The Life & Adventures of Nick Nickleby

by

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Part One

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A rural idyll - rolling green fields, grazing herds, sunlight glinting through trees, a rustic farmhouse. 'Higher Moor Farm'. Signpost lovingly hand-painted. A home.

NOGGS (V.O.)
There once lived a man called
Nicholas Nickleby. He was a good
man. A family man and a farmer,
with a loving wife, two loving
children and a modest property in
the county of Devonshire.
Nicholas Nickleby had it all.
Then he lost it.

In a meadow close by the farmhouse, beneath a great tree, is an open grave.

On the headstone, freshly carved: 'Ni chol as Ni ckleby. Bel oved husband and father.'

CUT TO:

2 I NT. NI CKLEBY'S FARM, MR & MRS NI CKLEBY'S ROOM - DAY 1 - 2 09: 15

NICK NICKLEBY, 18, a golden boy, but deathly pale today.

He opens his dad's wardrobe, looks inside at the worn-out lumber jack shirts and scruffy cords. Mud-caked boots are slung at the bottom, alongside a battered old briefcase.

At the end of the rail, Nick finds a dusty suit cover.

He takes it out, unzips it. Inside is a dated black suit, with shirt and tie. His dad's funeral suit.

Nick takes a moment, steels himself, then puts it on.

NOGGS (V.O.)
His son, Nick, took after him in many ways. A good boy with a warm young heart, kind and true.

Nick looks for the buttons on his shirt cuffs, but, after some contortion, he finds only holes for cuff-links.

NOGS (V. O.) Bit of a temper, mind you.

Frustrated, Nick slams out of the room

CUT TO:

hi m?

MRS NI CKLEBY (CONT'D)

I kept on and on - and on at him, but he wouldn't listen and now look. The stubborn old fool.

Kat frowns, is going to say something, but Nick stays her.

MRS NICKLEBY (CONT'D) What am I going to do without

Mrs Nickleby dissolves into fresh tears. Nick rallies.

NI CK

It's all right, mum Everything's going to be all right.

A grubby van screeches past on the driveway, missing them by inches. It swerves to a stop by the farmhouse door.

On the side of the van: Swift Recovery Bailiff Services.

CUT TO:

5 INT. NICKLEBY'S FARM, KITCHEN - DAY 1 - 11:00

5

The BAILIFFS take everything, including the funeral buffet, cramming their mouths with cocktail sausages as they go.

Nick is at the door, remonstrating with an NS BALLIFF.

On the table, the briefcase from the wardrobe lies open, spilling red bills, final demands, a repossession order.

Around the table, the Doctor sits with the sobbing Mrs Nickleby. Kat picks at her black nail varnish.

Nick gives up and comes back to the table, bewildered.

NI CK

He says it's too late. They're putting the farm up for sale.

Mrs Nickleby is so stunned she forgets to sob. Kat looks up, shocked.

KAT

They can't. Tell him they can't.

NI CK

We have to pay up or get out. Today.

MRS NI CKLEBY

It must be some terrible mistake.

KAT

Can't we talk to the bank?

NI CK

They're not going to help us. Dad was in debt. Something about the stock market. He's lost everything.

MRS NI CKLEBY

How would he have done that? He couldn't use the hole-in-the-wall without getting his card eaten. He was a good man, but he was clueless. Clueless.

Fresh floods of tears. The Doctor hands her a tissue. Mrs Nickleby pauses in her grief to appreciate the texture.

MRS NI CKLEBY

On, these are nice.

DOCTOR

It's a special balsam

Mrs Nickleby inspects the packet, and then takes the lot.

KAT

There must be something we can

Again she looks to Nick. He racks his brains, desperate.

NI CK

We don't know anyone with that kind of money.

DOCTOR

Well... There's always Ralph.

Beat. Nick and Kat are blank, trying to place the name.

KAT

Ral ph who?

DOCTOR

Your uncle. I know your father and he had their differences. But still, he is family.

MRS NI CKLEBY

I've never even met the man. Your dad invited him to our wedding, and to your christenings, and to your gran and grandad's funerals. But he was always too busy. (A LITTLE AWED) He's in

Nick's brain is ticking now. Could this be the answer?

NI CK

Does he know that dad's died?

MRS NI CKLEBY

(shakes head, tearful) I've been a bit busy too.

DOCTOR

I believe he's done very well for himself in the City.

MRS NI CKLEBY

I don't even have his number.

Her lip wobbles. Nick looks around the ransacked room

A bailiff leans in the doorway, jangles the door-keys, impatient to lock them out.

NI CK

Don't worry, mum l'Il find it.

On Nick, taking charge.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. FI ELD - DAY 1 - 11:50

6

5.

Nick is down by the grave, beneath the tree. He has a rucksack on his back and is making a call on his mobile.

NOGGS (O. S.)

This is the answering service for Ralph Nickleby Associates. Please leave a message after the tone.

A long bleep.

NI CK

Hi there, this is Mr Nickleby's nephew, Nick. I need to speak to him - about my dad - his brother. I - I'm coming to London, today.

Nick hangs up, choked. He touches the headstone, regretful.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'll be back, dad.

A beep - he turns, sees a cab drawing up to the farmhouse.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. NI CKLEBY'S FARM - DAY 1 - 11.55

7

The front door is blocked with a web of repossession tape.

RALPH

No. Let him wait.

On Ralph, playing to win.

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - CONTINUOUS 9

JEREMY VERISOPHT - a silver spoon fop whose bad habits have left him a tad cash poor - waits on the leather sofa, anxious, his reddened nostrils twitching. Beside him on the sof a is a House of Commons embossed dossier.

He distracts himself with a newspaper. The front page headline is: 'Russian Oligarch in Teen Sex Scandal' with a photo of a gross, leering, billionaire gent.

As Noggs enters, Verisopht stands, ready to go in.

NOGGS

He's busy. You want a drink?

VERI SOPHT

No, thank you.

Verisopht sits back down, even more anxious. Noggs opens a drawer in his desk, takes out a hipflask.

NOGGS

You sure?

He offers it. Verisopht hides behind the newspaper.

Noggs is about to take a swig when he sees a light flashing on his phone. He picks up the phone, presses a button, and listens... to Nick's answerphone message.

 $$\operatorname{NI}(\operatorname{CK}(\operatorname{O}.\operatorname{S}.)$$ Hi there, this is Mr Nickleby's nephew, Nick... I need to speak to him - about my dad.

On Noggs, perturbed.

CUT TO:

10 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 14:40

10

Ralph is on his laptop, biding his time, when Noggs enters.

RALPH

I'm still busy.

NOGGS

Had a message from Nick Nickleby.

Ralph's mood lightens - he'd completely for gotten.

RALPH

Is he bankrupt yet?

NOGGS

Not your brother. Message is from his son.

Ralph is thrown for a moment, but only for a moment.

RALPH

What does he want?

NOGGS

He's coming to see you. Sounded upset.

RALPH

My brother must be too embarrassed to face me.

He's amused. Noggs isn't.

NOGGS

Must've thought he could trust your advice. Him being your brother and all.

RALPH

Why would I wave a magic wand and make his debts go away? When I could have a little fun instead.

NOGGS

What should I tell the kid?

RALPH

I'm busy. Get rid of him

Verisopht interrupts, poking his head in.

VERI SOPHT

Ralph - sorry - there's a vote in the House at three -

Ralph snaps his laptop shut, turns on the chilly charm

RALPH

I've got a couple of minutes. Have a seat.

Noggs withdraws. Verisopht sits. As he puts the newspaper down, Ralph notices the headline.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Ah, Hawkovsky. I've heard he's a first rate businessman.

VERI SOPHT

Even I would run a mile from Vladimir Hawkovsky. And you know I'm not especially discerning.

Ralph smiles thinly, picks up the dossier.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Now, how is our bid coming along?

On Ralph, down to business.

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - CONTINUOUS 11

11

Noggs settles in, about to have another swig, when MADDY BHRAY rushes in. She's 19, British-Asian, breathtakingly pretty in spite of her unflattering cleaner's overalls. As she talks, she gets cleaning equipment from a cupboard.

MADDY

Sorry I'mlate, Mr Noggs.

NOGGS

Mss Bhray. In your Lat e first week.

MADDY

Maia was up all night. But my dad's looking after her now. I'll make up for it, work late.

Noggs grunts, apparently unforgiving. Maddy heads towards Ralph's office with cleaning products.

NOGGS

I've done in there. Don't want to upset Mr Nickleby, do we?

She realises – he's on her side after all. She smiles grateful, and heads out to do the loos.

As she exits, HAWKOVSKY sweeps in, the leering oligarch from the front pages, a man of vast wealth and appetites, with an ever-present black umbrella. He heads for Ralph's of fice.

Noggs is panicked, tries to head him off.

NOGGS (CONT'D)
Mr Hawkovsky. I didn't hear the buzzer. Have you got an appointment?

HAWKOVSKY

I do not need appointment. I do not need buzzer. Your boss needs my money.

Hawkovsky bats Noggs out of the way with the umbrella and strides towards the door to Ralph's office. Noggs thinks fast, dives in front of the door.

NOGGS

How about a drink first - vodka?

He holds out his hipflask.

NOGGS (CONT'D)

It's not the top stuff, but -

Hawkovsky takes a swig. He approves.

HAWKOVSKY

It is strong. Like grandmother used to make.

Noggs begins to usher Hawkovsky towards a side room

NOGGS

There were some papers Mr Nickleby wanted you to look over...

On Noggs, that was close.

CUT TO:

12

12 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 14:50

Ralph focuses on what Verisopht is saying.

VERI SOPHT

I've been working on the other committee members. If we could just award you the contract for the care homes now we would, but we have to be seen to be going through the process. Political cover and all that.

RALPH

But the committee is on-side? I'm paying you handsomely enough -

Verisopht flinches: the less said on that,...

VERI SOPHT

The care homes are yours - as long as you have the capital in place?

RALPH

I told you, I have an investment partner lined up. He's highly respectable, but prefers to keep his good works anonymous.

A knowing smile. Verisopht understands, but is still nervous.

VERI SOPHT

The less I know the better. I just want you to promise me it'll all look above board? The paper work. People will be all over this. It's worth billions.

RALPH

I promise you, my honourable friend, it will all be as clean as the kitchen surfaces in my flagship care home.

(IN CASE OF ANY DOUBT)
Spotless.

On Ralph, so convincing.

CUT TO:

13 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - CORRIDOR NR RECEPTION - DAY 1 - 14:5813

Maddy comes out of the loo and is heading to the next one. Noggs comes out to see her, grimfaced.

NOGGS

Your dad just called.

MADDY

I told him never to call here. Except in ... emergencies.

Her blood runs cold as she takes in his expression.

Verisopht hurries past them, happy to get out of there.

NOGGS

Your daught er needs to go to hospital.

Maddy pulls off her rubber gloves, starts to pack up.

MADDY

I'm so sorry.

NOGGS

Me too.

She realises what he means, can't deal with it now, but -

MADDY

No, please. I need this job, Mr Noggs. Just give me a chance.

NOGGS

Past or al issues aren't our strong point.

Back at reception, the door buzzer goes.

NOGGS (CONT'D)

You'd better go.

Noggs I eaves Maddy as he goes to answer it. On Maddy, eyes filling.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. RALPH'S OFFI CE - DAY 1 - 15:00

14

Nick, Kat, Mrs Nickleby and their suitcases await outside Ralph's office, country mice in the big city. The building is all period features, ostentatious, a forbidding door with a brass plaque: 'Ralph Nickleby Associates'.

Nick presses the door buzzer again. There is crackling as it connects.

NI CK

Hello? It's Nick Nickleby.

The line goes dead. Strange.

Nick buzzes again.

NICK (CONT'D)

We're here to see Mr Nickleby. About his brother.

NOGGS (O. S.)

He's busy.

The line goes dead again. Nick is frustrated. He buzzes again, but gets ignored. Mrs Nickleby admires the plaque.

MRS NI CKLEBY

, Nick. You could be

one of those.

KAT

(rolls her eyes)
He can't even get us in the door.

MRS NI CKLEBY

Nickleby and Nickleby. Ralph Nickleby and Nephew. The door opens - a moment of hope - then Maddy comes out and slams the door behind her. As she fumbles in a bag for her purse, Nick approaches.

NI CK

Excuse me, do you work here?

Not a good question. She fights back the tears.

MADDY

No, I don't.

NI CK

We need to see Ralph Nickleby. I don't suppose - (you can help?)

Maddy counts up the change in her purse as she hails a cab.

MADDY

I can't help you. Sorry.

Nick sees her upset, is concerned.

NI CK

Are you all right?

A moment between them But she has no time for such things. A cab pulls up.

MADDY

I've got to go.

She hurries to the cab window, turns on her sweetest smile.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Can you take us to Hackney for... (COPPERING UP) three pound sixtyeight? It's an emergency.

The NS CABBIE is shaking his head, about to go, timewaster. Maddy is desperate. Nick touches her shoulder.

NI CK

Here.

A scrumpled tenner from his pocket. His last. He offers it. She's still desperate, but wary.

MADDY

I don't even know you.

NI CK

Nick Nickleby. (TO CABBLE) Will this get her to Hackney?

The Cabbi e nods. Nick hands him the tenner. Maddy stares at Nick, touched. Another moment.

NI CK

You'd better go.

MADDY

Thanks, Nick Nickleby.

A smile through her tears, before she speeds off. Nick watches her go. Kat rolls her eyes again.

KAT

When you've stopped trying to pull, we still need to get in.

NI CK

(inspired)

Why don't you get us in, Kat?

He pushes the buzzer again.

NICK (CONT'D)

Say you've for gotten your bag. Try to sound upset.

The line crackles. With Nick's encouragement, Kat sniffs.

KAT

I've forgotten my bag.

Crackle. Silence. Then a hum as the door is unlocked.

NI CK

Wait here. I won't be long.

He opens the door and dashes inside. Success.

On Kat, left out.

CUT TO:

15 I NT. RALPH'S OFFI CE - DAY 1 - 15: 10

15

Hawkovsky has joined Ralph, lounging in the guest chair, holding forth.

HAWKOVSKY

Money is money. That is all there is in this world.

RALPH

The deal is happening, Vladimir, that's the main thing.

HAWKOVSKY

It may comfort these little people to think that there is clean and there is dirty. But money would comfort them more.

RALPH

SHAW8600 you wouldn't mind signing here?

A contract and pen. Hawkovsky smiles. Ralph tenses.

HAVKOVSKY

All in good time, my friend.

RALPH

We have agreed terms. The committee meets on Friday.

HAWKOWSKYHAW8OVSKYHAW860LPH

Then I have time to - how do you say? Sleep with it.

RALPH

Yay?r SigeptTiwn 44the deal of the century here,

Noggs hunts for the bag. He gets down on his knees to hunt under the sofa. Nick opens the door stealthily, and heads in, hoping to make it to Ralph's office door undetected.

Without turning around, Noggs detects someone entering.

NOGGS

You sure you left it here?

Nick pauses. Should he run for it? That wouldn't be nice.

NI CK

Sorry. That was a bit of a lie.

Noggs turns, glowering. Nick thinks he just has to explain.

NICK (CONT'D)

I have to see my uncle.

NOGGS

I told you already. He's busy.

NI CK

Can't I wait? It's important.

NOGGS

He doesn't want to see you, or your dad.

(grasping his arm)
Get the message?

NI CK

My dad's dead.

On the brink of throwing N_i ck out of the door, N_i oggs pauses, perturbed.

NOGGS

You what?

NI CK

He died last week.

NOGGS

Sorry. I had no idea.

He realises he's still holding Nick. He lets go, holds out his hand instead.

NOGGS (CONT'D)

Newman Noggs, your uncle's... associate.

Nick shakes his hand.

NI CK

Good to meet you, Newman. (beat, indicates) Your tie's got a bit...

Askew. It always is, but Nick assumes it happened in the scuffle. Noggs doesn't follow. Nick reaches out, straightens it.

NI CK

That's better.

NOGGS

Ch. Thanks.

Noggs can't remember the last time anyone cared enough to touch him It's a tiny thing, but a big deal to him

Nick tries again, heart felt.

NI CK

I really need to see my uncle.

The door of Ralph's office opens and Hawkovsky sweeps out. He ignores Noggs and N_i ck and leaves.

Noggs can't bear Nick's hopeful face a moment longer.

NOGGS

You snuck in, okay? Nothing to do with me.

On Nick, grateful.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. RALPH'S OFFI CE - DAY 1 - CONTI NUOUS

17

Kat huddles on the wall, cold, and fed up of listening.

MRS NI CKLEBY

Ral ph Ni ckl eby and . No one's going to qui bbl e. Your dad would have been so proud.

Kat goes to the front door, intending to try again, when a figure looms in the doorway - Hawkovsky. Kat takes a step back, intimidated. Hawkovsky stays blocking the doorway, looking at her, intrigued.

HAWKOVSKY

You have business with Mr Nickleby?

Kat is thrown for a moment, is she going to get in trouble?

KAT

Um Yeah, hi, my name's Kat. Uh. It's just - my uncle's Ralph Nickleby and my brother - he's gone in to see him and left us out here, but I'm freezing my - uh, my toes off, so if you could just let us inside to wait...? Please?

Her shy smile kills him

HAWKOVSKY

For you, Katerina, I would do anything.

He holds the door open. Kat beams, proud of herself.

KAT

Thanks. Come on, mum

Mrs Nickleby, snaps out of her reverie and enters with Kat.

On Hawkovsky, watching Kat. That leer twisting his lips.

CUT TO:

18 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 15:25

18

Ralph looks at Nick, who is fighting back his emotions. Ralph is surprised by the news, but not unpleasantly so.

RALPH

I hadn't expected him to die -(QUI CKLY ADDS) so young.

His mind is already racing, assessing the possibilities.

NI CK

I'm sorry. We should have told you straight away.

RALPH

Brothers die every day. The world goes on.

Nick is unsettled, but assumes Ralph is trying to make him feel better. He pushes on.

NI CK

They've taken everything, kicked us out, put the farm up for sale.

RALPH

The farm is for sale?

A very interesting possibility.

NI CK

We wondered if - we were hoping you might - maybe lend us the money to buy it back?

On Ralph, unpleasantly surprised.

CUT TO:

19 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - 15:28

19

Mrs Nickleby sits on the leather sofa, waiting. She picks up one of the newspapers, peers at Hawkovsky's leer. She frowns - it's kind of familiar, but she can't think why.

Kat pokes around reception, looking at the objects d'art, and at Noggs, surly behind his desk. He takes Maddy's CV (with photo) from the HR files and drops it in the bin.

He looks up, sees Kat watching him

KAT

Do you think Nick'll be long?

On Noggs, not likely.

CUT TO:

20 I NT. RALPH'S OFFI CE - DAY 1 - 15:30

20

Ralph is struggling to get his head around the proposal.

RALPH

Let me get this straight. Your father took my birthright and -

NI CK

Took your what?

RALPH

I'm the elder brother. By rights, the farm should have come to me.

NI CK

Wasn't it because he looked after gran and granddad?

Repelled by the boy's emotion, Ralph pushes on.

RALPH

Your father took my birthright, ran it into the ground and then lost it all on some idiotic gamble, and now you want me to loan you hundreds of thousands of pounds at zero interest with zero guarantee of ever being repaid?

NI CK

I'm sorry, I know it's a lot to ask, but I've got my mum and my sister to look after. I'd do anything. (INSPIRED) I could work for you.

RALPH

Why should I hire you?

NI CK

Because I'll work hard, and do a good job, and... we're .

He smiles at Ralph, hopeful. Ralph snaps.

RALPH

A grinning skull. That's all you are, with your sob stories and your smiles. Whatever it takes to get a free ride.

NI CK

(horrified)

It's not like that. I just thought - you wouldn't want to see us on the streets.

RALPH

Why would I care? I don't know you. I don't owe you anything. I made my own way in life. I suggest you do the same.

Nick is raging with indignation, but all out of arguments. With balled fists, he spits out the words.

NI CK

I will make my own way. But I'll never end up like you. Goodbye, Uncle Ralph!

Nick slams out, the door banging hard behind him

On Ralph, a rare flare of anger. No one does that to him

CUT TO:

 $\mbox{Ni} \mbox{ck}, \mbox{ Kat} \mbox{ and their mum are back on the doorstep. Ni ck is still seething.}$

NI CK

We don't need Uncle Ralph's help.

KAT

Er, yes we do. You should've let me talk to him

RALPH

This one would give me particular satisfaction. Find the agent and snap it up.

Ralph's mobile rings. Noggs withdraws. Ralph checks the caller ID: HAWKOVSKY. He answers, hopeful.

RALPH

VI adi mir, what can I do for you?... (FROWNS) Kat who?... (FROWN DEEPENS) I'm not sure I under st and.

On Ral ph, uncomprehending.

CUT TO:

23 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - 15:50

23

Now Ralph, entering at speed from his office, fully comprehends and there's c50 his office, fully

NOGGS

What about the boy and the mum?

RALPH

I don't care about them

NOGGS

Don't you think Kat might?

An inconvenience. Ralph rethinks.

RALPH

We can deal with the mother. But the boy's trouble. He has to go.

They've reached the exit. Ralph heads out. On Noggs, following, worried.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. STREET - DAY 1 - 15: 55

25

Ralph scans the street outside his office, turns to Noggs.

RALPH

You go that way. If you find her, call me.

Ralph sets of f in the other direction. Noggs pauses, then follows Ralph, catches him up, troubled.

NOGGS

What you want her for?

RALPH

For Hawkovsky.

A beat. Noggs's horror.

NOGGS

She's your niece.

RALPH

This is business. I'm not going to let my deal fall apart over some girl.

Ralph freezes, sees Nick and his family on the corner, zeroes in on Kat - the target.

CUT TO:

26

Nick listens as Ralph works his magic, turning it around. The women are sucked in. Nick is wary, harder to convince. Noggs hangs back, unable to look them in the eye.

RALPH

Grief affects us in different ways. I may have been a little harsh.

NI CK

Just a bit.

RALPH

Your father was better at showing his feelings. He was a good man.

MRS NI CKLEBY

He was a saint, Ralph. A saint.

She's pushing it, but Ralph grits his teeth, nods along.

RALPH

Hopefully my actions now will show you - I'm not all bad.

NI CK

You'll help us get the farm back?

RALPH

I've made enquiries. I'm afraid the farm has already been sold.

Their hopes are raised and dashed in an instant.

NI CK

Sold? Are you sure?

RALPH

Some local developer. I'm sorry.

KAT

It can't be. There must be a way...

Tears spring to her eyes. Mrs Nickleby begins to bawl. Ralph is alarmed, by the emotion, and the noise.

RALPH

KAT

Ep 1,

MRS NI CKLEBY

l n

KAT

Really?

MRS NI CKLEBY

I'm so proud of you, Nick. Nick Nickleby & Associates.

She's on the verge of bawling again. Ralph swiftly hands her his pristine handkerchief. The quality distracts her.

MRS NI CKLEBY (CONT'D)

On, is this silk?

Ralph hails a cab. Nick and Kat are left together. Neither can handle another parting right now. They downplay it.

NI CK

Look after mum And yourself.

KAT

Who's going to look after you?

NI CK

I'll be all right.

KAT

So will we.

NI CK

Right then.

A moment of toughness. Then at the last second, they hug. Tight. Fast. As Kat pulls away, she sneaks something from her pocket, gives it to him Maddy's CV.

NI CK

How did you..?

KAT

I'm not completely useless.

She grins at him, toughening up again. He's grateful.

RALPH

Ms Nickleby?

He holds the cab door open for her. Mrs Nickleby is already inside. Kat gets in with Ralph. The door shuts and the cab pulls away.

Nick is left on the pavement with a taciturn Noggs. Nick tries to make the best of it.

NI CK

So, what's it like, Dotheolds Hall?

NOGGS

(beat)

We'd better get a move on.

Noggs sets of f, pulling Nick's case, the least he can do for the poor lad.

On Nick, daunted, on the brink of his next adventure.

CUT TO:

27 INT. BHRAY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 1 - 20:00

27

Maddy enters, pushing a pram, a pharmacy bag in her hand. The child in the pram is unseen - sleeping under a blanket.

Maddy's dad, MR BHRAY, is on the sofa, a nebuliser beside him and a few used scratchcards scattered about. He's in his 50s, but aged by chronic illness and worry. He's deeply worried now. As is Maddy at the haggard sight of him

MADDY

Dad. You should be asleep.

MR BHRAY

Is Maia all right?

MADDY

It's just an infection.

MR BHRAY

I shouldn't have called you.

MADDY

No, you did the right thing. (BEAT) And now I'm going to do the right thing too.

She gets a battered laptop off a shelf. Mr Bhray panics.

MR BHRAY

No, Maddy. You promised not to go through with that.

MADDY

Things have changed.

MR BHRAY

I can look after Maia. I'm fine.

MADDY

No, you're not. And I don't want you getting worse any faster. I need to look after you both.

MR BHRAY

You don't have to sell yourself.

MADDY

It's a business arrangement.

MR BHRAY

It's an arranged marriage. I never wanted this for you.

MADDY

He'll get his visa, we'll get security for life.

MR BHRAY

It's not legal. If anyone finds out

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MADDY

No one'll find out. It's perfect.

He knows she's kidding herself. His heart is breaking.

MR BHRAY

Maddy -

MADDY

I'm lucky to have this opportunity. The sooner it's done, the happier I'll be.

MR BHRAY

- I am sorry.

Now her heart is too, but she has to stay strong.

MADDY

Dad, please. Go to bed.

He gives up, retreats, sadly. Maddy opens the laptop, opens an e-mail from 'Mrs Khenwigs' entitled 'A Proposal'.

On Maddy, steeling herself.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. DOTHEOLDS HALL - DAY 2 - 08:00

28

Establishing shot of the home and a sign that reads:

'DOTHEOLDS HALL. CARING FOR YOUR PARENTS AS WE CARE FOR OUR OWN.'

CUT TO:

29 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DINING ROOM - DAY 2 - 08:10

29

Breakfast time. The woe-begotten RESIDENTS sit at a long table as gruel-like porridge is slopped into their plastic trays by a somnambulistic ASSISTANT.

MRS SM KE, sits aside, at the window. She gazes out, unfocused, long accustomed to seeing the same thing every day and locking her thoughts up in her head. She wears a jumbled old man's suit, which looks unintentionally cool. She doesn't touch her breakfast.

Suddenly her eyes sharpen. She sees something different - someone - outside, at the gates. A golden boy, lost.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. DOTHEOLDS HALL - DAY 2 - CONTI NUOUS

30

Nick is dazed and crumpled from a night on the coach. He looks around. It looks rather nice.

He sees a face at the window, Mrs Smike, watching him She raises her hand, gives him a little wave.

Disarmed, Nick raises his hand, waves back. They smile.

Heartened, hopeful, he sets off down the drive.

CUT TO:

31 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DINING ROOM - DAY 2 - CONTINUOUS

31

Mrs Smike watches Nick approach with interest. She quickly reverts to her vacant look as WACKFORD SQUEERS enters

Squeers is a Little Britainish Hitler, rotund, balding, jazzy eye-patch, false tan set off by a pastel golfing sweater. He has a pile of residents' post, which he opens and reads aloud, with relish.

SQUEERS

Letters from home. Mr Cobbey?

MR COBBEY stirs into life, looks up, eager.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

Your daughter sends her love. She's sorry she's had to rent out your flat and sell all your furniture to pay for your keep here, but hey ho, such is life.

Mr Cobbey's mouth drops open, agog. Squeers moves on.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

Mrs Graymarsh? Your sister's dead. She's left you a hundred quid.

MRS CRAYWASH stares, disbelieving.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

It'll go towards the cost of replacing that vase you broke.

BOLDER

Just... when he saw me, he thought I'd lost a bit of weight.

SQUEERS

Oh, did he? Well then, we'll have do something about that, before you're allowed to see him again.

He digs a big spoonful of slop, ready to feed Mr Bolder.

A plate crashes to the floor, distracting him. He swings around, scanning for the culprit.

Mrs Smike stares out of the window. Her plate on the floor.

Squeers drops Mr Bolder's spoon. His target has shifted.

SQUEERS

Double-portions from now on. (TO MRS SM KE) And nothing for you. (TO ASSI STANT) Put her in her room For the rest of the day.

Mrs Smike glances at Mr Bolder. He's grateful, apologetic. The briefest twinkle in her eye, letting him off the hook. She doesn't mind. It was worth it.

CUT TO:

34 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, RECEPTION - DAY 2 - 08:45

34

Nick is getting impatient. He goes behind the desk, looks for some way to summon assistance. It's just a mess of trashy magazines, nail varnishes and doodles.

FRANNIE SQUEERS enters from within, 19 years of pig ignorance and pig appetite zipped into a too-tight tracksuit. She stops dead, fag halfway to her mouth. She has seen Nick and is smitten. Frannie makes sure she looks her best, sticks the fag behind her ear, and approaches.

FRANNI E

May I help you, sir?

Her smile is enough to send Nick running, but he braves it, politeness personified.

NI CK

I'm starting work here today. Nick Nickleby. FRANNI E

Frannie Squeers. My daddy's Wackford.

NI CK

Sorry?

FRANNI E

Wackford Squeers. The boss here.

NI CK

Ch. My uncle is Ralph Nickleby. Your dad's boss, in London.

Nick just got even more attractive to Frannie.

FRANNI E

Well, well, Nick Nickleby. I think you'd better come with me.

A come hither look. On Nick, wishing he could decline.

CUT TO:

INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFICE - DAY 2 - 09:30 35

35

Squeers is in his element, giving Nick the sales spiel, showing off his framed health & safety certificates and very small runner-up golf trophy.

Nick tries to take it all in, as Frannie takes him all in.

SQUEERS

You'll have seen our ads in the national quality press.

Nick hasn't, but nods as expected.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)
People flock here from far and wide. We are a beacon of excellence, awarded five-stars from CRAaPU

SQUEERS

The most remarkable thing is that we achieve all this whilst having the lowest overheads in the industry. And the highest profits. This is cutting edge business, my boy.

Nick frowns, not sure this is a good thing.

Frannie has a form, fiddles would-be erotically with a biro as she fills it in.

FRANNI E

So... Have you any experience of working in care before?

NI CK

None.

FRANNI E

Any training courses, qualifications?

NI CK

No.

FRANNI E

Voluntary placements? Informal care for an elderly relative?

NI CK

Not hing. Sorry.

FRANNI E

Okey dokey. Now if you'll just sign here. Tick here. And here.

He takes the pen, signs and ticks.

FRANNI E

And now it's official.

She presents him with a photo ID badge, clips it on his chest, coming over all unnecessary. Nick is unnerved.

NI CK

Is that it?

SQUEERS

Franni eki ns can show you everythi ng el se on-the-job.

Frannie titters. Nick pales.

CUT TO:

36 I NT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, CORRI DOR - DAY 2 - 14:30

36

Nick pushes a laundry trolley. Frannie follows behind him, admiring the view.

NI CK

How do we know whose clothes are whose?

FRANNI E

Just bung them what ever. They like a surprise.

She puts a 'Do not disturb' sign on the handle of the next door and opens it for Nick to go in.

CUT TO:

37 I NT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, MRS SM KE'S ROOM - DAY 2 - CONTI NUOUS 37

Mrs Smike sits on the bed, staring out of the window. She turns as the door opens, and sees Nick, smiles.

MRS SM KE

Hello.

Nick recognises her, smiles back.

NI CK

Hi, I'm Nick.

Mrs Smike is about to introduce herself, when Frannie enters. She is not best pleased to see Mrs Smike.

FRANNI E

Mrs Smike. You're not allowed to be in here. Go to the dayroom

MRS SM KE

I have to stay in here all day. Mr Squeers said.

FRANNI E

Well, I'm saying you have to go. Now.

Mrs Smike hesitates, unsure who best to obey.

Frannie froths and marches out, shouting.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)

Daddy?

Nick is concerned about Mrs Smike.

NI CK

Why do you have to stay in here?

But Mrs Smike is concerned about Nick.

MRS SM KE

I saw you, out si de.

NI CK

Yeah. It's my first day.

MRS SM KE

Looked like you wanted to leg it.

NI CK

No, I don't mind, really.

He can't cope with someone being nice to him And she is. She touches him

MRS SM KE

Don't be sad.

NI CK

I'm not - I...

MRS SM KE

You don't have to say. If you don't want.

NI CK

My dad...

He's choked, can't say any more. Doesn't need to. She puts her arm around him, warm

Frannie returns. Sees Nick upset. Mrs Smike touching him

FRANNI E

Get off him you I oon. (TO NI CK) Has she hurt you?

NI CK

No. We were only - (talking)

Squeers arrives, a small medical bag in hand. Frannie turns to him, indignant.

FRANNI E

Daddy?

SQUEERS

You know the rules, Mrs Smike. You do as you're told or else.

NI CK

Or else what?

SQUEERS

Out si de, pl ease, Ni ck.

NI CK

Not until (we've sorted this) -

SQUEERS

Before Nick can protest further, Squeers ushers him out of the door, locks it. Mrs Smike backs away.

MRS SM KE

l'm sorry.

SQUEERS

Shhh. Mrs Smike.

Frannie unzips the medical bag, takes out a syringe.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, CORRIDOR - DAY 2 - 14:40

38

Nick paces the corridor, troubled. He tries the door to Mrs Smike's room It's still locked. He bangs on it. No answer.

Nick turns, heads up the corridor to a door marked 'office'. He checks the coast is clear and heads in.

CUT TO:

39 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFICE - DAY 2 - 14:45

39

Nick looks around, not knowing where to start.

He looks on the desk. It's all photos of Frannie and golfing tat - 'World's Greatest' mug and the tiny trophy. There's a key inside it. No use to him

Nick opens a large cupboard. It's full of boxfiles bearing patients' names. He finds MRS SM KE's box, looks inside.

SQUEERS

Leave Mrs Smike to us experts, Nick. You're not a doctor. You're not even an NVQ level 1. You're a young man of impetuous temper and little or no experience. But one day, all this could be yours.

Nick frowns, it's the first he's heard.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)
Your uncle told me your dad's dead. He's had to take you under his wing, as it were.

He puts his arm around Nick, fatherly, confidential.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

SQUEERSmy knowledge, he's
got no other heirs. Doesn't take
a genius to see what he's doing,
sending you here. A kind of...
apprentice. So I earn from me.
I mpress me. And we could both
i mpress your uncle, you see?

FRANNIE (cont'd)
Tired out, poor thing. And he thought it'd be better, just us two.

NI CK

I'm pretty tired myself actually -

Before he can scarper, she bounds up, pulls himin.

FRANNI E

That's why I thought we'd just chill out here. Watch some telly. Have some dinner.

A massive bag of tortilla chips and a grim cheesy dip.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)

Come and get comfy. Have a dip.

Nick perches on the sofa, watches her dipping, sucking.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)

Hope it's posh enough for you. Daddy reckons you're like a millionaire.

NI CK

Your dad might be a bit confused.

Nick decides to turn this to his advantage.

NICK (CONT'D)

But... my uncle did ask me to keep an eye on things here. Report back to him

FRANNI E

What rating would you give me?

NI CK

What happened with Mrs Smike?

Frannie is put out. Why isn't he falling for her wiles?

FRANNI E

Do you fancy her or summat?

NI CK

Is she really senile?

Frannie huffs, might as well get this guff out of the way.

FRANNI E

She's nuts. Can't read or write. Zonked out half the time. Then when she likes she can be sneaky as anything. They get like that, proper cunning, when they've been in the loony-bins.

NI CK

What I oony-bi ns?

FRANNIE Been Locked up all her life, that one. Padded cells. Bzzz (M MES

41 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, MRS SM KE'S ROOM - NIGHT 2 - 20:30 41

A knock at the door. Mrs Smike opens her eyes, bleary. Nick

Nick moves on, unaware of the significance.

NI CK

I was looking for - I don't know-evidence, I suppose. Of how they're treating you here. But if you can just tell me, I could talk to my uncle or the inspectors or someone.

Mrs Smike is moved, but she has more pressing matters now.

MRS SM KE

It won't make any difference. But you have.

She squeezes his hand, warmly, closes her eyes. Dreams.

On Nick, troubled.

CUT TO:

42 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFICE - NIGHT 2 - 21:15

42

Nick sneaks into the darkened office. He turns on the computer. Desktop wall paper of Frannie gurns at him

He finds a folder entitled 'Patient Files', tries to open it, but it's password protected.

He gets his mobile out, tries calling Ralph.

NOGGS (O. S.)

This is the answering service for Ralph Nickleby Associates. Please leave a message after the tone.

NI CK

Hi, Newman. It's Nick. I'm at Dotheolds and I'm a bit... concerned. Can Uncle Ralph please give me a ring?

Nick hangs up, what more can he do?

He sees the CRAaPU report on the desk.

Inspired, he turns the computer back on, finds the CRAaPU website, clicks on 'Make a Complaint'.

On Nick, trying to make a difference.

CUT TO:

Sal	mon	Amendment s	13. 07. 12	41A

43 I NT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, NI CK'S ROOM - NI GHT 2 - 21:45 43

Ep 1,

Nick's cell-like bedroom He settles down to sleep. He's done as much as he can, but is still restless.

He gets his phone out, tries calling Kat.

'HI MADDY. IT'S NICK NICKLEBY. ARE YOU OKAY?'

He agnonises, then adds an 'X' at the end. He sends it. Looks at her photo, i magining her now.

A bleep. A reply already? He checks, excited.

'MESSAGE FAILED. CALL 450 TO TOP UP CREDIT'

On Nick, turning his phone off, cut off.

CUT TO:

46 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - NIGHT 2 - 23:00

46

Nick's voicemail plays on Ralph's phone as Noggs sits in his office, drinking, contemplating a modern art painting.

NICK (Q.S.)
It's Nick. I'm at Dotheolds and
I'm a bit... concerned. Can Uncle
Ralph please give me a ring?

Noggs takes the painting down, revealing a safe behind.

Noggs tries a random combination, tries to open it. Fails.

He slumps back in the chair, swigs, deletes the message.

CUT TO:

47 I NT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DAYROOM - DAY 3 - 10:30

47

The residents are catatonic in front of the world's most tedious tv programme - educational footage about how milk bottles are made or something of that ilk.

Mrs Smike is the only one not watching the tv. She sits at the window, deep in thought.

Nick watches her, wondering. Frannie sidles up to him

FRANNI E

Fancy taking me round the back - for a fag?

NI CK

I don't smoke.

FRANNI E

I've got chocol at e fingers.

An offer he can't resist. A chance to get rid of her.

NI CK

You go. I'll be there in a bit.

She bustles off, excited. Nick looks around at the vacant faces. Makes a decision.

Nick grabs the TV remote, turns the telly off. There's a mild ripple of consternation, culminating in a meek...

MR COBBEY

α.

Mrs Smike turns, intrigued.

NI CK

Sorry, Mr Cobbey. I thought we could do something different today, cheer us all up. What do you want to do?

Blank faces, underpinned by fear - what's all this about?

NICK (CONT'D)
How about... (GRASPING) a singsong? What songs do you like? Mrs
Graymarsh? Mr Bolder? Anyone?

Silence. But they look a little more interested now.

NICK (CONT'D)
Ckay then, I'll start and you
join in. (PAUSE, NO GOING BACK).
Pack up your troubles in your old
kit bag and smile smile smile.
While you've a la-la-la does
anyone know the words?

Silence. Interest is waning. Pressured, he tries one more.

NICK (CONT'D)
It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go... Okay.
Maybe not then.

He reaches for the remote. Mrs Smike stands up, sings.

MRS SM KE

Well since my baby left me, I've found a new place to dwell. It's down at the end of lonely street at Heartbreak Hotel. I've been so lonely, I've been so lonely, I've been so lonely, la-la-la

A different kind of silence. Awed. Her voice is surprising. Moving. She lights up when she sings. Everyone stares.

Nick claps. They all join in. Mrs Smike gives a little bow.

NI CK

Who's next?

 N_i ck beams at her. This might just work after all. Mrs

48 EXT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, BACK - DAY 3 - 10:45

48

A pile of old fag butts on the ground. Frannie alternates between smoking a fag and sucking a chocolate finger.

She hears something from inside. Singing. Laughter.

On Frannie, frowning, something's not right here.

CUT TO:

49 I NT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DAYROOM - DAY 3 - 10:50

49

Mr Cobbey clears his throat and pipes up a rousing rendition of Gerry and the Pacemakers 'How Do You Do It'.

MR COBBEY

How do you do what you do to me? I wish I knew, If I knew how you do it to me, I'd do it to you.

You give me a feeling in my heart. Like an arrow, passing through it. Suppose that you think you're very smart. But won't you tell me how do you do it?

As everyone listens or sings along, Mrs Smike seizes her chance. She slips out, unnoticed.

CUT TO:

50 I NT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFI CE - DAY 3 - CONTI NUOUS

50

Mrs Smike enters, goes to the cupboard, finds her file.

She opens it with trembling hands. Delves down to the locket, clasps it a moment, before hiding it in her jacket.

She sees the brown envelope below. Stares at it, in shock.

She picks it up, blows off the film of dust. Her name is printed on the front 'MRS SM KE'. She traces the letters with her finger. Pauses. Hardly dares to open it.

The door opens. She hides the envelope quickly.

Squeers enters, catching her closing the cupboard doors.

SQUEERS

Can I help you, Mrs Smike?

She overrides her fear, looks at him directly, honest.

MRS SM KE

You could. If you wanted to, Mr Squeers.

On Squeers, not likely.

CUT TO:

51 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DAYROOM - DAY 3 - 11:00

51

Mr Bolder leads a rousing chorus of 'Walkin' Back to Happiness'.

MR BOLDER

Walking back to happiness, woopah oh yeah yeah. Said goodbye to I oneliness, woopah oh yeah yeah. I never knew I'd miss you. Now I know what I must do. Walking back to happiness. I shared with you.

Frannie marches in with NS assistants - reinforcements.

FRANNI E

That'll do now. Break it up.

The residents do as they're told. Nick is less pliable.

NI CK

It's not doing any harm, Frannie.

FRANNI E

You've already lost one resident. Told you she was cunning.

Nick panics, scans the room

NI CK

Mrs Smike.

FRANNI E

It's all right. Daddy's taking care of her. We can take a break.

As Frannie puts the telly on, Mr Bolder touches Nick's arm

NICK (O.S.)

Let her go.

Squeers turns to see Nick. Nick is fuming, fists balled.

NI CK

I said. Let her go.

SQUEERS

I don't care who your uncle is. I'm in charge here.

He turns back, carries on dragging Mrs Smike inside, towards a wooden chair. Nick sees red. He flies at Squeers, pulls him off Mrs Smike and socks him in the face.

Frannie arrives, sees Nick attacking her dad and jumps on Nick's back. Nick whirls around, throwing her off. But as he does, Squeers picks up a plank and comes at him

MRS SM KE

Nick. Behind you.

Nick turns just in time to duck the plank. Squeers goes flying, lands on top of Frannie with a mighty COF! A pile of crates topple over onto them

Breathless, Nick turns to Mrs Smike.

NI CK

Are you all right?

She nods, smiles.

MRS SM KE

Thanks for coming.

Squeers groans from under the crates.

SQUEERS

Franniekins, call the police.

MRS SM KE

Think we'd better be going.

Mrs Smike holds out her hand to Nick. He takes it.

On Nick and Mrs Smike, on the run, together. [HOOK]

COM NG UP: EDITED HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT EPISODE.

END OF EPISODE