiles.

Barging past her, he grabs a glass from the cupboard, and stomps over to the bottle of Jack Daniels next to the fridge.

His hands are shaking as he pours a shot of the bourbon.

GREG

(voice steadily raising)

I have one shot when I get in from work. One fucking shot. Not the whole bottle. I really can't handle this anymore, Amanda. I've about had enough.

Amanda looks unphased as she knocks back the remainder of the gin in the glass, and pours herself another.

AMANDA

(strangely calm)

You know where the door is if you've had enough. I'm sure as hell not going to stop you.

Greg slams down his now empty glass on the work surface, and steps towards her.

GREG

No, I bet you're not.

He points nastily towards her face, snarling.

GREG (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna walk away from all this am I? You've got me by the fucking balls with that fucking pre-nup. Why the fuck did I sign that? I must have been mad.

Amanda smiles ever-so slightly.

GREG (CONT'D) (cont'd)

If I go, I walk away with nothing. I know that's what you want.

(beat)

Well I've worked bloody hard for all this, and I'm certainly not handing it all over to you on a plate. I'd rather stay, thank you very much.

Her smile widens.

GREG (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Yeah well just remember, you signed it too. If you leave, you'll get fuck all either.

Her smile drops a little, as Greg spins around and thunders away out of the house and into the car.

EXT. 4X4- MINUTES LATER

Greg sits for a while and gathers himself, fighting back tears.

He leans over to the glove compartment, and pulls out a tatty packet of cigarettes. He feels a pang of guilt as he effortlessly takes one from the packet and up to his mouth.

From the glove box he also produces a lighter, strikes it and slumps back, blowing out plumes of grey smoke, enjoying the flavour he'd missed for so long.

GREG

(under his breath)

God, I've missed you!

He takes another long, satisfying drag on his cigarette, and slowly gets up out of the car, clouds of smoke escaping around him, slams the door, and returns to the house.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

As Greg enters, he sees Amanda sitting on the sofa, half empty glass of gin in one hand, mobile phone in the other.

The gin bottle rests on the coffee table, half empty, little pools of alcohol dotted all around the glass surface.

Greg sits himself down on the two seater, safe from the glare of Amanda.

She raises her glass to her lips, he notices her make-up has run slightly- she'd been crying too.

GREG

(sympathetically)

Amanda, look, I'm worried about your drinking.

(beat)

Look, I know you're unhappy at the moment. I'm unhappy too. We didn't used to be, though, did we? I made one mistake, Amanda, one little mistake, and God, that was two years ago now, I thought we'd sorted all this out. Water under the bridge?

Amanda gazes down into her drink, listening.

GREG (CONT'D)

I know things aren't right, but your drinking is just making it worse. You can't even bear to be in the same fucking room as me, how do you think that makes me feel?

AMANDA

(still staring into her glass)

You drink JD everyday. That's OK?

Greg sighs, not bothering to retaliate, it being pointless.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I....I've got a lot on my mind, that's all. I think I... might be depressed.

GREG
(sarcastically)
You think?
(beat)
Look, we're going to have to work
through this. We've been together
too long, something's got to be
worth saving.

She slowly looks up, tears flooding down her cheeks.

AMANDA
I don't know if it is. I can't just
walk away though, I have to see
things through.

GREG
(surprised)
What do you mean?

She shrugs, and takes another sip.

GREG (CONT'D)
You mean that fucking pre-nup don't
you? Trying to drive me away. Think
again, Amanda.

He stands up, composes himself and sits down next to Amanda.

GREG (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I'm not at work tomorrow, why don't
we have a day out, a nice meal
somewhere, just us? Eh? Clean
slate. I know I've not been around
a lot recently, but neither have
you. Let's have a date. Start
again.

AMANDA
I've made arrangements for
tomorrow.

She sips the last of her drink.

GREG
Yeah, well, you know what?
(shouts)
SO HAVE I!

He gets up and heads for the door, and turns around to face
her before he goes up the stairs.

GREG (CONT'D)
Thanks for the effort, Amanda!

He slams the door behind him.

Amanda casually picks up the bottle, pours herself another drink, and checks her phone.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM

Paul and Louise sit side by side on the sofa, eating the casserole from lap trays as they watch television. They eat in silence.

The advertisements finish and the next programme starts.

The intro sequence to a programme called 'Wife swap'.

Hastily Paul grabs the remote from the chair arm almost knocking the meal from his lap, and flips channels to some true life crime investigation show, looking uncomfortable.

They continue eating.

PAUL
Day off tomorrow, thank God. It's been all work and no play lately.

LOUISE
Oh shit! I forgot you'd got a rest day, Mum's asked me to go shopping in London tomorrow, you know she doesn't like driving in the city, and she's absolutely shit at parking! You don't mind do you?

PAUL
No, don't worry about it, I might dig the old golf clubs out and have a few rounds at Kings' Green with the lads.

Louise nods, as they continue eating whilst watching the programme.

Paul stands up, takes the tray from Louise's lap and goes through to the kitchen.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S KITCHEN

Paul places the trays down on the island, fills the sink to wash the dirty pots and takes his phone out from his pocket.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

The words appear on the screen as Paul types them 'Day off tomorrow, she's out. All alone :(x'.

He places the phone back in his pocket, drops the pots in the sink and washes them, placing them on the draining board to drip-dry.

He checks his phone again and smiles.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

The message reads 'So am I. Hook up tomorrow. Need you again. Call me in morning :) xx'.

Grinning from ear to ear, he switches his phone off, replaces it in his pocket, and returns to the living room.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM

Paul sits back down, and they continue to watch the television.

Paul snuggles up to Louise and tries to nestle into her, but she silently pushes him away.

PAUL

Louise, don't be so hateful.

LOUISE

I don't want a hug. I feel like you're suffocating me, sometimes. I like my own space.

PAUL

I know you do. That's why I've been resigned to the sofa for the last week, while you have your own space, in our double bed.

LOUISE

Stop it now. I'm trying to watch telly.

PAUL

Yeah, let's focus on another shit documentary, instead of our farce of a relationship, hey honey?

LOUISE

Whatever.

Paul sighs, as he edges away even further.

WE FOCUS ON THE TELEVISION

The programme on is called 'The perfect murder?', and consists of a montage of quickly edited images accompanied by the voice-over of the HOST.

We see a photograph of a middle aged man.

HOST (V.O.)

...when Adrian's lifeless body was discovered two days later, slumped in his potting shed, no trace of any poisonous substance could be found. Had he simply had a heart attack or passed away painlessly in his sleep?

The image changes to a flame-haired middle aged woman.

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

Janet mourned the death of her husband, but quickly got on with her own life. Almost too quickly! She was re-married within six months, and soon, once again, Janet was in the spotlight.

The image on screen changes yet again, to show a picture of a man in his late fifties.

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

Janet's new husband, Kirk, fell ill at work, and was rushed to the hospital by the emergency services, where he was continually monitored as his condition rapidly deteriorated.

A bustling Laboratory is now on screen, with people in white coats and latex gloves go about their business.

HOST (V.O.) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 ..And it was here, in this lab that
 the shocking discovery was made-
 Kirk's blood samples showed a high
 dosage of a chemical called 'D4
 Complex', which, although outlawed
 in America, is still used
 throughout Europe in ant powder.

The image changes to that of a container of high strength
 ant killer.

HOST (V.O.) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 The D4 complex is completely
 tasteless and odourless, and attacks
 the body's central nervous system
 when ingested, leaving no trace
 within as little as 24 hours.

We see the picture of Janet again, with cage bars crudely
 superimposed over it, with the words 'BUSTED!'

HOST (V.O.) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 Janet pleaded guilty to the
 attempted murder of Kirk, and also
 owned up to poisoning her last two
 husbands, all for the inheritance.

RETURN TO SCENE

Paul stands up, as the sequence finishes, and goes off into
 another room.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE- DAY

It is another fine autumn day, both cars are parked in front
 of the house.

The front bedroom curtains are quickly drawn back by Louise.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S BEDROOM

The bedroom has cream painted walls with framed pictures and
 photographs hanging on them. A double bed stands along the
 wall, with wardrobes opposite.

Louise lets go of the curtains and turns around towards the
 bed, which is empty and unmade.

She tightens the cord on her dressing gown, and plumps up the pillows and pulls the quilt tidy.

She gives a pillow a final plump, and heads to the wardrobe, taking out a pair of blue denim jeans, and a scarlet coloured top, placing them neatly on the foot of the bed.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM

The room is in darkness apart from the flickering light from the television in the corner.

Louise creeps into the room, now fully clothed, and walks over to the curtains and heaves them open.

Paul awakes with a start on the sofa, curled up under a blanket. He blinks, and shields the sun from his eyes with his hand.

PAUL
(half asleep)
Ugh. Morning. Any chance of a
coffee?

Louise walks past him and through into the kitchen. He hears faint clinking noises, as she prepares a drink.

Paul sits up and flicks about the various channels on the television, not really paying much attention.

Louise enters, places the cup into Paul's outstretched hands, and heads to the door.

She turns and glances in Paul's general direction.

LOUISE
Right I'm off, Don't wait up.

PAUL
Yeah, fine. Later.

She closes the door behind her.

Paul takes a sip of his drink, scratches his crotch and puts the cup on the floor.

He slouches forward, and puts his head in his hands, and sighs.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

Both the cars stand on the drive.

The Venetian blind is being opened in an upstairs window.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- BEDROOM- DAY

Amanda walks away from the window, she is fully dressed, smart but casual, in a short skirt and a white T-shirt.

Greg is in the bed, awake but not fully alert.

AMANDA

Right, I'm off.

GREG

Where are you going? You never said.

Amanda stalls slightly, turning away, thinking.

AMANDA

I'm...meeting my Mother, shopping, catch up, dinner. Not seen her for a while.

Greg doesn't respond, but sinks slightly into the bed.

Amanda leaves the room, descends the stairs, and Greg hears the faint clunk of the front door closing.

Greg smiles to himself...waiting.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

Outside the 4x4 stands alone on the drive.

The sound of a car in the distance grows steadily louder, until eventually the Mini comes into view, and parks beside the 4x4 on the gravel driveway.

The engine stops.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- BEDROOM

Greg, still in the bed, sits up with a jolt, an excited look upon his face- almost a wry smile.

He listens intently to the car door being slammed shut, the footsteps across the gravel, and leaps to his feet almost instantaneously with the knocking on the door.

Completely naked, he skids across the floor, racing to the stairs, stopping only to put a photograph of himself and Amanda face down, on the dresser.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- CORRIDOR

Greg heads clumsily down the stairs, towards the front door, through which a blur of a scarlet red top can be seen.

He stops in his tracks momentarily, gathering himself, and walks calmly towards the door, reaching for the handle.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- BEDROOM- LATER

The blinds are now closed, Greg is lying on the bed, smiling and eyes closed.

He opens his eyes for a moment, looking down, guiding with his hands. He grabs lustfully, slightly pulling, then pushing, his lovers hair cascading out between his fingers.

We hear Greg's thoughts.

GREG (V.O)

Is this wrong?

(beat)

No-ones getting hurt.

(beat)

What is cheating anyway? A kiss? A quick fumble round the back of a bar? When I'm with Amanda, I'm with someone else mentally anyway, Is that cheating?

(beat)

Where does the line start, and how do I know when I've crossed it?

He hunches forward, throws his head back, and groans contentedly.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S KITCHEN- NIGHT

Paul sits, wearing a white dressing gown, at the island in the centre of the kitchen. He casually sips a beer whilst flicking through a golf magazine.

He looks across towards the living room door after hearing activity in the hallway.

Louise breezes into the kitchen, opens the fridge to take out a jug of water, and pours herself a glass.

PAUL
You're late, it's nearly ten..

LOUISE
(snappily)
I didn't know I was being timed.

She takes a big swig from her glass, finishing it, and places the empty glass in the sink.

PAUL
How was your Mum?

LOUISE
Fine.

PAUL
You didn't buy anything?

LOUISE
No, only dinner.

She leaves the kitchen mid sentence and heads upstairs.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Greg and Amanda sit in silence on the sofas watching nothing in particular on television.

Greg holds a shot of bourbon, and Amanda has a glass of gin. The gin bottle sits on the coffee table.

The silence is abruptly broken.

GREG
We really need to talk, Amanda.

AMANDA
(staring ahead)
What about?

Greg turns to face her.

GREG

What about?

(raising his voice slightly)

About us for fucks sake. We can't
carry on like this, living like
sister and brother. You're my wife.
Does that mean nothing?

Amanda shrugs, still avoiding all eye contact.

GREG (CONT'D)

Look, I wish I could walk away, cos
God knows I've tried to....

(beat)

Please Amanda, help me out here.

(shouting)

Look at me for fucks sake.

Amanda ignores him completely, sipping her gin.

Greg scoops his phone up off the coffee table, and heads
towards the hallway.

He turns around just before he leaves.

GREG (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I need to get out. Clear my head,
I'll be back later.

(beat)

You're fucking killing me, Amanda.

Amanda mutters to herself, under her breath.

AMANDA

Now there's an idea!

He shuts the door hard, causing Amanda to move her gaze from
the television slightly.

She hears the front door slam, and resumes her viewing and
drinking.

EXT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HOUSE- NIGHT

The stars are twinkling, a warm, clear, full-mooned night.
Both cars are parked in front of the house.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S LIVING ROOM

The room is in darkness, apart from the glow being emitted from the television.

Paul lies on the sofa under a blanket, smoking and drinking beer from the bottle.

He slowly inhales, deep in thought, and blows two strands of smoke out of his nostrils, which flickers under the light from the television.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S BEDROOM

Louise lies in the bed, half clothed, thumbing through a magazine.

Her phone rings, and she searches for it under the crumpled bedclothes. She answers in a whisper.

LOUISE

Hello?

She looks pleased, smiles, and looks around to make sure the bedroom door is closed.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Hello, You! I had a fantastic day today....

She slowly slides her hands down the front of her knickers.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I can still smell you!

She giggles slightly, and throws herself back onto the bed.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I need to be with you too, once a week is not enough. I hate my life here. I fucking despise him.

She takes her hand from out of her underwear, and leans up on her elbows, listening.

LOUISE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

(almost shouting)

Are you fucking with me?

She realises her voice is getting louder with excitement, and forces herself to whisper again.

LOUISE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Are you fucking with me? Don't fuck
with me.

She looks around suspiciously, checking Paul is not within earshot, and smiles.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE- NIGHT

Greg stumbles along the semi-lit, deserted lane, holding his mobile phone up to his ear. He looks left, then right, checking.

 GREG
 (quietly)
I really can't handle being with
her anymore. I need to be with you.
I need us. She's fucking poison!

He heads to a little wall at the side of the lane, and perches uncomfortably on it.

 GREG (CONT'D)
I mean it, true to God, I need that
bitch out of my life. I'm gonna do
her in. Don't know how, but it's
the only way, the bitch is going to
fucking die.

A tear rolls down his cheek, although his face shows no emotion.

He concentrates to hear the conversation, suddenly his expression becomes puzzled.

 GREG (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 (loudly)
Ant Powder?

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S BEDROOM- MORNING

The curtains are drawn, to little effect, as the sunlight pours through the thin, cream fabric.

Louise lies motionless in the bed, blocking out the light with an eyemask.

She is suddenly awoken by a banging on the front door, sitting up with a jolt and hurriedly slipping the mask up over her head.

Another knock on the door, and Louise is up on her feet and scurrying downstairs in her nightclothes to answer the door.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S HALLWAY

Louise comes skidding down the stairs towards the impatient rapping at the door.

The door is opened by a curious Louise.

She is cheerily greeted by the postman.

POSTMAN

Good morning! Package to sign for.

He hands over a little hardbacked notepad, and points where to sign.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

Here love.

She scribbles her signature in the boxes and hands back the notebook.

LOUISE

Thank you.

He pops the book into his pocket, puts the pen behind his ear, and hands over the parcel.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Thank you. Bye.

POSTMAN

Bye, love.

He turns and heads back to the road, and climbs into the post-van, as Louise excitedly checks the mail.

She scans the address label on the brown package in her hands, and rips open the top, excitedly.

She peers inside and a look of panic spreads over her face, slowing changing into a smile.

She reaches in, and takes out the white plastic container. On the front is printed in big garish letters 'Ant Away', with a picture of an ant within a red circle, with a red line running across it.

She turns the container to see the back.

CLOSE UP: ANT POWDER BOTTLE.

Louise's finger scans the ingredient panel, and stops halfway the list on 'Active ingredient: D4 Complex Compound'.

She taps the word with her fingernail, reassuringly.

She looks relieved, drops the carton back in the package, and runs upstairs.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S BEDROOM

Louise flings open the wardrobe, stuffing the package behind a pile of neatly folded clothes on the shelf.

She closes the wardrobe, and heads back towards the bed, searching for her mobile phone, eventually locating it under the pillows.

She frantically presses buttons on the phone, looking excited, then nervous.

CLOSE UP: MOBILE PHONE

We read the message she has typed; 'Its here! He's out til 5, come round if you can x x x :).

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- KITCHEN- DAY

Greg, in his dressing gown, opens the cupboard and takes out a small white saucer, placing it down on the worktop.

He gently fills it with milk and replaces the carton in the refrigerator.

He crouches down, searching in the cupboard under the sink, rummaging amongst the various household items, finally laying his hands on the container stashed away right at the back.

He turns around checking he is still alone, then brings out a container of ant powder.

Standing up, he carefully opens the container and sprinkles a small amount into the saucer of milk, stirring it with his finger.

Replacing the container to its hiding place under the sink, he washes his hands, and picks up the saucer.

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

Greg appears from around the side of the house, and places the saucer down in the shade of a tree.

The nearby bushes rustle, and the cat emerges, affectionately rubbing its body around his shins, purring.

Greg steps back, and the cat, noticing the milk, strolls towards the saucer and begins lapping it up, finishing in no time.

Greg bends over, picks up the empty saucer and walks away.

FADE TO

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- NIGHT

Greg's 4x4 pulls to a halt outside the house.

He gets out and quickly scans the drive, struggling to see in the darkness, before entering the front door.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- KITCHEN

Greg walks in and notices Amanda in tears, make up streaming down her face, glass of gin in hand.

GREG

Amanda?

She takes a big swig of her drink.

AMANDA

(sobbing)

Sooty's dead. I found him in the garden.

Greg gets a glass from the cupboard, and pours himself a shot of bourbon.

GREG

My God, poor Sooty. He was only six. What happened to him?

Amanda replies, fighting back the tears.

AMANDA

I don't know, I thought he was asleep on the garden, and I kept shouting him and shouting him, but he didn't move.

Greg hugs Amanda, consoling her.

GREG

Where is he?

AMANDA

I buried him at the bottom, next to the pond.

Greg smiles slightly, still hugging his wife, rubbing her back.

She pulls away to top up her drink, still sobbing.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I'm going to bed, I've had enough today.

She leaves the kitchen, glass in hand.

Greg waits until he hears her slow, heavy footsteps ascending the stairs, and takes out his phone, dialing a number.

GREG

(whispering)

Can you talk?

(beat)

O.K. I'll be quick, It fucking worked!

(beat)

Yeah, she buried it today.

(beat)

Of course I am! Like you told me, it leaves no trace whatsoever in the body, it's foolproof. It's the only way we can be together. I've got a training weekend coming up, I'll do it then.

(beat)

You come with me, it's only in the next county.

(beat)
You'll think of something.
(beat)
Yep, In the gin!

FADE TO

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN

EXT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- DAY

The boot of the 4x4 is open, as Greg places a small suitcase inside, and heads in through the open front door.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- KITCHEN

Amanda makes coffee, as Greg enters, placing a small weekend bag on the work surface.

He picks up a pile of paperwork and folders, a pre-packaged sandwich from the fridge, and a bottle of bourbon ,placing them in the bag.

AMANDA
You away then?

GREG
Yeah, I'll be back Monday.

He reluctantly kisses Amanda on the cheek, smiling slightly as he catches a glimpse of the bottle of Gin on the worktop.

He picks up the bag, and heads out the door.

INT. PAUL AND LOUISE'S BEDROOM- DAY

Paul is lying on the bed, half clothed, as Louise finishes packing her weekend bag.

LOUISE
Right I'm all packed. Two days of girlie fun! I can't remember the last time I went on a hen party.

PAUL
(laughing)
You have a good time, don't drink too much!

LOUISE
I won't! That London won't know
what hit it!

Paul smiles, as Louise zips up her bag, gives him a peck on the cheek, and heads downstairs.

PAUL
(shouting)
Be good!

AMANDA (O.S.)
I always am!

The door slams in the distance.

FADE TO

EXT. CONFERENCING CENTRE- DAY

The huge old building bustles with activity, as cars pull into the large car park, and people enter and emerge from the main reception doors.

Smokers gather to the side of the entrance.

INT. HOTEL ROOM- DAY

A large comfortable hotel room, with a double bed, a chest of drawers with a T.V on top, and a writing desk, where Greg is seated, wearing a smart grey suit.

He reads through paperwork, occasionally stopping to check the time on his wristwatch.

A gentle knocking is heard at the door. Greg turns his head.

GREG
(raising his voice)
It's open.

The door creaks slowly open.

GREG (CONT'D)
Hi!

CLOSE ON: LOUISE

LOUISE
(nervously)
Have you done it, the ant powder?

CLOSE ON: GREG

GREG
 (smiling)
 Oh yes! Four big spoons full!

CLOSE ON: LOUISE

LOUISE
 In the booze?

The camera pulls away to reveal Louise is actually standing in Amanda's bedroom, with Amanda sitting smiling on the bed.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- BEDROOM

AMANDA
 Yes, In his Jack Daniels. One swig...
 (laughing)
 And when they find his lifeless body slumped at the training centre with no signs of foul play...

Amanda rises from the bed, and embraces Louise passionately.

AMANDA (cont'd)
 ...we can be together...

INT. HOTEL ROOM- DAY

GREG
 ...forever!

Greg stands up from the desk, and grabs Paul, who is dressed in denim jeans and a bright red T-shirt, in a slow, lingering embrace.

He reaches for the bottle of bourbon, and pours two glasses, offering one to Paul, he takes it, shaking slightly.

GREG (CONT'D)
 I can't believe you managed to get hold of the stuff. You sly old fox. You hot...sexy...well hung...sly old fox. I think this calls for a little celebration, don't you?

He charges his glass against Paul's.

GREG (CONT'D) (cont'd)
To the pre-nup!

PAUL
To the pre-nup!

They knock back their drinks.

INT. GREG AND AMANDA'S COUNTRY HOUSE- BEDROOM

Amanda carefully pours two large glasses of gin, handing one to Louise.

They charge their glasses.

AMANDA
To us!

LOUISE
To us!

FADE OUT