

THE ESSENCE OF LOVE

by

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Characters:

Cast of 4/5 (2/3M 2F)

DIANA MOORE – around fifty

GEMMA MOORE – nineteen

MARTIN WALKER – around fifty

TOM WALKER – twenty-one

ABDUL HAMID – Moroccan street vendor in his sixties (Can be played by actor who plays Martin.)

V.O. YOUNG MOROCCAN STREET VENDOR

Synopsis of scenes:

Act 1

Scene 1 – 2.30 p.m.

Scene 2 – The following morning. 10.30 a.m.

Scene 3 – That evening. 6.30 p.m.

Act 2

Scene 1 – The following morning. 9.00 a.m.

Scene 2 – That afternoon. 5.00 p.m.

Scene 3 – That evening. 11.00 p.m.

Scene 4 – The following afternoon. 4.00 p.m.

Scene 5 – The following morning. 10.30 a.m.

Place – Two adjoining hotel roof terraces in Marrakech.

Time – The present.

Act 1

Scene 1

2.30 p.m.

Two adjoining hotel roof terraces in Marrakech. Low lying individual shrubs in pots form a gesture of a divide between the two areas. A patio table with two chairs upstage and a sun-lounger downstage are to be found on either terrace. Upstage doorways on either side lead into their respective hotel rooms. Downstage and looking out to the audience is the view of Marrakech with a street below.

On the SR area MARTIN sits in one of the chairs. He restlessly reads his book and swats away the occasional fly. TOM sits in the sun-lounger sketching in an artist's pad. His drawings are executed in black only using charcoal pencils and are not drawn from life but from his own vision. His plastic water bottle is on the floor beside him. YOUNG MOROCCAN STREET VENDOR is heard.

V.O. YMSV: *(Off. Street below.)* Music of Marrakech: Gnawa, Arabic, Berber, Raï. Rugs, djellabahs, Moroccan slippers, straw hats. All cheapest price.

MARTIN crosses to the edge of the terrace and looks over.

Hello, mister, you take a look?

MARTIN: *(Calling down.)* Maybe later.

V.O. YMSV: *(Off. Street below.)* All cheapest price.

MARTIN: Come on, Tom, for God's sake let's do something!

TOM: I'm doing this.

MARTIN: We're in Marrakech, Tom, Marrakech!

TOM: I know where we are, thanks.

MARTIN: Probably, if not *the* most exotic city in the world and what are we doing, sitting around on a hotel terrace twiddling our thumbs!

TOM: I'm doing this.

MARTIN: Are you going to be doing that all day? All week? Come on, Tom, let's do something.

TOM: I'm doing this!

MARTIN: I've paid good money for us to be here.

TOM: No, you paid good money for you and *her* to be here.

MARTIN: Yes, well, of course I'm delighted it's you now, Tom. We don't spend enough time together, you and I... you and me... I never know which one is correct. Look, Tom –

TOM: You're in my light.

MARTIN: Listen, Tom –

TOM: You're still in my light.

MARTIN: Better? I know you still somewhat blame me for what happened between your mother and I... mother and me.

TOM: Somewhat! I blame you entirely.

MARTIN: Yes, well, there's two sides to everything, you know.

TOM: You're the one that went off with that half-literate, chain-smoking Italian vampire... who eventually took a knife to you.

MARTIN: She was a mistake, I agree.

TOM: Not that you've done a lot better since: a sorry stream of sad, underage losers.

MARTIN: Not underage, Tom, never underage.

TOM: Well under *your* age, that's equally as obscene.

MARTIN: Well, maybe you're just jealous, Tom. We don't hear much about your conquests, do we?

TOM: You don't, no.

MARTIN: Come on, Tom, give me something, I never know what to tell my friends when they ask me about you.

TOM: Tell them to mind their own business.

MARTIN: They probably think you're...

TOM: What?

MARTIN: You know... You're not, are you? I mean if you are, of course that's quite all right with me.

TOM: I'm not. Look, just... read your book.

MARTIN: I've read it... twice.

TOM: I'm sure there's still lots you've missed... there usually is.

MARTIN: I want to see Marrakech!

TOM: Then go and see Marrakech!

MARTIN: I want to see it with you!

TOM: I'm doing this!

MARTIN: Okay, I'm going.

TOM: Good.

MARTIN: But I'd just like to say, Tom –

TOM: Oh!

MARTIN: Hear me out, Tom. I'd just like to say, your art... I don't pretend to understand it, but I know it's something that... well, something that you're very... dedicated to, which is good. Not saying that. I'm just saying, if you're... you know... apprehensive about... meeting girls... women –

TOM: Look –

MARTIN: Hear me out, Tom, hear me out. They can be tricky creatures, you don't have to tell me that... I know. I probably sampled a cross-section of practically all of them at uni alone. I didn't earn the reputation of The Staffordshire Stallion for keeping my nose pressed firmly in my books.

TOM: Please!

MARTIN: What I'm saying is, Tom, just... don't pass me by. I can help with the difficult introductions... believe me, that's the hardest part, the rest is all downhill, so to speak... plain sailing is probably a better way of putting it.

TOM: No, I think downhill is right in your case.

MARTIN: You only get one shot at being young, Tom, it's all too quickly gone. I'd give my right arm to be your age again... figuratively speaking of course. I suppose, in a nutshell, what I'm saying is, you've got the rest of your life to do that, Tom, just... don't let love pass you by. That's all, I've said my bit. And I'm here to help you, Tom. I can be a valuable ally in your romantic crusade.

TOM: Have you finished?

MARTIN: I'm done.

TOM: Firstly, let me say, there is nothing that I can possibly learn from you except how *not* to live my life.

MARTIN: Tom –

TOM: Secondly, FYI, I'm not apprehensive about meeting girls... women. On the contrary, I can get them like that! (*Clicks fingers.*) If I want to. And I have. Not that I'm going to tell you about any of them... or worse, introduce them to you.

MARTIN: Tom, you know I wouldn't –

TOM: Thirdly, FYI, the reason I'm not seeing anyone on a full-time basis is because, as yet, I haven't met a girl... woman, who's come close to equalling my intelligence, my artistic sophistication, my cultural orientation, my style, my dress sense or unique sense of humour. And what's more can pack all that into a half decent physique that's worth a second look at. Please tell your friends. Now, I would really like to get on with this.

MARTIN: Fine. Please yourself, I'm sure you will. FYI I'm off to see Marrakech.

TOM: Good. And don't bring any of it back here or she's going off the roof.

MARTIN: Have a wonderful day.

TOM: I will.

MARTIN exits through the USSR doorway. After a few moments TOM puts down his sketch pad and drinks from his water bottle. He gets up and looks over the edge of the terrace. He glances across to the adjacent terrace and crosses to the USSR doorway.

(Calling through.) You gone? Hello?

TOM removes his shirt and places it over a chair. He does the same with his trousers. He moves the sun-lounger to a spot nearby. He lies on it and enjoys the sun. DIANA enters through the USL doorway. She is dressed in a colourful outfit with makeup to match. TOM rolls off the lounger and crawls underneath it to hide.

DIANA: *(Calling back.)* I was only trying to help you out, darling, that's all. No need to get so sniffy about it. *(View.)* Oh, look! Come out here, Gem darling, you'll love this! Gemma, come out here!

DIANA crosses to the edge of the terrace and takes in the view.

It's wonderful, darling! You can see the mountains from here. Gemma, come out here, you're missing it!

GEMMA enters through the USL doorway. She is dressed in a much plainer outfit to her mother. She looks sourly at DIANA and sits in a chair.

Look at this! You're not looking, darling. Well, I'm sorry, I thought he was lovely.

GEMMA: Yes, that was obvious.

DIANA: I wouldn't have swapped seats if I knew you weren't going to say a word to him for the whole journey. It's not that I wanted to sit next to that man with awful halitosis.

GEMMA: I don't know why you did.

DIANA: For you to get chatting. It could've been the start of a beautiful holiday romance. When I was your age, Gem darling, I wouldn't think about going on holiday without there being a little innocent flirting involved with a boy I'd meet. Perhaps a little heavy petting and maybe the occasional off-piste fumble... if you get my drift.

GEMMA: Oh!

DIANA: You just have to be a little more sociable, approachable, try a little, from time to time. I had them all eating out of my hands at your age... all the boys.

GEMMA: I know, you've said.

DIANA: And it wasn't because I was beautiful... of course that didn't go unnoticed, but it was because I made an effort, (*face*) with this, (*breasts*) with these (*bottom*) and with this. We'll work on it, this holiday, and on your personality too.

GEMMA: I've got a personality, thanks! Just because you choose not to see it doesn't mean I haven't got one.

DIANA: I know you have, darling, it's just a lot of the time it's... not that forthcoming. It's only because I care, Gem darling, that's all. Tomorrow we'll go shopping, we'll find some gorgeous outfits for us both. I want to get something a bit like what I wore for my Cleopatra at –

*TOM has surreptitiously retrieved his trousers from the chair and struggles to put them on under his lounge.
DIANA stops to look.*

GEMMA: What?

GEMMA gets up to look.

(Embarrassed.) Mum!

Aware of the hiatus TOM ceases his activity.

DIANA: Hello, there!

TOM flinches and hits his head beneath the lounge.

TOM: Ow!

He looks out from under the lounge.

DIANA: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think the idea is to lie on top of them.

TOM: Needed some shade.

DIANA: Diana... Di. How do you do? And this is my daughter, Gemma... Gem. We should've been here yesterday... missed our plane.

TOM: Perhaps I could just... put my clothes on.

DIANA: Oh, yes. Not looking. No need to cover up for our sakes. A little nudity is quite all right in my book... and Gem's too, I'm sure... eh, Gem?

TOM has hurriedly put on his trousers and his shirt.

Okay, safe to look? Yes, if one can't strip off here on a balcony in Marrakech where can one do it, eh?

TOM moves the sun-lounger to its former place.

Let's start again shall we? Di. How do you do?

TOM: Tom.

DIANA: Tom. And this is Gem.

GEMMA: Hi.

DIANA: What a view, eh Tom? You been here long?

TOM: Since yesterday.

DIANA: Alone or...?

TOM: My dad.

DIANA: Oh, family thing too. Perhaps we should get together sometime, go halves on a dining table.

GEMMA: Mum.

DIANA: Come and say hello, Gem, instead of skulking in the corner. Oh, artist I see, Tom. Me too. Not a painter, I hasten to add... couldn't draw to save my life. No, thespian me... treading the boards. Don't worry, I'm not a huge star so don't feel you ought to recognise me... not unless you're an avid follower of the Neptune Players in Hove. No, didn't think so. What is it you draw, Tom, portraits, landscapes... nudes perhaps?

TOM: No. It's my own unique thing, you wouldn't have heard of it.

DIANA: Oh, intriguing. Does it have a name?

TOM: Abstract existentialism.

DIANA: Oh. Interesting, eh Gem? Maybe sometime I can have a little look... if your willing to show, that is. No, I'm more of an Impressionist girl myself, Degas, Monet and oh, Cézanne, he brings me out in goose bumps. You like the Impressionists, Tom? No, I'm putting you on the spot, asking you to cast judgement on your fellow artists, mustn't do that. Okay, I'm wearing far too much for this heat. I need to take a leaf out of your book, Tom. Perhaps you and your dad might care to join

us for a glass of bubbly on the terrace later... yours or ours.
Ciao for now.

DIANA gestures for GEMMA to talk with TOM and exits through the USL doorway.

GEMMA: Sorry. She's always trying to match me up with every boy she sees.

TOM: Yes, look...?

GEMMA: Gemma.

TOM: Yeah, I'm actually here to work. I was just taking a... bit of a break, that's all. So, what I'm saying is, I'm not here to socialise. So please tell your mother.

GEMMA: Yes, I will.

TOM: Thanks.

TOM sits on his lounge again and takes up his drawing materials. MARTIN enters through the USR doorway.

MARTIN: Oh, neighbours!

TOM: Oh Jesus, I thought you'd gone!

MARTIN: I left my sunglasses behind. *(To Gemma.)* Hello there, Martin... Marty.

GEMMA: Gemma.

MARTIN: Gemma, lovely name.

TOM: Your sunglasses are on your head.

MARTIN: Oh yes, silly me. Always doing things like that.

TOM: You can go now.

MARTIN: I'm saying hello to Gemma, Tom. Honestly, my son, I'm sure he came from the milkman.

TOM: I wish I had.

MARTIN: I bet he hasn't even said hello. Have you said hello to Gemma, Tom?

GEMMA: He's said hello.

MARTIN: Well that's a start. Are you here with a friend... or maybe a few of you on a cultural break... girls together?

GEMMA: My mum.

MARTIN: Oh. From Blighty too are you?

GEMMA: Yes.

MARTIN: What part?

GEMMA: Hove.

MARTIN: Ah, coastal girl. Hemel Hempstead me. He's in a squat in London somewhere.

TOM: It's not a squat.

MARTIN: Are you at uni, Gemma or...?

GEMMA: I work, in a shop.

MARTIN: Retailer. Selling?

GEMMA: Toys.

MARTIN: *(Suggestively.)* Oh, what kind of toys? Anything I might have come across?

TOM: *(More to himself.)* Oh Jesus!

GEMMA: Children's toys.

MARTIN: Yes, right. No, never worked in a shop myself. The closest I got to that was –

DIANA enters through USL doorway.

DIANA: I head more voices. Hello there. You must be Tom's father.

MARTIN: *(Less enthusiastically.)* Yes... Martin.

DIANA: Hello, Martin. Di.

MARTIN: What!

DIANA: Di... Diana.

MARTIN: Oh. Hello.

DIANA: We caught Tom a bit off guard, I'm afraid.

MARTIN: Off guard?

TOM: It doesn't matter.

DIANA: I've ordered up some bubbly if you'd like to join us.

MARTIN: Ah... love to, but I have to be somewhere. Maybe another time. Tom will be delighted to, I'm sure. *(Looks at watch.)* Running late. Nice to meet you Gemma... and you, Di. Have fun.

DIANA: We will.

MARTIN exits through the USR doorway.

Where's he off to, anywhere interesting?

TOM: Yes actually, his kinky club.

DIANA: Kinky club!

TOM: Yeah.

DIANA: What belly dancing you mean?

TOM: I'm afraid it's a little stronger than that. Fetishism, S&M, bondage, you name it, he's doing it.

DIANA: Goodness!

TOM: Live snakes too with borderline underage girls. Seriously. There's nothing those girls can't do with snakes apparently... so he says. He knows I don't approve.

DIANA: I'm surprised something like that's allowed in a place like this with the strict –

TOM: If you know where to look. He did... he always does. Back of a carpet shop, apparently.

DIANA: So he's into all that your dad, is he, Tom?

TOM: Is he! He can't get enough of it. That and the booze. My mum sent me here to police him. His liver's practically gone. Please don't encourage him.

DIANA: Oh dear! He looks quite sprightly.

TOM: Only 'cos he's off to his kinky club.

DIANA: Yes, I'm sure that would do it. You'll join us for a glass of bubbly won't you, Tom?

GEMMA: Mum, I think he wants to work.

DIANA: Oh nonsense! Nobody comes on holiday to work, eh Tom? Might as well stay at home. No, people come on holiday to have fun, to meet people, to socialise, have a little drink and... well, not to work.

GEMMA exits through the USL doorway.

Oh! She disapproves of my habits. She's so squeaky clean, it's unhealthy. Just because I like a little drink of an evening, a little smoke from time to time... if you know what I mean, Tom. Of course you do, you're an artist. She's the one who should be shocking me surely. I certainly was with my mother. Daddy jokes that I put her into an early grave. Which is probably true in hindsight. No, she takes after my ex-husband, he wouldn't say boo to a goose. Completely infuriating at times. I mean, that's really what finished us. Men in my opinion should, if you pardon my frankness, Tom, have balls. No point being one if you don't have them. I know it's an old fashioned opinion, but I'm an old fashioned girl. I like a man to stand at the helm... in certain matters, take a good, firm hold of the reins and not be afraid to use the whip when needs be. Well, I'm sure your dad knows what I'm talking about, eh Tom? And I'm sure you do too.

Doorbell rings.

Ah, there's our bubbly. Don't go away.

DIANA exits through the USR doorway.

TOM: *(To himself.)* Why me? Why me?

TOM takes his drawing materials and his water bottle and exits through the USR doorway.

Lights down.

Scene 2

The following morning. 10.30 a.m.

GEMMA enters through the USL doorway. She carries her book. She glances briefly across to the adjacent terrace and then crosses to the edge of her own and takes in the view.

V.O. YMSV: *(Off. Street below.)* Sunglasses: Tom Ford, Gucci, Calvin Klein, Versace, Hugo Boss. All cheapest price. Hey, lady, you come and see?

GEMMA: No... I've got some, thanks.

GEMMA steps back from the edge. TOM enters through the USR doorway. He carries his drawing materials and his water bottle. GEMMA and he share a brief but frosty look. TOM crosses to his sun-lounger and GEMMA crosses to a chair. TOM opens his artist's pad and begins to draw. GEMMA reads her book. DIANA enters through the USL doorway. She wears her exercise outfit and carries her bag. TOM puts his sunglasses on.

DIANA: *(To TOM.)* Morning!

TOM: *(Coolly.)* Morning.

DIANA: Another lovely one! Mind you we'll probably get sick of saying that in a couple of days. You missed your champers yesterday.

TOM: Heat stroke, had to lie down.

DIANA: Oh dear! Better today I hope.

TOM: *(More to himself.)* We'll see.

DIANA: Wear a hat. Is your dad around?

TOM: Haven't seen him.

DIANA: Maybe he's still chained up.

GEMMA: Mum!

TOM: *(More to himself.)* Let's hope so.

DIANA: Plans for today, Tom?

TOM: Just doing this.

DIANA: We're going shopping. Ought to get to grip with these dirhams first, work out what they're worth... in real money that is. Have a go at our haggling. We'll probably get taken to the cleaners. Oh well, all part of the holiday fun. You're welcome to come with us, Tom, if –

GEMMA: Mum, he wants to do his art.

DIANA: Oh! Well the offer's there, Tom, if you fancy a little excursion. (*Exercises.*) Okay, let's get going with this, shall we?

GEMMA: Mum, do you have to?

DIANA: Yes.

GEMMA: We're on holiday.

DIANA: I've got to keep my instrument in pristine condition. I never miss a day, you know that.

GEMMA: But –

DIANA: (*To TOM.*) She knows that.

DIANA begins her exercise routine. Some of it is tailored to the fact TOM might be noticing. After a while she incorporates vocal exercises. TOM, annoyed, exits through the USR doorway.

GEMMA: See!

DIANA: See what?

GEMMA: You've driven him off.

DIANA: I've driven him off! Nonsense! Why don't you talk to him instead of hiding behind that book? I mean, just look at the cover, that's probably what drove him off... if anything did.

GEMMA: I told you, he doesn't want to talk... to either of us. He made that perfectly clear yesterday.

DIANA: You're just saying that.

GEMMA: I'm not. Anyway, he's extremely arrogant. I don't want to talk to him.

DIANA: And you're extremely judgemental. That's one way to stay

single all your life. I'm just concerned about you, Gem, darling, that's all. I just don't want you to end up like a miserable spinster in a house full of cats, like Mrs Hawkins.

GEMMA: I'm not going to.

DIANA: You say that, Gem darling, you say that now. Come on, let's do some exercises together, show him you're not just a couch potato and have got a bit of life in you.

GEMMA: Just leave me alone!

GEMMA exits through the USL doorway.

DIANA: Gem? Gemma? Oh! *(To herself.)* Daughters, daughters, daughters! Oh!

DIANA is about to exit after GEMMA.

ABDUL-HAMID: *(Off. Street below.)* Gold bracelets, silver bracelets, amulets, talismans, lucky charms. Gold bracelets, silver bracelets, amulets, talismans, lucky charms.

DIANA crosses to the edge of the terrace and looks down.

Good day, lady!

DIANA: Hello!

ABDUL-HAMID: *(Off. Street below.)* May I show you?

DIANA: *(Calling down.)* Why not? Shall I come down? Hello? *(To herself.)* Oh, he's gone!

DIANA continues to look down. ABDUL-HAMID arrives on the terrace by his own particular route. He carries his bag of merchandise.

ABDUL-HAMID: Salam, lady.

DIANA: Oh! Where did you spring from?

ABDUL-HAMID: One moment, please.

ABDUL-HAMID crosses to the SR terrace and looks up to a window high USR.

It's okay, coast clear. Hotel boss see me here, he send fat brother to break legs... or neck.

DIANA: Oh dear!

ABDUL-HAMID: It's okay, he send before, but Abdul-Hamid quick and fat brother slow, no contest. Still the mongoose must not get sleepy otherwise the snake will strike.

DIANA: True, true.

ABDUL-HAMID: Ah, perfume! Like a thousand Moroccan roses!

DIANA: Thank you. That's good, yes?

ABDUL-HAMID: Very good.

ABDUL-HAMID takes DIANA's hand and studies it.

Ah!

DIANA: What?

ABDUL-HAMID: Ah ha!

DIANA: Good?

ABDUL-HAMID: Ah!

DIANA: Not good?

ABDUL-HAMID: Oh!

DIANA: Bit of both perhaps?

ABDUL-HAMID: I see passion, extreme passion.

DIANA: That sounds like me.

ABDUL-HAMID: But not with husband.

DIANA: Yes, that's definitely me.

ABDUL-HAMID: He dead?

DIANA: America.

ABDUL-HAMID: *(Positively.)* Ah, America! *(Considers. Not so positively.)* Hm, America. One child I see?

DIANA: Yes, daughter.

ABDUL-HAMID: Beautiful daughter, like mother?

DIANA: Potentially.

ABDUL-HAMID: She got boyfriend?

DIANA: We're working on it.

ABDUL-HAMID: I see love.

DIANA: For me or...?

ABDUL-HAMID: For her.

DIANA: Well that's good. Enough about her, more about me.

ABDUL-HAMID: No more. I show you merchandise now. One moment.

ABDUL-HAMID crosses to the SR terrace again and looks up to the window.

DIANA: Coast clear?

ABDUL-HAMID: Coast clear.

ABDUL-HAMID open his bag. The inside of the bag extends to create a display of various merchandise.

Bracelets, rings, silver, gold. Please, take a look. All genuine, all best price.

DIANA: So much to choose from. May I?

ABDUL-HAMID: By all means.

DIANA takes a pendant.

Ah, exceptional taste.

DIANA: Thank you.

DIANA tries it on.

ABDUL-HAMID: Beautiful.

DIANA: Yes?

ABDUL-HAMID: This stone for extreme good luck.

DIANA: Well we all need that.

ABDUL-HAMID: You see.

ABDUL-HAMID takes a decorative hand mirror from the bag and holds it up for DIANA to look.

DIANA: Yes.

ABDUL-HAMID: With this.

ABDUL-HAMID takes out a bracelet and gives it to DIANA.

DIANA: That's nice.

ABDUL-HAMID: For extreme long life.

DIANA: Well, we all need that too.

DIANA puts it on.

Yes, I like that.

ABDUL-HAMID: And this.

ABDUL-HAMID takes a ring from his bag.

Beautiful ring.

DIANA: Yes, it is. What's this for?

ABDUL-HAMID: Whatever you want.

DIANA: Then I'll take it.

ABDUL-HAMID: You look like wife of sultan!

DIANA: Oh!

ABDUL-HAMID: You have beautiful skin.

DIANA: Thank you.

ABDUL-HAMID: But what women does not want more beautiful skin forever?
You have good luck, you have long life but you do not want to have skin like an old peach.

DIANA: No.

ABDUL-HAMID takes out a small jar.

ABDUL-HAMID: All Moroccan women swear in this.

ABDUL-HAMID unscrews the lid. DIANA sniffs it.

DIANA: Mm, divine! Yes, I'll have that too. And I love that mirror. Is it for sale?

ABDUL-HAMID: For you, lady, yes.

DIANA: Good. Now, here we go, how much?

ABDUL-HAMID: For everything. (*Calculates.*) One thousand dirhams.

DIANA: One thousand! That sounds a lot.

ABDUL-HAMID: In your money, it is nothing. But for special lady, special price... nine hundred and fifty.

DIANA: Shall we say nine hundred... and twenty?

ABDUL-HAMID: Nine hundred... and forty.

DIANA: Nine hundred... and thirty?

ABDUL-HAMID: Okay, deal! You bargain well.

DIANA: Thank you. I'm actually pretty new to this.

ABDUL-HAMID: Impossible to tell!

DIANA: Well, I am an actress.

ABDUL-HAMID: Oh, big star, Hollywood?

DIANA: Not quite Hollywood. I'm a stage actress, although I did have a walk on part in a famous British soap opera once. The lady on the canal boat. Blink and you'd have missed me. Oh, yes, payment.

DIANA fetches her bag. She takes out an envelope of dirhams.

Right, let's see.

ABDUL-HAMID: Nine of these... and three of these.

DIANA: There.

DIANA gives money to ABDUL-HAMID.

ABDUL-HAMID: My pleasure doing business with you. May I know your name?

DIANA: Diana... Di.

ABDUL-HAMID: Diana-Di.

DIANA: Just Di.

ABDUL-HAMID: Ah. Abdul-Hamid. One last thing, free gift for lovely lady Di.

DIANA: Oh! Never say no to a free gift!

ABDUL-HAMID takes a small phial from his bag.

ABDUL-HAMID: Love potion, very strong.

DIANA: Oh!

ABDUL-HAMID: One drop added to any liquid, whoever drink and their eye first look on... *(Suggestively.)* Hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo!

DIANA: Sounds too good to be true, Abdul-Hamid.

ABDUL-HAMID: No want it?

DIANA: Now I didn't say that. Never say no to a free gift!

ABDUL-HAMID presents it to DIANA. DIANA takes it.

ABDUL-HAMID: May help daughter.

DIANA: Now that's a point... if it works.

ABDUL-HAMID: It works. Now, must go. Goodbye, Di.

DIANA: Abdul Hamid.

ABDUL-HAMID: Allah be with you.

DIANA: And you.

ABDUL-HAMID: You look million dirhams!

DIANA: Thank you.

ABDUL-HAMID exits the way he came. DIANA examines her purchases. She looks at the phial.

Love potion. Honestly, who does he think I am?

DIANA considers for a moment and then glances across to the adjacent balcony. She notices TOM's water bottle. She looks back to the USL doorway in GEMMA's direction.

Well, there's only one way to find out, I suppose.

She looks over to the USR doorway and then furtively crosses the divide. She crosses to TOM's water bottle, unscrews the top and pours in a couple of drops of the potion. She screws the top back on the water bottle and examines it. She replaces the bottle and crosses back over the divide. She throws the phial in her bag.

(Calling towards USL doorway.) Gem –

DIANA checks herself. She decides instead to be the first to test its efficacy. She takes a magazine from her bag and reclines on her sun-lounger.

(Sudden realisation.) God, what if it's poison! Diana! You've just put an unknown substance given to you by a complete stranger, in Marrakech, into someone else's drink! Are you mad! Why would he give me poison? He was friendly. He was smiling. That doesn't mean anything. Of course he was smiling, you were giving him money. Diana! No, don't get hysterical, it's probably just tap water.

DIANA takes the phial from her bag. She pours a drop of the potion onto her finger to test it. She hesitates.

Or poison. Diana!

She returns the phial to her bag and is about to cross the divide to retrieve TOM's bottle when TOM enters through the USR doorway. He wears headphones plugged into his mobile. DIANA turns her attempted cross into a leg stretch.

Good, got your sounds, Tom.

TOM: *(Talking loudly.)* Yes, it is!

TOM crosses to his sun-lounger. He sits on it and picks up his artist's pad.

DIANA: Oh!

TOM picks up his water bottle.

No, Tom... Tom!

TOM: What?

TOM takes off a headphone and drinks.

DIANA: Don't...

TOM: *(Looking at DIANA. Potion working.)* Ah!

TOM stares at DIANA.

DIANA: Tom?

GEMMA enters through the USL doorway. She holds DIANA's mobile.

GEMMA: Lionel.

DIANA: What?

GEMMA: Lionel.

GEMMA hands the mobile to DIANA. DIANA keeps half an eye on TOM as she speaks on her mobile.

DIANA: *(To mobile.)* Lionel?... No, darling, I'm in Marrakech... Yes... What's that?... Yes, I mean no... No, I'm fine... Whose?... Oh, Tony Hogget. Yes, I think so.

DIANA searches in her bag.

Lionel, I just have to take you inside with me... No, stop that, Lionel, that's very naughty. No, I didn't say that.

DIANA exits through the USL doorway.

TOM: *(To himself.)* Oh! Oh!

GEMMA: Something the matter?

TOM: What's... what's her name?

GEMMA: Whose?

TOM: Hers!

GEMMA: Her name?

TOM: Yes.

GEMMA: Diana.

TOM: *(To himself.)* Oh, Diana!

GEMMA: Are you okay?

TOM: *(To himself.)* Stared at her like a fool!

GEMMA: What?

TOM: *(To himself.)* Couldn't speak. Diana!

MARTIN enters through the USR doorway. He wears sunglasses and moves gingerly.

MARTIN: Oh, Tom is that you? I presume it is. Gemma is it?

GEMMA: Yes.

MARTIN: Morning.

GEMMA: Morning.

MARTIN: Think my drink must've been spiked last night... more than once. I can hardly see. Interesting place though, from what I can remember. Good entertainment. Quiet one on the terrace, I think for me today. You?

GEMMA: Just...

MARTIN: Reading? A book isn't it? I can just about make that out. Breezy romance... trashy holiday novel?

GEMMA: No, it's a book about fair trading.

MARTIN: Ah. I'm reading about the Moroccan sultans. They didn't hold back when it came to lavish entertainments. And I bet no-one dared spike their drinks, otherwise it would be... *(MARTIN mimes a throat being cut.)*

TOM has been lost in his thoughts. He sniffs his shirt and hurriedly crosses to the USR doorway.

Okay, Tom?

TOM exits through the USR doorway ignoring MARTIN.

And good morning to you too.

GEMMA: Is he...?

MARTIN: Hm?

GEMMA: Is he okay?

MARTIN: Him? It depends what you mean by okay.

GEMMA: He seems...

MARTIN: Up tight, judgemental, supercilious, superior? I'm afraid that's Tom. I don't think his artist confederates help. From the sound of it, from the little he's said, they all seem to be completely up their own –

DIANA enters though the USL doorway.

DIANA: Morning.

MARTIN: *(Less enthusiastically.)* Oh... Morning.

DIANA: Where's Tom?

MARTIN: He's... not sure. Sorry, need to sit down. Chillax for a while.

MARTIN crosses to a chair and sits.

DIANA: Is he okay?

GEMMA: No, someone spiked his drink.

DIANA: Oh! How do you know?

GEMMA: He just said so.

DIANA: Did he! Where is he?

GEMMA: *(MARTIN.)* He's over there.

DIANA: Not him, Tom.

GEMMA: He went inside.

DIANA: Ah.

GEMMA: Is everything okay?

DIANA: Yes... yes it's fine.

GEMMA: He seems to be acting strangely though.

DIANA: Who?

GEMMA: Tom. More so than usual.

DIANA: What do you mean by strangely?

GEMMA: Well he was just sitting there looking...

DIANA: What?

GEMMA: I don't know, it's like he's... taken something, some... drug.

DIANA: Ah.

GEMMA: He wanted to know your name.

DIANA: He knows my name.

GEMMA: He'd obviously forgotten it.

DIANA: Possibly his heat stroke again.

TOM enters through the USR doorway. GEMMA crosses to her chair and takes up her book. TOM stares at DIANA.

All right, Tom?

TOM: Yes.

DIANA: Wondered where you'd gone.

TOM: I'm here.

DIANA: Yes. Well... are you feeling okay?

TOM: Yes.

DIANA: Good. Well...

TOM: Diana?

DIANA: Yes?

TOM: It's a... a lovely name.

DIANA: Oh, thank you. I like it.

TOM: So do I.

DIANA: Tom's a nice name too.

TOM: Thank you.

DIANA: You're welcome.

TOM: I... I...

DIANA: Yes? Yes, Tom?

TOM: I... Would you like to see my... my drawings?

DIANA: Ah. Yes, yes I would.

TOM goes to fetch his artist's pad. He nervously approaches DIANA.

What do you call your style again, Tom?

TOM: Abstract existentialism.

DIANA: Yes, you're going to have to explain what that is.

TOM: It's a fusion of abstract conceptualism with a sense of existential... in an existential form, which represents... which... I'm sorry, I'm usually a bit more...

DIANA: It's okay, Tom, I'm sure Cezanne had similar problems when trying to explain his work to ignoramuses like me.

TOM: No, you're not... you're not.

DIANA: Thank you. Perhaps I should just have a...

TOM: Yes.

TOM opens the pad and shows his work.

DIANA: Ah!

TOM: These are just a few that I've been... I've been working on lately.

DIANA: Yes, yes, that's... Well... Look at that. Yes, that's very... very bold... very bold, Tom.

TOM: Thank you.

DIANA: Wow! Yes! Oh yes, that's... that's quite something. Do you just work in black?

TOM: Yes. I find colour is too... too...

DIANA: Colourful?

TOM: Yes! Yes!

DIANA: Oh yes, that's a... that's an interesting one. Like two mirrors in a hairdresser's that go on to infinity. I like it.

TOM tears the drawing from his pad.

TOM: Then I want you to have it.

DIANA: What? Sure?

TOM: Yes.

DIANA: Well... thanks. I'll put it up somewhere at home.

TOM: Your bedroom... I mean... somewhere.

DIANA: Yes, maybe the bedroom. Well thank you, Tom, that's been a...an education... in abstract existentialism.

TOM: Ah...

DIANA: Yes?

TOM: Perhaps you... perhaps you'd like to... go for a walk?

DIANA: A walk?

TOM: Yes. To... have a look around.

DIANA: Sure, that would be...

TOM: Just... the two of us.

DIANA: Sure.

TOM: I'll... meet you in the foyer.

DIANA: Give me a few minutes, Tom, to... put on something suitable for... walking in. Five minutes.

TOM: Five minutes.

DIANA: Better make it ten.

TOM: All the time you need... Diana.

TOM takes his drawing materials, but forgets his water bottle, and exits through the USSR doorway.

DIANA: *(More to herself.)* Okay.

DIANA fetches her bag.

GEMMA: What's going on?

DIANA: Going on? Nothing's going on, he was showing me his artwork.

GEMMA: Why?

DIANA: Because he wanted to and I wanted to see it, that's why.

GEMMA: Isn't he acting a bit...?

DIANA: A bit what?

GEMMA: Strangely.

DIANA: I've no idea what you're talking about. You've got completely the wrong idea of him... as usual. He's not arrogant as you imagine him to be, he's actually very friendly and sociable. In fact we're taking a walk together.

GEMMA: What!

DIANA: A walk, W.A.L.K.

GEMMA: What for?

DIANA: Why do people normally take a walk together? Really, Gem darling, you say some silly things. Okay, we'll postpone our shopping till another time. That's okay, isn't it? Good. *(Jewellery.)* Oh, what do you think of these?

GEMMA: Where did you get them?

DIANA: A travelling merchant who dropped by earlier. This is for good luck, this is for long life and this... this is for you.

DIANA gives GEMMA the ring.

GEMMA: What's this for?

DIANA: For attracting a man.

DIANA gives GEMMA the hand mirror.

Here, this might come in useful too. See you later.

DIANA exits through the USL doorway. MARTIN snores.

Lights down.

Scene 3

That evening. 6.30 p.m.

GEMMA: *(To mobile.)* Hi, just wondering where you are. Perhaps you can call me when you get this, let me know you're... okay.

GEMMA hangs up. She picks up the hand mirror and looks at it. MARTIN enters through the USSR doorway. He holds a glass of whisky and a bowl of cashew nuts.

MARTIN: Oh, hello.

GEMMA: Oh... hello.

MARTIN: They're still not back yet?

GEMMA: No.

MARTIN: Oh. Well they're obviously having fun... wherever they are. And you're sure they went off together, together together, not just leaving at the same time?

GEMMA: No, together together.

MARTIN: Well, wouldn't have put money on that one, would you?

GEMMA: No.

MARTIN: They could've got lost, I suppose, it's a bit of a maze out there.

GEMMA's mobile beeps.

Her? What does she say?

GEMMA: *(Reading text.)* Don't worry, everything's A okay.

MARTIN: Oh well, I suppose everything must be... A okay then. We're not to worry. *(Feeling sunburn.)* Oh!

GEMMA: How's your...?

MARTIN: Painful. Can't blame the sun for doing his job, can we? Her job. My own fault for falling asleep on the lounge with my shirt off. Thought I'd take advantage of it since Tom's gone. He seems to have claimed it for his own. His artist's studio. Have you seen them?

GEMMA: No.

MARTIN: Don't, they'll give you nightmares. Don't see why he can't do something a little more palatable like landscapes or nudes. Do you paint, Gemma?

GEMMA: No.

MARTIN: Any hobbies?

GEMMA: I write... a bit.

MARTIN: What genre?

GEMMA: Fiction.

MARTIN: Ah, anything published?

GEMMA: No.

MARTIN: Big fan of fiction me, big fan. Perhaps you'd like to show me something of your... if you're –

GEMMA: No, it's... it's not...

MARTIN: Not yet for the showing? I understand. (*Drink.*) Fancy joining me for one of these? This is whisky. G and T perhaps? Or a nice cool glass of white wine, perfect at this time of day.

GEMMA: No, I...

MARTIN: I'm buying.

GEMMA: No... thanks.

MARTIN: Well, let me know if you change your mind. Just a call away. Cashew nut perhaps?

GEMMA declines.

MARTIN: They're good. Certainly picked well here, didn't we? Wonderful view. No-one to whisk you away, Gemma, on romantic breaks like these... apart from your mum, of course? No boyfriend?

GEMMA shakes her head.

Well that's not good enough is it, Gemma? A lovely girl like you should have someone to wine you and dine you in romantic settings like these. You must have interest surely.

GEMMA: I'm... I don't have time for... for that at the moment, as much

as my mother wants me to.

MARTIN: No time for love!

GEMMA: I'm taking time to work out what it is I want... out of life. Don't want my life to revolve around... anyone else... at the moment.

MARTIN: Shame to lose out on some of life's pleasures along the journey. (*TOM.*) Don't want to end up like him. Although, having said that, he's acting a little out of character at the moment. Are you sure I can't order you something up from the bar?

GEMMA: No, really, I'm...

MARTIN: Seems a shame to sit around here empty handed on such a lovely evening. Push the boat out a little, you're on holiday.

GEMMA: Thanks, but... (*Mobile.*) Actually there's someone I need to –

MARTIN: Cashew nut at least. Go on, let me offer you something.

GEMMA: Thanks.

GEMMA reluctantly takes a cashew nut and eats it.

MARTIN: Listen, Gemma, if I might be allowed to say something. You'll probably shoot me down in –

GEMMA starts to choke on the nut.

Oh, gone down the wrong way?

MARTIN considers giving GEMMA the whisky.

No.

He sees TOM's water bottle.

Ah!

MARTIN goes to fetch it.

Here we are, drink some of this.

MARTIN gives the bottle to GEMMA. GEMMA drinks.

Better?

GEMMA: *(Looking at MARTIN. Potion working.)* Oh!

MARTIN: Nasty when that happens. Have another sip. Hold on to it for the moment.

GEMMA does so.

GEMMA: Oh!

MARTIN: Good. You look better. Feel it?

GEMMA: Yes.

MARTIN: Good. What was I saying? Oh yes, like I say, you'll probably shoot me down in flames, Gemma, but –

GEMMA: Gem.

MARTIN: What's that?

GEMMA: You can call me Gem.

MARTIN: Gem. Okay, Gem. Call me Marty.

GEMMA: Marty.

MARTIN: Yes. Ah, yes, you'll probably shoot me down in flames –

GEMMA: No... I won't.

MARTIN: What?

GEMMA: Shoot you down... in flames.

MARTIN: Figuratively speaking, I mean. But I would hazard a guess that you don't have a particularly high opinion of yourself, Gem. Am I right? Thought so. You see I'm a very good judge of people. You need to be in my business.

GEMMA: What is it you do, Marty?

MARTIN: Air and water purification systems.

GEMMA: Oh!

MARTIN: I'm the big cheese, the head honcho, the buck stops with me. And my job is to galvanise and motivate people... my team,

that is. Relatively new enterprise, three years in operation, had some initial teething problems, but we're going strong now. Set it up myself, had enough of slaving away for others and decided to go it alone. Best thing I ever did. Anyway, we seem to have started talking about me. Very clever of you to get me off the subject. It's you we're talking about, your low opinion of yourself. And you know what that's down to... what I think it's down to, Gem? Your mother. I know the type, if you forgive me for saying so, they don't let you breathe, give you space, they're all over you, stifling your every move. Am I right? You know I am. You know what the best thing for you to do, Gem? Might as well even start this holiday.

GEMMA: What's that, Marty?

MARTIN: Is for you to make a bid for your own independence. Do what *you* want to do, go where *you* want to go... with whoever you want to go with... whomever.

GEMMA: You're right, I will!

MARTIN: Good! That's what I like to hear. You know perhaps tomorrow you can make your first bid for independence by coming and exploring the markets, or souks as they call them, with me.

GEMMA: Yes.

MARTIN: Yes?

GEMMA: Yes, I'd love that!

MARTIN: Good. Good! We might even get lucky.

GEMMA: Lucky?

MARTIN: Pick up a magic carpet or a lantern with a genie inside. 'Yes, master, your wish is my command.'

GEMMA laughs.

You have a lovely laugh, Gem.

GEMMA: Thanks, Marty.

MARTIN: See, just because they're off having fun it doesn't mean we can't be having some fun together too. Are you sure I can't offer you that drink?

GEMMA: Yes.

MARTIN: What, 'yes' no I can't or 'yes' yes I can?

GEMMA: 'Yes', yes you can.

MARTIN: Okay, that's the spirit! I'll go and... What would you like, white wine or...? I know, do you like sparkling, champers?

GEMMA: Yes.

MARTIN: I think I'm ready to move onto something more playful. Perhaps I should order us up a bottle of that. What do you say?

GEMMA: Wonderful!

MARTIN: Great! Okay. Don't go away, Gem.

GEMMA: I won't, Marty.

MARTIN exits through the USR doorway. GEMMA moves dreamily about the terrace. She becomes aware of her clothes and hurriedly exits through the USL doorway. She puts the water bottle on the SL patio table en route. MARTIN enters through the USR doorway.

MARTIN: Okay, all ordered and on it's... Gem? Gemma? Are you hiding somewhere? Gemma? Gem?

DIANA appears at the USL doorway. She is dressed in a lavish Moroccan outfit.

DIANA: Ta da!

MARTIN: Ah!

DIANA: We're back! What do you think, Martin? I haggled stupendously for this. You ought to see what Tom's wearing.

TOM appears at the USL doorway wearing an equally sumptuous Moroccan outfit. He holds a couple of shopping bags.

Just look at him! Doesn't he look something?

MARTIN: Yes. Tom?

DIANA: Is Gemma about?

MARTIN: Ah...

DIANA: *(Calling back through USL doorway.)* Gem, darling! Gemma!

MARTIN: You okay, Tom?

TOM: Oh yes!

DIANA: Have you seen her?

MARTIN: A moment ago, she... went inside.

DIANA: Ah. He's going to do me now... my portrait.

MARTIN: Is he?

DIANA: He is. He purchased some paints, he needed colour! Where do you want me, maestro, outside or inside?

TOM: Inside perhaps, reclining on the ottoman.

DIANA: Good idea. He's full of good ideas. Now would you like to do me in this? Or...

DIANA takes another newly-purchased outfit from the shopping bag.

...in this?

TOM: Both, they're both equally as magnificent! I'll do two portraits... five, ten, twenty!

GEMMA enters through the USL doorway. She has managed to put together a racier outfit. She carries a tube of after-sun cream and is more focussed on MARTIN than DIANA or TOM.

DIANA: Hello, Gem darling.

GEMMA: Oh, hello.

DIANA: You look... nice.

GEMMA: Thanks.

DIANA: You've been okay here, have you, alone?

GEMMA: Yes.

DIANA: Good. (*Outfit.*) What do you think of this?

GEMMA: Nice.

TOM: Come on, Di, let me do your portraits now. To the ottoman!

TOM takes DIANA's arm and leads her through the USL doorway.

DIANA: Tom! *(Off.)* Careful, Tom, I bruise easily.

GEMMA: Hi.

MARTIN: I'd thought you'd run off somewhere.

GEMMA: No, I went to get this.

MARTIN: What is it?

GEMMA: Cream, for your sunburn.

MARTIN: Oh.

GEMMA: Maybe I can... if you want me to... put it on for you?

MARTIN: Oh, oh yes, if you...?

GEMMA: Yes. *(Shirt.)* Lift up.

MARTIN: Yes. They look something, don't they? Like a couple of –

MARTIN lifts up the back of his shirt. GEMMA puts cream on her hands and puts her hands on MARTIN's back.

Oh! Oh, yes! Oh yes, that's nice! Cooling and refreshing. You have... Oh yes! A magical touch.

Sound of doorbell is heard from MARTIN's room.

Oh, there's the champers. Thanks for that, Gem, that was really... really... wonderful. Think it's made quite a difference. Yes, quite a difference. Be right back.

MARTIN exits through the USR doorway. GEMMA enjoys the moment. DIANA enters through the USL doorway.

DIANA: All right, Gem, darling?

GEMMA: Yes, thanks.

DIANA: You've dressed up. Are you going somewhere?

GEMMA: No.

DIANA: Oh. Well, you look... nice.

GEMMA: Thanks.

DIANA: *(MARTIN.)* What's... what's he doing?

TOM: *(Off. Calling.)* Where's my model gone!

GEMMA: Oughtn't you be getting back to Picasso?

DIANA: He's only painting my portrait.

GEMMA: I don't want to know.

TOM: *(Off. Calling.)* Diana!

DIANA: *(Calling.)* I'm coming! *(To GEMMA.)* Just so long as you're...

GEMMA: What?

DIANA: You know... in control... of the situation.

TOM: *(Off. Calling.)* Diana!

GEMMA: Off you go.

DIANA: *(Calling.)* Coming, Mr Impatient!

DIANA exits through the USL doorway. Sound of champagne cork popping from within the SR hotel room. GEMMA swirls about the terrace.

GEMMA: *(Softly to herself.)* Marty, Marty, Marty... etc.

MARTIN enters through the USR doorway holding two glasses of champagne.

MARTIN: Having a little dance, are we?

GEMMA: I've been secretly learning some salsa dancing.

MARTIN: I'd join you. Trouble is I've got two left feet me.

GEMMA: It's easy, it just takes a little practice.

MARTIN: *(Giving glass.)* Here we are, Gem.

GEMMA: Thanks, Marty.

MARTIN: Well, cin cin.

GEMMA: Cin cin.

MARTIN: Here's to... What shall we drink to?

GEMMA: To being lost forever in the eternal moment!

MARTIN: Never drank to that before, but I'll go along with the sentiment.

GEMMA: Cin cin.

MARTIN: Cin cin.

They drink.

Mmm, lovely! (*Sunburn.*) Yes, that's made a big difference, thank you, Gem.

GEMMA: My pleasure.

MARTIN: Yes, they're looking quite something, aren't they? I don't know how your mother's managed to bring Tom out of his shell quite like this, but she has.

GEMMA: I want to hear more... about you, your work, your air and water purification systems.

MARTIN: Well... you're asking for it.

GEMMA: I'm listening.

MARTIN: All right. Water for instance. If I was wearing my salesman's hat... not so much nowadays.

GEMMA: Put it on.

MARTIN: Oh, okay.

MARTIN puts on an imaginary hat.

GEMMA: It suits you.

MARTIN: Thanks. Yes, I'd tell you not to drink that.

MARTIN points to the water bottle.

GEMMA: Because of the wastage?

MARTIN: And not only that –

GEMMA: I was reading that eighty-percent of plastic bottles get thrown into landfills.

MARTIN: Quite –

GEMMA: Twenty percent recycled.

MARTIN: Right –

GEMMA: What was it? Something like seventeen million barrels of oil are used in the production of plastic bottles in the USA alone.

MARTIN: Yes, and here's the good news –

GEMMA: That's mind boggling, isn't it?

MARTIN: And here's the good news, if I can get a word in.

GEMMA: Sorry, Marty, go on.

MARTIN: So the good news is... what is the good news? Yes, the good news is, when we provide a product, a simple in-house, under-sink, water filtration unit, that not only provides clear, odourless, tasteless water... which is the way water should be, but can save a small fortune in the household pocket in a few months alone. Think water, think Walker. Surname.

MARTIN shows his pendant of a large W.

Gift from the team.

GEMMA: It's lovely.

MARTIN: Well, it's just a...

GEMMA: And you're the big boss!

MARTIN: I am.

GEMMA: Do they call you 'sir', your team?

MARTIN: We tend not to be that formal.

GEMMA: I think it's wonderful what you're doing, Marty, how you're helping the environment. You deserve a big pat on the back.

MARTIN: Thanks, probably not have that pat on the back just at the moment, eh? Ouch!

GEMMA: I'd love to do something like that, something worthwhile.

MARTIN: Well you've got your shop, selling toys to children. That's worthwhile, isn't it?

GEMMA: They're just mass produced items and most of them made in intolerable conditions for the workers.

MARTIN: Oh... well, sounds like you're maybe in the wrong place.

GEMMA: Yes.

MARTIN: Perhaps you should come and work for me instead.

GEMMA: I'd love to!

MARTIN: What?

GEMMA: I'd love to do that!

MARTIN: What, selling air and water purification systems?

GEMMA: Yes! I want to join your team!

MARTIN: Really?

GEMMA: Yes!

MARTIN: Well, you'd certainly be a welcome addition, add a bit of youthful vigour to the team... not that any of us are old, by any means, just not as young as you.

GEMMA: I'd love to!

MARTIN: Great! Perhaps we can talk about it some more on our saunter around the souks tomorrow.

GEMMA: Yes. *(Toasting.)* To air and water purification systems!

MARTIN: To air and water purification systems! First time I've made a toast to that before too. And to new recruits!

GEMMA: New recruits!

MARTIN: Well... turning into quite an unexpected evening, isn't it, this?

GEMMA: Yes. Marty?

MARTIN: Yes?

GEMMA: Will you promise not to laugh at me if I show you something?

MARTIN: Show me...?

GEMMA: They're quite... personal.

MARTIN: They?

GEMMA: Yes. It's something I don't show anyone. No one knows about them.

MARTIN: Ah, the mind boggles.

GEMMA: But promise not to laugh?

MARTIN: I won't.

GEMMA crosses to the USL doorway as DIANA enters through the USL doorway.

DIANA: All right, Gem darling?

GEMMA exits through the USL doorway.

Enjoying a little drink together?

MARTIN: We are.

DIANA: Just remember, Martin, she's nineteen.

MARTIN: Old enough to make her own decisions in life without the aid of her mother.

DIANA: Well, just remember where you are. It's not a kinky S and M dungeon, filled with borderline underage snake girls.

MARTIN: I'm sorry?

DIANA: I know what you're into. And if you try to drag my daughter into your sordid fantasies you'll be dealing with me... and her father, who happens to be an ex-international boxer.

GEMMA appears at the USL doorway. She carries a note book behind her back.

GEMMA: What do you want?

DIANA: Just came out to get a bit of fresh air.

GEMMA: Got some now?

DIANA: Yes, thank you. I'll just be in here.

TOM: *(Off.)* Di, Di, DI, Di, Di, DI, Di!

DIANA exits through the USL doorway.

DIANA: *(Off.)* Coming!

GEMMA: Promise not to tease me if I show you?

MARTIN: Cross my heart and hope to die.

GEMMA shows her notebook.

GEMMA: They're poems.

MARTIN: Ah!

GEMMA: No one knows I write them. But I want to share one with you.

MARTIN: Sure, by all means. I'm a... I'm a big fan of poetry.

GEMMA: They're mostly about environmental issues, what we're doing to the planet. But there's one about my yearning, my longing for... Well, I won't spoil it for you. Would you like to...?

MARTIN: Yes, yes, I'd love to. Read away.

GEMMA: It's called 'Love's Essence'.
(Reads.) In the earth a seed there lies
She will not bloom as much she tries
Contained within her earthly womb
Her subterranean stony tomb
She cries for light but light there's none
No life beyond this world to come

MARTIN: Well, that's –

GEMMA: *(Reads.)* But with the touch of mercy's hand
Water falls upon the land
It trickles down to where she sits
And kisses life into her lips
And like a mighty tide in flood
It courses through her thirsty blood
And inch by inch she pushes though
Her rocky canopy and to
The air above, her home the light

MARTIN: Bravo, that's –

GEMMA: I am that seed, I was interred
Within the ground, not seen nor heard
Until your mercy came to me
And set my prisoned sorrow free
With your elixir pure and true
Love's essence is each drop of you

That's it.

MARTIN: Well that's... wonderful, wonderful! I'm...

GEMMA: You like it?

MARTIN: I love it!

GEMMA tears the poem from her book.

GEMMA: Here, for you!

MARTIN: For me?

GEMMA: I want you to have it.

MARTIN: Well... thank you, I'm... honoured.

MARTIN takes the poem.

I'll treasure it. I couldn't write poetry to save my life. It's a bit like my dancing, two left feet. Perhaps I've got two left brains.

GEMMA: I'll teach you.

MARTIN: Poetry?

GEMMA: No, salsa.

MARTIN: Oh. I'm warning you, two left feet me.

GEMMA puts the glasses down.

GEMMA: All you need to do is this.

GEMMA demonstrates.

That's it. Now together. We hold like this. And put all that together. That's it, that's good. You're a natural.

MARTIN: I'm enjoying this.

GEMMA: Me too.

MARTIN: Oh, lost it! Well... that was... that was very... very...

They are about to kiss when DIANA appears at the USL doorway. She has changed into her other outfit.

DIANA: Well! (*Outfit.*) What do you think of this one?

GEMMA and MARTIN part, much to GEMMA's annoyance.

Perhaps I could have a brief word with my daughter, Martin... alone.

GEMMA: I don't want a word.

DIANA: I do. If you don't mind, Martin.

MARTIN: I'll just be in here.

MARTIN exits through the USR doorway.

GEMMA: What do you want?

DIANA: Are you doing this to punish me?

GEMMA: What!

DIANA: Is this what this is about? Just because I've spent the day with Tom? I'm concerned, Gem darling, that's all. Remember, he's old enough to be your father.

TOM: (*Off. Calling.*) Diana!

GEMMA: And he's young enough to be your son.

DIANA: (*Calling.*) I'm coming! (*To GEMMA.*) Just remember what he's into, his S & M, his borderline underage snake girls.

GEMMA: (*Dismissively.*) Oh!

DIANA: You may've put it out of your mind, but I haven't.

TOM: (*Off. Calling.*) Where's my Venus?

GEMMA: I won't ask what you're into in there.

DIANA: He's painting my portraits, that's all.

TOM: *(Off. Calling.)* Diana!

GEMMA: Hadn't you better be getting back to him before his brush dries?

DIANA: Remember, you're not going to see him after this holiday.
Don't do something you might regret... for the rest of your life.

GEMMA: Actually, I'm going to work for him.

DIANA: What!

GEMMA: He's asked me. I'm going to be part of his sales team in Hemel Hempstead selling air and water purification systems and there's nothing you can do to stop me.

TOM appears at the USL doorway with a drink in his hand.

TOM: You keep running off! I want you!

TOM takes DIANA's arm and pulls her back to the doorway.

DIANA: Tom! Tom, that hurts!

TOM: Come on, Di, back to the ottoman with you!

DIANA: *(To GEMMA.)* We'll discuss that one, Gemma, I don't approve, I don't approve at all.

TOM and DIANA exit through the USL doorway.

(Off.) Ow, Tom! Be gentle, be gentle with me!

GEMMA calls across to the USR doorway.

GEMMA: Marty! Marty, she's gone!

MARTIN enters from the USR doorway. He carries a portable music player, a CD and the champagne bottle.

MARTIN: Everything okay?

GEMMA: It's fine.

MARTIN: Is she...?

GEMMA: I told her I'm going to work for you.

MARTIN: How does she feel about that?

GEMMA: I don't care. It's how *I* feel that matters.

MARTIN: That's the spirit! I'll drink to that. Here we are.

MARTIN refills GEMMA's glass and then his own.

GEMMA: *(Toasting.)* To us!

MARTIN: To us! I thought since we're in a musical mood. Something I picked up on my travels yesterday. *(Holds up CD.)* 'The Spirit of Marrakech'. Give it a whirl shall we?

MARTIN puts the CD on. Music plays.

Sounds okay. Perhaps we should learn to dance to this.

GEMMA: Marty?

MARTIN: Yes?

GEMMA: You know where you went last night?

MARTIN: Just about.

GEMMA: What do they do?

MARTIN: Do?

GEMMA: What do they have there?

MARTIN: Well, it's mainly their own Moroccan cuisine.

GEMMA: No, I mean with the entertainments.

MARTIN: Entertainments?

GEMMA: I don't mind, if that's what you're into.

MARTIN: Sorry?

GEMMA: I'm not going to be judgemental. They're not underage though are they?

MARTIN: Who, the waiters?

GEMMA: No, the snake girls.

MARTIN: Snake girls! I think someone's been concocting stories about

me. And I think I know who that might be.

GEMMA: So you're not into S & M and all that?

MARTIN: No. Does that disappoint you?

GEMMA: No.

MARTIN: Not with my sunburn, eh? (*Miming a whip.*) Ouch! No, I wouldn't believe anything he tells you.

GEMMA: Sit down, Marty, I'll give you some entertainment.

MARTIN: Yes?

MARTIN sits. GEMMA puts her glass down, turns the music up and starts to perform her version of a belly dance.

Ooh, a belly dance!

GEMMA's dance culminates in GEMMA sitting astride MARTIN's lap. They kiss passionately. DIANA enters through the USL doorway.

DIANA: Oh my God! Gemma!

TOM enters through the USL doorway. He holds up a colourful abstract existentialist portrait of DIANA.

TOM: My Venus!

DIANA: Oh God!

Blackout.