

Murphy's Law for Nice Guys

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May 11, 2007

FADE IN:

INT. GENERATION NEXT KIDS - TELEVISION STUDIO - MORNING

The set is decorated like an old woman's living room: floral curtains and upholstery, kitten figurines, and a large grandfather clock.

A YOUNG BRITISH BOY and GIRL address the CAMERA CREW before them; SAMUEL, 12, and HANNAH, 12.

BOY

(overexcited)

And always say 'please' and 'thank you'. 'Please' is an *adverb* used when making a request, or demand upon someone. And 'thank you' is an *adjective* expressing gratitude. Isn't that right, Mrs. Hornsby?

A PUPPET representing an old, elderly woman appears.

MRS. HORNSBY

(British accent)

You're absolutely right, Samuel.

The PUPPETEER behind the large, floral couch smokes as he plays on his mobile.

MRS. HORNSBY (CONT'D)

Manners are very important! You must use them at all times, to be courteous and appreciative. Letting those around you know that you care for what they do for you.

GIRL

I still don't see why saying 'you're welcome' is so important?!

CAMERAMAN #1 is fascinated with the contents of his nose.

CAMERAMAN #2 looks through a dirty magazine.

An attractive, dark-haired man draws on his arm in sheer boredom. This is BARTLEY FORBES, 32. Manipulatively. Charming. Opportunistic.

Bartley's mobile VIBRATES: GINGER. He smiles slyly. He EXITS.

BLEACHERS

A handsome, blonde-haired man, TRISTAN SULLER, 35, sits quietly among the empty rows with a proud smile on his face. Good-natured. Comfortable within his own mild existence.

STAGE

MRS. HORNSBY

And that's why manners are very important, Hannah.

HANNAH

Now, I understand. *Thank you*, Mrs. Hornsby.

Mrs. Hornsby laughs endearingly. Samuel and Hannah HUG her.

They freeze on their embrace.

(3 beats)

BLEACHERS

Tristan looks about curiously.

PUPPETEER...

rolls his eyes.

Tristan steps down from the bleachers.

TRISTAN'S POV - MAN

A disheveled-looking MAN is fast asleep in the director's chair-- the director.

He gives a disappointed sigh and approaches.

TRISTAN

(whispers; to director)  
Fredrick. Fredrick.

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

CUT!

Fredrick shakes awake.

CAMERAMAN #2

Thank God.

TRISTAN

Hello, Fredrick. So glad you could join us.

Tristan EXITS.

STAGE

Tristan approaches Samuel and Hannah.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

That was very good. Nice taping.

SAMUEL

Are you mad?! It was fucking shit!

HANNAH

You don't have to be a bloody producer, Tristan, to know that this show should be sacked!

TRISTAN

I'm not talking about the show. I'm talking about you two. You were fantastic.

Bartley RETURNS.

Samuel and Hannah make a B-Line for him.

SAMUEL

YOU GIT!

BARTLEY

What?

HANNAH

You weren't even here for the taping?!

BARTLEY

(apathetic)

Now, now, children. Let's not become hysterical...

SAMUEL

Hysterical?! You just wait until I get my agent on the line!

BARTLEY

Oh, stop it, Samuel! You're agent hasn't called you back in months, and we all know it!

Samuel lunges for him, but Hannah holds him back.

HANNAH

We're tired of this bloody show!

BARTLEY

Well, so am I! But I come and endure your sweet, little childish faces everyday and manage to go home without killing anyone.

SAMUEL

It's stupid and pointless! The material is old, we no longer have an audience. No one cares!

BARTLEY

So... what? You want extra biscuits at the crafts table?

HANNAH

We don't bloody have a crafts table! We eat out of the vending machines!

SAMUEL

We want out of this ridiculous show!

BARTLEY

Impossible. You're contracted until death, or puberty. Which ever comes first.

HANNAH

Fine. We'll call our mothers.

BARTLEY

You're mother would sell you for a quid, and--  
 (to Samuel)  
 --yours, well, she'd sell you for a pint of Beefeater and a good time.

SAMUEL

YOU BLOODY MAGGOT!!

Samuel attacks Bartley, knocking them both to the floor.

Tristan runs over!

He pulls Samuel off Bartley, but Samuel won't let go of Bartley's tie, choking him!

Tristan smacks Samuel's hand. Samuel let's go of the tie.

Bartley strives for breath.

BARTLEY

(coughing)

Oh, I got you now! No, you're not going anywhere now! You're here forever!

SAMUEL

LET ME GO TRISTAN!

TRISTAN

What are you so angry about?

SAMUEL

I'm not angry! I'm bloody tired!

HANNAH

Me, too, Tristan. It's just not fun anymore.

BARTLEY

(standing)

It's not supposed to be fun. It's supposed to be work.

SAMUEL

And it sure isn't a jolly, good time with *him* around.

TRISTAN

I'm sorry. I'll try and work something out with Mr. Twitty. I promise.

HANNAH

No offense, Tristan, but you're just the accountant.

TRISTAN

I said I'll try. Alright?

Samuel and Hannah nod considerately.

A FAT MAN in an outdated, tweed suit ENTERS. He smiles widely.

FAT MAN  
 (approaches)  
 Samuel. Hannah.

Bartley immediately straightens up, fixing his tie and fussing with his hair.

The fat, jovial gentleman is MR. TWITTY, 60, the head of children's programming.

MR. TWITTY  
 Beautiful taping children! Such natural talents. Don't you agree, Tristan?

Bartley sneers at Tristan.

TRISTAN  
 I most certainly do, Mr. Twitty.

MR. TWITTY  
 I do love that Mrs. Hornsby. Such a sweet woman.

TRISTAN  
 Uh...right. Mr. Twitty, I would like to speak with you--

BARTLEY  
 She is a very charming woman, that Mrs. Hornsby.

MR. TWITTY  
 Bartley! I hadn't seen you there.

BARTLEY  
 (fake smile)  
 Well, here I am at your service. You see, Mr. Twitty I'd like to speak with you as well--

MR. TWITTY  
 If this is any reference to the argument between you and Samuel I already heard. The cameramen said he gave you quite a wallop.

Bartley gives a phony chuckle.

MR. TWITTY (CONT'D)  
 Scuffles and indiscretions happen all the time in such a frantic environment as this.

(MORE)

MR. TWITTY (CONT'D)

It would be a shame to chastise one for such commonplace behavior. It's alright, Bartley, you are forgiven.

Samuel and Hannah snicker.

MR. TWITTY (CONT'D)

Now! On to my boy, Tristan. What is it you would like to speak with me about?

TRISTAN

Well, sir--

MR. TWITTY

Oh, do let us disgust such matters over lunch! I am quite famished.

TRISTAN

(gracious smile)

Absolutely, Mr. Twitty.

Mr. Twitty wraps his arm around Tristan.

Bartley scowls as the two men EXIT out the door. Samuel and Hannah laugh blatantly at Bartley.

BARTLEY

(under his breath)

Sod off.

Bartley EXITS.

INT. ST. JAMES PARK - INN THE PARK CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Tristan and Mr. Twitty eat at a table near the window, overlooking the park.

MR. TWITTY

So, my boy, tell me about this show idea of yours.

TRISTAN

I'm sorry?

MR. TWITTY

I naturally assumed that's what you wanted to speak about.

TRISTAN

Oh, no. I-I... I decided to forgo such a venture. I'm not producer material.

MR. TWITTY

Well, however will you know if you don't show the world your talent?! Don't be afraid of jumping overboard just because you don't have a raft. Sometimes drowning is the best thing that could happen to you.

Tristan nods.

MR. TWITTY (CONT'D)

I should know. I've been married four bloody times. Banshees, all of them!

His mind drifts fondly for a moment.

MR. TWITTY (CONT'D)

(whimsical)

Oh, but not my Natsu.

TRISTAN

Natsu...?

MR. TWITTY

Oh, had I told you? I, my friend, come the next morn, shall be betrothed.

TRISTAN

I wasn't aware you were seeing anyone.

MR. TWITTY

Oh, well, I haven't met her yet. Only seen a picture.

He leans in.

MR. TWITTY (CONT'D)

(whispers)

I bought her from Japan.

Tristan nearly chokes.

TRISTAN

You *bought* her?!

MR. TWITTY

Yes! Isn't it exciting?! Its so...new and modern. I feel like a schoolboy.

TRISTAN

Oh...God.

MR. TWITTY

Don't you feel that way? That constant fluttering in your stomach? Doesn't Melinda make you feel like a whole new man?!

TRISTAN

I assume so.

MR. TWITTY

Oh, my boy, isn't love grand?

Tristan can't help but smile at his lovestruck friend.

TRISTAN

Yes, Mr. Twitty, I guess it is.

MR. TWITTY

(raises glass)  
To love!

Tristan raises his glass.

TRISTAN

To love!

They toast.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - FOYER - LATER

Tristan ENTERS through the front door.

He gathers his mail off the floor.

He stands frozen for a moment... MUFFLED MOANS...

Tristan glances at his watch: 3:07 PM.

TRISTAN

(grumbles)  
Andrew.

Tristan seethes through the pile, walking into the kitchen.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He finally looks up from his mail.

TRISTAN

Christ!

The kitchen is eclipsed with filthy dishes, pots and pans, open containers of food, and so on.

He slams his mail down on the counter. He rushes upstairs!

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tristan bangs on the door to Andrew's room.

TRISTAN

Andrew open the door. Andrew--

He realizes the noise isn't coming from Andrew's room.

The MOANS continue, but less muffled.

A beat.

He listens at the door to *his* bedroom.

The loud MOANS continue.

He opens the door.

A naked WOMAN and MAN cease having sex.

Tristan's mouth drops.

WOMAN

Hello, darling.

TRISTAN

Wh-Wh-Wh--

The man jumps up, putting his clothes on.

The woman covers herself shamefully with a pillow. This is MELINDA WINSLEY, 26. Pretty. Flaky. Aloof.

MELINDA

I didn't think you would be home...so early.

TRISTAN

CHRIST, MELINDA!!

MELINDA

I know! It looks awful!

TRISTAN  
Awful?! WE'RE ENGAGED!!

MAN  
(to Melinda; angry)  
You said you didn't have a mate!  
That the ring you wore was your  
grandmother's and she gave it to  
you on her deathbed a week ago!

MELINDA  
Oh, God. I'm sorry.  
(to Tristan; off his look)  
And to you! I'm sorry to you, too!

The man approaches Tristan.

MAN  
Sorry, chap. If its any consolation  
she was a bloody awful lay.  
(to Melinda)  
Bugger off.

The man EXITS.

MELINDA  
Tristan...

TRISTAN  
Get out.

MELINDA  
I--

TRISTAN  
GET OUT NOW!

Melinda hurries out, still covered by the pillow.

We hear the front door CLOSE.

Tristan SLIDES down the wall, sitting on the floor.

He covers his face with his hands.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
(low)  
Bugger.

INT. LOCAL PUB - NIGHT

BAR

Tristan sits flanked between TWO other MEN, his head dropped onto the bar top covered by his arms.

The man to the right of him is his younger, womanizing brother, ANDREW SULLER, 26.

The gentleman on the opposite side is his painfully optimistic, childhood friend, SPENCER O'DONNELL, 35.

ANDREW

Well, fuck her! She wasn't worth the dirt from the bottom of your shoe!

SPENCER

(Irish accent)  
He's right...in so little words.

ANDREW

What you need is a 'revenge fuck'.

SPENCER

A bloody what?

ANDREW

A 'revenge fuck'. You go out and shag the brains out of some young thing that looks just like her.

SPENCER

Are you mad?! That's a horrid idea!

ANDREW

I'm just saying, it might help. And quite frankly, I don't understand why you're so surprised. She's only the eighth woman that's cheated on you.

Spencer stares at Andrew in disgust.

SPENCER

You're a terrible person.

ANDREW

You should forget all this love shit, and just have some fun. That's what keeps getting you hurt. You expect too much from women. If you just treat them like garbage from the beginning it just wears down their self-esteem leaving them no choice but to accept it.

SPENCER

I hope you get a venereal disease.

Andrew gives Spencer the two-fingered salute.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Tristan, mate, you can't mope over this woman like you did the rest. Their not worth it.

ANDREW

Hear. Hear.

SPENCER

You need to get back in the saddle.

ANDREW

And 'revenge fuck'.

SPENCER

Shut up!

TRISTAN

(sitting up)

I just don't understand!! I'm a bloody decent man! I treat women like goddesses, and I always end up with the same story! I thought it was different with Melinda.

ANDREW

All women are slags!

SPENCER

All women are *not* slags! You'll find a woman worth every ounce of care you give to her. You just have to keep searching for her.

ANDREW

(scoffs)

Oh, bloody Christ!!

Spencer kicks Andrew under the bar.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

FUCK ME!

TRISTAN

No. No more women. I am taking a break from women and focusing on the one thing I've always been good at.

ANDREW  
What?

TRISTAN  
Work.

ANDREW  
That'll never bloody happen.

SPENCER  
That'll never happen.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

COUCH

Tristan plays with the engagement ring in his hand.

He stares at for a moment.

He drops the ring into his glass of wine and swallows the entire glass, ring and all.

A beat.

Tristan places a record on his record player.

TRISTAN  
(softly)  
Come on, Otis. Give me something.

He places the needle down. "*Pain In My Heart*" by Otis Redding swells throughout the room.

Tristan lip-syncs along dramatically.

He takes a giant swig from his bottle of wine.

He continues lip-singing.

He sits on the floor under the speakers.

He takes another giant swig, but longer.

He turns the volume up.

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BED

Andrew lies awake. He can hear Tristan playing his record.

ANDREW

Oh, God...

He rolls over, and puts his pillow over his head.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

Tristan ENTERS the building. He looks like shit. Hangover.

Bartley spots Tristan as he waits for the elevator.

The elevator DINGS. Tristan gets on. Bartley races to the elevator, making it on in just enough time.

BARTLEY

(casually)

Hi.

TRISTAN

(uninterested)

Hello, Bartley.

BARTLEY

Long night?

TRISTAN

You could say that.

BARTLEY

Went out with the fiancée?

TRISTAN

No. My brother and best friend.

BARTLEY

You had a good time I see--

TRISTAN

I don't mean to be rude, but I'm not feeling all too well and--

BARTLEY

Oh, sure. Sure. I understand.

(3 beats)

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

It's a shame.

TRISTAN

What?

BARTLEY

I said it's a shame. What happened to Mr. Twitty.

TRISTAN

(interested)

What?! What happened to Mr. Twitty?!

BARTLEY

Oh, you didn't here? He died the other night.

TRISTAN

BLOODY WHAT?!

The elevator DINGS, dropping them off on the production floor. Bartley walks off the elevator whistling, as Tristan is still in shock.

The elevator doors threaten to close, but Tristan pushes through.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Bartley.

An elderly woman-- MRS. THOMPSON, 60-- interrupts Tristan obtaining Bartley.

MRS. THOMPSON

(sobbing)

Isn't it awful, Tristan? He was such a dear friend.

TRISTAN

Yes, Mrs. Thompson, it is. And he was a dear friend.

MRS. THOMPSON

And the way it happened...  
Dreadful.

TRISTAN

How did it happen, Mrs. Thompson?

MRS. THOMPSON

Oh, I can't speak on such matters.  
(whispers)  
Its too...kinky.

TRISTAN

Oh.

MRS. THOMPSON

(whispering)

They were having sex.

Tristan is now uncomfortable.

MRS. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

(normal voice)

Its none of my business, but a man his age shouldn't be doing such acrobatic things. It wears on the heart. I mean, can you imagine?!

TRISTAN

Actually, I'd rather not think about it.

MRS. THOMPSON

Well, me and my Charlie were quite the randy couple in our younger days, but now its like seeing Halley's Comet.

TRISTAN

Mrs. Thompson I'd be extremely pleased if we were to change the subject.

MRS. THOMPSON

Absolutely. We shouldn't be discussing the dead in such a way. What we should be discussing is the new head of programming.

TRISTAN

There's already a new head of programming?!

MRS. THOMPSON

Yes.

(annoyed)

An American girl. Apparently, she was the second-in-command at some television network in America and was forced to resign. Scandalous.

TRISTAN

How could they have hired someone already?

Suddenly, a cluster of older men in expensive suits march onto the floor: STUDIO HEADS.

The STAFF stand about quietly.

The leader of the pact speaks.

STUDIO HEAD #1  
(coldly)  
It was a travesty what happened  
to...

A beat.

He pulls an index card from his breast pocket.

STUDIO HEAD #1 (CONT'D)  
(reading from card)  
Henry Twitty. He was loved, and  
beloved by all at this network. A  
good, hard-working man. Let us all  
remember him with a moment of  
silence--

The entire staff bows their collective heads.

STUDIO HEAD #1 (CONT'D)  
--at home. In the meantime, I would  
like to introduce the new Head of  
Programming -- Joanna Hawks.

An attractive, African-American woman emerges from the herd of suits. This is JOANNA HAWKS, 33. Harsh but capable. Intriguing. Curious allure.

STUDIO HEAD #1 (CONT'D)  
We demand that all of you oblige  
her with the same respect you gave  
to Mr. Twitty. Perhaps more so.  
That is all.

The studio heads cluster onto the elevator. They EXIT.

Joann stands before the speechless staff.

A beat.

Tristan approaches Joanna to introduce himself, but Bartley swoops in boldly.

BARTLEY  
(extending hand)  
Hello. I'm Bartley Forbes. Producer  
of *Mrs. Hornsby's House*.

Joanna glances down at his hand.

JOANNA  
(coldly; addressing staff)  
There will be a production meeting  
tomorrow morning in Conference Room  
A. I expect all of you to be there.

No response.

She brushes past Bartley. She walks up the second level into her office, formally Mr. Twitty's office.

Bartley is taken back by her disregard of him.

INT. LOCAL PUB - NIGHT

The entire staff sits about the bar with scowls on their faces.

TABLE

Tristan sits at a table with Bartley, Samuel, Hannah, and TWO other PRODUCERS.

Hannah films Bartley with a digital camera.

BARTLEY  
Will you stop filming me, please?

HANNAH  
I'm teaching myself how to shoot documentaries.

BARTLEY  
Well, I don't want to be your subject so get it away from me.  
Now.

Hannah puts he camera down.

TRISTAN  
Where did you get that, Hannah?

A sorrowful look comes over her face.

HANNAH  
Mr. Twitty. He gave it to me for my birthday last month. Thought I should get some use out of it.

Tristan gives her squeeze.

TRISTAN

I think he would love to see you use it.

HANNAH

Yeah? Because I--

BARTLEY

She walked right by me and said not a word!

TRISTAN

Oh, for Christ sake, Bartley?!

BARTLEY

Who does she think she is?!

SAMUEL

I think she's the bloody Head of Programming.

BARTLEY

An American. What were 'the heads' thinking?!

ALL

Money.

BARTLEY

Yeah, right, but what money? What can she do that we can't do ourselves?!

PRODUCER #1

Run a network.

PRODUCER #2

Yeah. And not into the bloody ground like Mr. Twitty.

TRISTAN

Hey!

PRODUCER #2

I'm sorry, Tristan, but you know full well the reason we're in such a shithole is because he put us there. He was a decent chap, but a terrible businessman.

TRISTAN

(low)  
I know.

HANNAH

Maybe this American woman can help.

PRODUCER #1

Yeah, but did you see her?! She's a shrewd one that girl.

PRODUCER #2

She's going have a great time breaking us down.

BARTLEY

Not if we break her down first.

SAMUEL

What are you talking about, you git?

BARTLEY

I think we should show her who's boss.

PRODUCER #1

Bloody hell, Bartley.

BARTLEY

I'm serious. We let her know we're in charge and this is our network. Our studio. She's an American, she knows nothing of British television. They're all reality TV shows and soap operas and game shows. She'll probably make it worse.

TRISTAN

Bartley, I don't think its such a good idea to fool with her. She looks like she could hurt you.

The table snickers.

BARTLEY

And what would you bloody know? You're just the marketing accountant. This conversation doesn't even concern you.

The table falls silent.

A beat.

PRODUCER #2

I'm in.

PRODUCER #1

Oh, come now...

PRODUCER #2

I'm serious. Bartley has a point. She can't bloody swoop in here with her venom eyes and callous attitude and take over. I've been at this bloody network for nearly 13 years. I'm not going to have some young, American girl storm in and give orders. So, I'm in.

SAMUEL

Us, too.

HANNAH

Us, too.

TRISTAN

Samuel. Hannah.

SAMUEL

She could turn Generation Next Kids into something bloody awful. If we take over, we could run the network better.

PRODUCER #1

They do have a small point, Tristan.

Tristan is taken aback by his friends' willful indignation.

TRISTAN

Fine. You all do what you will. But I have a bad feeling its all going to blow up in your faces.

Tristan EXITS.

EXT. CEMETARY - MORNING

Tristan stands mournfully before Mr. Twitty's grave.

At least four dozen flowers and gifts surround his grave and headstone.

TRISTAN

I'm sorry, old friend.

Tristan places a bouquet of flowers atop the headstone.

A beat.

He EXITS.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM A - MORNING

The entire staff sit about chatting casually.

Joanna ENTERS.

They continue chatting and goofing about.

She takes a seat at the head of the table. Their talking still ensues as though she weren't there.

She smirks to herself.

She removes a folder from her briefcase. She takes a sheet of paper from the folder.

JOANNA

(reading names off sheet)

Kinsley. James. O'Hare. Barbello.  
Craig. Bearson. Milton. Stevenson.  
Wicker. Fredricks. Richards.

The room gradually grows silent.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Lowerly. Michaels. Gerrysburg.  
Salias. Brogan. Masterson. Hart.  
Fallows. Doe. Lamb. Cassill.  
Packer. Jameson. Butler. Lee. Mohr.  
Burroughs. Alexander, J. Percy.  
Vickers, L. Utterson. Christian.  
Popper. Edwards. Thomas. And  
Yussef.

The staff looks about curiously.

She places the sheet back into the folder and the folder back into her briefcase.

A beat.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

(coolly)

You're all fired, and have one hour  
to collect your belongings.

A wave of shock envelopes the room.

Tristan is speechless.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

If your name was called it was nothing personal, just that I looked over some things last night and realized that some of you, in useless positions, were costing unnecessary money. And the rest of you, your responsibility, or lack thereof, were attributing to the channel's dwindling success.

She stands.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Tomorrow we'll have another meeting to cut down on Marketing and Finance. And I expect the next time I hold a meeting, all horseplay and chattering stops when I get here.

She EXITS.

A beat.

Everyone CLAMORS in panic! She just sacked half the staff!

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - DEN - NIGHT

INTERCUTTING

Tristan is on the phone with Spencer.

TRISTAN

I couldn't believe it! She just sacked almost half the entire staff. It was callous and wrong! She did it without so much of a bat of her eyelash.

INT. SPENCER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A small BOY and GIRL scurry about the room rambunctiously as Spencer tries to carry on his conversation.

SPENCER

That sounds bloody awful.

The small boy rummages through the cabinet beneath the sink. He grabs a bottle of bleach.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Put that down!

TRISTAN  
Are you talking to me?!

SPENCER  
No. Michael. He's just discovered  
bleach.

TRISTAN  
Is he doing laundry?

SAMUEL  
God, I wish. This place is such a  
mess. I can't wait for Anna to get  
home. What were we discussing?

TRISTAN  
The possibility of me being fired  
by the world's most horrid woman!

Andrew skips downstairs with a DVD in his hand.

He puts the disc in the player.

TV

Two big-breasted women having sex appear on screen. Loudly.

ANDREW  
(grinning)  
Yes.

TRISTAN  
Andrew would you mind taking your  
filth upstairs?!

ANDREW  
My filth?! I got this from your  
room.

TRISTAN  
I don't-- My room?! Don't go in my  
bloody room!

SPENCER  
What's going on, Tristan?

CRASH! Something breaks.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
Michael. Liza. What are you two  
doing?!

BOY (O.S.)  
Playing!

GIRL (O.S.)  
Playing!

TRISTAN  
(to Andrew)  
I'm on the phone. Go upstairs.

ANDREW  
I bloody live here, too. Besides  
their breast look larger here than  
on my tiny, tiny telly.

Andrew sits comfortable in an armchair in front of the television.

TRISTAN  
Oh, for God's sake!

Tristan opens the door to the coat closet. He walks in, closing the door behind him.

Another CRASH! Something else breaks.

SPENCER  
Oh, for God's sake!

Spencer locks himself in the pantry.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
You still there, mate?

TRISTAN  
Yeah.

SPENCER  
I'm in the pantry.

TRISTAN  
Coat closet.

SPENCER  
Further proof we let other people  
run our lives. Remind me to never  
give your godchildren cake and  
juice before bed. Otherwise, I'll  
have to buy a stun gun.

Tristan chuckles.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

You're not going to lose your job, Tristan. You're good at what you do.

TRISTAN

So were half the people she fired! I don't want to lose my job, my boss, and my fiancée all in the same week.

SPENCER

Look, mate. She fired people she said were useless, right?

TRISTAN

Yeah.

SPENCER

Well, don't be useless. Show her you're there for a bloody reason. Tell her the idea about your kid's show. That way she can see your making a effort to stay.

TRISTAN

No. She'd probably hate it.

SPENCER

How do you know?

TRISTAN

Because I hate it.

SPENCER

No, you don't. You're just scared.

TRISTAN

Petrified is more like it.

SPENCER

Its better than crying and begging. Or not having a job at all.

TRISTAN

I guess you're right.

SPENCER

I know I'm right. I fire people everyday.

TRISTAN

(laughs)  
Thanks.

SPENCER  
Aye, no problem.

They hang up.

Tristan opens the closet door.

ANDREW (O.S.)  
(moaning)  
OH, GOD! OH, CHRIST!

TRISTAN  
Oh, God, Andrew!!

He closes the door immediately, closing himself inside again.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - TRISTAN'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Tristan can't get to sleep. He's tossing and turning.

He tosses his pillow on the floor, giving up at any attempt of getting some rest.

He stares up blankly at the ceiling, thinking.

A beat.

He gets up.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Tristan is at the stove cooking.

Andrew tumbles downstairs curiously.

He watches quietly as his brother busies about the kitchen.

Andrew can tell something's on his brother's mind.

He ENTERS.

Andrew opens a cabinet and takes out two plates. He places them on the table in the center of the room. He opens a drawer and places utensils by each plate.

Andrew takes a seat. Tristan dispenses the food onto both plates. He sits.

ANDREW  
Looks good.

TRISTAN

Thanks.

The two eat in silence.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCTION FLOOR - DAY

Tristan ENTERS.

Mrs. Thompson approaches him in tears.

TRISTAN

Mrs. Thompson, are you alright?

MRS. THOMPSON

No. Joanna-- Ms. Hawks-- fired me.

TRISTAN

She sacked you?!

MRS. THOMPSON

Yes. She said a woman my age  
wouldn't be able to keep up with  
her fast-paced schedule. So, she  
fired me.

She sobs into her handkerchief.

MRS. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

I was Mr. Twitty's personal  
assistant for nearly 25 years!

Tristan looks upon the old woman with empathy.

TRISTAN

(livid)

Where is Ms. Hawks, Mrs. Thompson?

MRS. THOMPSON

In her office. She's having a  
meeting with Bartley.

Tristan EXITS.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bartley sits across from Joanna at her desk.

BARTLEY

...a sort of reality show for  
children.

JOANNA

No.

BARTLEY

But--

JOANNA

I hate reality shows. Especially ones for children. There's enough of them in America, so I don't want to be dealing with them here. Besides, your idea is boring, and boring because it's overused.

BARTLEY

Well, I do have another--

Tristan burst into the office.

TRISTAN

HOW DARE YOU! How dare you sack that sweet old woman!!

Joanna is completely unnerved.

Bartley flees the room in fear.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

That woman has been here for nearly 25 years!

JOANNA

That's apparent.

TRISTAN

Now, I kept quiet when you sacked nearly the entire staff, and mainly due to fear, but you are malicious, spiteful, and quite frankly grouchy! I demand, at the very least, you give Mrs. Thompson her job back! NOW!!

A beat.

Joanna stands. Tristan backs up.

She sits on the edge of her desk, legs crossed. A smirk slowly grows on her face.

JOANNA

I'll tell you what, I've been sitting in this office listening to the most God-awful show ideas all day. So, if you can pitch a show idea to me in (glances at the clock on her desk) the next five minutes, that's somewhat feasible; I'll let Mrs. Thompson and you keep your jobs. If not, you're both fired.

TRISTAN

Wait, you'll sack me and Mrs.--

JOANNA

Four minutes and thirty seconds.

TRISTAN

A cooking show.

A beat.

JOANNA

(slightly intrigued)  
Okay...

TRISTAN

(nervous)  
Well...the kids cook and teach the children at home and in the audience how to cook. And its helpful, and sometimes humorous.

She takes a seat behind her desk.

JOANNA

(disapproving)  
Slapstick humor. Messy foods. Appliances gone array. Weird concoctions.

TRISTAN

No! No. More like a learning show.

JOANNA

Educational?

TRISTAN

With a bit of child-like humor. But seriousness about math, measurements, fractions, proportions and such. And health! Health!

(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
 Dietary habits and nutrition,  
 because kids eat a lot of  
 unsanitary things.

JOANNA  
 Anything else?

He takes a moment to think.

TRISTAN  
 Safety? How not to set the kitchen  
 on fire?

JOANNA  
 (unamused)  
 Are you asking me or telling me?

TRISTAN  
 Telling... I think.

Joanna nods to herself. Its apparent she is somewhat  
 attracted to Tristan's idea.

JOANNA  
 Why should I make this show?

TRISTAN  
 Because you bloody told me to come  
 up with something!!

JOANNA  
 Other than that. Why should I?

His mind drifts for a moment.

TRISTAN  
 (sincere)  
 Because my mum worked two jobs and  
 was hardly ever home. That's how I  
 learned to cook. I made dinner  
 every night, for me and my brother.  
 What little of it there was. And I  
 got better at math because of it,  
 too.

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
 I just felt as though, in some  
 small way, I was helping my mum. I  
 felt responsible, and...like an  
 adult. The man of the house she  
 needed me to be.

(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
Sometimes children need to feel  
helpful. It warrants their  
character.

A beat.

JOANNA  
(standing)  
I'd like a proposal on my desk  
tomorrow morning.

TRISTAN  
Of-Of what exactly?

JOANNA  
Your show.

TRISTAN  
(surprised)  
Oh, right. A proposal. Sure...

Tristan turns to EXIT. He stops.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
And Mrs. Thompson?

JOANNA  
I *need* a new personal assistant.  
But I'll find her something else  
she can do.

TRISTAN  
Thank you.

Tristan EXITS.

EXT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bartley and a slew of other employees jump up as Tristan  
EXITS Joanna's office. Apparently, they had been listening  
in.

BARTLEY  
(staightening up)  
So, how'd it go in there?

TRISTAN  
(shaken)  
Awful. She liked my show.

He EXITS in a daze.

BARTLEY

*His show?*

They all shrug in confusion.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Tristan, in a T-shirt and boxers, sits at the table.

His hair is a mess and numerous cups of half-drunken coffee sit in front of him, along with mounds of papers, reference books, and his laptop.

Its apparent he's tired. Exhausted even, but continues to attempt at writing the proposal Joanna wanted.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - MARKETING/FINANCE FLOOR - NEXT MORNING

Tristan lies fast asleep at his desk. He's out cold.

Joanna EXITS the elevator.

She approaches Tristan's desk, noticing him asleep.

JOANNA

Tristan. Tristan.

He's out like a light.

She kicks his desk.

Tristan shakes awake, still a bit dazed. He wipes the drool from his mouth onto his sleeve.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I'd like to see you in my office immediately.

She EXITS.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tristan ENTERS. Bartley is there.

TRISTAN

(to Bartley)

What are you doing here?

JOANNA

Take a seat Tristan.

Joanna drops his proposal on her desk. Tristan sits.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Not the best I've seen, but I'll  
cut you some slack because you're  
not used to doing production work.  
Its good.

She takes a seat.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
I wanna run with it.

TRISTAN  
Are-are you serious?

JOANNA  
Yes, you have a lot of heart and  
creativity, but not enough  
experience. Which is why you'll be  
producing the show *with* Bartley.

TRISTAN  
(stunned)  
I have to *produce* the show? With  
Bartley?

Bartley gives Tristan a wide, enthusiastic smile.

JOANNA  
Yes! What did you think was going  
to happen when you wrote the  
proposal?

TRISTAN  
I-I don't--

JOANNA  
You'll be given the title of  
Executive Producer, despite Bartley  
having volunteered himself to help  
you co-produce the show, given your  
lack of production skill.

TRISTAN  
(forced smile)  
I bet he did.

JOANNA  
So, here's how it's going to go:  
Tristan will producer the first  
episode solely.

TRISTAN

I will?!

BARTLEY

He will?!

JOANNA

Upon the success or lack thereof of production, and my viewing of the pilot episode I will determine if Tristan is to remain in charge, or if the show should be handed off to someone with more experience and a better vision. Which would be Bartley.

BARTLEY

(under his breath)

Yes!

TRISTAN

Oh, God...

JOANNA

But, all pre-production matters and staff meetings until taping will be held jointly. Understand?

They nod.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Good. I'm going out on a limb here, so if this proves difficult for either of you, you'll both be sorry.

They nod.

A beat.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

We're done.

Tristan and Bartley EXIT.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM B - NIGHT

Tristan and Bartley sit at the large table in the center.

BARTLEY

So, we need to design a set. I'll give Betty a heads up.

TRISTAN

Betty?

BARTLEY

She does set design.

TRISTAN

Oh. Right.

Bartley scoffs at Tristan's note-taking.

BARTLEY

What else...? Actors--

TRISTAN

Hannah. And Samuel. And possibly Vivie.

BARTLEY

No. Absolutely not. No Samuel. Hannah I may tolerate, but not that little prat.

TRISTAN

Samuel is not a prat. And if you got to know him better you would say differently.

BARTLEY

God, you really are a walking Public Service Announcement.

TRISTAN

I want him on the show.

BARTLEY

Fine. You're job will be to keep him away from me then.

Tristan rolls his eyes.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

Moving on to more pressing matters, we already have a crew, from *Mrs. Hornsby's House*, we'll talk to Joanna and Ginger about marketing and promotion, I'll direct--

TRISTAN

I think Fredrick should direct.

BARTLEY

(sighs)

Fine. *Fredrick* will direct, if you can keep him awake. You need to write the first draft of the script, Studio A is ours, and we have finally decided on a location. So, Terrific. Wonderful. Goodnight.

Bartley stands.

TRISTAN

Wait.

Bartley groans. He sits back down.

BARTLEY

What? What is it Tristan?! We've been here all night with your infantile questions and suggestions. What now?!

TRISTAN

I don't know how to write a script.

Bartley groans again. He takes pen from his pocket.

He grabs Tristan's hand. He scribbles something on his palm.

Tristan takes a look.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

What is this?

BARTLEY

Screenwriting software. It'll do it all for you.

Bartley stands.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, it just so happens you have made me almost an hour late for dinner reservations I made with a very unscrupulous woman.

TRISTAN

One more thing.

BARTLEY

(sighs)

Go ahead.

TRISTAN

I think we should pre-record the segment at the grocer's and show the children making the food they bought in front of an audience. I think it would be less-cost effective and a better demonstration of mathematics for the viewing kids at home.

BARTLEY

Fine, Tristan! I just want to go!

TRISTAN

(disappointed)  
Fine.

BARTLEY

Thank you.

Bartley EXITS.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM B - DAY

CAST and CREW sit before Tristan and Bartley. Hannah is there with her camera filming everything.

SAMUEL

So, you two are running the show?  
Together?

BARTLEY

Yes! For the last time.

TRISTAN

Well, until first taping. I run pilot by myself.

HANNAH

Well, alright Tristan!

The room gives him a round of applause. Bartley scoffs wryly.

TRISTAN

Its just simply a trial--

BARTLEY

Yes, just a trial. Which means,  
until then this is a co-operation.  
We're equals. We work together.

INT. STUDIO A - DAY

Bartley is on his mobile.

Production Assistants attempt to put the set together as Samuel and Hannah play around on the it.

Tristan ENTERS. He approaches Bartley.

TRISTAN

Bartley, what's happening?

BARTLEY

Huh? Oh, nothing, we're just putting the set together.

(on phone)

Yes, B-A-R-T-L-E-Y Forbes.

TRISTAN

Who are you talking to?

BARTLEY

(whispering)

*Hello! Magazine.* I'm trying to get on their cover for SEXIEST BACHELOR IN BRITAIN.

Tristan rolls his eyes.

TRISTAN

We were supposed to speak with Betty together, and nor did you ring me to tell me you were doing it!

BARTLEY

(normal voice)

Relax! I have it under control, okay? Don't worry your pretty, little blonde head.

TRISTAN

I am worried, if it means my job because Joanna doesn't believe we're working together properly!

The P.A.s finish assembling the set. Bartley hangs up his mobile.

BARTLEY

(to P.A.s)

Beautiful!

Tristan takes a look.

TRISTAN  
That set is ridiculous!

BARTLEY  
It is not! Its a kitchen. That's we  
agreed on.

TRISTAN  
But not this! Its awful! Its  
entirely too modern for a  
children's show. Kids don't care  
about stainless steel.

BARTLEY  
Exactly!

TRISTAN  
Its not right for the show. It  
looks like Dr. Who's laboratory.

BARTLEY  
What do you want: country kitchen  
with checkered curtains?

TRISTAN  
It would be a start.

BARTLEY  
To what?

TRISTAN  
Something normal. Less like the  
inner-workings of a watch.

BARTLEY  
And more like a run-down diner in  
Idaho.

TRISTAN  
Have you ever been to Idaho, let  
alone point to it on a map?!

Bartley opens his mouth to speak.

JOANNA (O.S.)  
You boys aren't fighting are you?

They turn to Joanna eyeing them suspiciously.

TRISTAN  
No.

BARTLEY  
No.

JOANNA  
 Good. Then someone explain--  
 (pointing to set)  
*this* to me.

BARTLEY  
 Its the set for *Cooking With Kids*.

JOANNA  
 Who's idea was it?

BARTLEY  
 (cocky)  
 Mine! I developed it with Betty. I  
 thought a more modern aspect would  
 be better appreciated by our young  
 viewers. Seeing as how I-- (off  
 Tristan's look) we thought it would  
 be a good idea if we pre-taped  
 outdoors segments and spliced them  
 with studio audience material as  
 the children prepare the food they  
 purchased in the earlier segments.

JOANNA  
 I don't like it.

BARTLEY  
 The pre-taping or--

JOANNA  
 The set. Its too impersonal and  
 looks like a laboratory.

Tristan tries to suppress a snicker.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
 And seeing how this was your idea I  
 expect you to fix it. Immediately.

BARTLEY  
 (irritated)  
 Sure.

JOANNA  
 Good. Continue.

Joanna EXITS.

Tristan snickers.

BARTLEY  
 (to Tristan)  
 You fix it!

Bartley storms off set.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - TRISTAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Tristan is at his desk reading a book on children's programming. On the cover is a picture of Mr. Rogers.

Bartley approaches.

BARTLEY

You finish writing the final draft yet?

TRISTAN

No. Not yet. Hannah needed help with something, so I haven't gotten to it.

BARTLEY

Tristan, that needs to be done immediately.

TRISTAN

And I said I'll do it. Ease off my back. A friend needed my help.

BARTLEY

With what? Her stupid little documentary?

TRISTAN

Its not stupid. She wanted my opinion and she got it. Besides it'll only take me a minute to finish.

BARTLEY

Then finish.

Tristan puts his book down.

He turns to his computer. He types rapidly.

He prints out the script and hands it to Bartley.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

That's all I ask.

Bartley notices a turned-over picture frame on Tristan's desk.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

What's that?

TRISTAN  
Oh, that's nothing--

Bartley picks up the frame. He turns it over: Tristan and Melinda holding each other lovingly, but Melinda's face is blacked out by permanent marker.

BARTLEY  
Is this your fiancée?

TRISTAN  
Was.

Tristan snatches the photo and tosses it in the garbage can.

BARTLEY  
Weren't you engaged before?

TRISTAN  
Yes. Twice.

BARTLEY  
Ouch. That's gotta hurt. Three engagements broken.

TRISTAN  
Yeah, just a little.

Tristan picks his book up again.

Bartley's mind drifts for a moment. A sneaky smile grows on his face.

BARTLEY  
You know, I was engaged once.

TRISTAN  
How thrilling.

BARTLEY  
It was. Until she cheated on me with my best mate.

Hook, line, and sinker... Tristan turns toward Bartley, interested.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Bartley and Tristan sit at the bar. The music is loud, its crowded, and lights are flashing everywhere.

Tristan looks tense. Uncomfortable. Its apparent this isn't his type of environment.

TRISTAN

(trying to talk over  
music)

I really thought she was the one.  
She really seemed to listen to me  
and understand. Or at least, I  
thought she did. Its just that out  
all the women I've been with, I  
never thought she'd hurt me.

Tristan notices Bartley is barely paying attention. He's too  
busy making eyes at a woman on the dance floor.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

You know, I'm going to go.

BARTLEY

What? Why?

TRISTAN

I'm not really a night club kind of  
person.

BARTLEY

But you can't go!

TRISTAN

(taken aback)

Why?

BARTLEY

Because...

He spots an attractive woman at the other end of the bar  
smiling at them.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

Because that woman's been staring  
at you all night.

Tristan takes a look. The woman winks at him.

TRISTAN

Oh, no. I-I-I can't. It's too soon,  
you know?

BARTLEY

Never too soon to get back in the  
saddle.

Tristan chuckles.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

What?

TRISTAN

Nothing. That's what my best friend told me.

BARTLEY

Sounds like a smart man. We should meet. And you should meet her.

Bartley pushes Tristan toward the woman's direction.

TRISTAN

No, Bartley, I don't--

Its too late. She's spotted him walking toward her.

END OF BAR

He approaches the woman.

They make friendly conversation as Bartley watches.

(3 beats)

Tristan returns.

BARTLEY

What happened?

TRISTAN

She's a man.

BARTLEY

A what?

TRISTAN

A man. She's a man.

Tristan takes a shot of whiskey.

BARTLEY

You're kidding, right?

Tristan shakes his head.

Bartley laughs.

TRISTAN

And on that note, goodnight my friend.

BARTLEY

You can't leave.

TRISTAN

Why do you want me to stay so badly?

BARTLEY

No reason. I just think...you should ease your way back into the swing of things, personally...and professionally.

TRISTAN

What?

Bartley takes a frustrated breath.

BARTLEY

Look, mate, I can't work with you. Your inexperienced and fumbly and dragging me down. This isn't your thing and I think you should relinquish *Cooking With Kids* to me. I can make it a far better show than anything you could produce. You could very well turn your own work into rubbish.

Tristan glares at him.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)

Come on, we're not getting on anyway. We'll just tell Joanna that we couldn't do it, and I'll even ask her to still keep your name as Executive Producer. And go about crunching numbers or what have you.

TRISTAN

My God. I don't believe I was ever so stupid as to fathom you had any sort of empathetic, cooperative bone in your weasel-y body! You know, Samuel tried to tell me about you once, and I didn't listen. Do you know I actually thought I could learn something from you?!

BARTLEY

Tristan, don't be so disappointed. Its only business.

TRISTAN

The only disappointment I have is with myself for not having the same sort of insight as a 12 year-old boy!

Tristan tosses a couple dollars on the bar top. He EXITS.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - MARKETING/FINANCE FLOOR - NEXT MORNING

Tristan is once again, face-down on his desk as Joanna approaches. This time he notices her.

He tries his best to gather himself.

JOANNA

Long night again I see.

TRISTAN

Actually, it seemed pretty short once I fell asleep.

JOANNA

(unamused)

Is this a frequent habit?

TRISTAN

The bad jokes or the drinking?

Joanna scowls.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

No, I promise you its not. I'm sorry.

JOANNA

Good.

TRISTAN

I'm not an alcoholic. Just, um, tired of shitty people.

JOANNA

Straighten yourself up a bit and meet me downstairs in the lobby.

She EXITS.

INT. HOBBS SUITS AND TAILOR - CONTINUOUS

Joanna watches as Tristan is fitted for an expensive suit.

TRISTAN

Um, Joanna not that I mind, because I believe every man should have a good suit, but I'm a bit curious as to why exactly do I need one.

JOANNA

We're going to talk to some very important people today.

(to tailor)

The cuffs need to be longer, he's a tall man.

She lights a cigarette.

TAILOR

There's no smoking in here, Miss.

Joanna glares at him. The tailor cowers away.

TAILOR (CONT'D)

(whispers; to Tristan)

She's a frightful gal, that one. Yours?

TRISTAN

Oh, no. She's my boss.

TAILOR

Shame. Nice legs though.

Tristan chuckles.

EXT. PRESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tristan and Joanna stand outside.

JOANNA

(takes a deep breath)

You feel good? Strong? God, I hate these things!

TRISTAN

Yeah. I feel great. What things?

JOANNA

Of course you do. A new suit does that to man.

She takes another breath.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

You'd think I'd be used to it by now, but they're such vultures.

TRISTAN

Joanna are we going--

Joanna opens the door. A barge of camera crews, reporters, photographers, and other media personnel cluster toward them.

Needless to say, Tristan is more than bowled over by the unexpected media attention.

Joanna, with a plastered on smile, escorts the speechless Tristan to his seat at the press table.

She takes to the microphone.

JOANNA

Thank you for coming ladies and gentlemen. I am very proud to have you here to announce the new and improved format and style for Generation Next Kids.

TWO P.A.s pull down a sheet covering a large, 3-D logo for Generation Next Kids, newly titled GNK.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

And along with our new look comes new programming. I'd like to introduce our new "star producer"-- Tristan Suller.

Tristan nearly faints being caught off-guard.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Tristan's new show *Cooking With Kids* will be our signature, headlining show this season, along with many other terrific programming this season.

A blinding light of flashing bulbs go off in Tristan's face.

Tristan tries to smile as he waves awkwardly.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCTION FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The entire staff at Generation Next Kids, watches the press conference proudly on the television.

Bartley ENTERS.

BARTLEY  
What's going on?

PRODUCER #1  
(pointing to telly)  
Tristan.

Bartley looks up. His mouth drops.

TV

TRISTAN  
Um...I very, uh, (clears throat)  
enthusised--no, that's not--

JOANNA  
Tristan is very excited about the  
importance of his role as *Cooking  
With Kids'* executive producer and  
the significance his show has on  
our network. We're hoping it  
reaches a wide range of children  
and young adults across the United  
Kingdom.

BARTLEY

A scowl seeps onto Bartley's face.

BARTLEY  
(under his breath)  
Fuck me.

He EXITS.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joanna is at her desk.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK...

Joanna turns down her stereo.

JOANNA  
Come in.

Tristan ENTERS.

TRISTAN  
I'm sorry, did I hear music?

JOANNA  
You needed something?

TRISTAN

I need to speak with you--

JOANNA

Where's Bartley? I couldn't find him all day.

TRISTAN

He's...sick. Flu or something. He rang me up this morning.

JOANNA

Well, its nice that he told me that.

TRISTAN

Sorry.

JOANNA

What did you want to talk about?

TRISTAN

That, um...well, that--

JOANNA

Yes...

TRISTAN

I just didn't think it would be such a spectacle. The show that is.

JOANNA

Why wouldn't you think so? You pitched a good idea and we need to get the network back on its feet. I think your show can do that. You may be a bit rusty on the mechanics of production, but that's what Bartley is there for.

TRISTAN

Well, that's just it... I can't--

Joanna holds up her hand, begging him to stop.

JOANNA

I'm going out on a limb here for you, Tristan, and risking a lot for you to do this.

TRISTAN

I know. I know. Its just that I didn't think I would be in such a spotlight.

(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

I don't-- I've made a second family here, but sometimes people's envy and uncertainties conjure up false fantasies. I don't want to make an enemy out of anyone I care about.

Joanna is taken aback by Tristan's sincerity for a moment.

JOANNA

For what? Helping almost a quarter of them keep their jobs? Coming up with something original? Creative? Promoting yourself to something better, that you clearly always wanted?

A beat.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I haven't been here that long. But I have noticed that you have a good rapport with the staff, as indication from your 'save Mrs. Thompson' outburst. They trust you. No one should be angry with you for that.

Joanna turns to the paperwork on her desk.

Tristan stands to EXIT.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Tristan.

He turns.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Such a hidden talent shouldn't be squandered, or complacent.

She turns back to her work.

Tristan EXITS.

INT. STUDIO A - DAY

A MAN doing simple magic tricks entertains Samuel and Hannah.

## TRISTAN AND BARTLEY

BARTLEY

You are absolutely ridiculous! This is completely childish!

TRISTAN

And why is that?! Because you didn't come up with it. I have ideas, too, you know!

BARTLEY

Ideas! More like unfinished childhood fantasies! I mean really, Tristan, a magician?!

Joanna ENTERS. She catches Tristan and Bartley arguing.

TRISTAN

Possibly, but I think that's what allows me to be more creative than you. I have more imagination! You're not the only one who may put forth ideas.

BARTLEY

But this is utterly moronic and simple!

JOANNA

Gentlemen!

They turn.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

What is going on here?!

A beat.

BARTLEY

Well, Tristan?

TRISTAN

Well, I-I thought, no, I, um--

JOANNA

Out with it.

TRISTAN

(nervous)

I thought it would be a good idea if we incorporated a chef into the show every now and then, just for an adult appearance.

(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

It wouldn't really take too much away from the kids being the focus of the show, given that he could also be entertaining.

JOANNA

I don't understand.

Bartley snickers.

TRISTAN

(nervous)

Well, I found this chef and we started talking and it turns out that in college he moonlighted as a magician at children's parties. And he still knows some tricks. And I thought once a week there could be a segment where he teaches how to cook something basic while doing magic tricks.

Joanna notices Samuel and Hannah. They giggling and laugh as the man does a disappearing act with a couple of eggs. They applaud when he finishes.

JOANNA

We'll try it out. If it doesn't work, we're tossing it.

TRISTAN

Absolutely.

JOANNA

Good.

Joanna turns to EXIT.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Who changed the set?

TRISTAN

I-I, uh, I did.

JOANNA

Better.

Joanna EXITS.

Tristan smiles excitedly. He approaches to Samuel and Hannah.

Bartley watches as Samuel and Hannah hug Tristan. The chef/magician shakes his hand thankfully.

Bartley storms out.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

TRISTAN

(on phone)

Bartley, its Tristan. Look, I still think you're a maggot, but you haven't been around in almost two days, and I can only cover and dodge Joanna so much and for so long. Call me back.

He hangs up.

Tristan turns to address the three crew members before him.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

(nervous)

Alright, so...we're going to-to, uh...shoot Samuel and Hannah as they buy the groceries and Vivian is going to pretend to be the cashier. And then we get the kids talking about the food and how to buy the food.

CAMERAMAN #1

(irritated)

Do you want us to shoot in wide shots, or stay close on the kids?

TRISTAN

I-I don't know. What do you--

The crew snicker at Tristan.

One crew member's cellphone RINGS. He answers it, ignoring Tristan.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Right...

Hannah runs up.

HANNAH

Tristan there's a problem.

TRISTAN

A problem? What is it?

HANNAH

Vivian doesn't want to do it. And Samuel refuses to work with her.

TRISTAN

What? Why?

Hannah shrugs.

A young, P.A. Assistant walks up.

P.A.

Mr. Suller we have a problem.

TRISTAN

Another one?!

P.A.

The grocer doesn't want us to shoot at his store. I tried to talk to him but he just kept screaming at me in Bengali.

TRISTAN

Why doesn't he want to do it now?

P.A.

Something about Samuel hitting on his daughter.

HANNAH

That could be why Vivian doesn't want to do the show. You remember she and Samuel had that thing?

TRISTAN

(annoyed)

Oh, for Christ's sake.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Vivian, 12, a waif-ish brunette girl, stands before Tristan and Hannah with a sour scowl on her face.

TRISTAN

Vivie, is it really worth it for you not to do the show because Samuel made you angry?

She grabs a glass and throws it against the wall. Tristan and Hannah duck as it shatters behind them.

They run out.

EXT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

They listen as she rants and raves about the trailer throwing things.

Tristan's P.A. walks by.

P.A.  
(on walkie-talkie)  
Yeah, Mike, Vivian's at it again.

HANNAH  
Want to try Samuel?

INT. SAMUEL'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

The hair stylist fusses in Samuel's hair as he angrily flips through a magazine.

TRISTAN  
Samuel, you have to do the show.  
For me. Please.

SAMUEL  
Its nothing personal, but I just  
can't work with such unprofessional  
people.  
(to hair stylist)  
I'm a boy, not a poodle! Quit  
teasing it!

Samuel shakes his head in disappointment at the hair stylist.

Tristan eyes Hannah. She shrugs her shoulders.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)  
She overreacted! It was one spin-  
the-bottle game, not a marriage  
proposal!

TRISTAN  
(gritted teeth)  
Samuel, I need all three of you.  
The segment calls for three  
children.

SAMUEL  
Fine. Hannah and I will bloody do  
it, and you can take some doughy  
fat kid off the street and have  
them read her lines, because I'm  
not working with her!

EXT. SAMUEL'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Tristan EXITS the trailer.

He runs his fingers through his hair wildly in frustration.

TRISTAN  
(to himself)  
Bugger. Bugger. Bugger!

THUNDERCLAP! It begins to rain.

Crew members scurry about packing up and putting equipment away.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
(looking at sky)  
You hate me, don't you?

THUNDERCLAP!

He EXITS.

INT. STUDIO A - LATER

The studio is empty. Quiet. And dark.

Tristan lies across the middle of the floor, his hands covering his face.

Bartley ENTERS.

TRISTAN  
Whom ever you may be, go away NOW!

Bartley approaches Tristan.

BARTLEY  
It's me.

TRISTAN  
Especially you.

BARTLEY  
Look mate, I just wanted to say I was sorry about the other night at the club. I came on a bit too strong.

TRISTAN  
You were sneaky and conniving. Not tactless.

(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Not to mention you deserted me for the last three days.

BARTLEY

Right. That's what I meant. Its your show and uh, you deserve to work on it, regardless of experience.

TRISTAN

This is the worst apology I have ever received.

BARTLEY

Well, you'll have to forgive me. I'm not used to apologizing to people! I just wanted to say I'm sorry. Especially after I heard about today.

Tristan sits up.

TRISTAN

GOD IT WAS A NIGHTMARE! It was raining and Samuel and Vivian were terrors, the crew hated me, and the location went to shit! It was awful!

He lies back down.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

I just want to lie here and pretend I'm still just an accountant. At least, until the next morning.

BARTLEY

You can't lie here all bloody night wallowing in your own piss! Let's get you a drink.

TRISTAN

(chuckles)

No, thank you, Bartley. I'd much rather wallow in my own piss.

BARTLEY

Oh, come on! I'm trying to be friendly, and you could use a drink.

TRISTAN

I'm not interested in being drunk.

BARTLEY  
Its one bloody drink! I'll pay.

Tristan sits up, thinking about it for a moment.

TRISTAN  
Where?

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - LATER

Tristan looks about the room. About two dozen men and women sit before a CHEERY WOMAN in a navy, blue blazer as she addresses them.

TRISTAN  
Bartley this doesn't look like  
Montgomery Place.

BARTLEY  
I know. I just thought this would  
be better.

TRISTAN  
Well, what is it exactly?

CHEERY WOMAN  
(addressing audience)  
--and welcome to SPEED DATING!!

CHEERS and APPLAUSE echo the room.

TRISTAN  
Speed Dating!!

BARTLEY  
Come on, now, it'll be fun.

Bartley slaps a nametag on Tristan's chest.

Bartley EXITS.

TRISTAN  
(low; angry)  
Bartley.

Tristan makes a move for him, but it interrupted by the Cheery Woman.

CHEERY WOMAN  
(animated)  
Sir, you have to take your seat for  
the dating to begin.

TRISTAN

Oh, no, I was tricked into this.  
I'm not staying.

CHEERY WOMAN

Sir, there's no need to be  
embarrassed. We all have 'dating  
droughts'. Speed Dating is here to  
add rain to your dry spells.

TRISTAN

No, believe me, I don't have dry  
spells, and if I did I'd supply my  
own rain. (off her look) That  
sounded horrid, didn't it?

CHEERY WOMAN

You may take your seat now sir.

TRISTAN

I'm terribly sorry, but I'm not--

CHEERY WOMAN

(hostile)  
I said take your seat!

Tristan takes a seat.

CHEERY WOMAN (CONT'D)

(animated)  
Alright, ladies and gentlemen,  
let's begin!

A bell DINGS.

The "woman" from the club sits across from Tristan.

His eyes widen as she smiles at him.

WOMAN

(man's voice)  
Hello.

TRISTAN

Oh, bloody hell.

MONTAGE

Bartley's first date is a stunning woman he lies to, claiming  
to be a big movie producer.

Tristan's next date is a woman with a nervous tick.

Bartley, once again, lies to his next date, claiming to be a spy working for the British government. The *real* 007.

Tristan's third date has a lazy eye and thick mustache.

Bartley is full-on making out with his next date. The bell DINGS. She EXITS. The next woman sits on Bartley's lap and picks up where the previous woman left off.

Tristan's next date is a enormously fat woman, who barely gets a word out through her whale-like breathing.

The bell DINGS and Bartley's date emerges from between his legs under the table.

Tristan's next date is a very attractive blonde. All is well, until she introduces herself, letting out the world's foulest breath.

Bartley and his next date return to their table. Its obvious they have just finished having sex. They introduce themselves.

Tristan's next date tries to sell him drugs.

The bell DINGS.

END OF MONTAGE

Tristan tops off a tumbler of whiskey.

A woman sits across from him. Its Melinda.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

(thrown)

What are you doing here?

MELINDA

Your friend told me to come. He said you'd be here and it would be a nice surprise, because you wanted to talk. About us.

TRISTAN

(glaring at Bartley)

Oh, did he?

MELINDA

Tristan I know things with us have been quite shaky, but I assure you I didn't mean to hurt you at all. You're the nicest man I've ever been with and I was astatic when you proposed to me.

TRISTAN

(low)

Then why did you cheat on me?

MELINDA

I'm sorry, what?

A beat.

TRISTAN

(standing)

THEN WHY DID YOU FUCKING CHEAT ON  
ME?!

The room goes silent.

MELINDA

(nervous)

Tristan. Please, calm down. Your  
making a spectacle.

TRISTAN

I beg to differ! I believe I'm  
within my own right to cause such a  
scene!

MELINDA

People are watching.

TRISTAN

Let them watch!! I want everyone in  
this room to know what ghastly slag  
you are!

MELINDA

I beg your pardon, Mr. Suller!

TRISTAN

(points)

THIS WOMAN CHEATED ON ME, MONTHS  
BEFORE WE WERE MARRIED! AND THE MAN  
SHE HAD SLEPT WITH REPORTED HER AS  
A BLOODY AWFUL LAY.

MELINDA

TRISTAN!

TRISTAN

A truth I have never brought to  
light.

The nightclub "woman" laughs blantly.

MELINDA  
I AM NOT TERRIBLE IN BED!

MALE DATERS  
YES, YOU ARE!

TRISTAN  
I hope you meet someone who breaks  
your heart as badly as you have  
broken mine.

Tristan EXITS.

A beat.

He RETURNS.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
(points)  
AND THAT MAN HAS A VENEREAL  
DISEASE!

Tristan EXITS.

Bartley chuckles nervously.

One-by-one each woman approaches Bartley, tossing their drink  
in his face.

EXT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tristan searches through his pockets for his keys.

He stops.

He hears LOUD SEXUAL MOANS coming from the inside.

TRISTAN  
(grumbles)  
Andrew...

He continues searching. No keys.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
Shit.  
(bangs on door)  
Andrew!

No answer. MOANS continue...

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
Andrew! ANDREW!

He BANGS on the door again. MOANS continue louder...!

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
Fuck me.

Tristan EXITS.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - TRISTAN'S DESK - CONTINUOUS

Tristan grabs his spare key from his desk.

He waits for the elevator.

Elevator DINGS.

He ENTERS.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator STOPS on the 17th floor.

Joanna gets on.

TRISTAN  
Oh, hello.

JOANNA  
Hello, Tristan.

(3 beats)

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
How did shooting go?

TRISTAN  
Oh, it was rough at first, but I-I managed, to uh... to pull the team to-together and-- it was fucking terrible! The crew thought I was a bloody joke, Samuel and Vivian were involved in some sort of ridiculous lover's spat, it rained, and the grocer yelled at people in Bengali! It was a nightmare!

JOANNA  
Sounds like it. Must have sucked.

TRISTAN

Oh, and then Bartley-- Bartley! He dragged-- no, no, tricked-- he *tricked* me into another fiendish ploy to embarrass me, and in front of my ex-fiancee no less. It did feel awful good to let her have it, but still he was slimy and arrogant!

JOANNA

Well, that's what mistakes are for, Tristan, to learn from them.

TRISTAN

Yes, but... I'm not right for this.

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

I don't think I should produce *Cooking With Kids* any longer.

JOANNA

Hmm. Well, then I guess...you're fired.

TRISTAN

But Joanna, wait--

JOANNA

I took a chance on you. Yet, you haven't met any of the qualities I expected, you'd show. Nor, by your attempt to quit as executive producer, have you made any further attempt at reconciling your faults. You would simply rather give up. And defeat is something I will not accept professionally from anyone without so much as a willingness to try.

TRISTAN

I BLOODY DID TRY!

JOANNA

No, Tristan, you showed up, saw that you couldn't handle things, and threw in the towel.

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I wanted you to run the show because I saw you as someone who could take charge without being overbearing to those you work with, but as it turns out you're just a bit too... incompetent.

TRISTAN

INCOMPETENT?! How dare you make such snap judgements of my professional capabilities! I am more than capable in being a "team leader"! I just don't find scaring people to death and threatening them with unemployment a worthy tactic in inspiring a job to perfection!

The elevator DINGS. The doors open.

Tristan gets off.

The doors attempt close, but Tristan sticks his foot in the way.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

And just for the sake of argument I am *more* than competent, professionally... *and* personally.

Tristan EXITS.

A faint smile sweeps across Joanna's face.

INT. TRAILER - DAY

Tristan burst in.

VIVIAN

I bloody thought you were fired?!

TRISTAN

Well, there's been a change in plans. I'm here now and you're doing the bloody segment. I'm not your mum, so don't expect me to coddle you. Get dressed and come out to rehearse your lines. NOW!

VIVIAN

I will *not* work with Samuel!

They eye each other intensely.

Tristan opens the door.

A young, red-haired girl ENTERS.

TRISTAN

This is Mary. She'll be your replacement.

MARY

(shy)

Hi.

Vivian's mouth drops.

EXT. SAMUEL'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Samuel is playing cards with a couple of CREW MEMBERS.

Tristan approaches. He yanks Samuel up, pulling him off to the side.

SAMUEL

Tristan, what gives, eh?

TRISTAN

How many times have I helped you out? I thought we were friends.

SAMUEL

We are friends.

TRISTAN

Then why won't you help me?! I'm trying to do some good here. You didn't want to be on *Mrs. Hornsby's House*, so I put you here, and now you won't even cooperate with me. This isn't what friends do Samuel.

Tristan walks away.

SAMUEL

Tristan, I'm sorry.

Tristan stops.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I am. Really. Its just...you put a lot of effort into this show, and I don't want to ruin it.

TRISTAN

Why would you ruin it?

A beat.

SAMUEL

Because I have a big, bloody crush on Hannah, alright!

TRISTAN

Hannah?!

SAMUEL

That's why I didn't want to do *Mrs. Hornsby's House* any longer. She's just really smart, and when I'm near her I feel stupid.

TRISTAN

Why didn't you tell me?!

SAMUEL

Because its fucking stupid?! I didn't want to do a bloody kid's show, why? Because I'm in love?

TRISTAN

(impressed)  
*In love?*

SAMUEL

Come on, Tristan, stop it.

TRISTAN

I apologize. I had no idea you were...*in love*.

SAMUEL

(with a smile)  
Bloody knock it off!

Tristan pulls Samuel toward him. He wraps his arm around him.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I am awfully sorry.

TRISTAN

I forgive you. After all you are a man in love.

SAMUEL

Bugger off.

Tristan catches a few CREW MEMBERS mocking he and Samuel.

TRISTAN

(loudly)

You know Samuel, I'm in an odd sort  
of mood today. A *firing* mood!

They scatter about moving on toward their duties.

INT. GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Tristan, Samuel, Hannah, and Vivian stand before the store's  
owner. A middle-aged, Bangladeshi man named MR. MOHAMMED.

TRISTAN

Mr. Mohammed I sincerely apologize  
for the disrespect that was brought  
to you, your store, and your  
family. And we would very much like  
it if we could use your store as  
our location.

MR. MOHAMMED

(heavy Bangladeshi accent)

NO! That foul-mouthed little boy  
said horrible things to my Khaleda.

TRISTAN

Your what?

MR. MOHAMMED

(pointing)

HER!

Mr. Mohammed points to an older, heavy-set girl, with thick  
cat-eye glasses, and a long, jeweled nose ring that connects  
to her ear. This is KHALEDA, 20.

She smiles a rotten-tooth smile.

TRISTAN

(whispers to Samuel)

You flirted with her!

SAMUEL

(whispers back)

I was trying to make Hannah  
jealous.

TRISTAN

Egh! Good luck.

MR. MOHAMMED

What is with this whispering?!

TRISTAN  
I apologize. That was rude.

MR. MOHAMMED  
(to Tristan)  
Do you see? Do you see how beautiful and fragile she is? This little boy could have ruined her innocence.

TRISTAN  
And Samuel is very sorry indeed.

SAMUEL  
I am terribly, terribly sorry for my conduct, Mr. Mohammed.

MR. MOHAMMED  
You should be. NOW GET OUT OF MY STORE! ALL OF YOU!

Feeling defeated, they each make their way toward the EXIT.

Hannah STOPS.

HANNAH  
Wait! I have a solution.

INT. GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Hannah is behind the cash register wearing a blue smock.

Samuel and Vivian are on the other side holding groceries.

HANNAH  
(overexcited; handing Samuel money)  
Here you are sir. Five pounds.

SAMUEL  
Thank you, Miss.

They each turn to the CAMERA CREW before them.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)  
Did you see how easy that was.

VIVIAN  
Purchasing groceries is as simple as 1,2,3. First, decide what ingredients you need and how much money you have to spend.

SAMUEL

Second, carry a calculator, or pencil and paper to determine how much your groceries will cost you.

HANNAH

And lastly, once you have everything you need, come to the register when you're ready to purchase the items you bought. Here, at Mr. Mohammed's Garden Fresh Market on Berwick Street.

SAMUEL

Isn't that right, Mr. Mohammed?

The crew focuses on Mr. Mohammed and Khaleda.

MR. MOHAMMED

(stoic; awkward)

That is right, Samuel. Come to my market for the freshest produce in the city.

Khaleda smiles bashfully.

SAMUEL

And when we return we'll show you how to make spaghetti.

A beat.

TRISTAN

(whispers)

Fredrick.

Tristan notices the entire crew, along with Samuel, Hannah, Vivian, Mr. Mohammed, and Khaleda staring at him with wide smiles.

He realizes what they're all so eager for. He smiles to himself.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

CUT!

They all CHEER.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - DAY

Tristan storms in.

He tosses a videocassette to Joanna.

She catches it.

He EXITS.

She looks at the tape. The label reads: *Cooking With Kids* Pilot.

MONTAGE

Tristan surrounded by books about television, kid's programming, and media as he reads a book about TV producing

Tristan working along side the show's editor

Tristan talking to director on how the show should be shot

Joanna and Tristan are being interviewed. A question is asked. Joanna directs the answer to Tristan, who appears less like a deer in headlights

Walking and talking with P.A.

Tristan and Joanna sit beside each other looking at Tristan's script. She moves closer. Tristan appears a bit uneasy.

Bartley is presenting a new idea to an uninterested Joanna. Tristan ENTERS grabbing her attention. They EXIT leaving an angry Bartley in her office

On set, Tristan talks with his actors

A number of people approach Tristan with questions. He answers one-by-one

Tristan is on a television interview by himself. He looks comfortable and focused

Tristan conducts a meeting with his crew and actors

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Tristan and Andrew walk down the street.

TRISTAN

I was thinking of a season-themed show. You know, for summer holiday. What do you think Andrew?

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Andrew? And--

Tristan stops. He notices Andrew is no longer beside him.

He turns around.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Andrew.

Andrew is at a newsstand. Tristan approaches him.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

What are you staring at?

ANDREW

You.

TRISTAN

What?

Andrew hands his brother a magazine with his face on the cover. *BRITAIN'S SEXIEST NEW BACHELOR* reads the title.

ANDREW

*Hello! Magazine?*

TRISTAN

Stop it. It was just a bloody interview. It doesn't matter, no one will ever read it.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Excuse me.

They turn. A pretty WOMAN holding a small child smiles at Tristan.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but are you Tristan Suller?

ANDREW

Yes, he is.

WOMAN

(excited)

I saw you on the morning news program yesterday! You created that show, oh, um...*Cooking With Kids!*

TRISTAN

Oh, I-I--

ANDREW

Created it from his own brain. He's a smart one, my brother here.

WOMAN

Its such a fantastic idea! I heard you tell that man why you created that show and I just completely wept.

TRISTAN

Oh, its not--

WOMAN

It was so incredibly sweet of you to do that for your mum.

TRISTAN

I don't think its really a big--

WOMAN

Can I have your signature? Please?

TRISTAN

Um, alright.

The woman searches frantically through her purse and diaper bag for something to write on.

She hands him a case of baby wipes.

WOMAN

Oh, here. Use this.

Tristan signs her wipes.

Another WOMAN walks by, pushing a stroller, while holding her older son's hand.

She spots Tristan. She turns, dragging her children along.

WOMAN #2

You're that fellow! The one who created that cooking show for children.

TRISTAN

Oh, uh, yes. Yes, I am.

ANDREW

I'm his brother.

WOMAN #2

I saw you on that morning program,  
and you looked so handsome.

TRISTAN

(bashful)

Oh, well, thank you.

WOMAN #2

It is so kind of you to have shared  
that story about wanting to help  
your mum.

TRISTAN

Its nothing really. Just wanted--

WOMAN #2

Can I have your signature?

TRISTAN

Sure. Absolutely.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

At least a dozen women with their children clamor about,  
begging for Tristan's autograph.

An attractive woman pushes her way through the crowd.

WOMAN

Can I have your autograph?

TRISTAN

Alright. Sure. Do you have  
something--

She pulls down her blouse, exposing the top of her breast.

WOMAN

Sign here.

TRISTAN

Um...

She moves closer.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Alright.

He signs her breast.

ANDREW

I'm Andrew. His brother.

The woman rolls her eyes.

WOMAN  
(to Tristan; sultry)  
Thank you.

She kisses his cheek leaving a huge, red lip print across his face.

She winks at him. The woman EXITS.

Andrew follows her.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCTION FLOOR - MOMENTS  
LATER

Tristan ENTERS. He notices at least half a dozen large, life-size banners of him on the cover of *Hello! Magazine* posted around the office.

Yet, everyone goes about their business as usual.

TRISTAN  
(to entire staff)  
Alright, I get it! Very funny!

The entire staff laughs.

PRODUCER #1  
So, how does it feel to be the sexiest man in Britain?

TRISTAN  
Come on now...

PRODUCER #2  
Aww... Look at him pout. Isn't he adorable.

TRISTAN  
You all have had your fun--

PRODUCER #1  
That's it! Show us that angry, bad boy scowl.

TRISTAN  
Enough, you maggots.

The crowd mockingly pouts at Tristan's disapproval.

PRODUCER #2  
We're just foolin' you, Tristan.  
Congratulations sexy!

Staff CHEERS and pats a bashful Tristan on the back.

Bartley watches in envy. He EXITS, pissed.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Tristan ENTERS.

Joanna tosses the *Hello! Magazine* in the trashcan.

He smiles at her attempt to hide her embarrassment.

JOANNA  
(trying to be coy)  
Yes. Wh-wh-what is it that you  
needed-need?

TRISTAN  
I just wanted to know if you were  
available later this week. I would  
like to talk with you about  
something.

JOANNA  
What is it exactly?

TRISTAN  
I have a new show idea.

JOANNA  
Oh, well, that's great. I'd love to  
hear it.

TRISTAN  
Good.

(3 beats)

JOANNA  
(stern)  
Anything else?

TRISTAN  
No.

Tristan EXITS.

A beat.

He RETURNS.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
You look quite pretty with your  
hair down.

JOANNA  
(taken aback)  
Thank you.

Tristan EXITS.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - COPY ROOM - DAY

Tristan is at one of the copy machines.

Bartley ENTERS.

BARTLEY  
(friendly)  
Hello.

Tristan doesn't answer.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)  
Oh, come on. You aren't still sore  
at me for the whole Speed Dating  
thing, are you?

TRISTAN  
No, Bartley. I'm not.

He turns to him.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
I'm sore because you're a lousy  
person.

BARTLEY  
I just wanted to know what you been  
up to. You avoid me like the  
plague.

TRISTAN  
(scoffs)  
I avoid you?!

BARTLEY  
Yes!

A beat.

TRISTAN

Well, you know, then I believe it to be a better choice for me.

BARTLEY

I was only trying to get you and Melinda back together.

TRISTAN

You must think I'm a real git! As though I would actually believe such a fable.

BARTLEY

Its not a fable! Its the bloody truth!

TRISTAN

You know what Bartley--

He takes a breath.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to leave before I lose my temper and my job.

Tristan grabs his copies angrily, spilling them onto the floor.

BARTLEY

Here, let me help.

TRISTAN

I got it!

Bartley bends to help anyway.

BARTLEY

(picking up paper)  
What's this? A proposal?

Tristan snatches the paper from his hand.

TRISTAN

Yes. Sod off.

Tristan EXITS.

A fiend-ish smile creeps across Bartley's face.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tristan and Joanna sit at her desk.

JOANNA

Its not that I don't think a nutritionist isn't a good idea, I just don't want kids falling into comas, because a man in a white lab coat bored them to near death with a slideshow projector about the four basic food groups.

TRISTAN

(disappointed)  
Right.

JOANNA

I do like the idea of teaching kids how to make various kinds of food from all over the world.

TRISTAN

What do American kids eat?

JOANNA

McDonalds.

Tristan laughs. Joanna smirks.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I think we can wrap up.

TRISTAN

Alright.

Tristan gathers his notes.

Suddenly, Joanna's stereo turns on loudly.

JOANNA

Shit! I'm sorry its on a timer.

Joanna fumbles to find the off switch.

TRISTAN

No! Leave it on!

JOANNA

What?

TRISTAN

Just turn it down a little. Please.

A beat.

She adjusts the volume. Lena Horne's "*Stormy Weather*" swells throughout her office.

Tristan listens fondly.

He sits.

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

I love this song. Its one of my favorites. And the better version. The one from the 60s she recorded sounds like music that should be played in a lift.

JOANNA

I agree.

TRISTAN

Its got that great scratch-y, vinyl sound. Old and authentic.

He listens.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Its so beautiful.

Joanna smiles at his affection for her music.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Did you know that Ethel Waters first sang this song in 1933?

Joanna shakes her head.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

At the, uh... Cotton Club, in Harlem, New York, I believe it to be. You know of it?

JOANNA

Not personally, but yes.

TRISTAN

And then of course it was turned into the beautiful song before us now, by the ever so amazing Lena Horne.

JOANNA  
 You got a soft-spot for American  
 blues and jazz?

TRISTAN  
 And American soul music.

JOANNA  
 (with a smile)  
 American soul music?

TRISTAN  
 You know: Aretha Franklin, Marvin  
 Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Al Green--

JOANNA  
 You like Al Green?

TRISTAN  
 Yes. Along with: James Brown, Ray  
 Charles, Billy Paul, Teddy  
 Pendegrass, Sam Cooke, Gladys  
 Knight, Jackie Wilson--

JOANNA  
 Otis Redding?

Tristan stares at her stone-faced for a moment.

TRISTAN  
 (serious)  
 Otis Ray Redding, Jr. is God.

JOANNA  
 Well, I don't about all that...

TRISTAN  
 Are you kidding?! Have you heard,  
 "Coffee And Cigarettes"?

JOANNA  
 No.

TRISTAN  
 (hysterical)  
 Well...

JOANNA  
 Not that big on Redding.

TRISTAN  
 You're doing this on purpose,  
 because there is no possible  
 explanation for you fiend denial.

JOANNA  
I like Otis Redding. He's just no  
Wilson Pickett.

TRISTAN  
WILSON PICKETT?!

Joanna laughs.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCER'S FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Bartley ENTERS the office. He grabs his keys off his desk.

He sees Tristan in Joanna's office.

They appear to be talking rather intimately as romantic music swells throughout her office.

Hmmm..

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

TRISTAN  
The man was not a true artist and  
wrote not a note of any of his  
songs. Which by the way belonged to  
other people.

JOANNA  
Like?

TRISTAN  
The Archies, the Beatles, Jimi  
Hendrix and the Experience,  
Stephenwolf, shall I continue?

JOANNA  
I am merely remarking that Mr.  
Wilson Pickett is a fine, and  
talented singer as is proven by his  
induction in the Rock&Roll Hall of  
Fame.

TRISTAN  
That's not really a great honor.  
Its similar to shagging the  
sluttiest girl in school; if you  
wait patiently your turn will come.

Joanna laughs heartily.

The song ends.

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
I love that song.

JOANNA  
I think you said that.

TRISTAN  
Yeah. Its just...its just very  
factual right now. You understand?

Joanna avoids the question.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to invade  
your privacy.

A beat.

JOANNA  
Its late.

TRISTAN  
I believe it is.

JOANNA  
Well, enjoy yourself.

TRISTAN  
I'm sorry?

JOANNA  
I thought you mentioned something  
about a birthday.

TRISTAN  
OH, FUCK! SPENCER!

Tristan gathers his things.

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
Joanna...thank you.

JOANNA  
For?

TRISTAN  
I realize that our conversation in  
the lift the other night was the  
billow of attitude I needed to  
point me in the right direction.

(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
And I just wanted to say 'thank  
you' for that.

She nods considerably.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
Anyway, I'm off.

Tristan EXITS.

EXT. SPENCER'S HOUSE - VERANDA - NIGHT

Spencer sits before his birthday cake, picking at it with a  
fork.

Tristan ENTERS onto the veranda.

He stops with the cake.

TRISTAN  
I'm sorry. I was in a conference  
with Joanna--

Spencer waves for him to stop.

SPENCER  
I'm too drunk to care. Just bored  
out of my skull. Want some cake?

TRISTAN  
Spencer, I'm terribly sorry.

Spencer hands him a slice of cake.

Tristan takes the plate. He sits beside his friend.

SPENCER  
I guess the exciting world of  
television can't compare with your  
friends 36th birthday dinner. Or  
his squawking kids.

TRISTAN  
Oh, come now, Spencer...

SPENCER  
I know. I know. Its just the  
drunken bully in me.

He smacks the table and sits up straight.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Alright. Tell me about the exciting world of children's programming!

TRISTAN

Well... Bartley was snooping around the Copy Room while I was in there.

SPENCER

Oh, interoffice politics, how do I loathe thee.

They chuckle.

TRISTAN

Uh, Samuel- the boy I told you about- he has a very flattering crush on Hannah. Very smart girl. Help me out of a jam.

SPENCER

Oh, to be Peter Pan again. Do you remember that girl you liked in grades--

TRISTAN

Let us not bring up every terrible love I ever had.

SPENCER

I wasn't. I was bringing up one.

TRISTAN

Sod off.

SPENCER

What else? How was the meeting with the Venom-Lady?

TRISTAN

It was...pleasant.

Spencer recognizes the look on Tristan's face.

SPENCER

Go on...

TRISTAN

She rejected my idea about a nutritionist appearing on the show. Said it would put kids in a coma. But she liked my idea about food from around the world.

SPENCER

And what else...?

TRISTAN

What else? There wasn't much--(off his look) oh, no, no, no. It was a very proper meeting between two staff members. It was completely professional.

SPENCER

Until...

A beat.

TRISTAN

Until we talked about music. Which became a bit flirty.

SPENCER

Oh, dear friend...

TRISTAN

But that doesn't have to mean anything!

SPENCER

Dear Mr. Suller, I have known you come past these 25 years. And if I don't know this, then I don't know anything: you can not simply know a woman. You have to fall in love with her. And as always you will fall in love with this one, too. So, let me now congratulate you on finding love once more. A feat I always believe you would accomplish.

TRISTAN

Spencer I am not in love with Joanna. And I will ultimately prove you and your "wise" predictions wrong.

SPENCER

How so?

TRISTAN

As alluring and attractive as she may be, or become to me in the future, I, Tristan Suller make the solum promise to hold my emotions long enough to think the situation through, thoroughly.

SPENCER

Why would you do that? You like her.

TRISTAN

Exactly.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCTION FLOOR - MORNING

Tristan ENTERS on the floor.

To his surprise the entire staff of producers glare at him harshly.

TRISTAN

What's wrong?

PRODUCER #1

What's wrong is you shagging the boss for a little attention.

TRISTAN

Bloody what?!

PRODUCER #1

You heard me! Bartley saw you two last night.

TRISTAN

Bartley! Of course!

BARTLEY

Don't lie Tristan, I saw you and Joanna listening to romantic music and whispering to one another last night. Is that not true?

TRISTAN

No, it isn't, you prat!

PRODUCER #2

You stole our jobs Tristan!

TRISTAN

No. I didn't! I only gave her the idea to save Mrs. Thompson's job. She was firing everyone! I didn't want anyone to go!

PRODUCER #1

You are the bloody last person I expected to betray us! Any of us!

TRISTAN

I didn't betray anyone! This is what I want to do now. Why can't you all be supportive instead of listening to a pack of lies spouted out of Bartley?!

PRODUCER #1

Bartley may be a sack of cow dung, but he's in the same boat as the rest of us, and he's the best producer we have right now.

Tristan takes a frustrated breath.

TRISTAN

You're jealous. All of you!

PRODUCER #2

How can we be jealous if you having slept with the boss doesn't even allow us the chance to compete?

TRISTAN

I don't know. Maybe you should have better ideas.

PRODUCER #2

You were merely the Marketing Accountant, and now all of a sudden the bloody Messiah of GNK. Explain that!

TRISTAN

I AM NOT SHAGGING JOANNA!

BARTLEY

Can you prove it?

A beat.

Tristan approaches Bartley.

TRISTAN

(growls; to Bartley)  
 You are a vile and disgusting  
 excuse for a person. (to staff) And  
 if anyone hear chooses to listen to  
 a single word that spews from  
 Bartley's mouth is just as  
 loathesome as he is!

Tristan storms out.

Bartley smirks to himself.

INT. STUDIO - DAY - LATER

BLEACHERS

Samuel is looking over his lines.

Two PRODUCERS walk in.

They toss film equipment onto a rolling cart.

PRODUCER #1

Can you believe Tristan?! Had the  
 gull to say we were jealous!

PRODUCER #2

Well, we all gave it to him bloody  
 good this morning. Serves him right  
 to be angry. I'm bloody angry, too!

PRODUCER #1

Here. Here.

PRODUCER #2

I just hope he learns he can't just  
 simply take over! And in such a  
 gross manner: sleeping with Joanna.  
 The thought of it!

PRODUCER #1

I don't know. She's got nice gams.

Producer #2 scoffs.

PRODUCER #1 (CONT'D)

What? She does.

PRODUCER #2

Is this it?

PRODUCER #1

Yeah. Let's get out of here. Studio creeps me out when no one's in here.

Producer #2 makes scary noises.

Producer #1 hits Producer #2.

PRODUCER #2

Ow.

They EXIT.

Samuel takes out his mobile. He dials.

INT. GYM LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tristan is dressed in a plain white tee, and blue shorts; simple compared to all the other male gym members in their tracksuits, or matching tennis outfits.

Tristan puts on his headphones.

He hangs his jacket in his locker. His phone is vibrating:  
SAMUEL.

Tristan closes his locker.

He EXITS.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

SAMUEL

Damn it!

Hannah ENTERS. She approaches Samuel.

HANNAH

Where is everyone?

SAMUEL

I don't know, but something happened with Tristan.

HANNAH

(worried)

What? What happened? Is he alright?

SAMUEL

I don't know exactly.

HANNAH  
Well, let's find out.

Hannah grabs his hand. Samuel smiles to himself.

They EXIT.

EXT. GYM - CONTINUOUS

Tristan walks toward the tennis courts.

A man and his wife in matching tennis outfits approach him. This is CHARLES, 38, and MIMI VICKERS, 29, a snobbish, rich couple.

CHARLES  
Tristan!

TRISTAN  
(under his breath)  
Oh, God. (fake excitement) Charles!  
Mimi! How are we?

They shake hands.

CHARLES  
Good, old chap. How's that left swing?

TRISTAN  
Getting ready to test it out.

MAN  
On the courts?

TRISTAN  
Yes.

MIMI  
Us too, Tristan.

CHARLES  
What do you say to a good ol' game of singles?

Mimi smiles at Tristan smugly.

TRISTAN  
Oh, no. I just wanted to--

CHARLES

Oh, I get it, Mimi, he's terrified.  
Gave you too much of a thrashing  
last go we had, old boy?

MIMI

Is that right, Tristan? Afraid of a  
little competition? Afraid to be  
beaten once again?

JOANNA (O.S.)

No. He isn't.

Joanna appears in a low-cut, white tee and shorts.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

In fact, I just had the most  
amazing idea. What do you say to a  
game of doubles?

MIMI

(smug)  
Smashing.

CHARLES

I agree.

Charles and Mimi EXIT.

TRISTAN

Do you play tennis?

JOANNA

(flirty smile)  
Maybe.

They EXIT.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - CONTINUOUS

Joanna serves. She hits the net.

JOANNA

Sorry. A little rusty.

Charles and Mimi smile at each other slyly.

MIMI

Alright, love. Try once more.

JOANNA

Okay.

Joanna serves again. She wales it across the court, knocking Charles on his knees at his failed attempt to recover the ball.

Tristan chuckles. Joanna winks at him.

MONTAGE

They play.

Immediately, Joanna turns into an animal on the tennis court.

Tristan is surprised and turned on by her competitiveness and aggression.

Spectators appear around the court to watch.

Tristan and Joanna have good communication and sportsmanship between them both. Charles and Mimi on the other hand, begin yelling and screaming at each other, once they realize their losing the game.

Joanna gives Tristan a friendly pat on the bum. Tristan is surprised, but curious about her gesture.

Tristan tries to give Joanna the same friendly pat, but gets carried away.

Tristan and Joanna win.

END OF MONTAGE

The spectators CHEER.

TRISTAN  
(cheers; laughs)  
Yeah, baby! We won!

JOANNA  
(cheers)  
We won! What now losers?

TRISTAN  
You going to cry Charles? Aw...  
Afraid of a little competition  
Mimi?

JOANNA  
(laughs)  
We kicked your asses!!

Tristan and Joanna hug.

They lock eyes for a moment.

They pull apart slowly.

A beat.

They continue to mock Charles and Mimi.

CHARLES  
(angry)  
Next time, Tristan.

TRISTAN  
Next time what? You lose?

Joanna laughs.

Charles throws his racquet at Tristan. He misses hitting the net.

Tristan and Joanna continue laughing.

Charles and Mimi EXIT.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCTION FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is working.

Samuel and Hannah ENTER.

SAMUEL  
Can I have everyone's attention?!

The entire staff continue about their work.

Hannah grabs Samuel's hand. She drags him to the second level.

They stand on the platform before Joanna's office, above everyone.

Hannah pulls a whistle out her pocket. She blows on it.

Everyone shrieks at its shrill noise.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)  
Where did you get that?

HANNAH  
Rape whistle. My mum gave it to me.

SAMUEL

(to staff)

Now that we have your attention, we want to bring about some concerns we have.

BARTLEY

Alright, Samuel. You can have cookies at the crafts table.

A few staff members laugh.

SAMUEL

This isn't a joke, tosser!

Everyone laughs.

HANNAH

All of you are guilty of abusing the only person in this place worth a damn! Tristan is a good man. There needs to be more of him, but there isn't. There's just him, and does the work of a thousand Tristans. And no one ever says 'thank you' to him, but he still keeps being kind and patient with everyone here.

BARTLEY

I'm not going to sit here and listen to a couple of moppets squawk about that traitor.

HANNAH

You are such a wanker, Bartley. I know you started this.

He smirks at her.

SAMUEL

The point is, Tristan is our friend. A fucking good friend. What about him would ever possess any of you to believe he would do something so corrupt, so knavish, so snide, so...Bartley, to get ahead as to sleep with Joanna. And does she really appear to be the type of woman who would do such a thing...and with Tristan, which is an odd sort of rumor.

HANNAH

Anyway...

SAMUEL

Anyway, your own insecurities and jealousies about your own longevity here is what has blinded you all to the good Tristan has brought to the network. He only pitched Joanna the idea for *Cooking With Kids* to save Mrs. Thompson's job--

MRS. THOMPSON (O.S.)

That's right!

Mrs. Thompson stands at the door.

MRS. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

In affect, saving most of you here from being sacked! (shaking her finger) You all should be ashamed!

The entire staff bows their collective heads in shame.

EXT. GYM - PARKING LOT - LATER

Tristan walks Joanna to her car.

JOANNA

Did you see his face?

TRISTAN

I really thought he was going to cry.

They laugh.

A beat.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Well, back to the office we go.

JOANNA

Yeah.

Joanna extends her hand. They shake hands.

Joann opens her car door.

TRISTAN

Joanna?

JOANNA

Yes?

The words won't come out.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Are you alright Tristan?

He nods.

TRISTAN

I just wanted to say...good playing today. Thanks. Those two are terrors.

JOANNA

You're welcome.

She gets in the car. She closes the door.

Tristan knocks on the window. She rolls down the window.

TRISTAN

Would you like to go out...at some point and time in the near future.

She smiles, flattered.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You make me nervous a bit.

JOANNA

I'm sorry for that. And... I'm also sorry, but I make it a rule to not date anyone that I work with. I'm sorry.

TRISTAN

Oh, um... I understand. I do. That's a very noble ideology.

JOANNA

I don't know about noble...

TRISTAN

It is. Its also a very strong one.

JOANNA

I'm sorry, Tristan.

TRISTAN

Its completely fine.

Tristan is obviously disappointed.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
I'll see you at the office.

JOANNA  
Yeah.

Joanna turns the engine over.

She drives off.

TRISTAN  
Bollocks.

Tristan EXITS.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCER'S FLOOR - NEXT  
MORNING

Tristan ENTERS onto the floor hesitantly.

Immediately, Joanna GRABS him and brings him to the center of  
the floor.

JOANNA  
Can I have everyone's attention,  
please?

The staff gathers before she and Tristan.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
I would like to proudly announce  
that *Cooking With Kids* is the  
number one children's program in  
England.

TRISTAN  
It is?!

APPLAUSE.

JOANNA  
Also, Mr. Suller here, has been  
formally invited, by the Chairman  
of the BBC, to his annual summer  
garden party.

TRISTAN  
Oh, my God! I was?!

SAMUEL  
Bugger, Tristan, what do you know?

TRISTAN  
That... I have THE NUMBER ONE  
SHOW!!

APPLAUSE and CHEERS.

One-by-one his fellow producers congratulate and apologize to him.

PRODUCER #1  
I'm really sorry, Tristan. It  
wasn't right.

PRODUCER #2  
You're a good man. With some real  
good friends.

He motions toward Samuel and Hannah.

TRISTAN  
(touched)  
Don't I know it.

Tristan is delighted by the news and his coworkers sincere apologies.

Bartley snarls off in a corner.

BARTLEY  
(under his breath)  
Tosser.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joanna ENTERS her office amid Tristan being praised by the staff.

Joanna discovers a gigantic, beautiful bouquet of flowers in her office.

She picks up the card: THANK YOU.

She turns to Tristan standing in her doorway.

TRISTAN  
Congratulations are in order for  
you, too. I know I'm beginning to  
sound like a broken record, but  
thank you. You do more than you  
realize. Or take credit for.

JOANNA  
(flattered)  
You're welcome.

Tristan EXITS.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tristan ENTERS Joanna's office.

She's behind her desk working.

TRISTAN  
(slurring his words)  
Before you ask, no. It is still not  
a habit. But I do have the number  
one kid's show on BBC.

JOANNA  
Oh, you're good and drunk, aren't  
you?

TRISTAN  
Which you should be! Come  
downstairs and have some liquor.  
And cake.

JOANNA  
I don't like cake.

TRISTAN  
Neither do I. Come on. Its my  
"congratulations/apology party" and  
you're missing it.

JOANNA  
No. I can't--

TRISTAN  
Oh, right. You don't fraternize  
with staffers.

JOANNA  
There's that. And the mounds of  
work on my desk. Along with the  
fact that I believe no one down  
there would care for my company.

TRISTAN  
Nonsense! Its *my* party, and you are  
invited.

JOANNA  
No, Tristan. Its not a good idea.

A beat.

Tristan sits his drink down.

He walks over to her.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Tristan what--

He picks her up, cradling her in his arms. They lock eyes for a moment.

TRISTAN  
(softly; a tad focused)  
You're going to party, and you're going to like it.

They EXIT.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCER'S FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Bartley watches miserably as the other staffers dance, drink, and have a good ol' time.

The room is crowded.

He takes a seat on a desk.

He notices who's desk he's sitting on - Tristan's.

Tristan's satchel rest beside him on the desk. He stares at the bag for a moment.

He cautiously slides his hand inside the open flap.

He pulls out the proposal with Tristan's name on the front cover.

He looks around nervously, before stuffing the proposal under his shirt.

He EXITS.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCER'S FLOOR - LATER

Tristan and Joanna drunkenly attempt to clean the mess left behind by the party.

Everyone has gone and the janitorial staff are far too drunk/passed out to help.

TRISTAN

Joanna?

JOANNA

Yes?

TRISTAN

Why did you come to London?

A beat.

JOANNA

Well, the sob story is: I was in a relationship with my old boss in Los Angeles. He hurt me. I haven't been in a relationship since, and not really before him. And as it turned out, him dumping me was actually quite damaging to my oh, so bright future in Hollywood. So, I decided I needed a new job and a change of scenery. (off his look) What?

TRISTAN

Its just that I always thought you had the right idea. Of just burying yourself in your work and distracting yourself from people, to focus on something in life you're good at, rather than another aspect of life you're not, like a relationship.

JOANNA

Sorry to disappoint. But I'm just another hurt person too scared to put faith into love again. Hence, the burial of work, and snappy attitude. God, no wonder everyone hates me. The bitterness just oozes out of me.

A beat.

TRISTAN

Mr. Twitty was more than my boss. He was a friend. He was kind. Friendly. A pleasure to be around.

JOANNA

This going somewhere hurtful?

TRISTAN

But he was the ultimate reason as to the channel's failing. But you resurrected it into something... watchable, entertaining. I think that makes you a far better boss than Henry. And I believe he would agree.

JOANNA

(bashful)

Thank you.

TRISTAN

You're welcome.

They continue cleaning.

EXT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT - LATER

Tristan walks Joanna home.

They reach her door.

A beat.

JOANNA

Come inside. I want to show you something.

She opens the door.

They ENTER.

INT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A JUKEBOX. But not just any jukebox, a jukebox containing nothing but Otis Redding songs.

Tristan is speechless.

JOANNA

I listened to that song you suggested and got kind of carried away. I have to admit you were right. He's a genius.

TRISTAN

God. He's God.

JOANNA  
You want to play something?

Tristan's eyes widen.

INT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Tristan and Joanna sit on the couch talking, as they play records from the jukebox.

JOANNA  
No. My mother died when I was in middle school. She and my father.

TRISTAN  
I'm sorry.

JOANNA  
Its okay. I had a really good childhood. Me and my sister were raised by our aunt.

TRISTAN  
You have a sister?

JOANNA  
Saffron.

TRISTAN  
Saffie. First kiss, was a girl named Saffie. She kissed me, then threw a rock at me.

Joanna chuckles.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
Little Saffie. Little Joanna and Saffie.

The music stops.

Joanna gets up.

She plays *"I've Been Loving You Too Long"*.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
This is my favorite song.

JOANNA  
Is it?

TRISTAN  
Yeah... Want to dance?

JOANNA  
(smiles)  
Sure.

They dance.

The song ends. They lock eyes again.

Tristan goes for it. They kiss.

INT. TRISTAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The phone RINGS.

After a moment, Tristan picks it up.

TRISTAN  
(sleepily)  
Hello?

CALLER  
Mr. Suller? I'm a member of the  
British Academy of Film and  
Television. I wanted to announce,  
and congratulate, you being  
nominated for a BAFTA award for  
Most Outstanding Children's  
Programming for *Cooking With Kids*.

Tristan drops the receiver in shock.

EXT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Tristan SCREAMS at the top of his lungs.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE BUILDING - PRODUCER'S FLOOR - LATER

Tristan ENTERS the floor clearly on cloud nine.

He's congratulated by all on his nomination as he makes his  
way eagerly to Joanna's office.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tristan ENTERS.

He makes a move to kiss Joanna, but she backs away.

TRISTAN  
What's the matter?

JOANNA

I just think here, at work, we should try and remain as professional as we can.

TRISTAN

Oh, right. I agree. Completely.

INT. STORAGE CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Tristan and Joanna make out in a storage closet.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Tristan ENTERS the studio.

He approaches a busy Joanna.

TRISTAN

(overjoyed)

The luncheon with the Chairman of BBC was fantastic. He has more money than God, which I take issue with, but you have to see his house. Its absolutely ridiculous.

JOANNA

Tristan I'm sorry, but I can't talk with you right now. I'm dealing with a billion things at one time for Bartley's new show.

TRISTAN

Bartley had an original idea? Petrifying.

PRODUCER #1

Its actually quit exciting Tristan.

TRISTAN

Really what is it?

Producer #1 opens his mouth to speak, but is carted away by a P.A.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Joanna what's the show about?

JOANNA

Um--

A P.A. approaches.

P.A.  
 (to Joanna)  
 Some problem with Vivie in make-up.

JOANNA  
 Oh, God. Where's Bartley?

P.A.  
 He's leaving the press junket now.

Hannah approaches.

HANNAH  
 I'm not say poof on television.  
 We're a children's show for fuck's  
 sake!

JOANNA  
 What?! Let me see that?!

Joanna takes a look at the script.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
 Hannah that's merely a typo.

HANNAH  
 Thank God.

TRISTAN  
 Hey, Hannah. What's Bartley's show  
 about?

Bartley ENTERS.

BARTLEY  
 (smug smile)  
 Sorry. The junket ran longer than  
 expected. So many questions.

TRISTAN  
 Hannah.

HANNAH  
 Oh, right. A mock news show for  
 kids.

TRISTAN  
 (taken back)  
 What?

HANNAH

Yeah. Some type of mock news show for kids with real bits of news thrown in to keep kids well-informed, or something like that.

Hannah EXITS.

Tristan's blood begins to boil.

He eyes Bartley as he speaks with Joanna.

TRISTAN

YOU FUCKING TWIT! YOU FUCKING WANKER! YOU STOLE MY SHOW!!

Tristan approaches him.

Two cameramen hold Tristan back.

BARTLEY

I didn't steal anything of yours!

TRISTAN

You're a bloody liar and a coward!

BARTLEY

(to Joanna)

I don't know what he's talking about!

JOANNA

Alright! What's going on?!

TRISTAN

The idea for my next show. This was it, and he stole it!

Joanna turns to Bartley.

BARTLEY

I didn't! Joanna I swear!

Joanna approaches Tristan.

JOANNA

(gently)

Tristan do have any proof that Bartley stole you're show?

Tristan shakes loose.

TRISTAN

Yes! My proposal.

He searches through his satchel.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)  
Its here. I know it is. I put here.

JOANNA  
What about a disk? Did you save anything to a disk?

A beat.

TRISTAN  
(embarrassed)  
No.

JOANNA  
Did you tell anyone about your show idea?

TRISTAN  
No. Because I didn't want anyone to steal it from me!!

(3 beats)

JOANNA  
Tristan. I have no other choice. I have to continue with the show, giving Bartley the credit.

Bartley, without Joanna looking, blows Tristan a kiss with his middle finger.

TRISTAN  
What?

JOANNA  
Tristan, I'm sorry--

TRISTAN  
FINE!

Tristan EXITS. Samuel ENTERS.

SAMUEL  
What's going on? Where did Tristan go?

A beat.

JOANNA  
Let's get back to work.

Slowly, but surely, the cast and crew carry on.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

MONTAGE

Tristan sits angrily, but helplessly by as Joanna and Bartley work closely together on "his" show.

Bartley rubs it in Tristan's face, obliviously to Joanna.

The entire staff is attracted to Bartley's show, it's refreshing and fun.

"Bartley's show" also gaining a decent amount of media attention.

Tristan is a volcano waiting to explode.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tristan sits on his couch. He continually checks his watch.

(3 beats)

Joanna ENTERS through the front door.

TRISTAN

Where were you?!

JOANNA

I got stuck at work. Bartley needed help with something.

TRISTAN

That's why we missed our dinner reservations?! Because of Bartley?!

JOANNA

Tristan...

TRISTAN

Is not bad enough you took his side in the whole matter--

JOANNA

Hey! Tristan.

TRISTAN

But then you bring him home, into our personal lives.

JOANNA

I have never brought him home! You do, with every argument you start and fight you pick with me about him!

TRISTAN

And *Cooking With Kids*.

JOANNA

What about it?!

TRISTAN

Exactly my point! You stopped caring about it.

JOANNA

I care very much about *Cooking With Kids*! It just that right now I need to focus on--

TRISTAN

On Bartley's show. "Bartley's show". It my bloody show! MY SHOW!! He took it right from under me!

JOANNA

Tristan you're jealousy is out of control!!

TRISTAN

JEALOUSY?!

JOANNA

YES! The temper-tantrums, pouting, arguing, fighting... I don't want to do it anymore.

A beat.

TRISTAN

You're breaking up with me?

JOANNA

What? No, Tristan--

TRISTAN

Because you can. I'd hate to be such a burden upon you.

JOANNA

Tristan that's not what I--

TRISTAN

I know what you meant, and you meant every word. And that's fine by me.

JOANNA

Tristan don't. That's not what--

TRISTAN

Go. You can go.

JOANNA

Tristan...

TRISTAN

GO! NOW!

A beat.

Joanna EXITS.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - DEN - DAY

Tristan lies in a bathrobe sprawled across his couch watching British soap operas and eating cookie dough.

His phone rings. Its Joanna. He turns the volume down on the phone.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Andrew and Spencer try to pull him out of his funk, but it doesn't help.

Hannah and Vivian try as well, to get him to come back to work, but Tristan would rather wallow instead.

Joanna is at the front door. She bangs on the door, but Tristan turns the volume up. She lifts up his welcome mat for his spare key, but the only thing that's there is a post it: PLEASE GO AWAY. After a moment, Joanna EXITS.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - DAY

Joanna is talking with Bartley.

JOANNA

(disappointed)

Since Tristan won't come back to work. I guess I'll have to hand *Cooking With Kids* over to you.

BARTLEY  
Thanks Joanna.

Her mind drifts for a moment.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)  
Um, Joanna--

JOANNA  
Go.

BARTLEY  
Sure.

Bartley EXITS.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The task of taking over *Cooking With Kids* proves to be thornier than expected.

BARTLEY  
(yelling at everyone)  
What the hell is going on?!

SAMUEL  
Production...?

BARTLEY  
No one's doing what I ask, dammit!

SAMUEL  
That's because you're not doing it the way Tristan does it?

BARTLEY  
Newsflash twit, I'm not Tristan.

SAMUEL  
No. You're not. Otherwise you wouldn't stand there.

BARTLEY  
What?

A spotlight falls, crashing a foot from Bartley. He jumps.

Samuel laughs.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)  
Oh, very funny. We'll see who has the last laugh.

Joanna ENTERS.

JOANNA  
What happened in here?

BARTLEY  
A little lighting accident. But  
everything is fine now.

JOANNA  
I was talking about the shouting.

SAMUEL  
Oh, that was Bartley.

BARTLEY  
I just can't understand Tristan's  
notes. And I know how much you all  
loved him, but I'm taking over, and  
all I ask is that you give the same  
respect you gave him.

SAMUEL  
(under his breath)  
Never.

JOANNA  
I agree.

Samuel is floored.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Samuel?

SAMUEL  
(dry)  
I'll try. Possibly.

BARTLEY  
That's all I ask Samuel.

JOANNA  
Good. I won't have anymore  
fighting.

Joanna EXITS.

BARTLEY  
(to Samuel)  
Wanker.

SAMUEL  
(to Bartley)  
Git.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - DEN - DAY

Spencer and Andrew are talking to a "couch-ridden" Tristan.

TRISTAN

I already told you two wankers: I'm not going.

SPENCER

But you're nominated. And you could win.

TRISTAN

I don't care if it was the Nobel Peace Prize. I'm not moving from this spot.

ANDREW

Well, you'll have to move by Saturday. I have a date, and I don't want her to see...you.

SPENCER

Are you sure--

TRISTAN

Spencer... I'M NOT GOING!

ANDREW

Alright.

SPENCER

Sure.

They bolt.

INT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT - DEN - NIGHT

Tristan once again spends the night at home.

He sits and listens to his American soul record collection.

Tristan plays his messages. The first one is from Joanna.

JOANNA

(on machine)

Tristan, it me. I want to talk to--

He deletes it.

Tristan PLAYS his last message. Its Samuel.

SAMUEL

(on machine)

Tristan quit your wallowing! We need you here. Bartley is a terror and Joanna is miserable for some reason...you sly dog (making panting noises).

Tristan chuckles.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

(on machine)

Anyway, we all miss you. Joanna said you can come back anytime you want. So take her up on it. Soon. Hope you're well. Talk to you later. Oh, wait! Since you won't come back to work, Bartley took over *Cooking With Kids*, which means he'll have to accept the award on Sunday if don't show.

Tristan stops the machine. He rewinds it back.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

(on machine)

Since you won't come back to work, Bartley took over *Cooking With Kids*, which means he'll have to accept the award on Sunday if don't show.

A vengeful sneer inhabits his face.

EXT. HANNAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Tristan KNOCKS on the door hurriedly.

Hannah answers.

HANNAH

(excited)

Tristan!

They hug.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

TRISTAN

I need you, Samuel, and Vivian.

HANNAH

For what?

TRISTAN

I have an idea for documentary.

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bartley ENTERS.

BARTLEY

Joanna?

JOANNA

Yes, Bartley.

BARTLEY

Do you have a date to the award ceremony?

Joanna, looks up, curiously.

EXT. RED CARPET - DAY

A entertainment news correspondent interviews Bartley. Joanna stands beside him.

CORRESPONDENT

And who's this with you?

BARTLEY

(bringing Joanna close to him)

This is my very beautiful Head of Programming.

Joanna appears uncomfortable.

CORRESPONDENT

Are you proud of your executive producer here?

Bartley squeezes her waist.

JOANNA

I'm proud of all my producers. Even the ones who couldn't be here tonight.

Joanna slinks away from Bartley's grip. She walks ahead.

Bartley moves, bumping into Angela Lansbury.

ANGELA LANSBURY

Oh, excuse me young man, but I do believe you stepped on my dress.

Bartley scoffs at her. He EXITS.

ANGELA LANSBURY (CONT'D)

Well!

INT. THEATRE - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A mousy, UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN sits behind the control board monitoring the ceremony.

Andrew ENTERS, dressed as a security guard. The woman takes surprised notice of him.

ANDREW

(under his breath)

Tristan you owe me so big.

UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN

What are you doing here?

ANDREW

I-I, uh, was... I was looking for you, sexy.

UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN

Me? Why?

ANDREW

I'm drawn to you. I saw you earlier and just, uh, had to have you?

UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN

You did?

ANDREW

Oh, yeah.

He takes off his cap, tossing it to her.

She smiles a large gap-tooth smile.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(low)

God.

INT. THEATER - WETBAR - LATER

Bartley sips his drink.

Liam Nesson approaches the bar.

LIAM NESSON  
 (to bartender)  
 Scotch. Neat.

He turns to Bartley.

LIAM NESSON (CONT'D)  
 Hello. Didn't you create that news  
 show for kids?

Bartley nods not so humbly.

LIAM NESSON (CONT'D)  
 My children love that show. Very  
 inventive.

BARTLEY  
 (chuckles)  
 I know.

LIAM NESSON  
 Right... Well, good luck tonight.

Liam Nesson extends his hand.

BARTLEY  
 Thanks. But I don't need it.

Bartley tops of his drink and EXITS.

LIAM NESSON  
 (under his breath)  
 Arse.

INT. THEATRE - AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Bartley RETURNS to his seat beside Joanna.

A clip from a nominee is shown.

The audience begins to CLAP.

Joanna is taken out of her daze and joins in.

The award-winner steps on stage and gives his speech.

AUDIENCE

BARTLEY  
 Is everything alright?

JOANNA

Yeah, I--

BARTLEY

Don't worry. I know we'll win.

Joanna gives a phony smile.

Bartley smiles back, placing his hand on her knee.

Joanna appears uneasy.

INT. THEATER - CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Andrew and the unattractive woman are making out heavily.

With her back toward the monitors, Andrew casually puts in the mini-videotape.

INT. THEATRE - AUDIENCE - LATER

*Cooking With Kids'* category is up.

STAGE

PRESENTER

And the winner for Most Outstanding Children's Programming is... (opens envelope) *Cooking With Kids!* Accepting the award is Bartley Forbes, co-executive producer.

The clip for the show isn't shown.

AUDIENCE

Bartley pecks Joanna on her cheek.

He stands up, approaching the stage.

Joanna appears upset.

INT. THEATER - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Andrew hits the PLAY button.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bartley accepts the award and gracious applause from the audience.

BARTLEY  
First, I'd like to thank my  
talented crew and actors--

"The clip" from *Cooking With Kids* interrupts him.

SCREEN

But instead of the clip being Bartley speaking of producing the show, or interacting positively with the cast and crew, a reel of him screaming embarrassingly (peppered with profanity) at the cast and crew, talking sexually explicit with staff members of Joanna, and bragging on his mobile secretly about stealing Tristan's current show with Tristan's ex-fiancee, Miranda.

BARTLEY (CONT'D)  
(panicking)  
That's not me! That's not me!! TURN  
IT OFF! TURN IT OFF!!

AUDIENCE

Joanna is in shock.

SCREEN

Samuel and Hannah appear.

STAGE

BARTLEY (CONT'D)  
I had to of known it was the two of  
you!

SCREEN

SAMUEL  
The real person who deserves this  
award is Tristan Suller.

HANNAH

He created *Cooking With Kids* out of his own imagination and appreciation for his hard-working mother, Mary.

A picture of Tristan's mother is shown.

VIVIAN

He is a man of great optimism, loyalty, and respect. Only minor characteristics that make him not only a great producer, but a wonderful person.

Several shots of Tristan are shown of him in a positive light as a producer.

AUDIENCE

Joanna watches proudly.

INT. THEATRE - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Andrew notices the monitor: Bartley in a sweaty panic.

He pulls away from the unattractive woman.

ANDREW

I'm sorry but I have to go.

UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN

But--

ANDREW

I'll call you.

He EXITS, leaving the shirtless woman in wonder.

He RETURNS.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(surprised)

You're a really good kisser.

He EXITS.

The unattractive woman smiles to herself.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Tristan ENTERS on stage in street clothes.

Two guards try to ENTER on stage to stop Tristan, but are wrestled to the floor by Andrew and Spencer. Both men hold the guards down by sitting on them.

AUDIENCE

Joanna's mouth drops.

STAGE

Tristan snatches the award from Bartley.

TRISTAN

You can have the show you stole from me. But not *this* one. I worked too hard on it. And care too much about it.

Tristan grabs Bartley.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

(whispering in his ear)

It would be a good idea if you left the stage before I kick your arse on live television.

He lets go of him.

BARTLEY

I told you you'd turn it into rubbish, I just didn't think you'd do it on the telly.

TRISTAN

On second thought...

He punches Bartley right in the nose. He falls to the floor.

ANDREW

Nice deck, Tristan!!

Blood pours from Barley's nose.

The audience CHEERS.

AUDIENCE

Angela Lansbury and Liam Nesson hi-five.

STAGE

Embarrassed, Bartley runs backstage.

(3 beats)

TRISTAN

I want to just simply thank the one person who has given me hope, inspiration, and confidence in myself. She's pushed me out of my protective shell and challenged me along the way, recognizing my true talent as a producer. I am more than appreciative of their belief in me. And I hope this makes up for how much I hurt them.

ANDREW

(to Spencer; tearful)  
Aw... He's going to thank me.

SPENCER

You're a blooming idiot.

Tristan motions to the orchestra maestro.

The orchestra enters into a melody of Otis Redding's "*I've Been Loving You Too Long*".

Tristan joins in singing the lyrics.

AUDIENCE

Joanna is thunderstruck.

STAGE

Tristan comes down from the stage.

He tries to kiss her, but she backs away.

JOANNA

Despite the romantic gesture. I think we should take it slow.

TRISTAN  
I agree completely.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Tristan and Joanna make-out heavily.

They fall to the floor. Clothes tossing in the air.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator DINGS.

The doors open.

Tristan and Joanna are fully clothed

JOANNA  
(stern)  
Fix your tie.

Joanna EXITS.

Tristan EXITS the elevator.

He winks at us with a sly smile, fixing his tie.

FADE OUT.