

JOHNNY: Particularly when you wake me up the way you did this morning.

JUDY giggles.

JUDY: I don't know what you're talking about. Tea?

JUDY pours the tea.

JOHNNY: Are you happy, darling?

JUDY and JOHNNY

JUDY: Terribly. Aren't you?

JOHNNY: Oh yes, appallingly.

JUDY: Appallingly? I like appallingly.

JOHNNY: It's disgraceful. Shouldn't be allowed.

I keep thinking we'll get a letter. 'Happiness hasn't come off the ration, you know.'

JUDY: A letter from

JOHNNY: The police? Something about public decency.

JUDY: Like a stiff letter from the bank.

JOHNNY: 'It has come to our attention, Mr Martin, that you and Mrs Martin are Offensively Happy. We ask that you desist at once. This uxoriousness is quite unacceptable.'

JUDY: Ux

JOHNNY: Uxoriousness. It means a surfeit of spousal affection. It isn't at all the done thing for a man to be so keen on his own wife.

JUDY: Then you're an uxor.

JOHNNY: No, I think uxor is wife.

JUDY: Is it?

JOHNNY: I think so. Latin.

JUDY: I'm sure you're right.

JOHNNY: So you're the uxor that I'm all uxorious about.

JUDY laughs.

JUDY: You're cheerful.

JOHNNY: It popped into my head, as I was lying in the bath you ran for me, that I will have nothing to do at the weekend.

JUDY: Nothing to do?

JOHNNY: To the house. No tiling or plastering, no dust sheets. Nothing left.

JUDY: You've done a wonderful job.

JOHNNY: You as well. In your dungarees, scarf round your head like Rosie the Riveter.

JUDY: Will you know what to do with yourself?

JOHNNY: I expect we'll find something.

JUDY: We could go dancing?

JOHNNY: Yes, perhaps.

JUDY: Whatever you want to do, darling.

JOHNNY: Sickeningly happy.

Do you know, I'm so contented I'm not sure I even care if the promotion doesn't come off.

JUDY: Oh?

JOHNNY: I look around and think well, what more do I need? My wife, my beautiful finished house. The money would come in handy, but we don't *need* it, do we? We've got everything.

JUDY: No of course.

JOHNNY: Asking for more might be greedy. Knowing I'm utterly content with what I've got.

JUDY: Yes no that's wonderful, darling.

Is it today?

JOHNNY: Is what?

JUDY: Will you find out today?

JOHNNY: I don't know. Soon, I think. Now, marmalade or lemon curd?

JUDY: It's wonderful you're feeling so philosophical about it.

Have some marmalade, it's a new batch.

Only don't let it hold you back from making every effort. You've been there the longest, by rights they should have made you Assistant Manager some time ago, it's only fair.

JOHNNY: You always defend me.

JUDY: Of course I do I'm your wife.

You deserve that job. Don't miss out by being diffident.

Or late.

JOHNNY: No, alright.

JOHNNY stands up, draining his tea cup.

Delicious breakfast, thank you.

He goes to the hallway and puts on his hat and coat. JUDY picks up his lunch box and follows him.

JUDY: I'm so proud of you.

She hands him his lunch box and his briefcase. He kisses her.

Have a good day, darling.

JOHNNY: Same to you. Don't buy any chickens.

JUDY: I promise. Goodbye.

JOHNNY goes out of the front door with his briefcase and lunch box. JUDY waves and smiles from the door as he goes down the path.

JUDY comes back to the kitchen, goes to a drawer and takes out a laptop computer.

She brings it back to the kitchen table, opens it and sits down.

SCENE 2

FRAN

Afternoon, the same day. JUDY and FRAN are in the kitchen.

JUDY is decanting some modern groceries into 1950s tins and boxes and putting them away.

FRAN sits with a cup of tea. There are a number of vintage dresses slung over the back of one of the dining chairs.

JUDY: Johnny?

FRAN: Yes.

JUDY: My Johnny?

FRAN: I was surprised because you don't go in the shopping centre.

JUDY: We didn't agree with them building it.

FRAN: That's what I thought.

JUDY: And we loved the old cereal factory, we were heartbroken they knocked it down.

FRAN: It was derelict by then, wasn't it? Probably a hazard.

JUDY: They could have propped it up, the what d'you call it, the front of it.

FRAN: The façade.

JUDY: Façade, exactly. That was everyone's horizon, that was the face of our town since the twenties.

I don't expect it registers as a protest, just the two of us boycotting, but still.

Grab the Self-Raising, will you?

FRAN does.

He takes his lunch with him, he doesn't go out for pizza.

FRAN: It looked exactly like him.

JUDY: You were in there?

FRAN: Going past the window. I was going to wave, but it was too far.

JUDY: Did you see who

FRAN: No, I didn't recognise

JUDY: It probably wasn't him.

FRAN: I recognised his suit.

I don't know who she was.

JUDY: Probably someone from the office.

FRAN: Dark hair.

JUDY: Right.

FRAN: You know them all from the office, do you?

JUDY: Yes, I've met them.

FRAN: They all get on, do they?

JUDY: Yes he gets on with all of them apart from one of them.

FRAN: Quite young. Well, younger than

JUDY: Younger than me?

FRAN: I um. I was at a distance so I don't know, really.

I'm sure there's a perfectly

JUDY: Yes, I'm sure there is.

FRAN: Sure there's nothing to worry about.

JUDY: I'm not worried - you seem more worried than I am.

FRAN: Just you never really know what someone gets up to when you're not there, do you, or how they are with other people

JUDY: Johnny doesn't get up to anything, god he wouldn't know where to start.

FRAN: Marcus wants me to quit work, do this.

JUDY: This is work.

FRAN: Quit my job, I mean.

JUDY: He doesn't want you to stop and have babies, does he?

FRAN: Oh god no.

JUDY: OK, good.

FRAN: Yuck.

JUDY: No, I know.

FRAN: He just means running our home, like you do.

JUDY: It is nice. It makes sense for us.

FRAN: You still like it?

JUDY: I do. I like the calm. Looking around and knowing everything's in order. Having time to clean behind things, it's a deep, quiet kind of happy. Our home. All ready for him. I pop upstairs just before Johnny gets back, pin my hair, little bit of perfume. Take my pinny off. Daisy-fresh.

Then he walks in the door and

JUDY smiles to herself.

Yeah.

What are you thinking? Is it something you'd

FRAN: Oh, Marcus is making so much noise about it I can't hear what I think.

When he gets an idea in his head I mean I love how tenacious he is about things but when he goes on and on.

Does Johnny drive you mad sometimes? Properly mad. No?

JUDY: He doesn't really.

FRAN: No.

I just don't think I've got a domestic goddess in me. I leave things on the stairs intending to take them up and then I find I've been quite happily walking past them for weeks. I come home after a twelve hour day and I'm frazzled. Longest recipe I used this week was 'Pierce Film Lid'.

JUDY: But if you were at home, you'd have time to

FRAN: This is what I'm saying - even if I had the time, I'm just not sure I would. We both like things tidy, it's just his tidy is a lot tidier than mine.

JUDY: You do need a consensus.

FRAN: I always think that when they cite 'unreasonable behaviour' in divorce cases. For some people that's leaving a towel on the floor, unreasonable behaviour. Others wouldn't mind if you shagged a different lover every lunchtime as long as the washing's hung up.

JUDY: Sorry, I've just got to pop upstairs - one moment.

FRAN: Sure.

JUDY goes upstairs. She loudly closes the bathroom door then tiptoes into the bedroom and closes the door softly.

FRAN looks through the pile of dresses.

JUDY picks up the phone beside the bed and dials.

She sits down while it rings, stands as it's answered, then realises it's gone to voicemail.

JUDY: Hi Johnny, it's me.

JUDY: It's gone, Johnny.

JOHNNY: It's gone?

JUDY: I've been using it to plug the gap.

JOHNNY: Your rainy day money?

JUDY: I guess it's been a pretty wet year. The fridge, the car and

JOHNNY: We haven't had that many repairs, have we?

JUDY: Just a little bit each month, but it adds up.

JOHNNY: You've burned through all of it?

JUDY: Yeah.

JOHNNY: Could we ever afford this?

JUDY and JOHNNY

JUDY: Yes, when there was more money coming in.

JOHNNY: When you had a job.

JUDY: After that.

JOHNNY: When?

JUDY: Don't make me

JOHNNY: When?

JUDY: OK, when your salary was bigger.

When we started this. There was. More commission.

JOHNNY: So it's me.

JUDY: It's not your fault, it's the market, isn't it?

JOHNNY: My failure to provide.

JUDY: I didn't say that. The promotion was going to sort it out.

JOHNNY: Sorry, am I being massively lower middle class about this? You don't start spending the money till you've got it.

JUDY: We were sure you'd get it.

JOHNNY: So if I can't bring enough money in to fund this life, we have to stop, don't we?

JUDY: It's just the finance, just give me a chance to sort out the finance. I'm truly truly sorry, I was trying to protect you

JOHNNY: I'm a big boy I don't need

JUDY: This is what I'm saying, I made a mistake and I'm sorry, but leave it with me and I'll try and think of a way round it because it doesn't need to be a thing that knocks us off course, does it? You wouldn't be saying all this about wanting to stop if you hadn't found that letter, would you?

Would you?

JOHNNY: I think maybe Alex coming here lost me the promotion.

JUDY: No.

JOHNNY: Don't you think it's maybe a bit of a turnoff, knowing someone gets waited on at home, wouldn't you kind of lose respect for them a bit?

JUDY: Let me talk to her, I can talk to her if you

JOHNNY: No, god.

JUDY: Why does it matter what anyone else thinks? If we choose to share out the tasks in our marriage in a different way from

JOHNNY: OK, you're not going to listen let's go to bed.

JUDY: I'm listening.

JOHNNY: Let's go to bed, talk about it in the morning.

JUDY: No, Johnny. I've sat here all evening waiting for you, worried about what you'll be coming back in with.

JOHNNY: I'm tired.

JUDY: So am I.

JOHNNY: How can you be tired? You don't do anything.

Sorry.

JUDY: Where did that come from?

JOHNNY: OK, look. Your life and my life, there's.

You don't vacuum the living room one day, I probably wouldn't even notice. You forget to cook, what's the worst thing that happens? It's not having to deal with people, make decisions all day, knowing the impact on your place on the target board, on the face you get to wear when you walk into the office. You don't have any of that.

JUDY: Doesn't mean I can't understand, can't support you.

JOHNNY: You feel a million miles away.

JUDY: I'm here.

JOHNNY: It's like talking to someone underwater.

JUDY: I'm here, Johnny, I'm here.

JOHNNY: I feel like we're performing it. I have to get home every night at the same time so we can do this little dance of cocktails and dinner,

JUDY: I make you dinner it's a nice thing.

JOHNNY looks at JUDY.

Sorry, I'm listening.

JOHNNY: Whatever we were trying to do, it

What must we look like?

JUDY: It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks.

JOHNNY: What about what I think? Do we care what I think?

I think we might have got it all wrong.

I'm supposed to feel like a pig in shit, lucky Johnny.

It actually makes me feel like a child, I feel

I feel like the whole thing is just some kind of delusion
we're

JUDY: Johnny this is real. This is us, this is how we're supposed
to be.

This is us finally living life like we want to. If other people
have a problem with it they're probably just jealous of how
happy we are. How everything we do is about making each
other happy, making the fantasy happen for each other.

Not every couple has that, we're bloody lucky. What we
have is so good. It's not about the money, the money's not
important. We've made a real home.

"Are you happy, darling?" "Yes, disgracefully". We say it
as a joke, but it's true, isn't it? Our mornings together, our
evenings, our nights.

JOHNNY: I'm not.

JUDY: Not what?

JOHNNY: Happy.

I

I'm sorry, I'm not.

JUDY: Why?

JOHNNY looks away, looks down. Thinks before he speaks.

JOHNNY: Nothing's happened, I promise nothing's happened

JUDY: What?

What, Johnny?

JOHNNY: I've been having feelings for

JUDY: Feelings

JOHNNY: For a person. About a person.

A woman.

Nothing's happened.

But there's been an

Attraction.

JUDY: Who is it?

JOHNNY: It doesn't matter.

JUDY: Of course it matters of course it

JOHNNY: Because thinking about it tonight I think it's more
that things aren't right here.

JUDY: Who is it?

Is it Alex?

It's Alex

JOHNNY: It's not about her, it's not about who it is

JUDY: Is it Alex?

JOHNNY: Yes, OK, if it makes a difference to

JUDY: Well it's nice to put a face to it, isn't it?

This woman you

JOHNNY: You're not listening, nothing's happened.

JUDY: Stop saying that, it makes me think something has.

JOHNNY: Nothing's going to happen.

JUDY: Then why tell me?

So I can think about it while I clean the house?

While I iron your shirts, starch your collars, wondering
where you are, who you're with?

While I scrub the potatoes? On my hands and knees
polishing the floor?

How dare you bring me this? After everything I've done,
Johnny.

JOHNNY: I never

I'm trying to be honest.

I wanted your help.

JUDY: Selfish.

JOHNNY: I didn't tell you for you to get hurt about it, it was an
example of

Something's not right. The way we're living, it

You don't seem to know what it's done to you.

JUDY: I'm happy with it you're the one

You're the one suddenly saying it's broken.

*JUDY goes to the cutlery drawer, takes it out and brings it back to
the table, then upturns it. The cutlery clatters out onto the table.*

JOHNNY: What are you doing?

JUDY: Cutlery needs polishing.

JOHNNY: It's three o'clock in the morning.

JUDY: I'm not sleepy now.

Sunday night, I should have done it earlier only I was too
upset.

JOHNNY: Judy

JUDY: Don't.

JUDY takes out a cloth and a tin of polish. She sits down.

JOHNNY watches helplessly.

SYLVIA: Well it's not that easy, is it? When it's your boss.

Who's got the power in that situation? She might have felt that if she said anything he'd have her removed, she might have been in fear for her job. We don't have any idea what she might have gone through.

JUDY: Mum. This is Fran's husband

SYLVIA: Yes I'm sorry, I don't mean to say

But we don't know her, do we?

JUDY: You don't know Marcus either. She might be lying for all we know.

SYLVIA: Why would she? At great personal risk

JUDY: I don't know, because she's a fantasist, maybe?

SYLVIA: You'd know, I suppose.

JUDY: What?

SYLVIA: Fantasist. You'd know.

JUDY: You mean I'm

SYLVIA: This gingham paradise you've made for yourself - you know it's not real, don't you? The fifties didn't even look like this in the fifties. You're living in a cartoon.

You want to know what the fifties were like, from someone who was actually there? The fifties were terrible. The idea that anyone would want to would choose to go back there, it's ridiculous.

The pair of you in your frocks, look at you.

Do you know how cold it was? November right through to March. Everyone huddled round their own fireplace, cause everywhere else was freezing. The whole house except about a yard around the sitting room fire where it was *boiling*, the rest of it bone-cold. It bit your nose off in the morning. I'd offer to help mum with the dinner, not to spend time with her; just so I could stand next to the oven.

Rationing! Still rationing. Bread you could build houses with. And god it was bland: grey meat, grey people, everything grey. My dad came home once with this amazing new food a friend had been talking about – Mum wouldn't let us eat it cause she'd heard it was made out of mould. It was yoghurt.

That's being a woman in the fifties. Fear. Bomb-shaped holes everywhere, men like my dad back from the war with their body intact but their head different. Everyone making do and mending, things that were already wrecked. And the intolerance: try being anything other than a straight white man and see if you still think it's utopia.

And don't expect not to be groped at work, that's the least of your worries. Your husband is legally allowed to fuck you whenever he wants to, it doesn't matter how much your head aches or your back aches or you can't stand the sight of him anymore, the weight of him on you. And no abortion, no birth control. No help anywhere. Divorce him? Good luck, love. Whatever he got up to, you turned a blind eye to it.

My poor mother. Frightened of a yoghurt.

She said to me as she was dying – in the hospice – she said 'what have I done, really?' I said don't say that, you brought up three children, what's more important than that? But she knew. Her life was wasted. All her potential boiled down to such a bitter little existence.

You know what she'd do if she saw you now? She'd laugh.

Because it's ridiculous. Being nostalgic when you weren't even there.

They used to think nostalgia was an affliction, did you know that? A neurological disease. Not a branding strategy for tea towels.

'Nostalgia ain't what it used to be', that's the joke, isn't it?

Except it isn't a joke, because you're wasting yourself when you could choose not to. That's what we did for you on those marches, so you could be brave and strong and *better* and this is not what I fought for this is not what we fought for and it isn't funny anymore.

A long moment while this lands.

JUDY smoothes down her skirt. She stands, walks to the kitchen.

JUDY: God's sake, mum.

She pours and drinks a glass of water. Comes back to the living room with something to say.

I've told you before, I'm not like this as a rebellion against you, this is authentically

SYLVIA: We all rebel against our mothers, don't we? Mine told me not to marry your father, should have listened really but

JUDY: Dad again.

SYLVIA: What's 'Dad again'? As if I bad-mouth him to you all the time.

What Judy doesn't know, Fran, is that her father started sleeping with other women while she was still in nappies.

JUDY: Dad?

SYLVIA: Yes.

JUDY: My Dad?

SYLVIA: Where do you think he was when he wasn't at home? I could name you four or five women.

JUDY: He's not here to defend himself, this isn't

SYLVIA: Why would I make it up? It's a desperate feeling, I wouldn't wish it on anyone. I felt embarrassed to exist.

You're not supposed to complain to the child, it's not good for them but the upshot is thirty years of you thinking I'm the wicked witch and him getting to be bloody Gregory Peck.

I'm sorry darling if that's a shock. But you're thirty eight now and you say you like cleaning behind things so there we are. All clean.

SCENE 4

ALEX

Late morning. JUDY is in the kitchen.

ALEX is upstairs in the bedroom, looking into the wardrobe at JUDY's dresses. She closes the wardrobe quietly, picks up a notebook and comes downstairs.

JUDY: Got everything you need?

ALEX: Yes, for now. Once we've signed the agreement we'll come back and measure up for a floor plan, get photos etcetera.

JUDY: Right, um

ALEX: Shall we sit down and I'll talk you through

JUDY: I mean I don't know if we're ready to

ALEX: Just want to take you through our pack so you know what you're getting if you list the house with us.

ALEX stands by the table, takes out some papers and brochures from her bag and lays them out.

JUDY: Right.

JUDY comes to sit down opposite.

ALEX: It's a sole agency agreement, minimum of twenty weeks on the market but it won't take that long, things are really getting snapped up right now.

This is one of our standard brochures, you can see it's all nicely presented, but if you like you can pay upfront for Enhanced Marketing, so you get a glossier brochure like this plus your listing comes up first when anyone searches on the website or one of the big meta sites, your Prime Location or Right Move, whatever.

But I wouldn't push that on you because I really think our standard service is what they'd call premium in other agencies. We're all about working closely with clients, making sure you feel valued and listened to, and obviously helping you quickly find a good quality buyer without any of the bullshit you get sometimes, you know?

JUDY: You're good at this.

ALEX: Thanks.

Am I? I don't do many valuations now I'm managing a branch, so

I thought you said you weren't ever moving.

JUDY: I'm just thinking about it at the moment, just considering

ALEX: It's a good time, very much a vendor's market.

JUDY: And how much would we

ALEX: Obviously I need to go back and do a proper evaluation based on all the info I've

JUDY: I was hoping we could just informally, just an idea really.

ALEX: Off the top of my head?

JUDY: Sorry. I didn't realise you'd have to go through the whole

ALEX: It's like Antiques Roadshow, people are just waiting to hear a number.

These are going for four, four-fifty at the moment.

A sex thing?

JUDY: Oh my god you didn't

ALEX: Johnny?

JUDY: Oh my god.

ALEX: That would be completely

I'm his boss.

JUDY: I thought he'd told you, I thought it was a mutual

ALEX: Johnny?

JUDY: I'm his wife it's obviously not that hard for me to understand someone being attracted to him.

ALEX: No sorry of course he's lovely but

God no.

OK that makes more sense now.

JUDY: What does?

ALEX: The way he's been behaving.

Right, OK.

Huh.

JUDY: Oh god.

ALEX: God, men are so

JUDY: Please don't tell him I told you?

SCENE 5

MARCUS.

Afternoon. JUDY and MARCUS in the living room, with drinks.

MARCUS: And that's why it's called a Screwdriver.

JUDY: Because they stirred it

MARCUS: Yes, with a

JUDY: That's brilliant, I never knew that.

MARCUS: No well no one does really.

JUDY: Is it true, do you think?

MARCUS: I don't know. Why let truth get in the way of a good story?

JUDY: This from the man who looks everything up on the internet.

MARCUS: Ha! No, well you've got me there, haven't you?

MARCUS sits back.

This is nice.

JUDY: We get on, don't we?

MARCUS: Yes, we get on very well.

JUDY: We're good friends. Even if it's me and Fran, really, that see each other most often, and you and I don't really see each other without the others but I do always feel

I think there's a lot of things we agree on.

MARCUS: Yes, I do too.

JUDY: Yes?

MARCUS: Yes.

JUDY: I don't see why we shouldn't take that to another level.

MARCUS: Another - sorry?

JUDY: I wondered if I might come and work for you.

MARCUS: Work for me?

JUDY: Fran told me you lost your secretary. PA.

MARCUS: Fran told you the reason, did she? The circumstances behind

JUDY: It's really rough, I'm sorry.

MARCUS: You know they've sent me home, while they

JUDY: But you'll be back, presumably, soon? Won't you?

MARCUS: I'm off indefinitely. While the other partners *review*
the situation.

JUDY: I suppose there's a procedure they have to

MARCUS: Oh yes there's a procedure. Procedure that I put in
place, when we set up the agency. Collecting statements
from the rest of the staff, anyone I'd been in contact with,
anyone that had seen us working together.

JUDY: God.

MARCUS: And you know that's my company. Everything I've
worked for.

Hashtags flying around, people who've never met me.

JUDY: It'll blow over, won't it? When they work out she was
just looking for attention, or money or whatever? It's not
like you *really* did something.

MARCUS: Course not.

JUDY: With any luck they'll work out there's nothing in it,
welcome you back with open arms. At which point you'll
still need help, presumably.

MARCUS: Yes.

JUDY: When Fran told me about it, it was like a lightbulb, I
just had this idea of *me* as your secretary.

MARCUS: But why would you want to be

I thought you were very happy here?

JUDY: Well, circumstances. It looks like I'll need to take on
some kind of paid something. If we're to stay afloat.

MARCUS: This job that Johnny didn't get.