

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

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HAPPILY EVER AFTER

CHARACTERS:

LIZZIE/ CINDERELLA/ WIFE /SLEEPING BEAUTY

BEN/ CINDERELLA'S PRINCE/ SLEEPING BEAUTY'S PRINCE

CHLOE/RAPUNZEL

DAVE

USE OF SPACE:

The playing space is split into three areas and the action moves between them throughout the play.

- On the right is the back yard of a small terrace house .
42 Fripps Street. A single pumpkin occupies what looks like the remains of a vegetable garden.
- In the centre is Lizzie and Ben's living room and can be simply a coffee table and a couch or some chairs. The Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty interactions should be played in Ben and Lizzie's space with Rapunzel in the 42 Fripps Street space.
- On the left is a counselor's office which is simply a chair.

The focus shifts back and forth between the three spaces throughout the play.

SCENE ONE

THE PRINCE AND CINDERELLA.
CINDERELLA IS SWEEPING THE FLOOR.
THE PRINCE ENTERS.

PRINCE: Hello. I'm looking for a Cinderella.... I am the Prince.

CINDRLLA: I know who you are. I've been waiting but none of that matters now.
You've come and you've found me.

PRINCE: Found you? Please don't misunderstand me.
The reason I am here is that I have this slipper and I seek the girl
whose dainty foot fits into it perfectly. When I find her I will know she
is my true love and we can be married without delay.

CINDRLLA: I know that slipper. It's mine. It's me. I am the girl you seek

PRINCE: Your slipper?

CINDRLLA: I was wearing it...last week...at the ball. Surely you remember how
we danced and laughed in the moonlight.... Until the midnight hour
approached and I was forced to make my retreat.

PRINCE: I do remember dancing with a most beautiful girl. My heart wept in
agony at midnight as she bade me farewell. I know in my heart I'm
destined to marry her I wish to cause you no offence...but....you do
not seem like her.

CINDRLLA: No?

PRINCE: No. I have no wish to disparage you...but she was....

CINDRLLA: Clean?

PRINCE: Yes-

CINDRLLA: Dressed in a most beautiful gown? With hair like spun silk and a scent
of newly bloomed flowers on the first day of spring?

PRINCE: You clearly know her-

CINDRLLA: My good, brave, sweet Prince....I am her. I assure you.

PRINCE: I cannot dismiss your claim. Not completely but if you are truly my dearest and truest love....Try this slipper. If you are indeed she, the shoe will fit as if made only for your foot. Then all doubt will evaporate as does morning dew in summer. I will know that you are indeed my sweetest and truest love.

CINDRLLA: You wish me to try on the slipper. To place my foot in that beautiful slipper? The one that I recognize so clearly as my own.

PRINCE: Yes. Then I will know that what you profess is true.

CINDRLLA: Do you not look at me, despite these rags, and feel the same sentiment for me as you did at the ball? I recall without any shadow of doubt what we have meant to each other.

PRINCE: I do not wish to labor the point...But my wish is that you take your turn in trying on this shoe. I insist upon it.

CINDRLLA: I cannot try on the shoe.

PRINCE: Cannot try on the shoe?

CINDRLLA: Cannot....And will not.

PRINCE: Will not? But you have said it is your shoe. If that is indeed true...there should be no question of you slipping your foot gently into the slipper?

CINDRLLA: No. I ask you to take my word as proof enough that I am your truest love....Look at me and tell me that you see with your heart that I am that girl who danced and laughed with you at the ball.

PRINCE: Despite your rags, I see that you are very sweet and in your way...very lovely even...But you are burdened by hard work and poverty.

CINDRLLA: I ask you to believe me.

PRINCE: I can have neither peace nor certainty until you try on that slipper. When you try the slipper, I will know if you are my truest love. I will know whether I can believe the truth of what you say.

CINDRLLA: Then my sweet, foolish Prince....you shall have neither peace nor certainty. I will not try on the slipper. I believe that my true love would know me whatever the circumstance....By what is in his heart. Not by what is on my foot.

PRINCE: Then I shall continue my search.

CINDRLLA: You shall continue your search....And that search may last a lifetime.

***THE LIGHTS COME UP ON 42 FRIPPS STREET
CHLOE SITS BY THE PUMPKIN.***

CHLOE: ***(READING)***

And so the Prince never found the foot that perfectly fit the slipper and both he and Cinderella lived very long lives, never meeting again or marrying. On his death bed, the Prince still wondered if the pretty ragged girl who had refused to try on the slipper, had in fact been his true love. He died as Cinderella did. Alone. Never knowing. Always regretting that neither would bend over the question of whether a shoe fit.

(STOPS READING)

I read this yesterday...And the day before.
Every time I read it I hope it'll end differently.
It can't . I wrote it.

Out of the blue. After work one night...Late like always....
January...You said. "We should grow our own vegies"
"Why?"

"I feel like it,"
So that was it.

You bought a gardening book, seedlings and a shovel and just started digging.

Gardening was a new skin. Didn't quite fit. Didn't look right. I remember looking out the window at you in your immaculate work clothes.

"Dan, you'll ruin your suit."

So you changed and I thought that meant something.

***(CHLOE TAKES THE PAGES AND BEGINS RIPPING THEM IN
HALF ONE BY ONE AND THROWING THEM AWAY)***

Liar.

Prick.

Coward.

SCENE TWO

***THE LIGHTS COME UP ON THE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE.
LIZZIE SITS IN A CHAIR.***

LIZZIE: Once upon a time...I worked in an office. With people.
I should be working. Now. At work. I've taken time off for this. But
now I work from home so is that still taking time off?

These are the big questions for me now.

And I do work. But it's different now. There's not the same urgency. I
mean I regularly used to work through lunch and that's not healthy but
I enjoyed it.

People carried on about it.

"Did you miss lunch again, Lizzie?"

I started to say I'd eaten. Some days I'd make up a menu.

"I had a salad and an apple"

What was your question? It was about honesty....

I believe in honesty. One hundred per cent. I just don't like giving bad
news. Last week I was working on a proposal and one of the
consultants I'm working with, sent me a report so badly written, I
wanted them to completely trash it and start again. I sent them an email
saying, "This is crap. Forget the week you've spent on it and start
again" and then I ended it with "Cheers, Lizzie".....It was like I was
saying..."Your work is awful, you're an idiot and I'm a bitch but no
hard feelings....Love Lizzie".

I just need to say here....Ben and I have never had an honesty problem.
From the beginning I could tell him anything. We were best friends.
I felt very comfortable eating in front of him. Anything...Onions,
garlic. That's a sign of real intimacy, I think. There was nothing I
couldn't tell him.

I'd even tell him when I went out with other men.

That's not normal is it?

BEN ENTERS THE COUNSELOR'S SPACE

BEN: No. Yuck. Jesus, Lizzie. Ask yourself if I needed to hear that.

LIZZIE: You've never done it then?

BEN: Of course not. What normal person licks another person on the cheek
over dinner?

LIZZIE: It was after. I turned my cheek so he could give me a quick kiss goodnight and I felt his tongue slide straight across my face.

BEN: Jesus.

LIZZIE: I won't be seeing him again. I refuse to have my cheek licked after one dinner. Totally unacceptable.

LIZZIE ADDRESSES THE COUNSELOR
I think I suspected how he felt and I think he always felt that way. He never said anything...so we just went along.

I really took time coming around to it but then I did come around to it. In a big way.

BEN: Since when? You've never said anything.

LIZZIE: I'm saying it now. I've just realized.

BEN: Well...Good for you.

LIZZIE: Good for you?

BEN: You've never said anything. How do I know you're serious? I think you could really hurt me if it's just a passing thing.

LIZZIE: It's not a passing thing. It won't pass no matter how much I wish it would. And I don't mean that the way it sounds.
(PAUSE)
Could I really hurt you? I find that quite moving.

BEN: It's fantastic isn't it? I'm over the moon about it myself.

LIZZIE: It's very romantic. And obviously I would never do anything to hurt you. ...Intentionally. So now it's all out in the open...Where to now? How should we progress things?

BEN: How about... I don't want you to see anyone else. I want us to only see each other. From now on. How's that?

LIZZIE: Excellent. Decisive. We are absolutely on the same page.
(PAUSE)
And don't think I have a one track mind or anythingBut....
Can we have sex? Is that part of us "seeing only each other"...Or have I misunderstood what you were getting at?

BEN: Lizzie, I want us to have children together.

LIZZIE: That's not a prerequisite for sex with you is it?

LIZZIE ADDRESSES THE COUNSELOR

Who says that?
I'll tell you who....Nobody.
Its too much pressure and the one thing I've never told him was that
when I was 19 I was pregnantWhich I don't judge myself for.

So we've bought a house.... I've been a renter all my life....An inner
city renter. Now I've...we've got a mortgage. We're settled.

But it was coming...From the very beginning....The big
decision...The alarm that was only ever been on snooze.

BEN: It's the perfect time for us. We don't want to leave it any longer. Age
wise I mean. And we love each other. Don't we?

LIZZIE: Okay. Yes. We absolutely do.

BEN: You don't sound keen.

LIZZIE: It's not that. No. Not at all.

BEN: I really want this Lizzie. I really want us to have a baby. Together.

LIZZIE: I do too.

LIZZIE ADDRESSES THE COUNSELOR

And I think I meant it
And if we've been trying and trying and trying for the last year with no
success that's nobody's fault. It's not because I only think I meant it. I
mean I've been throwing myself into it. We both have.

We're not getting anywhere but I don't think saying "Cheers" at the
end will be enough.

(PAUSE)

Did I mention that I worked on a 4.5 million dollar change
management proposal last week? That's big. That's 4.5 million dollars.

SCENE THREE

42 FRIPPS STREET

***BEN ENTERS CARRYING A SMALL BOX.
HE PUTS IN BY THE DOOR AND KNOCKS.***

BEN: Chloe. It's Ben Sullivan...The property manager. I know you're in there. I think you can hear me. Chloe. Just knock or something...If you're listening.

It's a runaway train, Chloe. A runaway train.
I have to get the carpets cleaned and the garden fixed up.
Chloe could you at least let me know what condition the carpet is in?

Can you hear me?

I could find you somewhere else to live. They're going to kick you out, Chloe. You haven't paid any rent in a long time so you don't really have a leg to stand on.

(PAUSE)

I see the pumpkin's nearly ripe. Did you plant it yourself?
You could cook it. You'd need to come outside

I like pumpkin. In a roast. Or a curry. We eat a lot of curries. Lizzie would curry this in a flash if she saw it. It's like a thing with her. The curry.

Anyway....I left a couple of cans of soup out here on the step. I think you should eat them and think about coming out. Okay? How about you knock twice if you can hear me?

(WAITS – NO RESPONSE)

Or don't....

DAVE ENTERS EATING THE REMAINS OF A HAMBURGER.

DAVE: How'd you go?

BEN: Nothing. No answer.

DAVE: She's still in there?

BEN: Pretty sure.

DAVE: Is tear gas legal?

BEN: No.

DAVE: Fucking ridiculous.

(YELLING TO CHLOE)

The board's going up Chloe. This bullshit's got a finite life. We've been pretty fucking patient. But it can't last forever-

BEN: I've told her all that.

DAVE: Yeah and it's worked a treat-

BEN: Alright.

DAVE: You're having zero impact Benny. I don't see her standing out here with a suitcase saying "Sorry boys. Naturally I'll vacate at your convenience."

(TO CHLOE)

It's a notice for you next sweetheart and then you know what happens? The police come and kick the door in and you have to come out-

BEN: Do you think that's actually helping?

DAVE: You're too soft. Way too fucking soft. That's your trouble. This whole thing would have been resolved three months ago if I'd-

BEN: Three months ago she was paying rent.

DAVE: I want her out. I don't want to stand around asking her nicely....I want her to pack up her crap and move out.

BEN: I get it. I'm trying.

DAVE: You've got less than a month to get her out and get this place presentable to show potential buyers.

BEN: I get it.

DAVE: I've got buyers coming out of the woodwork.... And there's no board yet...It's a month away....there's no advertising....it's word of mouth.

Do you know what a gift that is? I'll tell youIt's gift we can't bloody open because Morticia won't come out and she won't let us in.

Benny, we have to get the joint cleaned up ASAP. God know what's been going on in there...She's probably sacrificing small animals.

BEN: I don't think she's doing that.

DAVE: You're pretty bloody green....I could give you so many examples of tenants with months of unpaid rent that trash properties.

One place had stale vomit covering the bedroom walls. I'm not even going into the scene left behind when junkies vacate. Syringes sticking

out of every surface. Even the bloody carpet... Fucking disgusting. Takes weeks to make a dent in a place like that.

BEN: I don't think she's a junkie.

DAVE: But you don't know, do you? There's a big difference in what you see when they throw on their glad rags to apply for a property and a few months later, when they've destroyed it and are squatting rent free. A big difference.

You've got no idea what she's doing in there or where that bloke, she was living with, has shot through to. No idea. I mean...Is he still in there with her? Is he dead? Cut up into little pieces in the freezer? Do they have a freezer?

BEN: Point taken.

DAVE SPOTS THE BOX ON THE STEP

DAVE: Fuck me....Look there. She's having food delivered. That door must open some time. Were they there when you arrived?

BEN: No....She conjured them up before my eyes.

DAVE: Well that's your next step, Sunshine....

BEN: What?

DAVE PUTS HIS ARM AROUND BEN'S SHOULDER AND WHISPERS CONSPIRATORIALLY

DAVE: You're going to wait out the front...One night....And find out who comes in and out.

BEN: Spy on her?

DAVE: Don't be so melodramatic....Jesus...She's staying in a house she doesn't own. Rent free. The owners' are ready to sell. You need to make that happen and I'm just putting two and two together Sherlock.

Someone is bringing her food....So unless she's got magic powers she's opening that door and taking the food in...I just want you to make sure next time she does that...you're here to help her carry it.

BEN: I get it.

DAVE: Do you, Benny? Property Management is not an easy profession and sometimes....I question your suitability for it.

BEN: Alright.

DAVE: Anyone can be a property manager when the rent's being paid...It's times like this...when you have to apply the screws, that the men get sorted from the boys.

You need balls the size of hot air balloons for some situations.

BEN: I know...

DAVE: I can't stand here all day holding your hand...giving you pep talks...I've got a property open in 10 minutes...

Get on to this Benny, because this house is a potential fucking gem. What a position. It's literally 15 minutes from anywhere....

BEN: Alright. I've got it.

DAVE: I really hope so...Don't let me down...Catch you later.

DAVE STARTS TO EXIT. BEN WAITS UNTIL HE'S OUT OF SIGHT AND CALLS AFTER HIM

BEN: Dave....Dave, I think you dribbled sauce on your tie...Jesus....Mate.....I'd really hate for you to go to your inspection looking like a dickhead.

END OF SCENE

SCENE FOUR

LIZZIE AND BEN'S LIVING ROOM.

***LIZZIE IS PUTTING AWAY A SCRABBLE SET
THE SOUND OF A DOOR CLOSING***

LIZZIE: In here.

BEN ENTERS. HE KISSES HER.

BEN: That furry little turd crapped on the driveway again. Why is he always hanging around?

LIZZIE: Stephen and I were playing Scrabble.

BEN: I think he likes you.

LIZZIE: He does not. I think he's lonely and we have a lot in common... He likes to play Scrabble and so do I. He likes to skive off work and so do I. It's fun but very unhealthy.

BEN: Does he have to bring that little shitting machine with him? Shouldn't he be working? At his job.

LIZZIE: Don't mention work...It's a Pandora's Box of guilt and recrimination. Ben, we need to rethink this whole arrangement.

BEN: Not getting enough done?

LIZZIE: Not nearly enough.

BEN: Then stop playing games all day with your architect boyfriend. Show some dedication. Have some self discipline. Commit to your career.

LIZZIE: Like you do.

BEN: Absolutely. (*PAUSE*) Did you win? At least tell me you won.

LIZZIE: I always win. But he's very good and I think one day he'll beat me...If we play long enough. By that time we'll have both been sacked for doing nothing but playing Scrabble and drinking coffee.

BEN: You both work for yourselves. Even I couldn't get sacked from that arrangement. What is it he does exactly? Never seen anything he's supposedly designed.

LIZZIE: He specializes in restorations and renovations of period homes.

BEN: He would.

LIZZIE: Jealous?

BEN: No. I couldn't care less about restorations and renovations of period homes.

LIZZIE: He's the perfect neighbour. It's like having a playmate on call.
(PAUSE)
How was your day?

BEN: I'm still supposed to be evicting the woman at Fripps Street....I told you...

LIZZIE: With the pumpkin?

BEN: She still won't answer the door. I don't get that. If someone was outside your house knocking on your door, calling your name....Wouldn't you answer?

LIZZIE: I do. I invite him in to play Scrabble.

BEN: Dave's being a complete prick. There has to be more to it. You don't just lock yourself in a house. You don't just do that.

LIZZIE: Call the police.

BEN: It's too soon. Don't you think? Too soon for the police?

THERE IS A PAUSE

LIZZIE: I got my period.

BEN: Fuck.

LIZZIE: I know. I'm sorry.

BEN: It's not your fault.

LIZZIE: I think we need to see someone. It's been eight months.

BEN: No, it hasn't.

LIZZIE: It has....We started trying in July....It's now March.

BEN: Its only eight months.

LIZZIE: We're having sex all the time.

BEN: That's an exaggeration.

LIZZIE: Ben, we need to see someone.

BEN: We're fine. We need to be patient. I know you're thinking it's your age-

LIZZIE: I wasn't thinking that. I was thinking we should see a doctor. Have tests.

BEN: Okay. We could.

LIZZIE: Not the endorsement I was looking for,

BEN: What if you went first? You could go first and I'll come with you and then we'll know. It could be me but it's just.... I'm sure there's nothing wrong. It's not that I don't want to have tests-

LIZZIE: Ben.

BEN: I'm not saying it's you. I'm just sure there's nothing wrong. With either of us.

Lizzie, we're meant to have a child together. I've always thought that. The first time we met. I thought that. So let's not jump the gun on the whole tests thing.

LIZZIE: There's no such thing as being "meant to have a child". Some people never have children.

BEN: That won't be us.

LIZZIE: What about women who get pregnant by accident? I think it's random.

BEN: I don't think it is. And I don't think all this negativity is helping. You'll get pregnant. It's just time. But if you want me to come to the doctor with you...I will...I just think it's too soon. Way too soon.

LIZZIE: Ben, I really hope there's no problem....But we're having sex constantly and-

BEN: Eight months is only eight months. We are not having sex constantly. We're probably not doing it enough.

LIZZIE: We did it nine times last week.

BEN: Why are you keeping count? That's not very romantic...Jesus, Lizzie... You make it sound like such a chore. I remember when the opposite was true....When we first got together.

LIZZIE: I know.....It's not that, Ben. You know it's not that. I just don't want to take my temperature and pee on a strip of paper every half hour to get into the mood. There's no spontaneity.

BEN: I tried being more spontaneous but you didn't like it.

LIZZIE: Sneaking up behind me with a thermometer was not spontaneous. . It was just creepy. Ben...Please, let's go to the doctor. If there's something wrong...I'm not saying there is but if there is....We could look at the options and get some counseling.

BEN: Counseling? Do you mean a psychiatrist?

LIZZIE: No...A counselor. To talk about how we're feeling. How we progress things. Where to next.

BEN: We can talk to each other. Can't we? We can talk about anything? Can't we?

LIZZIE: Yes.

BEN: That's what we've always said.

LIZZIE: I know.

BEN: You know you can tell me anything.

LIZZIE: I just thought-

BEN: Just give it some more time. There's no big hurry. It'll happen. In its own time. Things just take time.

LIZZIE: What if it doesn't?

BEN: It will. It'll be okay.

LIZZIE: What if it's not?

BEN: It will be. You'll see.

LIZZIE: You're enough. If it doesn't happen. For me. Definitely. No question. You're enough.

BEN: I know.

LIZZIE: Am I enough?

BEN: You hear stories of people who try and try and it finally happens. We need to relax. What about people who try for years and adopt and then

get pregnant?....That happens. We need to calm down. Take it easy.
Kick back.

LIZZIE: Ben, am I enough? If we can't have a baby?

BEN: We can. We will. You worry too much.

THERE IS A SHORT SILENCE.

LIZZIE: We could always get a dog. Research always says pets add years to your life.

BEN: And subtract thousands from your property value. Our paving looks terrible since your boyfriend's little rat dog shitting machine moved in across the road.

LIZZIE: He's cute.

BEN: He's a rat with a huge frigging hairstyle. And he's white.

LIZZIE: He's a pedigree Maltese.

BEN: Well that just makes me suspicious of your Scrabble buddy. What sort of bloke has a Maltese terrier? He should have a manlier dog. A more butch breed. A dog that's not white.

LIZZIE: Doberman? Rottweiler?

BEN: Some type of Heeler.

LIZZIE: I think it's nice that Stephen has a Maltese. It shows he's secure in his masculinity. Comfortable with who he is.

BEN: Comfortable being a wanker who restores period homes with a Maltese terrier named Fritz.

LIZZIE: But the thing is Ben..... Fritz is incredibly clever. He fetches, he sits, he rolls over, shakes hands-

BEN: Shits.

LIZZIE: That too. And always with such incredible timing and pinpoint accuracy. Right on the driveway....And just before you get home.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR. DAVE ENTERS. CARRYING BINOCULARS.

DAVE: Hello, hello. Not interrupting, am I?

BEN: What are you doing here?

DAVE: There's dog shit on your driveway.

LIZZIE: And tomato sauce on your tie.

DAVE: Where? Jesus Christ... This is Armani...

LIZZIE: With a dash of Heinz.

DAVE: I must've done that inspection like this... Shit Ben why didn't you tell me.

BEN: I honestly didn't notice.

DAVE: Well... You want to get on to that dog crap... It'll take the colour right out of those pavers.... And bugger your lawn. I hate dogs. They just crap constantly. Like mice... Do you know mice never stop shitting? My kids have got mice and I make them keep the little turds in the garage... The smell would knock you over.

BEN: Do you want a coffee or a beer? Or a pie?

DAVE: Can't stay. Just came to give you these.

DAVE HANDS BEN THE BINOCULARS

LIZZIE: What are they for?

DAVE: I've been thinking about the next phase of the operation at Fripps Street.

BEN: Dave-

DAVE: Hear me out. You go at night in an unmarked car-

BEN: Unmarked?

DAVE: Not literally unmarked. Just not known to her. Take that shit heap of Lizzie's.

LIZZIE: It's a brand new MX-5.

DAVE: Whatever. Park over the other side of the road and keep watch with these binoculars.... She'll come out... Eventually.. To pick up one of those food packages.

LIZZIE: Is she a criminal?

DAVE: Worse.

BEN: She's not worse than a criminal.

DAVE: You think I'm a bastard...A real prick... I know that's what you think....But look at it from the owner's point of view...She's a hurdle in them achieving a return on investment... You're a property manager, Pal....Your loyalty is to the owners of the property you're managing...If you're so worried about Chloe...Go into public housing. Or social work.

BEN: There's more to it...She wasn't always so mysterious. She used to pay the rent. I just wonder what the story is.

DAVE: The story is...she's probably a junkie, a bludger or a terrorist.

LIZZIE: Perhaps all three.

DAVE: Don't dismiss any of it. It's a hotbed out there.

LIZZIE: A hotbed-

DAVE: Of drugs, terrorism and bludging.
Anyway, I can't hang around all night discussing the state of the world with you two. I've got a late inspection. Have you got a tie I can borrow? Can't wear this one.

LIZZIE: I don't know Dave....The sauce does something for you.

DAVE: Very funny.

BEN: I'll get one.

BEN EXITS. DAVE PACES AROUND.

DAVE: So...Lizzie...Lizzie.....Lizzie.....
Are you pregnant?

LIZZIE: Dave...Do I look pregnant?

DAVE: No...You actually look pretty good.
I'll tell you why I ask...The other day Ben had a baby seat for the car, sticking out of the boot....Wrapped up in plastic...I thought it might mean something.

LIZZIE: Not to me.

DAVE: It must be a gift for someone.

LIZZIE: Maybe.

DAVE: He's a cagey bastard...I don't reckon he'd tell me if you were.

LIZZIE: Maybe not.

DAVE: I'll tell you Lizzie... The last thing any real estate agency is going to put up with is a property manager who can't manage properties. It'd be better if he showed people he's got the balls to take care of it.

LIZZIE: Show who?

DAVE: People...at the office. He's under the pump. The pressure's on.

LIZZIE: Could he lose his job?

DAVE: Would he notice? You're a feminist type so you'll jump up and down when I say this...Two incomes is like a "get out of jail free" card to someone like Benny. It's different for me. Sonia's home with the kids so I have to bring in the bucks. It's no hardship because I love real estate and hate snotty noses.

Benny, on the other hand, can frig around changing jobs and because there's no urgency. And that's your fault.

LIZZIE: Is it?

DAVE: Yeah. Your income's a safety net. The best thing for Benny would be if you did get pregnant. Then he'd get the message.

LIZZIE: What message?

DAVE: The message that comes from having kids. That life isn't always about choosing. Sometimes, it's just about deciding, committing, doing. Got me?

LIZZIE: Got you.

DAVE: So how's work, anyway?

LIZZIE: I miss my office. Meetings, coffee-

DAVE: I told Benny...I don't believe in working from home. It's an excuse to waste time.

LIZZIE: Is it?

DAVE: Shit yeah. You have to get out there in the cut and thrust. Let people know you mean business.
What is it you do again?

LIZZIE: I'm a business analyst.

DAVE: I knew it was some wanky new age business thing. How can you analyze businesses sitting on your arse at home?

LIZZIE: I 'm not here all day every day. I do spend time with my clients.

DAVE: Don't get in a knot....I'm just saying...I don't believe in working from home.

LIZZIE: I'm not sure I do either.

BEN ENTERS WITH A TIE

BEN: It's not Armani.

DAVE: That's for frigging sure.
Christ, is that the time? I'll catch you later.
I'm telling you Benny, get onto that dog shit. Think of the pavers.

BEN: Thanks for the binoculars.

DAVE: Get on to that as well. One day, you'll thank me for being such a prick.
You'll realize what a mentor I've been. Bloody inspirational. Every word pure gold.

DAVE TAKES THE TIE AND EXITS.

LIZZIE: Binoculars.

BEN: The super spy of real estate.

LIZZIE: And then what?

BEN: A gun...and shoot her. Dirty Harry style. Witty repartee followed by a bullet between the eyes.

LIZZIE: I'm serious.

BEN: So am I. And after I've finished with her....I'll find Fritz and make him pay for his offences to the driveway. He'll dance before I'm done with him, Lizzie. It'll be a massacre...A bloodbath.

But the truth is.....I probably won't live to see that day.

LIZZIE: Why not?

BEN: I just squeezed a huge glob of toothpaste down that tie I gave Dave...I thought it suited his outfit more than the sauce.

END OF SCENE

SCENE FIVE

2 WEEKS LATER

CHLOE IN THE BACK GARDEN – 42 FRIPPS STREET

LIZZIE AND THE COUNSELOR

CHLOE SITS BESIDE THE PUMPKIN. SHE IS PULLING OUT WEEDS AND TIDYING UP

CHLOE: I tried to be nice. In the beginning. Stoic. I thought it would be admirable. I made it all about you. The cult of you. The romance. The myth. The triumph. The tragedy.

I couldn't keep it up.

I went to your office....That was a mistake...They wanted the car back.....Something about the lease.

I don't drive anyway.

"It's the insurance"

I don't drive.

"It's actually owned by the company"

I don't fucking drive.

Then this woman came up to me and she was crying. . She was saying "I'm sorry. It's awful. How could this happen. I remember him always being so happy...." She was shaking...And I thought..... When was he so happy? Why don't I remember that? How could I have forgotten that? How did I miss that? Who was he when he was here?

Who were you, Daniel?

Then all I could think was you'd slept with her. She was like a female you. The anti-me. Competent. Corporate. Perfect.

One late night at the office after a job well done. Maybe you'd screwed her..... And she was standing there, looking at me, clutching my arm, spilling tears, mascara and snot all over me and I just wanted her to leave me alone. I just wanted her to go away.

"Please take your fucking hands off me."

I could see what they were all thinking. It was like I could read minds..." So embarrassing. So awkward. No wonder.....It's just awkward because she's volatile. Irrational. Obviously unstable. And he was so great. So funny. So sweet. It's so sad....."

All of those things and none of them.

And just like that.....Just like that.....The page turned...

And it was all about me and who I'm not and wasn't and couldn't ever be.

I'm just so tired. Just so tired of the whole thing.

And furious. Just so fucking furious all of the time. Even when I'm not, I am.

"Rage and the pumpkin, a Legacy of Lost Love."

A good title for a story.

If I could be bothered to write it.

Or wash.

Or sleep.

Or eat

LIZZIE SITS IN A CHAIR.

I don't want to harp on this honesty thing...But I do think sometimes it's a luxury....Something you can't really afford so you just make the decision you have to. You just do it and its like you can't even remember deciding....Only later you think...Was it right? Should I have done that? What did it cost?

I've done that twice. Once when I was 19. And I don't judge myself for that.

And whatever we say...Ben and I....It's not me...I know it's not me. I had no trouble conceiving in 10 rapid fire minutes with Shane Hicks in his parent's holiday house at Torquay...All I could think about afterwards was the chenille bedspread. It was such an ugly bedspread. I think it was turquoise.

And I know 19 wasn't really that young but in a way it also was. It was younger then than it would be now. And I wasn't ready.

So it's now and I'm not 19.

And he won't go to the doctor. He's scared and I'm scared and I don't get scared. I just don't do that..Not usually....Except with Ben...because with Ben everything means just a bit more.

It wears me out.

So we're stuck. At an impasse. You can't be happy at an impasse. You get tired of it. Tired of each other.

Then if you think about it another way...A better way....it's just a problem and problems have solutions. You just have be prepared to find them. Reprioritize

(A SOFT ALARM SOUNDS)

Time's up...Can I just say you're very good at this...You don't say anything which I find strangely comforting. You're a bit like a night light. It's easy to ignore you but it's quite nice that you're there. And I'm not sure I could keep quiet for so long. That's a real skill. So....Well done you.

END OF SCENE