

THE C WORD

by

Ni col e Tayl or

Based on the book
"THE C WORD" by Li sa Lynch

1

1

LIVE ACTION OVER TITLES: -

LISA, blonde, early thirties, lies on a lilo with one ear-phone in. She is in her own world, singing.

Angle on PETE, LISA's husband, coming out the villa doors. He's mid-to late-thirties, a cheeky, handsome Scouser. He comes over to the pool and dips his legs in up to the knees. LISA sees him, smiles at him.

PETE

 Bloke from over the way there
 popped his head in, reckons you've
 got a cracking voice.

LISA

 Really?

PETE's eyes twinkle with mischief.

PETE

 No.

She laughs. He laughs. They like each other, these two.

Crank up music over: -

CUT TO:

1A

1A

A magazine office. Each individual page of a magazine issue is being pinned up onto one wall while LISA and two colleagues, JACK and SARA, are standing in front of it, pointing out things and discussing.

1B

1B

PETE is bantering away with TWO COLLEAGUES as they head from the open-plan workspace to the lift area, with football stuff over their shoulder.

1C

1C

PETE gets home muddy and in football kit to find LISA on the phone, happy, obviously excited at some good news. She passes PETE the phone and goes over and writes 'Jamie's wedding' in big felt tip letters on the CALENDAR on the fridge, embellishing it with stars - Sat 11th Oct 2008.

[N.B. The fridge is covered in pics - a childhood snap of LISA and GABBY, her and JAMIE, one of her and PETE. These - along with various concert tickets and wedding invitations for forthcoming events - are all tucked around this calendar which is packed full of plans for the months to come].

LISA grabs her jacket and beckons to PETE. PETE - still talking on the phone - follows her out the house. The door closes behind them.

CUT TO:

2

2

A pub garden, strung with fairy-lights. It's packed with a summer after-work crowd, people are sitting at picnic tables. At one sits LISA and PETE, along with GABBY, LISA's best friend from Derby, GABBY's nerdy but witty husband SAM and LISA's university friend ABIGAIL, who's posh and glam and deadpan, and who probably went to Rodean.

PETE

New York, Washington then through the Blue Ridge Mountains, to North Carolina, South Carolina, Savannah, Georgia then Miami.

LISA

1,000 miles of highway, 40 mixtapes, 8 skanky motels and 3 weeks off work. Woop!

She and PETE smack a high five.

GABBY

There's this restaurant in New York right where the food comes out in test tubes and you inhale one of the courses off a cloth.

The bell for last orders.

PETE

(standing up)

Right any more for any more?

SAM raises his empty glass, indicating he'd like another.

LISA

Better not. I've got to be in work early to leave early.

PETE heads inside to the bar.

ABIGAIL

Does it move around?

LISA

(Looking down at her chest)

I'm not sure.

ABIGAIL

Well check.

LISA
What now?

SAM
(gesturing for her to go
ahead as he turns away)
Please.

A bit gingerly LISA massages her left tit.

LISA
It does. I think.

Impatient at the inconclusiveness, ABIGAIL leans over and feels LISA's tit. And feels it. And feels it.

GABBY
(shoving ABIGAIL off)
Right let me have a go.

GABBY is mid-massage as PETE returns to the table with a pint for SAM. PETE looks at SAM who shrugs, disclaiming any responsibility.

GABBY (CONT'D)
(to SAM, still massaging)
Remember that ovarian cyst I had?
It just went away on its own.

Finally SAM puts his pint down.

SAM
D'you want us to just... (go away)?

PETE
Tell you what let's stay but mate
if you just stand up I'll have a
quick rummage around your nutsack.

SAM starts unbuckling his belt. Laughter. PETE smiles at LISA who smiles back. The joke was directed at her - she is clearly his favourite audience.

CUT TO:

3

3

LISA approaches her boss, SARA, late-40s, who's walking across a busy magazine office en route to a meeting. SARA is warm and melodramatic and American.

LISA
(intercepting her)
Sara I've got to shoot off -1180 398 Tm /TT1 Tc 1t2 180

Before LISA can react to this inappropriateness, SARA grabs her forearms.

SARA (CONT'D)
We cannot spare you.
(as an afterthought)
Don't take me to a tribunal for that.

On LISA, smiling, shaking her head slightly, used to her boss's manner and realising it's a compliment. SARA hurries off to the meeting.

SARA (CONT'D)
(calling back)
Go when you need to. Ask Jack to send out a couple more options for the cover.

LISA goes over to her desk to pick up her bag. The guy at the desk across, JACK, holds up a piece of paper. Scribbled on it is 'TOP'. LISA glances down at her top, confused. Then JACK puts another piece of paper beneath it that says 'SHOP'. He thinks she's leaving early to go to Topshop. LISA gets it and laughs.

CUT TO:

4

4

LISA has her head on PETE's shoulder in the waiting room. It should feel like they've been waiting quite a while.

PETE
There's a nun over there reading
Grazia.

LISA puts her head up.

PETE (CONT'D)
Every time.

CUT TO:

5

5

On LISA having a mammogram.

CUT TO:

6

6

LISA and PETE follow the NURSE down a long corridor. The NURSE strides quickly despite markedly short legs and muttongy calves. They have to hurry to keep up.

PETE
What was it like?

LISA

Like shutting your tit in the
fridge door.

PETE winces, then they have to speed up to keep up with the nurse. Then from behind we see PETE nip LISA's arse. She thumps him then a second later pulls her pants out of her arse.

CUT TO:

7

7

LISA and PETE sit on two chairs across the desk from the CONSULTANT, middle-aged, handsome and reassuring, with a touch of the Gold Blend man about him. The NURSE pulls the door shut. LISA and PETE both note it strange that she stays in the room.

The CONSULTANT turns to the screen behind him and touches a switch. The screen lights up with a huge mammogrammed picture of LISA's breasts. The image looms over them.

CONSULTANT

Lisa the shadow on the film, that's
the lump you can feel.

He gestures with a pointer to a darker area on the photograph.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

It isn't a cyst. The signs are
consistent with breast cancer.

A two shot of LISA and PETE, reeling. Time seems to slow. The CONSULTANT continues talking -

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

Obviously we're hoping that it's
low grade. We'll do a needle biopsy
today and that will tell us more
about what we're dealing with,
whether it's invasive or non-
invasive. If the cancer is
invasive, you may need a course of
chemotherapy and radiotherapy, but
in either case, because of the size
of the lump we'll need to start by
operating to remove the breast.
It's a lot to take in, but if
there's one thing to retain from
what I'm telling you it's that the
treatment of cancer and in
particular breast cancer has come
on leaps and bounds and survival
rates have improved enormously.

- but from LISA and PETE's POV it's mostly just lips moving -
a high-pitched whine drowns out what he says.

When he's finished, the NURSE speaks - audibly, but to LISA and PETE's ears, as though she were speaking another language.

NURSE

Have you got any questions?

It's too much to take in yet. PETE looks at LISA who's not in a position to formulate any either.

NURSE (CONT'D)

He stands still among them and takes his phone out of his pocket. Looks at it. Scrolls down to "Jane and Ian, Derby". And dreads what he's about to have to do.

CUT TO:

15

15

The bath is running. LISA is too stunned to cry.
The doorbell rings.
She turns the tap off.

CUT TO:

16

16

PETE opens the door.

IAN and JANE, LISA's parents, and a mid-twenties guy, LISA's brother JAMIE, are standing there with an overnight case. PETE hangs back as with a wracking sob, LISA almost falls into IAN's arms.

CUT TO:

16A

16A

LISA, PETE, IAN, JANE and JAMIE sit around five untouched

PETE's head falls into his hands and LISA registers this with alarm.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

The tumour is around five centimeters in length, which means we're looking at a stage 2 or a stage 3 cancer, depending on whether or not there's been a spread to the lymph nodes.

LISA

How many stages are there?

CONSULTANT

Four.

IAN

Oh G-d.

PETE rocks back and forth, his head in his hands. JANE is stunned, white. LISA, horrified by the devastation around her, swallows back her own fright.

LISA

What do we do?

CONSULTANT

Don't Google. There's a lot of rubbish about and it'll only frighten you.

The NURSE hands her a stack of literature.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

(gently)

You'll have the operation first. I do a skin sparing mastectomy which means I remove the nipple and take out the breast tissue but the skin itself will be saved.

NURSE

An expandable implant goes in which will be gradually pumped up and then when it's time for the breast to be rebuilt, that expandable prosthesis will be replaced by a fixed volume one. It achieves really good cosmetic results. I'll show you some pictures in a moment.

LISA

LISA
(like it's the most
important thing in the
world)
My brother. My brother's getting
married in five months.
(disbelieving)
I won't be able to go.

NURSE
Of course you will. Of course you
will. You'll wear a wig or a
lovely headscarf and you will look
amazing.

On LISA, blinking with absolute disbelief that what the NURSE
is saying is going to become a reality. Suddenly, JANE, who
until now has been completely quiet, lets rip.

JANE
How? How can this possibly be?
She is vibrating with shock and rage.

JANE (CONT'D)
I'm 55, I'm screened every year,
you're 28 and they're telling me
you've got breast cancer? How?
How can that be? How can it be a
cyst one minute and a huge invasive
tumour the next?

LISA
(gently)
Mum stop.

JANE
(getting louder,
panicking)
I just think it's appalling that
nobody picked this up!

LISA
Please.
She's scared too. This is making it worse.

JANE
I have never heard of this, have
you Ian? Never. A girl of your
age getting breast cancer. Never.

LISA, desperate now, looks to PETE but he too is lost to her,
his forehead in his hands. At this most terrifying moment
for her, LISA is engulfed by her family's collective despair.
It's like a tide, rising and rising and threatening to
overwhelm her, until suddenly she can take it no longer.

LISA
(to her family)
STOP! Stop it. All of you. The
lot of you. I can't do this. I
cannot handle seeing you like this.

The CONSULTANT and the NURSE stay quiet and don't seem fazed.
They seem to know to just let LISA get on with it.

LISA (CONT'D)
Carry on as you are, carry on like
this and I'll deal with all of this
on my own, or you can just pack it
in now and do it with me. So
decide now.

She is as frightened as she is angry, but above all things,
she is determined. This devastation has to stop.

LISA (CONT'D)
What's it going to be?

CUT TO:

17A _____ 17A

JANE is violently ironing a pile of clothes.

17B _____ 17B

IAN is outside violently washing his car.

17C _____ 17C

PETE is clattering about in the shed at the end of the
garden.

17D _____ 17D

JAMIE is kicking a football against the side of the house,
again and again and again.

LISA walks through all of this, seeing each member of her
family in their own private pain and unable to help her.
It's frankly doing her head in. Needing to get away from it,
she heads for her bedroom -

CUT TO:

18 _____ 18

- and shuts the door.

Coming to sit down on the bed, LISA looks like she's about to
explode.

Her hands are steepled against her face and she's breathing in and out as if she were willing herself not to cry or scream or have a panic attack.

A moment, then she sees her laptop - a white Macbook. She

LISA
What are you doing?

IAN
Delimescal ing the kettle.

For fuck' s sake. Enough. Truly - enough.

LISA
We' re going out.

CUT TO:

20

20

Five uncomfortable stools in a tapas restaurant. They' re all

LISA
Ignore her. It's about... the
Bullshit. That's where it's going.
Everything I feel. Everything I
want to say.

She looks at PETE as she says this, like she's explaining her
need and asking him to get onboard.

LISA (CONT'D)
I'm going to send the link round my
friends so people know what's going
on with me, which means that the
rest of the time we can talk about
other things.

Beat.

IAN
Can your Mum and I read it?

LISA hesitates.

LISA
Yeah. But no questions and no
comments. Cos it's all going up
there unvarnished.

ABIGAIL
Wait. This can't just be for your
friends. Have you Googled the word
'cancer'?

PETE
(stiffly, sounding a
warning)
The doctor told us not to.

Everyone looks at ABIGAIL, afraid of what she's going to say
next.

ABIGAIL
Google 'cancer' and a thousand
pages will come up trying to tell
you that it's a gift.

IAN
A what?

ABIGAIL
A gift. Merry Christmas. Happy

JANE
(as if speaking from

IAN (CONT'D)
(playing to the gallery
now)
Give over.

He looks at LISA over the menu - it's a bit of an act but it's a good one and it does what it needs to - it tells LISA that he's onboard.

CUT TO:

21

21

LISA is sitting on her bed, typing. Not tentative, but with gusto - really clattering away at the keys.

LISA (V.O.)
Being diagnosed with cancer is like being told you've got twenty minutes to revise for an A level in a language you've never learned. And if that weren't enough, consider the course materials - packed with pink girliness, cutesy prettiness and woeful attempts at just-us-girls hen night-style fun. Why is there so much Bullshit about the Bullshit? Where are the people telling it like it really is?

A knock and JAMIE comes into LISA's bedroom.

JAMIE
Alright Arsehat?

She shows him her computer and we see the blog.

LISA
I'm calling it "Alright Tit". What do you think?

JAMIE
(coming to sit on the bed)
Yeah. Good. Yeah.

JAMIE is clearly more upset than he's letting on. LISA closes her laptop.

LISA
How are the wedding plans?

On JAMIE, not really knowing how to answer - that's the last thing on his mind.

JAMIE
(deflecting)
It's ages away yet, isn't it?

LISA
I'm sorry. About the timing. I
don't want this to interfere.

On JAMIE, trying to gauge how to answer. He's devastated by the news but gets that LISA needs him to get onboard with the way she's handling it.

JAMIE
(slightly forced)
Well. You do have form.

LISA
What form?!

JAMIE
My 8th birthday she falls off her
bike. Upstaged. No-one
interested in my Moonwalk. Only
interested in signing your cast.

LISA
Cos your moonwalk was shite!

JAMIE
Glandular fever.

LISA
Yeah - during my A Levels!

JAMIE
Yeah but you were still playing the
glanny card during mine.
"Jamie can you leave your physics
coursework and come down and set
the table, Lisa's got to rest in
front of Home and Away".

LISA laughs - tantamount to an admission. The two of them are quiet for a bit. All the safety, all the comfort of their childhoods - gone.

LISA
I'm going to be bald, at the
wedding.

JAMIE
That's alright.

LISA
And in all the photos. That'll be
nice. I'll be bald, bloated and
one titted.

JAMIE
OK.

LISA
But I'll still be there.

JAMIE

Course you'll be there. Cos I'll not be going down any aisle without you.

LISA

You'll not be going down the aisle at all, you muppet. You stand and wait at the end of it while Leanne comes down.

JAMIE

(grinning)
Right. Shit.

CUT TO:

22

22

PETE is brushing his teeth. When he comes into the bedroom, he finds LISA standing in white pyjamas. She is taking a gorgeous cocktail dress out the wardrobe and hanging it up.

LISA

For Jamie's wedding. Just need the Louboutins and I'm set.

On PETE, pausing, considering how to proceed.

PETE

Babe.

He sits down on their bed.

PETE (CONT'D)

You know you don't have to...man up just cos I was crying like a baby.

LISA

I'm not 'manning up'. It's the end of my twenties, it's the start of our marriage and I'm not going to let this change me or take over our lives for any longer than necessary. We've got things to do, sex to have, babies to...freeze. Shoes to buy. This is not taking any more than my hair.

PETE looks at her. It's bravado, surely - she's as scared as he is - but she's determined to do this her way.

LISA (CONT'D)

I can't control anything about this shit-uation except for how I handle it and this is how I'm handling it.

On PETE realising she's not for turning. She needs him to get onboard. Making an effort to switch modes:

'Why wasn't it you?' I thought as we passed a happy-looking twentysomething, arm in arm with her equally - and nauseatingly - happy-looking boyfriend. 'Why haven't you got this?'. I find myself actually looking forward to surgery next week.

After a moment, she gets up, untacks the old calendar - full of parties and dinners and holidays and festivals - and all the photos. Instead, she puts up a new calendar - which marks out all the stages of her treatment and her new life: MASTECTOMY, CHEMO STARTS, CHEMO 2, CHEMO 3, CHEMO 4, CHEMO 5, CHEMO 6, CHEMO ENDS. She stands in front of it, trying hard to adjust to this new reality.

Then she picks up a yellow felt tip and writes in 'JAMIE'S WEDDING' at the end of it all - and in exactly the same way - and with the same prominence - as it had before.

LISA picks up her iPhone and clicks -

CUT TO:

- and the new calendar automatically becomes the background to LISA's 'Alright Tit' blog - 30.05.08.

CUT TO:

24

24

Close on a black felt tip drawing lines and curves. Then we pull out and see that it's the CONSULTANT - drawing on LISA's boob, marking where to cut. On LISA, steeling herself.

LISA (V.O.)

I WANT THIS THING OUT OF ME. Cut me open, take my nipple, take the lot, scar me right up. Just get. it. out.

CONSULTANT

Ready?

LISA sits up, pulls her gown on. She looks at PETE, who's sitting at the other side of the room. He doesn't look ready. He stands up and goes over to her.

They hold onto each other until they both become aware of the CONSULTANT waiting. Reluctantly, they separate.

PETE

LISA follows the CONSULTANT out the door, leaving PETE alone in the room, seeming vulnerable and a bit lost.

CUT TO:

25

25

LISA is lying on the trolley. An ANAESTHETIST is moving around preparing the anaesthetic.

ANAESTHETIST
Just like a couple of gin and
tonics.

LISA
(scared but styling it
out)
Well that's a worry. It takes more
than a couple to do anything to me.

The ANAESTHETIST smiles.

ANAESTHETIST
Can you count down for me from 5.

LISA
5...4...3...

Then the numbers stop.

CUT TO:

26

26

IAN, JANE and PETE, all exhausted and quite down - like it's all gone on longer than they thought. Then the CONSULTANT comes in. IAN stands up.

CONSULTANT
It's all out. It took longer than
we expected because the cancer did
make it into Lisa's lymph nodes.
But the operation went well and
it's all out.

On PETE, nodding, relieved.

CUT TO:

27

27

The next day. JAMIE and GABBY are hanging around the corridor. PETE comes out of LISA's room.

JAMIE
How is she?

PETE
On morphine. And whizzed off her
tits. Tit.

GABBY
(to JAMIE)
Go on. You go in first.

CUT TO:

28

28

JAMIE goes in. There she is. Bandages across her chest. She sounds weak when she speaks.

JAMIE
(shocked at the sight of
her but trying to hide
it)
Hi arsehole.

LISA
Hi bowel breath.

JAMIE
How you feeling?

LISA
(gesturing to under the
bed)
Amazing. Can you just check under
there?

Following her instruction, JAMIE lifts up the side of LISA's bed sheet and sees a gross bag of bloody fluids (it's attached by tube to LISA's armpit, which is being drained of blood and fluid). He grimaces. Looks at her. LISA is grinning - she just wanted to gross him out.

JAMIE
Urgh you bastard.

28A

28A

The date 07.06.08 appears on-screen as an array of friends and family visit, and we hear LISA in voice-over:

LISA (V.O.)
Lovely as it was to be so inundated with well-wishers, it was my first taste of feeling like a museum exhibit; a freak-show to be viewed in single-file. (Roll up, roll up, for the one-breasted woman!) But rather than play the part of the ill person or feel conscious about my new, wonky-looking chest, I gave the people what they wanted. It made me feel better. It made them feel better. And it was the best tactic I had in my cancer-beating arsenal.

During the above:

28B	_____	28B
	IAN rigging up an iPod dock	
28C	_____	28C
	SARA from work popping her head around the door	
28D	_____	28D
	JANE whacking two pillows together to make LISA more (and simultaneously less) comfortable (PETE watching this with alarm)	
28E	_____	28E
	GABBY reading aloud from one of those shit "Take a Break" type magazines and the two of them laughing	
28F	_____	28F

LISA can't resist.

LISA
Well done you.

Across the room, PETE shakes his head, looking at her with laughing eyes.

CONSULTANT
(on his way out)
I have to say I'm so impressed with how you're handling all of this.

LISA
(surprised, pleased but trying not to show it)
Well. Pfah. Hmm. I don't. Crikey. I don't know about that.

The CONSULTANT exits with a smile. A few seconds of knitted brow later, LISA finally comes up with a satisfactory response.

LISA (CONT'D)
"I bet you say that to all your patients". That's what I should have said.

PETE
Too late babe. He'll have to go with your first answer.

He mimics all her cringey sounds. He's laughing and gets her laughing.

CUT TO:

29

29

A few days later. PETE and JANE are sitting in chairs in the CONSULTANT's office. They are both looking anxiously at a screen, behind which, there's the sound of dressings coming off.

NURSE
(finishing removing the dressing)
Now, remember there won't be a nipple, but that'll get rebuilt after chemotherapy and radiotherapy, when we finish your reconstruction.

The dressings are off. The CONSULTANT and NURSE stand expectantly, but LISA keeps her eyes screwed shut.

LISA
I can't. I can't look. Mum can you?

JANE hops off her seat and goes behind the curtain.

JANE
My G-d.

LISA
(panicky)
What? What is it?

JANE
That is amazing.

LISA opens her eyes and looks down. Then exhales.

LISA
Shit.

She looks up at the CONSULTANT.

LISA (CONT'D)
There's hardly any scarring.

From the other side of the screen:

PETE
Do I get a look?

On LISA, slightly nervous. JANE squeezes her hand. PETE pops his head around the curtain. On LISA, scanning his face for a reaction. After a long moment -

LISA
(vulnerable)
Say something. Better or worse than you were expecting?

PETE
I had been gearing up for some kind of heinous purple X shaped gash with bruising all around it and stitches poking out, surrounded by crusty blood. So I'm a bit disappointed.

He comes over and kisses LISA on the cheek with a smile, reassuring her that it's all OK.

PETE (CONT'D)
(to LISA, as if there were no-one else in the room)
Looks great.

She squeezes his hand. The NURSE hands LISA a gown.

CONSULTANT
There's an implant in there which will need to be pumped up slowly with saline.

NURSE

It'll be inflated gradually over
the next few weeks.

LISA

So I'll have two roughly equal
sized knockers for Jamie's wedding.

CONSULTANT

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

In your case, that isn't something I would advise. A course of IVF relies on pumping you full of oestrogen and that might accelerate the cancer.

A blink. LISA is slow to adjust.

LISA

(shocked)

So I can't. I can't...

On JANE, looking down at her lap, obviously shocked and upset but trying to hide her feelings.

CONSULTANT

I'm afraid it could be dangerous for you to try.

CUT TO:

30

30

LISA, PETE and JANE let themselves into the empty house. The two of them stand there, winded, as we catch sight of their wedding photograph in the background.

JANE

(jaunty)

Right I'll piss off and give you two some space but mind I'll be back out in time for Coronation Street.

She gives LISA a perky pat on the arm and heads for the spare room.

CUT TO:

31

31

As soon as JANE closes the door, the facade drops. The awfulness of the news is written all over her face.

CUT TO:

32

32

Later, in bed that night, LISA and PETE are lying side by side, holding hands, still wearing the same expression. We stay on them as they lie there in silence.

CUT TO:

33

33

The snip snip h Tf (snip) Tj ET Q q 1 0 s12 164 747 T

LISA (V.O.)
(glazed)
The no kids clause.

CUT TO:

34

34

It's early in the morning and PETE is going to work. He strides past the odd PARENT walking his or her CHILD to school. Walking through London, they and all other pedestrians would usually be invisible to him, but today that isn't the case. PETE's face registers very little, but we can tell he is aware - and slightly pained by - walking through all of these people in school uniforms.

CUT TO:

35

35

The hairdresser is cutting LISA's hair short. There's the sense that as all this is happening to her, she needs to keep fixed on her reflection, to try amidst all the changes to recognise herself.

LISA (V.O.)
I didn't see that one coming.

CUT TO:

36

36

PETE gets into work. He drops his bag at his desk and then goes over to the kitchenette and turns on the kettle. He's in his own private world, a million miles away from here.

CUT TO:

37

37

LISA is still looking in the mirror. The haircut is well underway now.

LISA (V.O.)
But dwelling any further on it
right now would be a bit like
crying over conceding a penalty
when you're already ten nil down.

Her hair is falling all about her. Suddenly we notice she's starting to cry. Silently at first - the hairdresser doesn't even notice. By the time we see GABBY's reflection in the mirror - she's coming back with two cups of coffee - LISA is in floods of tears.

GABBY
(to the HAIRDRESSER)
Can we just?

The HAIRDRESSER steps away - he hadn't even noticed.

HAI RDRESSER
(feeling bad, thinking
it's the hair)
It's not finished.

LISA gets up and GABBY hugs her, doesn't stop hugging her.

CUT TO:

38

38

LISA and GABBY are sitting on a bench outside the hairdressers, holding their coffees, in peaceful silence. LISA has stopped crying. GABBY remains quiet until LISA is ready to talk. Eventually -

LISA
Sorry.

GABBY
Can you stop saying sorry!

LISA shakes her head.

LISA
I don't know what's wrong with me.

GABBY
Well we do know what's wrong with you.

A small mirthful sound escapes from LISA - half sniff half sob half laugh.

GABBY (CONT'D)
Plenty of us won't have kids of our own you know. Not even plenty - probably half. Half of us won't. We'll end up leaving it too late to get off the starting blocks.

LISA
D'you ever think that if we'd stayed up in Derby we'd be onto our third?

GABBY
Yeah but why spend your twenties doing that when you could be getting shit-faced and staggering around London in high heels trying to find a taxi who'll go South of the river?

LISA smiles.

GABBY (CONT'D)

LISA nods, knowing she's right. Then something passes over her face.

LISA
It's just Pete.

She can't say anymore, just makes a gesture that indicates she means she's upset for him.

GABBY
I always thought he was a bit of a
cocky twat but you seemed to like
him.

It's well-intentioned but LISA doesn't smile. Eventually -

GABBY (CONT'D)
(softer)
You know the only kind of life he's
particular about is one with you.

CUT TO:

39

39

LISA comes back to the house with a new bob haircut. She enters gingerly, self-conscious as she looks at PETE. But from the way PETE looks at her, we can tell that everything GABBY said about the way he feels about her was right.

CUT TO:

40

40

- LISA is applying make-up in front of the mirror.

LISA (V.O.)
I've spent as long as I can
remember wishing I looked
different. As a kid, I loathed my
super-curly, strawberry-blonde
(okay, ginger) hair. I was hardly
blessed with a good set of gnashers
either. Best to use the words of my
Dad, who chose his father-of-the-
bride speech to announce that I had
'teeth like Ronaldinho'. And ever
since, it's been everything from my

LISA (V.O.)

I wish I had the chance to go back to my 13/14/15-year-old self, give her a good shake and tell her not to be so bloody self-conscious.

LISA emerges into the hall, finally ready to go. She looks amazing. Stunning. Like the most glamorous not-at-all-sick-looking sick person you've ever seen. PETE, who's been waiting for her, smiles a "you are hot" smile at her, then he holds the door open and they exit, closing the flat door behind them.

CUT TO:

Others looks like they've got no reason to be there at all.

JANE

I'm wondering whether it might have been something you ate.

Everyone looks at JANE, speechless. And even through the hell that she's in, LISA's eyes register the absurdity of that comment.

CUT TO:

46

46

On LISA, looking like she's had one hell of a week of side-effects.

LISA (V.O.)

The nausea they tell you about.
And the bone pain. The fatigue.
The shivers. They even give you
the heads up about the acne. But
no one warns you about the toll
that cancer treatment's going to
take on your arse.

Pull out to reveal that LISA is typing this blog entry on the toilet. She hits 'post' and the date 30.06.08 appears on-screen.

CUT TO:

47

47

In the living room, PETE is watching Wimbledon. The thwack thwack of the tennis ball is interrupted by -

LISA (O.S.)

(calling out)

Pete.

PETE

(thinking she wants the
score)

It's 40/30 to Murray. 2 sets all.

LISA (O.S.)

Can you come here?

PETE

(standing)

Amazing. You've had all day to
move your bowels and now it's match-
point.

The click of the lock as LISA emerges, handing a slightly grossed out PETE the laptop.

PETE (CONT'D)

Are we not flushing now?

LISA
There's nothing to flush.

PETE
(almost impressed)
Unbelievable.

LISA
(excited)
Look. Someone's written to me.

CUT TO:

48

48

LISA and PETE sit at either end of the couch as LISA reads aloud to PETE from her laptop.

LISA (V.O.)
Dear Lisa. I like your blog - it's funny and no shit. It's true - the steroids make your ass harder to crack than the Da Vinci code. I'm 25, I live in Brighton, though originally from Toronto. I'm a jazz pianist -

She turns the computer round to him and shows him a YouTube type video of a funky-looking girl - black hair, black glasses, Ghost World type - playing amazing jazz piano. This is Anya.

PETE
Cool.

LISA
(resumes reading)
And I have secondary breast cancer. Want to know the single best gift you can buy for a cancer patient? A giant sized tub of Sudocrem.

PETE
What's Sudocrem?

LISA Googles it.

LISA
(reading)
Sudocrem is a thick white barrier cream used for...nappy rash.

PETE
Nice.

LISA
Which helps keep your skin lubricated to prevent chafing.

PETE
Want me to go and/(pick some up)?

A strange look passes LISA's face. Before she can answer
LISA bolts to the loo and slams the door.

CUT TO:

49

49

PETE is making a sandwich. A voice from the loo.

LISA (O.S.)
Pete?

PETE
Yeah?

LISA (O.S.)
Can you get me something from the .01670000Tc 12 0s4Pp -C

LISA (CONT'D)
To that girl who wrote to me. I
want to write back.

PETE snuggles down next to her.

PETE
Dear...

LISA
Anya.

PETE
Dear Anya. At seven thirty three
pm British summertime I filled the
pan to the delight of the Wimbledon
crowd.

LISA
Pete.

PETE
Alright alright. Dear Anya.
Thanks for your message. It
lightened the load.

She rolls her eyes at him.

LISA
Never mind.

PETE
No wait. Dear Anya. Thank you for
the message. My husband says it's
the first time he's seen me smile
all week.

CUT TO:

51

51

A few weeks later. LISA is pale and tired but still has her
hair and her 'verve'.

PETE
I don't have to aTm 580 93 TCT1 1 Tf4 63 0 842 cm BT -181

PETE

Under twenty five minutes.

LISA

Go! Someone's got to keep me in handbags and iTunes while I'm sat here on my arse.

PETE

(guilty, worried)
Right. See you later.

54

54

LISA (V.O.)
 I might try to act cool with him,
 but the truth is that his
 excitement when a new comment
 appears is nothing on mine. Today
 I failed to eat the sandwich and
 wasn't arsed with mascara, but I
 loved reading everything you wrote.

The sound of the door opening and PETE getting home. LISA waves from her perch on the couch and carries on typing. PETE looks utterly relieved to find her happy and occupied.

LISA (V.O.)
 So, whatever it is you've said, or
 if you're just reading and not
 saying anything at all - thank you.
 You've made an under-employed woman
 with swollen joints and one missing
 nipple very happy.

Satisfied, she hits 'post' and the date 07.07.08 appears on the screen.

CUT TO:

55

55

It's the weekend. PETE is cooking bacon and eggs, quite content in the kitchen. That is, til LISA comes in and hands him a hair-ball (from her head). He doesn't know how to react. He turns the hob off.

PETE
 We knew this was going to happen.

LISA
 Thanks that's helpful.

PETE
 It's going to come out and then
 it's going to grow back again.

LISA
 (determined, in denial)
 It might not. If I don't do
 anything to dislodge it.

On PETE, not believing that this is going to be the case but not saying anything to contradict it. Understanding that this is what she needs to believe.

CUT TO:

PETE

Babe.

Beat.

PETE (CONT'D)

How long since you...?

LISA

Since I what?

PETE

Had a shower?

Beat.

LISA

A few weeks.

PETE

Right.

LISA

But I've been having baths.

She touches her head.

LISA (CONT'D)

Do you think I should wash it?

PETE

...Maybe. You might feel better.

On LISA, conflicted.

LISA

Does it smell?

PETE

(meaning 'yes')

No.

SHOWER sound, which continues over the next scene.

CUT TO:

58

58

PETE has made the bedroom romantic, boudoir-like - by lowering the lights and lighting tea-lights around the room. He puts music on and seems excited for her to come out the bathroom and see how nice he's made it.

The shower sound stops. A moment, then LISA appears. She takes the towel off her head - to reveal hardly any hair left. There's hair all over her towel which she lets drop to the floor. On PETE, a flare of shock on his face which he tries to cover up.

PETE

Shit.

He springs off the bed and goes over and puts his arms around her.

PETE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

He feels terrible for telling her to have a shower. LISA just stands there, vulnerable and forlorn and stunned.

LISA

Too late. On LISA, nervous, as they open the door.

It's too much for ABIGAIL who honks with laughter. LISA grabs her arm -

LISA
Sorry. Sorry.

- and pulls her out the door.

CUT TO:

62

62

As soon as they're in the corridor again, ABIGAIL explodes.

ABIGAIL
The baldness. The Annabel.

LISA
(happier)
Let's go.

LISA links her arm through ABIGAIL's and they move along the corridor as fast as LISA's legs will go.

CUT TO:

63

63

The sound of PETE getting home.

LISA
You're cheerful.

PETE
Am I? No I'm not.

LISA
(moody)
How was work?

PETE
(lying)
...Dull.

He's trying to tell her what she wants to hear.

PETE (CONT'D)
How was it?

LISA
Great.

She's sitting at the kitchen table, still in the hoodie, grumpy again.

PETE
Let's see it then.

LISA
I didn't get one.

PETE

Why not?

LISA

Cos the 65 quid NHS wig budget gets you a number in acrylic that might just about do for a dressing up box but that's it. I got some headscarves.

PETE

(brightly)

OK.

LISA

From the Mystic Meg Spring Collection. But there's obviously no way I am going to Jamie's

JANE
I thought that might be a friend of
LeWalter's.

PETE (V.O.)
She doesn't know them personally
Jane. Just through Twitter,
because of the blog.

JANE
Oh.

Apparently satisfied. Except not.

In London, LISA and PETE can't help but smile at each other
at this exchange.

JANE (CONT'D)
But how do they know her?

PETE (V.O.)
The blog.

LISA (V.O.)
The blog.

JANE (CONT'D)
Oh. Oh, right. Of course.

She replies in a tone that suggests she doesn't entirely get
it and they'll be having the same conversation again next
week. IAN is back on the line.

IAN
Who's Anonymous, who's always
putting his two penneth in?

PETE Laughing, shaking his head.

LISA (V.O.)
(trying not to laugh)
I don't know Dad. They're
anonymous.

Beat.

JANE
Even I knew that.

PETE (V.O.)
(taking over)
See you in a couple of hours. We've
got to go now.
(Looking at Lisa)
I'm taking your daughter out.

CUT TO:

LISA and PETE stand outside a posh wig shop in Mayfair. It's
one of those that's so discrete that you can't see inside.
LISA gives PETE the stink-eye.

So this was what he meant by 'taking her out'. PETE pushes

LISA
Endeavour. Excalibur.

PETE
Is there one called Extortionate?

LISA
There's one called Ominous.
Amazing.

PRETTY WIG SHOP GIRL
Ominous is pretty directional.

LISA has a 'are you fucking kidding me?' look on her face. Another shop assistant - a young gay guy - swoops in to avert disaster.

WIG GUY
(to his colleague)
Thanks Erin.

She disappears. He takes over.

WIG GUY (CONT'D)
It's good to start by looking for something that's most like your real hair. You've got a great face so most of them will suit you. Try on whatever you like. There's a fitting room just behind me.

LISA, still uncertain, but with slightly more confidence, returns to the wig that looks most like her real hair. She picks it up and with no great enthusiasm, takes it over to the fitting room.

PETE is browsing other wigs, poking them with a finger, adjusting to their strangeness, when LISA steps out of the fitting room with the wig on.

LISA
(to PETE)
What do you think?

PETE turns around. She looks different. Very different. She looks like someone with a wig on - and she can read that immediately on PETE's face.

LISA touches the wig self-consciously, avoids any more eye-contact with PETE then returns to the dressing room. On PETE, who realises immediately that he's fucked up.

WIG GUY
(trying to help)
I'll feel a bit strange to begin with but if you take it to your hairdresser you can have it trimmed into your own cut.

LISA gets ready hurriedly, pissed offedly.

PETE
(trying to pull it back)
Babe. Did you want to try
something else?

CUT TO:

67

67

Outside the shop, PETE is trying to flag down a cab. LISA stands holding two boxes like she's being weighed down by them. She watches 'normal' GIRLS her age pass her in the street, girls who are free and getting about their business, girls who don't have to spend their evenings like this.

LISA (V.O.)
(angry)
Yes. I do want to try something
else. A pair of Louboutins. Size
5. Black. Pigalle Patent. That's
what I want. That's what I saved
up for. Only now I'm having to
spunk the money on something that
makes me look like a member of
Spinal Tap.

CUT TO:

68

68

LISA is back at the kitchen table with computer and hoodie, pounding on the keys, taking her frustrations out on the laptop.

LISA (V.O.)
But I don't have a choice. I'm not
being a sideshow. I want Jamie to
have the best wedding ever and I'm
not rocking up looking like Uncle
Fester and ruining it all.

She hits 'post' and the date 08.08.08 appears on-screen. When she looks up she sees her parents outside the window - newly arrived from Derby - heading towards the house. JANE and IAN looked tired and strained but as soon as they see LISA looking at them, their expressions change - they paste up smiles and wave vigorously. It's an act - all an act - and they all know it.

CUT TO:

69

69

trying to pull it back)

LISA
(sulky)
We can't feed them. We've got no
money left.

JANE
I'm transferring that money
straight into your account.

LISA
Mum.

IAN
Put it on then.

LISA
No.

IAN
You paid all that money to display
a syrup on a stand? You daft
bugger. Let's see it on.

LISA
No. You'll see it at Jamie's
wedding.

IAN
(putting his arm around
LISA)
You're a stubborn so-and-so do you
know that?

LISA
I have been told that, yes.

IAN
Luckily I wouldn't have you any
other way. Night Erika. Night
Colette. Don't fight.

He flicks the light off.

CUT TO:

69A

69A

LISA is curled up on the couch under a blanket. IAN is there
too. It's just the two of them. They're watching TV but
LISA is pre-occupied and IAN knows it.

IAN
(trying to boost her)
You've nearly broken the back of
the chemo now. Halfway through.

He puts an affectionate hand on her ankle. Lisa broods.
It's like she hasn't even heard him. Eventually -

LISA
Dad. Did you get a fright when you
saw me?

IAN
(it's obviously true)
What makes you say that?

LISA
We've not seen each other for a
couple of weeks and I just thought,
y'know I look different -

IAN
(moving closer to her)
Don't be daft. Course I didn't get
a fright. You're you. I just saw
you.

He takes her hand and huddles up next to her on the couch. Tears shine in his eyes but he's determined not to show her. LISA tries to concentrate on the TV but in her peripheral vision, we see the wedding photograph - her and PETE, on that amazing day, looking very in love and very attracted to each other. The seeds of doubt...

CUT TO:

70

70

The house is empty but in the living room, there's a "LAST DAY OF CHEMO" banner hanging across one wall. Flowers everywhere. On the floor, some balloons.

CUT TO:

71

71

LISA, wig-less, in the bath, looking worse than she's ever looked.

A cursor appears on-screen, as though LISA was about to compose a blog post. The cursor flashes for a moment and then disappears. She's just not up to it.

CUT TO:

72

72

PETE sitting on the couch among the banner, balloons and flowers. It's a beautiful summer evening outside. He looks knackered and miserable. Suddenly -

LISA (O.S.)
(shouting, distressed)
Pete. Pete.

PETE springs up, runs to the bathroom. The door's locked so he kicks it open, busts the lock.

In the bath, LISA is slumped to one side, with no strength.

LISA (CONT'D)
(sobbing with exhaustion)
I can't get out.

PETE
(kneeling down to comfort
her)
It's OK. It's OK.

Then he gets up and pulls her out of the bath. He carries her to their bedroom, covered in a towel. She can't make eye-contact with him. Distressed, and ashamed, at being this vulnerable.

The date 08.10.08 appears on-screen as PETE comes in in a wedding suit.

PETE
Is this alright still? I thought
it might need altering before the
weekend.

He's a bit self-conscious in it - tucking himself in,
thinking it's gotten a bit tight round the waist etc. LISA
doesn't look up.

PETE (CONT'D)
Lisa.

LISA glances up at him and all she can see is her gorgeous
husband looking gorgeous in his wedding suit.

LISA
You look like Ron Burgundy.

PETE
Shit. Do I?

He glances in the mirror unhappily then spins back around to
her, trying to cheer her up.

PETE (CONT'D)

PETE

Babe. I just think you should try the dress on, check you've got what you need before we go.

LISA

Why? Why would I want to do that? If you - if either of you - think having the right denier tight is going to make the slightest difference to how I look on the day... I know what I'm going to look like. I'm going to look like a cancer patient!

She gets up, exits and slams the door, taking her laptop with her.

CUT TO:

74

74

The dress for JAMIE's wedding hangs from the wardrobe. Pull out to reveal a bloated, bald, exhausted LISA lying on the bed, looking at the dress like it was her shiny gold nemesi s.

LISA (V.O.)

I used to be chirpy and have manners. Now I'm some tetchy bitch who shouts at her husband. Of all the cancer side effects I'd expected, what I hadn't bargained for was it turning me into a horrible person.

CUT TO:

75

75

PETE is at his desk, looking deflated, as a COLLEAGUE passes.

COLLEAGUE

Massive one?

PETE

What makes you say that?

COLLEAGUE

You look knackered mate.

On PETE, registering that he just doesn't have a clue.

PETE

Lisa's not really up to going out at the minute so.

A flare of embarrassment on the guy's face.

COLLEAGUE

Sorry. That was a bit...of me.

PETE
(weary)
No no not at all.

A long awkward pause as the COLLEAGUE lingers, trying to transcend his earlier mistake and connect with him.

COLLEAGUE
I've been having a look at the blog
you know rather than ask you all
the time cos that gets a bit...you
know.

The guy is insanely awkward but well-meaning. PETE nods,
smiles anaemically.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)
She's a brilliant writer. It's
good that she's got an outlet.

On PETE, nodding, but the COLLEAGUE seems to pick something
up.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)
What are you doing to let off
steam?

On PETE, exhaling heavily, thinking about it but not knowing
how to answer. Maybe it's the first time he's been asked.
Eventually -

PETE
I boil the kettle.

COLLEAGUE 1
(thinks he's joking)
What?

PETE
No that's what I do. I boil the
kettle. I put the kettle on about
twenty times a day. And there's
probably a ten to one ratio - of
boiling it to pouring it out - and
then the same again for pouring it
out to actually drinking it. So
basically every time I put the
kettle on there's only like a one
in a hundred chance someone will
actually have a cup of tea.

The COLLEAGUE realises that PETE's going quietly mad.

CUT TO:

On LISA, the outfit complete, the make-up complete, the wig
on, stands in front of the mirror. She looks at herself.
Not bad.

This is the best it's going to get and it's taken ages but she's satisfied. She picks up her iPhone and snaps a picture which she then publishes to her blog.

Relieved, even slightly pleased, LISA pulls the wig off, puts it on the stand and splashes her face with cold water. She rubs her eye - an eyelash. Then rubs again - a couple more fall out in her hand.

LISA lets out a squall of pure frustration, kicks something and dissolves into tears.

CUT TO:

77

77

The sound of the key in the lock. PETE comes in and sees LISA, asleep under a blanket on the couch, tired out. He looks at her tenderly, hating seeing her so unwell.

Then he notices the television. On mute, his and LISA's wedding video is playing.

On the screen: LISA, standing in her wedding dress, with IAN.

LISA is crying again.

LISA (CONT'D)
It's so ugly Pete. I don't
recognise myself. Some mornings.
I don't want to wake up.

This is hard for PETE to hear.

LISA (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
And I'm jealous. Of everyone in a
park or in a pub or at work; I'm
jealous of Gabby, of Abigail, of
anyone who's out there getting on
with their lives while mine's on
hold.

PETE (CONT'D)
Cos your good for nothing husband
got behind with the laundry.

This should feel like an acknowledgment of how tough the last few weeks have been for him too.

PETE (CONT'D)
Any other evidence?

He climbs onto the couch beside her, and for a moment their attention is caught by the wedding video. Eventually -

LISA
(small voiced, off the
wedding video)
Why would you?

PETE
That was one day. It was awesome.
It was a party. People got drunk.
They danced. It was brilliant.
And it was one day. It didn't make
me feel like we were going to have
a fairytale life.

LISA snorts at the understatement of the year.

PETE (CONT'D)
OK I didn't expect this either but
that's what the vows are for and I
never would have stood there saying
them if I wasn't up for it. And
for the record I fancy the arse off
of you - wig on, wig off, hood up,
hood down, makes no difference -
but the way you're feeling I
haven't imagined you've been in the
mood for sex.

LISA
(small voice)
I'm not.

PETE
Right. So I'll wait. Cos you and
me, we're getting old together.
That's what I took from that day.
And that's happening. That's the
only thing I'm holding you to.

She puts her arms around him, sobbing again.

LISA
(muffled)
I don't want people to look at me.

PETE
Babe. Slightly embarrassing to have to point this out but they won't be looking at you. They'll be looking at Leanne.

LISA's tear-stained, slightly amused face looks up at him.
Eventually -

LISA
Pete.

PETE
What is it darling?

LISA
My eyelashes are coming out.

PETE makes a mirthful sound. LISA looks at him.

PETE
(by way of explanation)
Of course they are! That's the Bullshit for you! They couldn't hang on another few days til after the wedding. What does that tell you?

On LISA, blank.

PETE (CONT'D)
That you are not the boss of this.

On LISA, pale and exhausted and frightened - that she isn't in charge, that she can't take control of this. PETE takes her hand then heads into territory that's usually out of bounds between them.

PETE (CONT'D)
(gently)
It's cancer. It's not going to bend to your iron will.

LISA
(devastated, like she's really taking it in for the first time)
I can't believe it.

PETE
I know.

He puts his arms around her.

PETE (CONT'D)
I know.

He can't believe it either. They sit there, arms around each other, neither believing it. When the hug ends, PETE looks at her and grins.

LISA
What?

PETE
(Looking at her eye)
You've got one really cute one
clinging on at the side there.

LISA
(touches her face self-
consciously)
What d'you mean?

He holds her face. Her eyelashes are clumped together (through crying) which makes them look sparse in places. In one of those sparse places, there's one eyelash that seems to stand out.

PETE
He's proud is that one, he's lost
his mates but he's hanging in
there, on a solo mission.

Lisa can't help but cheer up a bit at how silly and cute he's being.

PETE (CONT'D)
I would kiss it. But I better not.
In case I dislodge it.

His taking the piss makes her laugh and it restores her. They lie side by side on the couch, clinging on, in this together, turned towards each other, ignoring the TV like it was screening the wedding video of two other people, two irrelevant strangers. LISA cuddles into PETE. Somehow acknowledging the seriousness of what is happening has helped.

CUT TO:

78

78

TANNING SALON WOMAN
Right young lady. Get those baps
out.

LISA is in Derby, pre-spray tan, reluctant to take off her dressing gown. Reveal JANE in the next booth along.

JANE
C'mon Lisa. Those two have seen
more tits than you've had hot
dinners.

TANNING SALON WOMAN
Tits? That's a first from you
Jane.

JANE
That's the Bullshit for you.

LISA is still reluctant to disrobe.

JANE (CONT'D)
Look at my raisins. You've got
nothing to hide.

LISA removes the dressing gown. We see the breast - there's
no nipple, just breast. LISA looks so vulnerable with it
exposed.

TANNING SALON WOMAN
Bloody hell. Agnes come and look
at this.

Another woman peeks over.

TANNING SALON WOMAN (CONT'D)
That is the best falsie I've ever
seen. Thing of beauty.

LISA looks at her mum who smiles. The tanning salon women
lift up their spray guns and fire.

CUT TO:

79

LISA looks nervous but she and PETE are holding hands
tightly. PETE looks a bit nervous too. PETE leads her
inside.

79

LISA (V.O.)
It takes a gargantuan effort not to
let the dark stuff surface. Cos
it's there all the time. The joking

He knows what it's taken to get there. He hugs her for a moment too long, then goes and resumes his place. LISA and PETE sit down. Relieved to have kept her promise, and to have got there, LISA exhales. On her hand tightly entwined with PETE's. LEANNE starts to come down the aisle, and all eyes are on her. PETE smiles a "what did I tell you?" smile.

CUT TO:

80

80

IAN and JANE are dancing, to cheers and whistles.

On LISA and PETE, at their table. LISA is laughing at the sight of her parents showing off. JAMIE and LEANNE join IAN and JANE, doing rubbish but cute dancing as the dance-floor fills up. LISA watches, smiling, enjoying it, feeling under no pressure to join in. Then as the final chorus swells, without warning, LISA grabs PETE's hand and pulls him onto the floor.

PETE takes LISA in his arms and they dance among IAN and JANE and JAMIE and LEANNE - but it's like there's no-one else in the room. LISA isn't self-conscious - she's just totally focused on her husband. He twirls her around. JAMIE is sweaty and bouncing off the walls and mouthing the power ballad and the whole room is going off. But LISA is happy, serene, in this moment with PETE. They have that magical 'thing' that couples sometimes have that makes them stand

The next morning. The dining room is full of wedding guests from the day before, milling around chatting and going to the buffet. Among them, JANE, IAN, JAMIE and PETE.

LISA sits alone in a quiet corner. She is pale and exhausted and wears a head-scarf. She gave it absolutely everything at the wedding, and is now in the market for a quiet family breakfast, hence the choice of a tucked-away table.

As she waits for PETE to join her, LISA catches someone staring at her from another table. A woman, DIANE, in her mid-sixties, who is not just staring, but also now whispering something to her husband.

LISA touches her head-scarf and lowers her eyes. She glances over to the buffet but PETE is chatting to JAMIE and doesn't see her. She looks down at her plate and feels horrible.

DIANE

Excuse me.

LISA looks up and there's the staring woman, her husband beside her.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Are you Lisa Lynch?

Beat.

LISA

(worried)
Yeah?

DIANE

(elbows her husband)
Thank you.

LISA looks from the woman to her husband. She has no idea what's going on.

PETE is en route back from the buffet table with two plates, when JAMIE stops him.

JAMIE

Mate. Who are those two?

JAMIE gestures to LISA's table where the couple is now sitting on either side of her, the woman chatting away.

PETE

No idea. Were they not at the wedding?

IAN has come up behind them. Clearly this is a talking point at his table as well.

IAN

They're not ours and Leanne's not claiming them.

THE C WOheads (only LISA and

JAMIE, PETE and IAN look back at the scene that's unfolding at the table. The woman exuberant, LISA bemused but smiling. PETE goes over.

PETE

Alri ght.

LISA

This is my husband, Peter.

DIANE

(standing up)

Pete!

She shakes his hand then gives him a kiss. PETE reacts with polite surprise, shooting a look to LISA. LISA laughs.

LISA

Diane reads the blog.

DIANE

I recognised her.

(to her silent husband)

Didn't I?

There being no show without Punch, along comes JANE.

JANE

(protective, professional)

I'm Jane McFarlane, Lisa's mum.

DIANE

Of course you are. I recognised you and all, from the wedding photo you put up. That were a stunning hat you had on.

JANE

(struggling to get her head around these strangers having seen JAMIE's wedding pic, but pleased)

Thank you.

Now IAN has arrived and so have JAMIE and LEANNE. Easy conversation continues (tbw) between DIANE and the McFarlanes.

While all this is going on above their heads (only LISA and DIANE's husband are sitting), the previously silent husband talks to LISA.

HOTEL MAN

(deeply felt)

Our grandson's had it a year now. In his kidneys. I'm not on the computer but Scott's printed off some of it for me.

You think folk just use the internet for mucky pictures and booking holidays and remembering the name of some actor you've forgotten. Then suddenly you find something like this.

LISA is so moved by this quiet man sharing this with her. It never crossed her mind that what she's doing might have an impact on anyone else. Unusually, LISA is lost for words.

Suddenly IAN has joined in their conversation.

IAN
She's always been a writer hasn't she? I've always said you should write a book.

DIANE
Absolutely she should. Absolutely.

LISA looks up to see JAMIE, his eyes dancing with amusement.

JAMIE
Unbelievable.

LISA throws her hands up in the air, laughing. Because it is - unbelievable.

JAMIE keeps looking at his sister. He doesn't have the words and he doesn't need them - he manages to convey the depth of feeling to LISA without them. He is amazed by her, proud of her.

Meanwhile, DIANE has given her phone to a waitress for a group shot. Everyone huddles around LISA.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
(into Lisa's ear)
Twatclacker.

He kisses her cheek as the picture's taken.

CUT TO:

82AA

82AA

Months later, as denoted by the calendar on the fridge and the length of her hair, which is now a short crop. Instead of chemotherapy appointments, as we're used to seeing, the boxes are full of references to radiotherapy (which have been crossed out as complete) and there's a box saying

LISA (V.O.)

I've seen off six sessions of chemo, 28 sessions of radio and the first stage of a successful reconstruction. I might still be one nipple short of the pair, but I'm edging ever closer to leading a more normal life.

She hits post and the date comes up - 15.04.09. Then she looks over at the calendar at a box that says 'END OF TREATMENT' with a little finishing line drawn underneath.

CUT TO:

82AB

82AB

LISA and PETE sit nervously in front of the CONSULTANT.

CONSULTANT

There's no sign of cancer.

LISA exhales with exhausted relief. Hold on her and PETE, not talking, so relieved but also a bit traumatised by everything that has gone before.

CUT TO:

82AC

82AC

LISA and PETE emerge from the CONSULTANT's office, a bit shell-shocked.

LISA (V.O.)

There's no sign of cancer. The most beautiful words in the English language.

They start to walk towards the door.

LISA (V.O.)

It doesn't mean I'm cured. I've got five years of pills to take before I can say I'm in remission. But it's enough to let us give the finger to the Bullshit in the best way we know how.

CUT TO:

82AD

82AD

The sound of the key turning in the lock, and back they come to their flat.

LISA (V.O.)

By pressing play on our lovely life again.

Stunned and proud. Jamie shaking his head and laughing, cos this is typical LISA.

82F

82F

82M

82M

At home, PETE cooking. LISA pressing out another two Nurofen with her back to him, the slow beginnings of dread taking root.

82N

82N

Another appointment with the familiar CONSULTANT who shakes both of their hands. LISA and PETE sit across the desk from him. We don't see him or hear what he says. Instead we hold on LISA and PETE, listening, and understand everything from their reaction. Unutterable devastation.

CUT TO:

83

83

A month later. LISA and PETE sit in silence for a long time. They wait, not touching any of the magazines on the coffee table. LISA looks very different from any previous appointment. For the first time there's no make-up, no heels. A door opens and a small female THERAPIST, dark hair, smiles at them.

THERAPIST

Come in.

CUT TO:

84

84

The room has a desk, three chairs, lots of bookshelves.

LISA

This is my husband Pete.

The THERAPIST shakes PETE's hand. PETE and LISA sit down on two straight-backed chairs while the THERAPIST takes a seat behind her desk.

THERAPIST

How long have you been married?

LISA

5 years.

The THERAPIST nods.

THERAPIST

When were you diagnosed?

LISA

I found out I had breast cancer about a year and a half into our marriage. Then recently they told us it had come back.

She looks at PETE.

LISA (CONT'D)

It's in my bones and my brain. I'm having ongoing treatment to keep me alive as long as possible but there's nothing they can really do. That all happened about a month ago now, so I should really have had time to get used to the situation.

She sounds angry, bitter even in this self-reproach.

THERAPIST

Is it a situation anyone gets used to?

LISA looks at her. Promising for the first time. PETE starts to relax. Hopeful.

LISA

The pain is under control, but...it's everything else.

LISA is opening herself up here. Asking for help. PETE takes LISA's hand. They look at the THERAPIST. They NEED her to come up with something. The THERAPIST takes her time before replying.

THERAPIST

There are strategies for coping. For doing more than coping. One in particular, a technique called mindfulness, has been found to be particularly helpful.

LISA and PETE are gaining in confidence. Encouraged, they exchange a look. It definitely isn't as bad as they thought it'd be.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

We can talk about a few different approaches. But before that there's a book that I think that you'd both really benefit from reading.

She reaches into a drawer and places a book in front of them.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

It's called The C Word.

A beat.

The atmosphere changes immediately.

LISA looks at the THERAPIST. Is she being serious? On PETE, who can't quite believe this is happening. Suddenly all hope for the session seems to have evaporated.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

...What's wrong? What have I said?

She sees that neither of them are touching the book. LISA looks at PETE. PETE looks at LISA. He seems too stupefied to say a word. Eventually -

LISA
...I wrote it.

A long and excruciating moment as this registers on the THERAPIST's face.

THERAPIST
Oh. Lisa. Lisa Lynch.

She clearly feels horrendous.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. It really didn't occur to me.

Flustered, she takes the book back. As far as LISA and PETE are concerned, the appointment is already over.

CUT TO:

With a heroic effort, and absolute dignity, PETE makes his way to the end.

CUT TO:

88

88

The lifts. The 'call' button is red. By the floor length window at the end of the corridor, PETE stands looking out over London. He can't believe it. He cannot fucking believe it. Suddenly he is sobbing, howling in absolute devastation. His BOSS emerges into the lift area and sees him. He goes to him and puts a hand on his shoulder, allowing him just to stand there without apology, without anything, and let himself cry.

CUT TO:

89

89

LISA is sitting in a chemo chair, but this chemo treatment is very different from the first time around. For one thing, the room is incredibly plush - LISA is sitting by a window in what looks like a Business Class plane chair, complete with personal video screen. [N.B. The liquid in the bag that's being administered is clear, not red].

But more noticeably different than the change in her

90

90

LISA and PETE are lying on separate couches. No communication between them. They may as well each be in a room on their own. They are turned away from each other, can't reach each other. They simply have no idea what to do. After a moment, PETE gets up and leaves the room, trudging, barely lifting his feet off the ground. Hold on LISA, knowing they can't go on like this, frightened to go on like this, and knowing that if anything is going to change, it's up to her.

CUT TO:

91

91

Close on LISA, glowering.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
I'm glad you came back.

Reveal that LISA is back in the THERAPIST's office. This time PETE isn't with her. LISA seems deeply, DEEPLY ambivalent to be there. It's an ambivalence that shades into resentment.

LISA
It was you or art therapy.

A very long time before the THERAPIST speaks. When she does, it's with an admirable warmth and candour.

THERAPIST
I recommend your book to pretty much everyone who comes in here. Almost on reflex.

LISA registers that this is her acknowledging the fuck up.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Because it's brilliant and funny and honest and I've seen it really help people.

It's bittersweet for LISA to hear this.

LISA
It's no use to me now though, is it? I wrote, for me, when I was going to get better. When I thought that all I had to do was just get through the treatment and I'd come out the other side. Cos so many people do. So many people survive.

She sounds like she still can't believe that she's one of the unlucky ones.

LISA (CONT'D)

Treatment's indefinite, now. It's not to change anything, that's not happening, it's just to keep me alive. I didn't have to have it. When they said it's come back, I could have just sacked the whole thing off. But I wanted to live. Obviously. Only at the moment it's not, it's not obvious. Cos I'm sitting there thinking why am I doing this? I would never say that to my family. Never. But I have to say it to someone so I'm saying it to you.

THERAPIST

LISA

I just keep thinking there must be a way to do this. So when I look at things, at that branch, at that boat, I'm dazzled by how beautiful it is, instead of everything reminding me of what I've lost or what I'm going to lose.

GABBY

Are you seriously giving yourself a hard time because you're not reacting to terminal illness in the right way?

LISA

No. I'm not. But I so badly want to get past this part. And get to the stage where I'm making the most of my time. Flying kites across Hampstead Heath. Whatever.

GABBY shoots her friend a look.

GABBY

First of all. Cock off. Kites. Shall I tell you what terminally ill people fly kites?

LISA

I think you're going to.

GABBY

Pretend terminally ill people. Terminally ill people in films. And let me tell you something else. Unlike you, they've got plenty of time on their hands to do whimsical shite like that because they don't have to spend most of their days sitting on their arses in hospital.

LISA looks like she's thinking about this.

LISA

So you're saying I'm not really in a position?

GABBY

(rant over, gentle)
I'm saying there is no right way to do this.

GABBY takes LISA's face in her two gloved hands.

GABBY (CONT'D)

You're going to find your way. OK?

LISA

OK.

Suddenly LISA is crying. GABBY hugs her and holds onto her.

LISA (CONT'D)
(crying)
The crying's got to stop though.
I'm going to dissolve.

GABBY
It will. But not today.

CUT TO:

93

93

LISA is back in the therapist's office. She seems less reluctant to be there than the last time and more confident, as if determined to use these appointments for whatever she needs. We come into the scene mid-session.

LISA
I've started writing down passwords
for things. For paying the bills
online. And my email.

She avoids eye-contact and speaks as though talking to herself.

LISA (CONT'D)
But I keep imagining a scenario in
which our wireless router needed
resetting and I hadn't left Pete
with instructions of how to do it.

THERAPIST
Are you blogging about it?

LISA
The router?

Beat.

THERAPIST
Your fears of death.

LISA
No. I'm British. And we just
don't talk about death, do we?

CUT TO:

94

94

JANE is ironing. IAN is painting the skirting. PETE - grey-faced, stuck in the pain, and somehow separate from the others, in his own world, is making cups of tea. No-one is saying anything to each other.

LISA (V.O.)
I miss the blog.

CUT TO:

LISA

Not cos I feel like writing. I don't. It was for me, it was for making sense of things, but you can't make sense of this, can you?

A note of anger and even the edge of bitterness in her voice.

LISA (CONT'D)

But I miss it. Cos whatever was happening, before, even when my life was on hold, especially when my life was on hold, it gave me a purpose.

Suddenly, with that realisation, she's crying.

LISA (CONT'D)

And the thing is, I still need a purpose. I'm waiting for that morning where I open my eyes and I don't feel it all rushing up towards me. Or I do feel that, but there's still something I want to

A beat, as LISA registers the change in his tone.

LISA
(without missing a beat)
Balti Kashmiri Chicken, vegetable
biryani, naan bread and some
sagaloo.

PETE
(to Lisa)
And to follow?

IAN
(touches his stomach)
I know what would follow if I ate
all that.

LISA
(ignoring him, not taking
her eyes off Pete)
...the entire first season of The
West Wing.

IAN
Oh give over.

JANE
Again? For goodness sake.

PETE and LISA ignore them. It's a private moment between the two of them - they're entering a tacit agreement to be themselves again; to resume their normal.

PETE
I'm in.

For the first time in a long time, there's hope.

CUT TO:

The CONSULTANT crosses his arms and fixes his eyes on her face.

CONSULTANT

According to my colleagues in oncology, you're doing very well. How would you feel about stopping treatment for a bit?

LISA and PETE looked scared.

LISA

Why?
(dry-mouthed)
Is it not working?

CONSULTANT

On the contrary. It is working. It's working very well.

He flips on a light box to show two brain scans, side by side.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

The cancer has done what the cancer has done and there's no way to reverse that. But we put you on this course of treatment to stabilise you, and that's exactly what's happened.

He extends a pointer to the shadowy areas on each scan.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

You've gone from this-
(indicating a large shadow)

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

- to this.

He points to a smaller one.

PETE

(hardly daring to hope that this could be good news)
So...what does that mean?

CONSULTANT

It means you deserve a break. Take a couple of months off, and then we'll see where we are.

LISA

A couple of months? No chemo?

CONSULTANT

No chemo. No coming in here.

He smiles at her.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)
Go on holiday. Do whatever you
like.

CUT TO:

98

98

LISA and PETE are in their local pub. It's the same one as
in the beginning. They both still seem in shock at the news.

LISA
What do you want to do?

PETE
I don't care as long as it's with
you.

LISA
Chatter upper.

He smiles. They are both - slowly - acclimatising to the
news. LISA looks around. It's not too crowded but there's a
nice after-work buzz.

LISA (CONT'D)
It feels sort of normal to be in
here.

PETE
I know. It's weird.

They look just like any other couple, having a drink in a pub
after work.

LISA
Do you think we'll be OK?

PETE
Yeah. They're really happy with
you.

LISA
No I mean. It's going to be new,
isn't it? We've had our routine.
Hospital days, recovery days.

PETE
Are you nervous?

LISA
Yeah.

PETE
Me too.

A quiet moment. LISA inhales.

LISA
It's so nice to be out.

PETE
I know.

It's tentative, but they're actually having quite a nice time.

LISA
You look different.

PETE
How?

LISA
More like a boyfriend person. Less like a carer person.

PETE likes that. He leans over and kisses her on the lips. There's a nice atmosphere. Like they're on a date. They're almost shy with each other, smiling at each other a bit, adjusting to being out.

LISA (CONT'D)
D'you want a beer?

PETE
Nuh.
(standing up)
We're having champagne.

Off her look -

PETE (CONT'D)
I'm taking good news where I can get it.

The noise of the pub - the noise of regular life going on all around them - as they just smile into each other's faces, a part of it but also in their own wee world, just like any other couple.

CUT TO:

99

99

LISA and PETE are in bed, tucking into a cheese plate, music on. PETE's arms are behind his head and he looks happy. LISA is looking at him, loving his contentedness.

LISA
Do you wish you'd known?

He answers honestly, without hesitation.

PETE
No.

LISA
I've turned you grey.

PETE
Cheers for that. Suits me though
doesn't it?

LISA
Yeah.

She touches his hair and he tilts his head until it's resting
on her hand.

LISA (CONT'D)
What shall we do?

PETE
(peaceful, relaxed, in
love)
This. I want to carry on doing
this.

CUT TO:

100

100

A few days later. We pan across a carpet COVERED with
guidebooks to New York, Conde Nast magazines open to pages on
great hotels - all of them splayed open so the covers face
out. We follow this Hansel & Gretel-like trail until we see
GABBY on the phone.

GABBY
How does the queen-size room
compare to the king-size?
(pause)
Could you find out for me please?

Elsewhere in the room, JANE, hyper-efficient as usual, is
doing the same thing, pen in hand.

JANE
(into the phone)
I wonder if you can help me. I'm
looking to price two first class
tickets to JFK.

GABBY
Oh they've both got a bath?
Excellent we need a bath.

She shoots a smile to LISA, who smiles back. ABIGAIL comes
in from outside with a cardboard tray of four coffees that
she distributes around. She puts one on the table in front
of LISA. LISA is on the phone as well. It should gradually
become clear that LISA is talking to a travel insurance
company.

LISA
Lisa Jane Lynch.

Pause.

LISA (CONT' D)
30 August 1979.

Pause.

LISA (CONT' D)
... Eh yeah. Cancer.

JANE glances over.

LISA (CONT' D)
In my bones. And in my brain. But
it's under control at the moment
so/

Pause.

LISA (CONT' D)
/no of course. Carry on.

Pause.

LISA (CONT' D)
My last hospital admission was...
Quite a few months ago now. I
don't know the exact date but I can
find out.

Pause.

LISA (CONT'D)
We're going to Spain.

PETE laughs and looks at her with admiration bordering on disbelief. This is her. This is LISA. Who will not be defeated.

CUT TO:

104

104

Early morning. Bird-song. GVs of a private pool, terracotta roof tiles, bougainvillea etc. It's perfectly private, perfectly serene. No-one is awake yet.

CUT TO:

105

105

Next to PETE, LISA opens her eyes. There's the moment of acclimatising to where she is, and then there's that other moment, the moment she discussed with the therapist. The remembering.

A moment, then LISA gets up, with the help of her stick. She walks slowly and a bit uncertainly through this brilliant, beautiful light-filled villa to the patio doors, pulls them open -

CUT TO:

106

106

- and steps outside.

We should be able to feel that moment - her taking in the new smells, the still-cold tiles underfoot, the wood pigeon coo, the flowers threading everywhere.

LISA goes over to the pool, rolls up her pyjama bottoms and sits down on the edge.

LISA
(putting her feet in)
Bloody hell.

She looks at her feet moving back and forth in the water, then tilts her face up and into the sunlight. Squinting. Inhaling. Smiling.

This is LISA finally getting a 'blossomiest blossom' moment and she sits there, taking it all in.

CUT TO:

107

107

A few hours later. PETE emerges, half-asleep and in pyjamas.

LISA lies on the lilo with one ear-phone in. She is in her own world, singing. We will recognise this as the same Scene as Scene 1 - and realise that what we were seeing then was not in fact a 'carefree day' before diagnosis but a day now, post-terminal diagnosis, which LISA is enjoying and making the most of.

PETE comes outside then heads over to the pool, submerging his legs up to the knees.

PETE

Block from over the way there
popped his head in, reckons you've
got a cracking voice.

LISA

Really?

PETE's eyes twinkle with mischief.

PETE

No.

LISA
I'm sorry to call you at work.

PETE (V.O.)
It doesn't matter what is it?

She sounds upset.

LISA
Remember Anya?

PETE (V.O.)
Course. Jazz pianist in Brighton
who recommended the cream for your
arse.

LISA
She died.

LISA is crying.

LISA (CONT'D)
It was me and her and Cassie and
Laura. All bloggers, all with
secondaries, all of us in the same
leaky boat. She's the first.

PETE (V.O.)
(understanding perfectly)
I'm coming home.

CUT TO:

112

112

PETE and LISA are sitting on the couch, his coat still on,
his arms around her.

LISA
(terrified, sobbing)
What did it feel like? Was she in
pain? Was it how she wanted it?
Did she even know what was going
on?

The above is muffled as PETE takes her in his arms.

PETE
I don't know darling. I don't
know.

CUT TO:

113

CASSIE (O. S.)

Lisa?

LISA turns around and sees a pretty girl in a wheelchair, CASSIE, and another girl, LAURA.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

You made it.

The three of them hug.

CUT TO:

114

114

The three are eating chips on a picnic table. Perhaps not

It's a serious moment, each having their own moment of reflection. It should feel like they're toasting themselves. Shortly after -

LAURA
Shall we go to the pier?

LISA
Definitely.

CASSIE
I need to go to the loo though so
it'll be sunset by the time we get
there. Might need a torch.

Laughter. 'Play' pressed on life again. LISA looks like she's happy in this company, and genuinely having a good time.

CUT TO:

115

115

LISA, CASSIE and LAURA are hugging. It's the end of the day and they're sitting around with coffees behind a large bay window of a sea-front cafe. A cab is out front, ready to pick up CASSIE and LAURA. It's clear that it was a good day, a day well spent. Improvised goodbyes.

CASSIE
(to Lisa)
Are you going to be OK love?

LISA
Course. Pete's on his way.

CUT TO:

116

116

Shortly after.

LISA sits alone at the table, looking out the window, her stick resting against the chair. Then on impulse, she reaches into her bag and gets out her iPad. Then she clicks a button to give her a fresh blank page on her blog.

LISA (V.O.)
I started this blog for me, cos I'm
a selfish sod and writing's how I
sort out how I feel about things.

CUT TO:

117

117

JANE is sitting in front of her laptop, reading the blog entry.

JANE
(calling out)
Ian!

LISA (V.O.)
But I haven't half met some amazing
people in the process. One of
them, Anya, died last week and
today, I've been toasting her life.

CUT TO:

118

118

COREY is in his high-chair, being fed by LEANNE 'aeroplane style', while elsewhere in the room, JAMIE is lying on the couch, holding his iPhone up and reading LISA's blog, completely absorbed.

LISA (V.O.)
Trust me. A cup of tea just
wouldn't cut it. But holding up a
snifter of whiskey felt right.

CUT TO:

119

119

LISA (V.O.)
Like we were recognising what we'd
had as well as what we'd lost.

We see this text on the computer in the distinctive 'Alright Tit' font, then pull out to see JANE sitting in front of it and IAN standing behind her, both of them reading. IAN puts a hand on JANE'S shoulder.

CUT TO:

120

120

PETE in the car, driving along the sea-front, driving to get her.

LISA (V.O.)
I don't want you to go reading too
much into this post. Heck, grief is
hardly something you can rehearse.

It's the end of a summer's day, people are swarming about after a day of activity, lights are starting to go on. Hold on PETE as we hear LISA'S voice-over.

LISA (V.O.)
I'm just saying...

CUT TO:

LISA looks up from the blog and sees PETE, in white work shirt and smart trousers. He's trying to find her through the hordes of after-work drinkers who now crowd the entrance.

LISA (O. S.)
... there's a lot to celebrate.

Then PETE sees her, and his look of concentration is replaced with one of delight. They hold each other's gaze. What's between them is perennial. Entirely outside space and time. It contains everything. All that will be lost. And all that will endure.

CODA:

Lisa and Pete had 4 more holidays in Spain during her treatment break.

She died peacefully on 11th March 2013, surrounded by her family.

INSERT:

A photo of the real Lisa and her nephew Corey.

The C Word is in its 3rd printing.

Lisa's blog is still visited by [X] visitors every [X], and continues to inspire people living with cancer and their families and friends, all over the world.

END TITLES: Just Looking by The Stereophonics.