

# WHO KNOWS WHO KNOWS WHO?

by

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Characters:

Cast of 5 (3M 2F)

TOBY HARPER – forties  
SAMANTHA HARPER – forties  
DOUGLAS FULLER – forties  
GINA FULLER – forties  
JASPER WRIGHT – late thirties

Synopsis of scenes:

Act 1

Scene 1 – Friday 6.30 p.m.

Act 2

Scene 1 – Saturday 9.30 a.m.

Place – Kent. Two adjoining cottages belonging to Toby and Samantha and Douglas and Gina.

Time – The present. Summer.

Act 1

Scene 1

*Friday 6.30 p.m.*

*The rear view of two adjoining cottages with a shared garden. The garden is sunken and comprises most of the stage area. In the garden there is the front end section of a shed DSL. Entrances and exits lead in and out of the garden as well as in and out of the cottages.*

*A paved path US of the shed leads off SL. There is a bush, perhaps rhododendron, DSR. A paved path US of the bush leads off SR. There is a low stone wall three to four feet high that runs in front of the two properties. This forms the US perimeter of the garden as well as serving as a walkway and access to the respective cottages. A few wide stone steps in the centre of the walkway descend into the garden. The rear stone wall of the adjoining cottages is covered in a climbing plant such as wisteria. The bottom section of two upstairs windows are higher up on the wall. There are two rear doors to each cottage (stable doors), that open out onto the walkway. One door is USR and other USL. They are painted different colours.*

*Birdsong. TOBY enters through the USL door. He descends the steps into the garden. He enters the shed. Sound of car arriving and pulling to a stop. TOBY exits the shed with a garden table. He places it on the SL area of the lawn. He returns to the shed to fetch a couple of garden chairs. He opens them and places them by the table. GINA enters through the USR door. She holds her case.*

TOBY: Oh, Gina!

GINA: Toby.

*GINA descends the steps into the garden.*

TOBY: At last!

GINA: Stay there!

TOBY: What? What is it?

GINA: I've imagined this moment for six weeks – seeing you standing here, in the flesh – I want to enjoy it... for a few seconds at least.

TOBY: I can't wait that long.

GINA: You're going to have to.

TOBY: I want to hold you, kiss you.

GINA: Let me enjoy my moment. I don't want to rush anything. I want everything to be special, every minute to be savoured, impressed deeply into my heart, my soul for always. Just drink me in, Toby, and I'll drink you in.

TOBY: Yes, let's drink each other in. Sounds a bit raunchy, doesn't it, when we phrase it like that – a bit like one of our text messages.

GINA: One of yours.

TOBY: Excuse me, I think one of yours too.

GINA: Stop it. I'm shy now in the cold light of day and without a glass of something to encourage me.

TOBY: That's on its way. Oh, Gina, I thought I would go mad – facing another day without you – literally stark, raving bonkers. I've been shaking practically the whole day, shaking with thoughts about you – a million thoughts bombarding me at once. I could barely keep my mind on my work. I showed people the same bathroom three times – potential buyers to a bungalow in Peshurst. I felt like an idiot – was behaving like one, a foolish... fool.

GINA: My sweet, foolish fool.

TOBY: I've been semi-articulate all day – that's not good for an estate agent. You'll put me out of business if we carry on like this.

GINA: Do you want us to stop?

TOBY: No, I want us to start.

GINA: I'm ready.

TOBY: So am I.

*They are about to kiss. TOBY's mobile rings.*

Bugger! Sorry, I should've put it on silent.

*He checks the display.*

It's her.

*He turns the volume down.*

I'll call her back.

GINA: No, deal with it now, we don't want her hovering over us. You'll just be thinking about what to say to her while we're kissing. Don't want that.

*TOBY answers his mobile.*

TOBY: *(To mobile.)* Yes, hello?... Yes I am... It was – it was fine... No, not too bad... In the garden... Just – just enjoying the garden, that's all... No, not yet, probably have something up at the pub... Yes, probably. *(Mouthing to Gina.)* Sorry. *(To mobile.)* Was there something you... What? I can't hear you. You need to put the – Samantha?... That's better... Yes. Is everything... *(Concerned.)* Talk about what?... Sorry? Sorry for what?... Sam, have you been drinking?... Okay, okay, I'm just asking, you just sound a little... emotional – emotional and muffled again... Yes. What is it you're sorry about?...

*GINA ascends the steps. She takes her case and exits through the USSR door.*

*(To himself.)* Balls!... *(To mobile.)* No, I just... stood on a stone. Look, Sam, this sounds like something that needs to be said not on two ends of a telephone – on the ends of two telephones – especially since I keep on losing you... Yes... No, I'm not not wanting to hear what you're wanting to say – I'm not saying that – I'm just saying... What is it you're sorry about – right now?... I see... Right... Okay... Look, Sam, I really do think this is something we need to discuss at home – at leisure – where we can lay it all out on the living room floor, so to speak... Yes, my advice now is to plonk yourself in a nice, hot, relaxing bath and... What's that?... No, like I've said, I'm fine... Yes, just looking forward to doing nothing for a couple of days – with no-one – no-one about... No, they're not here.

*GINA enters through the USSR door. TOBY holds up his hand to indicate a couple more moments.*

Look, Sam, battery's practically out. Have that bath, light some candles, listen to one of your relaxation thingies. I'll probably

do the same myself in the pub – de-stress myself over a pint I mean... Yes... I'm going to lose you any moment... Talk anon... Yes... Okay... Bye then... Bye now... Yes.

*TOBY hangs up. GINA descends the steps.*

So sorry. This is now officially on silent.

GINA: Everything okay?

TOBY: Yes. I thought she suspected for a moment though.

GINA: Us you mean?

TOBY: When she said she wanted to talk about something important.

GINA: What was it?

TOBY: Oh... I don't know, it wasn't clear – it never is clear with Samantha what she's trying to say – even more so after a couple of gin and tonics. Something about being sorry.

GINA: Sorry for what?

TOBY: How she's *been* lately – I don't know. It'll pass. But let's not talk about her, it's eating into our precious time together. Now, please, please, please can we kiss?

GINA: We can. But make it like the first time, Toby.

TOBY: The very first.

GINA: Always like the first time.

TOBY: Always.

GINA: Forever now.

TOBY: Yes, yes, forever now – now let's kiss.

*They kiss.*

Bliss and heaven. More.

*They kiss again.*

More bliss, more heaven. Like an oasis after a trek through the Gobi desert. Again.

GINA: Enough.

TOBY: Enough?

GINA: For the moment. Let me savour those two.

TOBY: I have Riesling. It's chilling so we should give it a moment.

GINA: (*Sings 'Till There Was You'.*) 'There were bells on a hill but I never heard them ringing, no I never heard them at all till there was you.' That song's been on my mind since we met.

TOBY: What, for six weeks?

GINA: On and off. It says everything I feel.

TOBY: Me too. I was contemplating the workings of fate on the way over. If Douglas's cousin and wife hadn't decided to move to Italy and you and Douglas hadn't decided to take on the renting of the place here I would never have met you.

GINA: We almost didn't. I was persuading Doug it was a luxury we couldn't afford. He said once I saw the place I'd fall in love with it. I came all prepared to talk him out of it. But it wasn't the cottage I fell in love with – although it is very pretty –

TOBY: It is.

GINA: It was my neighbour – potential neighbour... and landlord.

TOBY: The moment I laid eyes on you I knew I'd be extremely flexible with the rent.

GINA: He thought it was the place of course that did it.

TOBY: Win win situation. And all so fast, a whirlwind. I'm still marvelling at how many opportunities we got, to sneak off together, to enjoy our secret trysts. Fate smiling on us.

GINA: When will you tell her?

TOBY: Tell her what?

GINA: About us? You are going to tell her, I presume... aren't you?

TOBY: I... I haven't really thought that far ahead – yet. Have you?

GINA: Yes... and beyond.

TOBY: Beyond?

- GINA: When we're together – beyond being with them.
- TOBY: Shouldn't we first see how things go between us before we rush into things – telling them? I mean I think we *should* – at some stage – if everything goes... to plan. But we've only had a handful of kisses to date, shouldn't we at least... well, to put it bluntly, bed test things for a while – for your sake just as much as – you might be hugely disappointed with me – by me... I'm hoping you won't be, of course.
- GINA: How could I be, Toby, I'm in love with you, I adore you.
- TOBY: And I adore you too, Gina, there's no question about that, none at all. But, as you wisely say, let's savour things slowly, get to know one another intimately, lovingly... at a comfortable pace.
- GINA: And we will, Toby, I know we will. I just want things to be right between us – right from the start.
- TOBY: They've never felt righter.
- GINA: But it's wrong to deceive them any more than we have to.
- TOBY: And we won't... any more than we have to, but first we have to.
- GINA: I just don't want to be one of those women who sneak off at weekends to carry on a grubby affair behind their husband's back.
- TOBY: It doesn't have to be grubby. We won't let it get to the grubby stage. We'd have told them well before it gets grubby.
- GINA: I'm not good at deceiving anyone.
- TOBY: Me neither, Gina, me neither.
- GINA: My neck goes all red when I lie.
- TOBY: No, I don't have that problem.
- GINA: All around here. But that's not the reason I don't lie more, it's just that I have a very strong sense of right and wrong – a natural sense of justice perhaps.
- TOBY: We'll tell them when the time's right – not a second too late... or too early. We really haven't been deceiving them for that long – when you think about how other people stretch it out for years without a shred of guilt. Only six weeks – two and a half

days, if we're not counting text messages – that's nothing. Listen, Gina, we're discussing things too intensely too soon. The Riesling will be chilled by now. I'll be right back, so don't run off.

GINA: The only place I want to run to is into your arms.

TOBY: You beautiful angel.

GINA: You handsome man.

TOBY: My goddess.

GINA: My prince.

*TOBY ascends the steps and exits through the USL door.*

*(Sings to herself.)* 'There were birds in the sky but I never saw them winging, no I never saw them at all till there was you'.

*GINA crosses to the shed and has a cursory peek inside.*

DOUGLAS: *(Off. Calling.)* Geeny?

GINA: *(To herself.)* Oh God!

DOUGLAS: *(Off. Calling.)* Geeny are you here?

*GINA hurries into the shed, closing the door behind her. DOUGLAS enters through the USR door. He holds a travel bag and a bunch of flowers.*

Geeny?

*He puts his case down and descends the steps. TOBY enters through the USL door holding two glasses of wine and the opened bottle in a cooler sleeve.*

TOBY: Here we are my gorgeous – *(Seeing DOUGLAS.)* Oh!

DOUGLAS: Hello. Sorry, didn't mean to... Doug.

TOBY: Yes, I know. You surprised me, I didn't think... I didn't think you were... here.

DOUGLAS: I wasn't... until now. I've just arrived.

TOBY: Right. Right. How are you?

DOUGLAS: Well thanks, Toby. You?

TOBY: Yes, yes... well. Thanks. You... both here or just you?

DOUGLAS: No, both of us... I think. Gina came ahead of me in the car.

TOBY: Ah.

DOUGLAS: I came on the train.

TOBY: Oh.

DOUGLAS: Have you seen her?

TOBY: No... no I haven't. I've just arrived myself, not so long ago – *(aware he's holding two glasses)* we have, Samantha and I.

DOUGLAS: For the weekend?

TOBY: Probably – we need to see how it goes. Problems – with her parents. We're poised to hurry off at any moment – well, she is.

DOUGLAS: Oh? Nothing too serious I hope.

TOBY: Just age... you know... age. Are you... planning to stay long – you and Gina?

DOUGLAS: Gina the weekend, me... well it depends.

TOBY: Oh, on what?

DOUGLAS: Whether she wants me to... or not. She's not expecting me to be here.

TOBY: No?

DOUGLAS: No, she wanted to be here alone – to have some thinking time alone, she said.

TOBY: Ah.

DOUGLAS: She was quite insistent she didn't want me around.

TOBY: Well, we all need time alone to think sometimes – I know I do, that's why I'm here.

DOUGLAS: But you're not.

TOBY: Not...?

DOUGLAS: Alone.

TOBY: Oh... no – no, not yet, but like I say, I'm expecting Sam to hurry off at any moment – then I will be. She might in fact be hurrying off as we speak.

DOUGLAS: What, without telling you?

TOBY: Her mind's all over the place with the stress of it, so anything's possible. I'll probably get a text letting me know she's on the A21 before too long... if she has.

DOUGLAS: I wanted to surprise her, that's why I came.

TOBY: Samantha?

DOUGLAS: No, Gina.

TOBY: Oh... yes of course.

DOUGLAS: I don't usually remember it and she probably thinks I've forgotten again. She usually nudges me just before the day – but not this year. Thankfully I remembered.

TOBY: Her birthday?

DOUGLAS: Anniversary.

TOBY: Ah.

DOUGLAS: Especially since it's the big one too.

TOBY: The big one-two – twelve?

DOUGLAS: No ten. I should say *a* big one too.

TOBY: Oh, I see.

DOUGLAS: Ten years, mustn't forget that one.

TOBY: No. Well done... for remembering.

DOUGLAS: Thought I'd kick off our eleventh year together on the right foot. Unexpected romantic gestures are at the top of the list apparently.

TOBY: The list?

DOUGLAS: Yes, I was reading an article recently: ‘How to maintain a healthy and thriving marriage’. Unexpected romantic gestures were at the top.

TOBY: *Expected* romantic gestures coming a poor second, were they?

DOUGLAS: No, doing one’s fair share of the housework was number two. I should get points for that, I’m pretty regular with the Hoover.

TOBY: Points off for me, I’m afraid. Samantha too – plenty deducted for her.

DOUGLAS: She’s probably gone for a walk, or having a lie down perhaps.

TOBY: Probably. Nice evening for it – a walk, that is.

DOUGLAS: I was desperately trying to resist it – on the train – calling her, or texting. I so nearly did – several times – just to let her know – but then it wouldn’t have been unexpected, would it?

TOBY: No.

DOUGLAS: Perhaps we could join forces – if I’m allowed to stay – have drinks together, or dinner.

TOBY: Oh – well, don’t want to get in the way of your anniversary celebrations.

DOUGLAS: No, not tonight, I was thinking tomorrow perhaps. It was all a bit formal last time – necessarily so – sorting out keys, boilers and recycling arrangements. Wasn’t much opportunity to get to know each other, personally.

TOBY: No, no there wasn’t. Well I’ll run it by Sam – if she’s still here – see what she says, but in theory I’d definitely be... definitely... up for it.

DOUGLAS: We’ll keep each other posted.

TOBY: Yes.

DOUGLAS: Dahlias.

TOBY: What?

DOUGLAS: (*Flowers.*) These. She likes them... when I remember.

*DOUGLAS ascends the steps and exits through the  
USR door.*

TOBY: *(Softly calling.)* Gina? Gina?

*GINA comes out of the shed.*

Gina.

GINA: God, why did he have to remember it this year of all years?

TOBY: Very inconvenient of him.

GINA: It's just a little hiccup, that's all, Toby. I'll insist that I want to be here alone. I'll pack him off on a train back home.

TOBY: Yes.

GINA: Oh, it sounds so brutal, doesn't it, hearing myself saying that.

TOBY: Well...

GINA: Since it's our anniversary it might have to wait till tomorrow. I can't be that cruel.

TOBY: No?

GINA: I can't.

TOBY: No... of course not. I'll probably have to pack Samantha off to her parents. I can't keep her absence hidden from him for too much longer.

GINA: Oh I'm sorry, Toby, I really am.

TOBY: It's not your fault, Gina, it's his fault for remembering.

GINA: What will you do?

TOBY: Do?

GINA: Tonight?

TOBY: *(Feeling sorry for himself.)* Entertain myself, I suppose. Dinner at The Swan and an early night... thinking about you.

GINA: Perhaps we can get a text or two in.

TOBY: *(Hard done by..)* That would be nice.

DOUGLAS: *(Off. Calling.)* Geeny?

*GINA hurriedly exits via the SL paved path.  
DOUGLAS enters via the SR paved path.*

TOBY: No luck?

DOUGLAS: No, nowhere to be found.

TOBY: Mine hasn't shown either. No texts from the A21 yet so that's a good sign.

DOUGLAS: Yes, most likely gone for a walk.

TOBY: Well... I...

DOUGLAS: Actually – just between you and me, Toby – I had a bit of an ulterior motive for following her down here.

TOBY: Oh?

DOUGLAS: I've been trying to put it out of my mind – the thought of it – that there might be.

TOBY: Might be what?

DOUGLAS: Somebody else... on the scene – so to speak.

TOBY: On the scene?

DOUGLAS: You know... romantically.

TOBY: Ah. Really?

DOUGLAS: Yes. But I haven't been able to.

TOBY: Able to what?

DOUGLAS: Put it out of my mind. The thing is I have no hard evidence for it – nothing solid to go on to prove anything, just a horrible, gnawing feeling in here telling me all is not well.

TOBY: Well that's good.

DOUGLAS: Is it?

TOBY: Having no hard evidence for it, I mean. You don't want your fears confirmed for you, do you... I'm presuming.

DOUGLAS: No, but then I don't want to be in the dark about it either – if there is something... happening.

TOBY: Yes... no... true.

DOUGLAS: I have a fair bit of soft evidence for it.

TOBY: Soft evidence?

DOUGLAS: The way she's been behaving – recently.

TOBY: Oh?

DOUGLAS: She's been humming and singing a lot more... generally perkier about the house.

TOBY: Perhaps she's won the lottery and isn't telling you.

DOUGLAS: I'd like to think that was it, I'd be a lot more comfortable knowing that.

TOBY: Or *not* knowing that – as the case may be.

DOUGLAS: Yes.

TOBY: Just *that*?

DOUGLAS: No, not just that. She's been a lot more guarded – with her phone I mean. The other day I picked it up – just to move it – she snatched it away from me with such... panic, as if there were something on it she desperately didn't want me to see. Her neck was going all red too. It does that when she's trying to conceal things from me – not just from me, others too. It's genetic – on her mother's side. I can feel them all coming back – all the old fears. In the past with relationships I've had – the few I've had – I've always been the one who's been left, not the one doing the leaving. I have abandonment issues – one of my clients told me – but it hasn't really been an issue since I've been with Gina – until now. When Sandy was leaving me I had terrible panic attacks – debilitating – and for a long time afterwards. I used to have to retreat into the basement at work to try and compose myself – often while dealing with clients. Fortunately I'm managing to keep those at bay... so far.

TOBY: Well, if it's any consolation, Sam's always shielding her phone from my prying eyes and I have absolutely zero suspicion of her carrying on with someone behind my back. (*Jokily.*) Perhaps I should. No, they just need their own stuff – for their eyes only... we all do. So, if I'm understanding things

correctly, Doug, your ulterior motive for surprising her unannounced was to see if she had secretly arranged to meet this... whoever it is – if there is a whoever it is – here at the cottage, while you were... *not* here with her.

DOUGLAS: I'm ashamed to admit it – appearing to be so suspicious having so little grounds for it. It's what destroys marriages, isn't it: irrational jealousy.

TOBY: Absolutely.

DOUGLAS: But it's hard to reason with one's gut – these churning doubts – no matter how much I try.

TOBY: Just a thought, Doug, but wouldn't you have done better to wait a bit.

DOUGLAS: Wait?

TOBY: Delayed your arrival. I mean Gina's only just got here – hasn't she? – hardly time for things to get underway. He's probably still on the way down – if there is a someone on the way down. If I were you, I would've waited until perhaps morning tomorrow – the prime time to catch them with their pants down... so to speak. Sorry to be so matter of fact about it.

DOUGLAS: Well that's the thing, I suppose, I don't really want to catch her with someone... with their pants down. My hope is things haven't got to that stage yet. If there is someone she's planning to meet here it's better I arrive sooner rather than later so nothing can actually *get* underway. I'm hoping this unexpected romantic gesture might remind her that I'm not all dull Doug and there's a passion in here that's still alive. You know the main thing that heartens me that she hasn't arranged to meet anyone here is the fact that *you're* here.

TOBY: Me?

DOUGLAS: And Samantha, of course. It would be a bit brazen of her to carry on with somebody right under your noses.

TOBY: Yes, true.

DOUGLAS: Word would soon get back to me, wouldn't it?

TOBY: We'd feel obliged to tell you.

DOUGLAS: I know you come and go, but she doesn't know your diary, does she?

TOBY: No – no she doesn't.

DOUGLAS: Unless of course she was hoping to sneak someone in unnoticed – under the cloak of darkness.

TOBY: Still... hell of a risk to take. No, if you want my opinion, Doug, I think you need to take her word for it and that she is actually here just to... to think. Like I say, we all need that. You're talking to an estate agent – we know how important thinking time is for people – for an accountant too I should imagine. No my advice would be just to leave her to it.

DOUGLAS: Go you mean?

TOBY: She might not take too kindly to you interrupting her thinking time.

DOUGLAS: But it's our anniversary.

TOBY: True... but probably wouldn't hang about though. Share a glass of bubbly together then leave her to it. Sorry, just thinking aloud, Doug, none of my bloody business of course.

DOUGLAS: No, thanks for lending an ear to my concerns, Toby.

TOBY: Well, we're good listeners, estate agents – the good ones are.

*GINA enters through the USR door.*

GINA: *(Acting surprised.)* Douggie, what the heck are you doing here?

*DOUGLAS puts the flowers behind his back.*

DOUGLAS: Hello, Geeny.

GINA: Toby, you're here too.

TOBY: Yes, just arrived – well almost just arrived.

GINA: With Samantha?

TOBY: No – yes – I mean if she's still here, that is, I was explaining to Doug she might have to shoot off at any moment – parent problems.

GINA: Ah.

TOBY: Doug says you're here for the weekend.

GINA: I am, Douggie's not supposed to be though – are you?

*DOUGLAS presents the flowers to GINA.*

What's this?

DOUGLAS: Flowers.

GINA: I can see that.

DOUGLAS: Happy anniversary.

GINA: Oh... oh I completely forgot about that.

*GINA puts her hand to her neck.*

DOUGLAS: The big one-o. Don't know how you managed to forget that one, Geeny. Is your neck reddening?

GINA: No.

DOUGLAS: It is. *Did* you forget?

GINA: Yes, I did. Please stop reading too much into that, Douggie. (*To TOBY.*) It reddens sometimes – it's genetic.

TOBY: Really?

DOUGLAS: Yes, I told him.

GINA: Did you? Why?

DOUGLAS: Ah... it came up in our conversation.

GINA: My neck?

DOUGLAS: Yes... I –

TOBY: We were discussing family genes.

DOUGLAS: Yes, that's right, we were.

GINA: Well, I'm not happy about you telling Mr Harper my intimate quirks.

DOUGLAS: Sorry, won't happen again.

GINA: *(Irrked.)* There aren't any more to tell. Anyway, I was talking to someone the other day – a doctor – who said it could equally be caused by sudden stress. Her friend had the same condition.

DOUGLAS: Are you feeling sudden stress now, Geeny?

GINA: Yes, I am actually. I specifically wanted time to be here alone to think – and you suddenly appear out of the blue.

DOUGLAS: But it's our anniversary. I thought I'd surprise you. I don't usually remember.

GINA: I know and it's... very... sweet of you, Douggie – despite the stress of it.

TOBY: Well, I'll leave you to your celebrations – check out where Sam's got to. Lovely to... see you... both.

DOUGLAS: Don't forget, Toby, perhaps tomorrow.

TOBY: Yes.

*TOBY ascends the steps and exits through the USL door.*

*(Off. Calling.)* Sam? Samantha, are you about?

GINA: Tomorrow?

DOUGLAS: I told him – if I'm allowed to stay – it would be a nice idea for us all to get together for drinks or dinner perhaps.

GINA: But then when do I have my thinking time, Doug?

DOUGLAS: Well I thought possibly Sunday. I could go for a long walk perhaps – leave you to it – join you for dinner and travel back together in the evening.

GINA: I need to be alone to think.

DOUGLAS: Well you would be.

GINA: No, you'll be around – in the vicinity.

DOUGLAS: I could walk a fair distance away.

GINA: I really do want to be alone – it's all part of the... the thinking process. I'd like you to get the train back tomorrow morning.

DOUGLAS: I still don't know what you're needing to think about.

GINA: No, and I've told you, neither do I, that's why I'm here to think... to find out what it is I'm needing to think about.

DOUGLAS: I do love you, Geeny, you know that, don't you?

GINA: Yes, I do. We'll need to get food.

DOUGLAS: I thought we could go to The Swan.

GINA: *(Hastily.)* No, no not The Swan. Let's not go anywhere, I'll nip out and get something to have in. Thanks again for those.

DOUGLAS: Don't you want to take them?

GINA: Yes.

*GINA takes the flowers and gives DOUGLAS a quick kiss.*

DOUGLAS: I brought champagne. *(Annoyed with himself.)* Oh!

GINA: What?

DOUGLAS: That was meant to be a surprise.

GINA: I'll try to forget it. *(Giving flowers back to DOUGLAS.)* Perhaps you could find something to put these in. I'll probably take in a bit more thinking along the way – since you've interrupted it – but I'll try not to be too long.

DOUGLAS: Are you sure you really want to be cooking on our anniversary?

GINA: No, I won't be, you will. All part of my surprise, isn't it?

*GINA ascends the steps and exits through the USR door. After some moments there is the sound of car starting up and pulling away. DOUGLAS performs a short breathing exercise to manage his anxiety. He ascends the steps and exits through the USR door. After a couple of moments JASPER enters via the SL paved path. He surveys the garden and looks up to the SL cottage. He crosses the lawn a little and looks up to the SR cottage. He tries the wine and winces. He takes out his mobile and dials.*

JASPER:

*(To mobile.)* Hello my beautiful, darling, angel... Yes, it's me again... Yes, I know you did... Yes, I know that too, but you didn't think I wasn't going to did you?... No. If I was I wouldn't be calling you, would I? I'd be ringing your bell, banging on your door with both fists, shouting your name lovingly through your letterbox until you welcomed me in... Hello?... Sam Sam?... I know you're still there, I can hear you breathing... Ah, there you are... No, I'll give you a clue: it's somewhere we've enjoyed wild and unbridled lovemaking together... Well, yes it could be I suppose. I'll narrow it down: somewhere where you'd expect to find *him*... Yes who do you think I mean? On a weekend perhaps... Have we ever enjoyed wild and unbridled lovemaking together in the public bar of the Old Red Lion? Think woody retreat. Naked on the lawn – big clue there... Bingo!... Well, I just happened to be on a train which just happened to stop here, so I just happened to get off and here I am... Sitting on the lawn, as it happens. Don't worry, I'm not naked... Yes, I know he is... No, I just tracked him to pub where he's presently sousing his insides with fine Kentish ale... Because I'm not prepared to let you throw away nine months of a beautiful, loving affair for a meaningless marriage, that's why, Samantha!... No, I will not keep my voice down!

*Sound of birds being startled and taking flight.*

Because if you're going to cast me off as cruelly and as callously as you would an old pair of tights I think you ought to know how I'm feeling about it... Yes, so you've said... Because I don't believe it's what you want, that's why... What you really want... What you really, really want... Yes, he most likely will... Well I think one of us ought to be honest with him – and since it's not going to be you... Yes, I think we should... No, I'm staying here... Well, you'll have to take a taxi then... Can't wait to see you.

*JASPER hangs up. He enters the shed. After a moment he backs out of the shed, holding a tennis racket and playing an imaginary opponent within the shed.*

*(Commentating as he plays.)* A low forehand across the net to the Serb's backhand... Shedovitch tries to lob Wright, but Jasper Wright's on it. Beautiful return back into his opponent's court... Shedovitch tries a chip. Jasper Wright sprints for it...

*JASPER races into the shed. There is the sound of crashing.*

*(Within shed. After a moment.)* Ow!

*DOUGLAS has entered through the USR door. He hears JASPER's 'Ow!'.*

DOUGLAS: Hello? Who's in there?

*DOUGLAS descends the steps. JASPER exits the shed still holding the racket.*

JASPER: Hello?

DOUGLAS: Can I help you?

JASPER: Help me?

DOUGLAS: Are you looking for someone?

JASPER: No. Are you?

DOUGLAS: No, I live here.

JASPER: I see. I thought you might have been one of us.

DOUGLAS: One of you?

JASPER: Yes, society for the protection of endangered species: SPES. There's a group of us going round keeping an eye out.

DOUGLAS: Eye out for what?

JASPER: Badgers – this weekend.

DOUGLAS: Badgers?

JASPER: Yes.

DOUGLAS: I didn't know they were.

JASPER: Were what?

DOUGLAS: Endangered?

JASPER: They are in Kent.

DOUGLAS: Really?

JASPER: Very much so – nowadays. Didn't used to be of course, used to be teeming with the buggers – badgers. That's why they came here.

DOUGLAS: The badgers?

JASPER: No, the people – malicious people, unsavoury elements of society – to hunt them, bait them, slaughter them. Now there’s only a handful left in the whole of the county.

DOUGLAS: A handful of badgers, in the whole of Kent? I find that quite hard to believe.

JASPER: Most people do. So did I before I joined SPES.

DOUGLAS: So what were you doing in there?

JASPER: Looking for badgers – sorry, I thought I’d explained that.

DOUGLAS: You know you’re on private property?

JASPER: Try telling that to a badger. No, I’ve got his permission.

DOUGLAS: Mr Harper’s?

JASPER: Yes, Mr Harper’s. He said I was free to come through if I was on the trail – which I am. I’ve been tracking a family of them for most of the day – one in particular, the daddy – last seen heading this way. Have to keep my distance of course.

DOUGLAS: I thought they were nocturnal creatures.

JASPER: Common misconception. If there’s no-one about they’re quite happy to be out in the daylight.

DOUGLAS: Really?

JASPER: Yes. No, he’s a keen badger supporter is Mr Harper. I’ve just been sharing a drink with him up at The Swan – chatting about them. You haven’t caught sight of him have you?

DOUGLAS: Mr Harper?

JASPER: No, the badger.

DOUGLAS: He’s at the Swan?

JASPER: Who?

DOUGLAS: Mr Harper?

JASPER: Yes.

DOUGLAS: With his wife?

JASPER: Not that I noticed.

DOUGLAS: Well either she was or she wasn't.

JASPER: Then no she wasn't. Now you come to mention it, he said he'd come without her.

DOUGLAS: To The Swan?

JASPER: No, here to the house – this weekend.

DOUGLAS: No, he didn't.

JASPER: He did.

DOUGLAS: He didn't.

JASPER: I'm sorry, but I was there when he said it.

DOUGLAS: No, he didn't come to the cottage here without her. She's here.

JASPER: Is she?

DOUGLAS: She was. She may've gone off now to see to her parents. Mr Harper obviously didn't tell you that.

JASPER: No... we were mainly discussing badgers.

DOUGLAS: Interesting why he should tell you he'd come here to the cottage without her – when he hadn't.

JASPER: Yes.

DOUGLAS: Yes. Any ideas why he might have done that?

JASPER: Perhaps he's a... compulsive liar – can't help himself.

DOUGLAS: Mr Harper is a very honest man.

JASPER: I'm not saying he's not honest. It's an illness – a condition – like Tourette's or kleptomania.

DOUGLAS: He is not a compulsive liar, Mr...?

JASPER: Duckworth.

DOUGLAS: Mr Duckworth.

JASPER: Ethan Duckworth. And you are...?

DOUGLAS: I think you know who I am, Mr Duckworth.

JASPER: Ah... if you're someone off the TV, I'm sorry, I don't usually watch –

DOUGLAS: You know very well I'm not someone off the TV, Mr Duckworth.

JASPER: Okay. You're going to have to help me out here a bit.

DOUGLAS: I hoped it wasn't true – that you didn't actually exist – but here you are, it seems, proving that you do.

JASPER: Exist?

DOUGLAS: Yes.

JASPER: Well... I hope I do.

DOUGLAS: And I hoped you didn't, but I suppose I have to deal with the reality of it that you do.

JASPER: Have I said something to upset you, Mr – ?

DOUGLAS: It's not what you say that upsets me, Mr Duckworth, it's what you are.

JASPER: Someone who's passionate about the welfare of badgers?

DOUGLAS: There are no badgers, Mr Duckworth, no badgers at all, are there?

JASPER: Well, like I say, there are still a handful of them left in Kent, but –

DOUGLAS: I know exactly who you are and why you're here, Mr Duckworth, and it's not for the badgers.

JASPER: I think perhaps you may be confusing me with someone else.

DOUGLAS: Yes, someone else perhaps who just happens to wander into our garden... Who just happens to be confronted by the one person he expects not to be here... Who has to come up with a fantastical story about looking for badgers. No, Mr Duckworth, there's only one person you could possibly be.

JASPER: Who's that?

DOUGLAS: Her lover.

JASPER: Ah.

DOUGLAS: Yes 'ah', Mr Duckworth, 'ah'. Do you still want to talk about badgers?

JASPER: No... probably not much point now, is there.

*DOUGLAS breathes to manage his rising anxiety.*

She told you... about us?

DOUGLAS: Of course she didn't.

JASPER: No?

DOUGLAS: There wouldn't be much point her secretly carrying on if she had would there?

JASPER: I'm sorry?

DOUGLAS: If she'd told me.

JASPER: I'm not with you.

DOUGLAS: Why would she – secretly carry on – knowing that I knew?

JASPER: Presumably she's trusted you not to tell anyone else.

DOUGLAS: Tell anyone else?

JASPER: Well, people blab. Anyway you said she *hadn't* told you.

DOUGLAS: No.

JASPER: Then how did you find out?

DOUGLAS: Let's just say I've known it for a while, Mr Duckworth.

JASPER: Okay. Weeks... months?

DOUGLAS: Months! How long's it been going on for between you?

JASPER: Just over nine.

DOUGLAS: Weeks?

JASPER: No, months.

DOUGLAS: Oh!

*DOUGLAS breathes again to manage his anxiety.*

JASPER: You okay?

DOUGLAS: No, Mr Duckworth, I am not okay! I secretly hoped nothing as yet had 'happened' between you, but I suppose nine months is hoping beyond hope that nothing has.

JASPER: You seem to be taking all this quite personally, Mr – ?

DOUGLAS: How else can I take it other than quite personally! This may be an idle affair for you, an inconsequential fling, a –

JASPER: It most certainly isn't! I'm sorry, but I take great offence at you calling it that.

DOUGLAS: Do you!

JASPER: Yes, I do. You know nothing about our relationship, how we feel about each other. This is no inconsequential fling, no idle affair, Mr – whatever your name is?

DOUGLAS: Fuller! Douglas Fuller!

JASPER: Mr Fuller – Douglas Fuller. Not just another casual bedfellow to satisfy my not ungenerous libido.

DOUGLAS: Please...

JASPER: Perhaps you're concerned about her as a friend.

DOUGLAS: As a friend!

JASPER: If you are, I can tell you, Douglas, that for the first time in my life I can put my hand squarely on my heart and say here's someone – a woman – I'm deeply in love with.

DOUGLAS: And so can I, Mr Duckworth, so can I!

JASPER: Ah. I see... I see now. So that's it. All makes perfect sense now.

DOUGLAS: Sense?

JASPER: I thought it was just because you cared about her – as a friend.

DOUGLAS: You're quite unbelievable, Mr Duckworth.

JASPER: Am I. Does she know how you feel about her?

DOUGLAS: What?

JASPER: Have you told her – that you love her?

DOUGLAS: Yes... I've told her.

JASPER: And... what's she said?

DOUGLAS: She's told me she loves me too – not so much recently – you probably won't be too surprised to hear.

JASPER: How recent is recently?

DOUGLAS: That's none of your business!

JASPER: I think it's very much my business, considering she's been telling me she loves me for most of the past nine months. I wouldn't like to think she'd be saying it to us both.

DOUGLAS: Neither would I, Mr Duckworth, but that obviously seems to be the case.

JASPER: And sex?

DOUGLAS: Sex?

JASPER: Has it taken place between the two of you?

DOUGLAS: Of course it has.

JASPER: Within the past nine months?

DOUGLAS: That is absolutely none of your business!

JASPER: That's probably more of my business than anything else, don't you think?

DOUGLAS: No, I don't!

JASPER: I'll take that as a yes. Well, it seems she's done a better job concealing you from me than me from you.

DOUGLAS: I can't believe she hasn't mentioned me. In the whole of the nine months you've been... seeing each other?

JASPER: Not a squeak of you, Douglas.

DOUGLAS:           *(More to himself.)* I suppose she had to, to manage her guilt.

JASPER:             Perhaps.

DOUGLAS:           To carry on with you behind my back.

JASPER:             Well, that's all a matter of perspective whose back she's been carrying on behind.

DOUGLAS:           Well obviously it's mine.

JASPER:             Well, sorry, I beg to differ – Douglas.

DOUGLAS:           Quite unbelievable!

JASPER:             It's funny, it's usually me – up to that kind of thing – in the past – keeping one hidden from the other. Once I managed three of them all at the same time – separately, I mean. I must confess it hurts – now the shoe's on the other foot and love's involved. What about him?

DOUGLAS:           Who?

JASPER:             Mr Harper.

DOUGLAS:           What about him?

JASPER:             Does he know?

DOUGLAS:           About what?

JASPER:             You and her?

DOUGLAS:           Yes, of course he does.

JASPER:             You make it sound like he's quite okay about it.

DOUGLAS:           About what?

JASPER:             You and her?

DOUGLAS:           Being here?

JASPER:             Well... anywhere I suppose, but yes, here – in such close proximity.

DOUGLAS:           Of course he is, he wouldn't be renting the place otherwise, would he.

JASPER:             You mean it's all part of the agreement?

DOUGLAS: What?

JASPER: You and her?

DOUGLAS: Of course.

JASPER: You've all agreed to it?

DOUGLAS: Yes.

JASPER: Well... it seems things around here are a little less conservative than they at first might appear. Meeting you has been extremely informative, Mr Fuller – Douglas.

*JASPER hands the tennis racket to DOUGLAS.*

DOUGLAS: Where are you going?

JASPER: *(Bitterly.)* To go and slaughter the rest of Kent's badger population.

*JASPER exits via the SL paved path. DOUGLAS breathes to manage his anxiety. He's unable to and sinks his teeth into the racket. There is the sound of a car arriving. DOUGLAS sits.*

GINA: *(Off. Calling.)* Douggie?

*GINA enters through the USR door. She carries a bag with takeaway in.*

Still out here?

DOUGLAS: Yes.

GINA: Thinking time all done for tonight now – you'll be pleased to hear. I picked up a takeaway in the end – Chinese. Thought I'd spare you the cooking.

DOUGLAS: Right.

GINA: Is everything...? Douggie? Are you all right?

DOUGLAS: I suppose there's no point pretending I am, when I'm quite clearly not.

GINA: What is it? Are you not well?

DOUGLAS: No... I'm not well... not well at all.

GINA: Is it your stomach again?

DOUGLAS: My stomach... my head... my heart... all suffering.

GINA: Suffering? Suffering from what?

DOUGLAS: I knew there was something... something happening – my gut was telling me that much – as well as other tell-tale signs... all was not... well.

GINA: Dougie – ?

DOUGLAS: Let me finish. I hoped things had not gone too far and that it could be avoided. I know I'm as much to blame for... after all it has to be worked at, doesn't it... complacency sets in, things become... neglected – little things, but important things nevertheless – things that... shouldn't be neglected.

GINA: Dougie, what are you – ?

DOUGLAS: Please, Gina, let me finish. I suppose I always hoped if things did get... critical, they'd be able to be talked about before any action – drastic action – was taken. But now I know that was a hope that was... just a hope... having no foundation in reality.

GINA: Doug – ?

DOUGLAS: When you told me you needed to come here alone to have some 'thinking time' I did have my fears.

GINA: Fears of what?

DOUGLAS: Of what I've subsequently learned to be true.

GINA: You're being extremely oblique, Douglas.

DOUGLAS: I know about him.

GINA: Him?

DOUGLAS: You know who I mean, so there's no point trying to hide him any longer... or your neck.

GINA: Did you look at my phone?

DOUGLAS: No, I didn't, but by the way you've been handling it recently I suspected there was something on it you didn't want me to see.

GINA: How did you find out?

DOUGLAS: I've just been chatting to him.

GINA: Really?

DOUGLAS: I presume it was him you went looking for on your thoughtful drive. You got your wires crossed it seems.

GINA: No, I was just with him in the pub – before I went to get this. He came back here then to tell you?

DOUGLAS: Not before trying to fob me off with a story about him looking for badgers.

GINA: What?

DOUGLAS: But I soon got it out of him, once he knew I'd guessed who he was.

GINA: Listen, Douggie... you may not believe this but nothing's... 'happened' between us – apart from cuddling... and kissing – nothing more.

DOUGLAS: No, I'm afraid I don't believe that.

GINA: It's true. Look at my neck.

DOUGLAS: Then one of you is obviously lying.

GINA: You trust my neck don't you?

DOUGLAS: At this point I don't trust anything about you.

GINA: Well, what has he told you?

DOUGLAS: He was quite open about his 'not ungenerous' sexual appetite. I can't believe he's managed to keep that contained for the time you've been together.

GINA: Well... he has.

DOUGLAS: Please, you don't have to lie to me to soften the blow, I've already hit the ground.

GINA: I'm not. Doug – ?

DOUGLAS: Would you have told me?

GINA: Of course.

DOUGLAS: After how long?

GINA: I wouldn't have left things more than a couple of months.

DOUGLAS: Well, your idea of a couple is obviously quite different to mine. Were you planning to... *are* you planning to... leave me for him?

GINA: Doug – ?

DOUGLAS: No, don't answer.

*DOUGLAS starts to hyperventilate.*

GINA: Doug – ?

DOUGLAS: I... I...

GINA: Dougie – ?

DOUGLAS: I need to be... I need to... I...

*DOUGLAS drops the tennis racket and exits via the SR paved path.*

GINA: *(Calling after.)* Dougie? Dougie? *(To herself.)* Oh!

*GINA puts the takeaway bag on the steps. She takes out her mobile and checks it. She crosses to the USL door and opens it.*

*(Calling within.)* Toby? Toby?

*She exits into the SL cottage.*

*(Off. Calling.)* Toby, are you here? Are you upstairs, Toby?  
Toby?

*She enters through the USL door. She takes out her mobile and dials.*

*(To mobile.)* Toby... Where are you?... Oh, you've gone back there... What?... I've just seen Doug... Well I thought you may be interested... About how he's taking it... About us... No, you and me, Toby... No, I haven't told him – you have, remember?... Yes... He said you had... Just now... Well that's what he said... No, he's gone off somewhere. He needed to be alone... Look, Toby, I'm coming up to join you, wait there.

*GINA hangs up. She exits through the USR door. There is a moment or two of birdsong suggesting a brief passage of time. JASPER enters via the SR paved path. He surveys the garden and looks up towards the cottages. He checks his mobile briefly. He picks up the tennis racket and notices the teeth marks in it. He checks them against his own to verify they're in fact teeth marks. He crosses to the takeaway bag and looks inside. There is the sound of a car arriving and then pulling away. JASPER takes a chair and places it more centrally in the garden. He sits. SAMANTHA enters via the SL paved path. She remains close by the shed.*

SAMANTHA: (Calling softly.) Jasper?

*JASPER pretends not to hear her.*

Jasper? (Louder.) Jasper?

JASPER: Oh, it's you.

SAMANTHA: Is he here?

JASPER: Who are we talking about?

SAMANTHA: Who do you think? Toby.

JASPER: Oh. No, he's still at the pub.

SAMANTHA: How do you know?

JASPER: I spied him recently through the window, tucking into his ale and venison pie.

SAMANTHA: And *they're* here too? Their car's outside.

JASPER: Yes – he is. Haven't seen her... yet.

SAMANTHA: He saw you?

JASPER: Oh yes, we saw each other.

SAMANTHA: You spoke to him?

JASPER: We spoke to each other.

SAMANTHA: What did you tell him?

JASPER: About...?

SAMANTHA: Who you are, what you're doing here?

JASPER: I told him I was your lover.

SAMANTHA: What!

JASPER: No, don't worry, he doesn't know a thing. I told him I worked for SPES.

SAMANTHA: SPES?

JASPER: Society for the protection of endangered species. That I was out looking for badgers.

SAMANTHA: What?

JASPER: I told him I had your husband's permission to trespass – if I was on the trail.

SAMANTHA: He believed that?

JASPER: I was very convincing.

SAMANTHA: Jasper can we please, please go somewhere else to talk?

JASPER: No, I think here's a good place... even more so now.

SAMANTHA: Listen, Jasper... if you think I haven't agonised about this. If you think I haven't spent these last few days and nights questioning whether I'm being the biggest fool that ever lived to want to finish something so... well let's face it, something I'll probably – no, definitely – never ever have in my life again.

JASPER: Possibly.

SAMANTHA: What?

JASPER: *Possibly* never ever have in your life again.

SAMANTHA: Definitely.

JASPER: If you say so.

SAMANTHA: I do, Jasper, I do. I'll never find anyone like you. Someone who can be so... well, everything you can be: passionate, romantic, loving... fun.

JASPER: All excellent reasons to give someone the elbow, I'd say.

SAMANTHA: I've told you why, Jasper. Look, please, please, please,

Jasper, could you leave here at once, he could appear any second.

JASPER: Can I just stop you. Which 'he' are we talking about here?

SAMANTHA: Toby, of course.

JASPER: Just checking. Go on.

SAMANTHA: Look, if you think there's someone else... Do you? You think I've met someone else – someone from my group perhaps.

JASPER: Cult.

SAMANTHA: Group.

JASPER: Cult.

SAMANTHA: Group. And I'm ditching you to get together with him. Is that what you think?

JASPER: Goodness no. You'd have run it by me first, I'm sure. Our affair has always thriven on honesty and trust absolute.

SAMANTHA: Yes, Jasper, it has.

JASPER: Your affair I should say. For me it's just a relationship – not an affair – having no significant other to hide it from.

SAMANTHA: Jasper –

JASPER: That's not to say – I hasten to add – it's in any way, shape or form less precious to me.

SAMANTHA: Jasper –

JASPER: As the immortal bard – Shakespeare – said: what's in a name?

SAMANTHA: Jasper, I don't want him to find out like this.

JASPER: Who?

SAMANTHA: Toby.

JASPER: Or not Toby, that is the question.

SAMANTHA: Jasper! I've made up my mind, Jasper, it's what I want, what I really, really want... despite what you say.

JASPER: Okay. And you've probably been in breach of the rules too.

SAMANTHA: Rules?

JASPER: Carrying on with someone – someone *else* that is – me I mean – without the full consent of the group.

SAMANTHA: No, Jasper, my group isn't like that.

JASPER: No, I'm not meaning the cult – I'll continue referring to that as the cult to avoid confusion – I'm meaning the thing you've got going on here.

SAMANTHA: What thing?

JASPER: I'm sure you've agreed a certain protocol to adhere to – house rules – like not having two on the go at once.

SAMANTHA: Jasper, you're making no sense.

JASPER: No?

SAMANTHA: No, none whatsoever. Look, we're both quite raw at the moment and we're both in danger of doing – and saying – something we'll most likely regret for a long time to come. Yes, we do need to talk – and we will – but not here, not now. I'll call you... very soon. Jasper?

JASPER: (*Tennis racket.*) I've been wondering who these teeth marks belong to.

*JASPER gives the tennis racket to SAMANTHA.*

Any ideas?

SAMANTHA: No.

JASPER: Maybe you should raise it at your next AGM... if you're that formal that is.

*JASPER exits via the SL paved path. SAMANTHA puts the racket down and picks up the wine glass. She tastes the wine and winces at the sweetness. She examines the label on the bottle. She notices the takeaway bag. She crosses to it and looks inside. She then checks her mobile. She looks thoughtfully in the direction JASPER exited.*

SAMANTHA: (*To herself.*) No, Samantha. You're going to damn well see this through. Do the right thing. It's the right thing to do.

Yes.

*She takes a few deep breaths. She exits via the SR paved path. A moment of birdsong. The USL door opens – perhaps the top section of the stable door – and TOBY nervously looks out.*

GINA: *(Off. Calling.)* Douggie? Douggie are you here? Douggie?

*GINA enters through the USR door. TOBY steps out.*

He's still not back.

TOBY: *(Takeaway bag.)* Whose is that?

GINA: It's ours – our takeaway.

TOBY: What's it doing there?

GINA: I put it there.

TOBY: I'm sorry, Gina, but he must've been looking at your phone, it's the only conclusion I can come to.

GINA: Like I say, Toby, I don't think he would lie to me.

TOBY: Why wouldn't he? You've been lying to him. Look, I know I've had a couple of drinks, but I think I would've remembered if I'd come back here and told him about us – so he's obviously lying.

GINA: Perhaps he *did* pick it up from your conversation earlier.

TOBY: No, I've been going over it and I'm absolutely sure I gave no hint of anything – unless he's a master sleuth and can pick up on subliminal clues like Sherlock Holmes – which he obviously isn't.

GINA: Please, don't be rude about him.

TOBY: God, this is...! This is... God!

GINA: I secretly hoped you might be happy about it, Toby.

TOBY: *(Suspiciously.)* Does he really know?

GINA: What?

TOBY: Or are you just telling me he does – so I call Samantha and tell her about us before he does – which he won't do

because he doesn't really know?

GINA: What, you think I'm trying to trick you, Toby?

TOBY: Are you?

GINA: No. How could you think that!

TOBY: No – sorry, sorry – forget I said that – I'm just... So he just walked off did he?

GINA: Yes.

TOBY: And you told him absolutely nothing had happened between us?

GINA: Only kissing and cuddling.

TOBY: Did he even need to know that?

GINA: I suppose not, but he does now. Obviously something has to have happened between us. Better to tell him the truth that nothing much has, rather than him imagining the worst...  
*(More to herself)* although he is imagining the worst.

TOBY: *(Rising anxiety.)* He's got our landline number, so he's probably called her already... and she's had a couple. God knows what she's going to say... and do. What do I tell her?

GINA: Why don't you tell her the truth, Toby?

TOBY: *(Still rising.)* The truth?

GINA: That you're in love with me.

TOBY: *(Still rising.)* But I don't know if I am yet, do I?

GINA: What?

TOBY: *(Angrily.)* Well I *think* I am, but that's the whole bloody point of us doing this, isn't it, so we can find out for sure!

GINA: *(Angrily.)* Well I *know* I'm in love with you and I don't bloody care who finds out about it!

*GINA tearfully exits through the USR door.*

TOBY: Gina? Gina? *(To himself.)* Balls, balls, balls, balls, balls!

*TOBY checks his mobile. He notices the tennis racket. He crosses to it, picks it up and nervously assesses the teeth marks. He surveys the garden perimeter.*

*(Calling warily.)* Douglas? Doug? Douglas?

*He enters the shed with the racket. SAMANTHA enters through the USL door. She sees the open shed door.*

SAMANTHA: *(Calling.)* Toby?

*There is a thump from within the shed.*

TOBY: *(Within shed.)* Ow!

SAMANTHA: Toby? Is that you in the shed?

TOBY: *(Within the shed.)* Yes, yes, I'm in here.

*TOBY exits the shed.*

*(Guiltily.)* Samantha.

SAMANTHA: I needed to come.

TOBY: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Yes.

TOBY: He... called you, I presume.

SAMANTHA: Who?

TOBY: Douglas.

SAMANTHA: Douglas?

TOBY: Didn't he?

SAMANTHA: No.

TOBY: No?

SAMANTHA: No. Why would he call me?

TOBY: Um... no particular reason, I suppose – except to tell you he's here... they are.

SAMANTHA: Why would he want to do that?

TOBY: Just... being a friendly neighbour I suppose. Letting us know their comings and goings.

SAMANTHA: Well, no, he didn't.

TOBY: Ah. So why are you here?

SAMANTHA: Because I wanted to talk – not on the ends of two telephones.

TOBY: Your car's still in the garage isn't it?

SAMANTHA: I came by taxi. *(Takeaway bag.)* This yours?

TOBY: No, it's theirs, their... anniversary dinner.

SAMANTHA: What's it doing there?

TOBY: Um... not sure, I've just come back from the pub.

SAMANTHA: *(Wine.)* That theirs too?

TOBY: Oh – no, that's... that's mine.

SAMANTHA: I didn't know you liked sweet German wine.

TOBY: Well... no I don't. Just thought I'd try it out – as an aperitif... digestive.

SAMANTHA: Ah.

TOBY: How did you know, that was sweet German wine – without tasting it – or looking at the label?

SAMANTHA: Oh I... I arrived earlier.

TOBY: How much earlier?

SAMANTHA: Not much. I came into the garden. You weren't about so I... had a little walk.

TOBY: I see.

SAMANTHA: Is everything all right, Toby? You seem –

TOBY: No, I'm... I'm fine. You just caught me in my own world – in the shed... in the shed... in my own world. Just having a look at the roof where the branch came through. Think I'll need to do a better repair job – seems to have let the rain in. Also I'm quite surprised to see you – after our conversation earlier – I

thought you might have taken up my suggestion of a nice relaxing bath.

SAMANTHA: I wanted to talk. The pub will still be open. Perhaps we can go there, have a drink. Unless you want to stay here?

TOBY: No... happy to go to the pub... again.

SAMANTHA: Okay.

TOBY: Right.

SAMANTHA: Well, I'm ready.

TOBY: Me too. Lead on... to The Swan.

*SAMANTHA and TOBY exit through the USL door. After a couple of moments JASPER enters via the SR paved path. He looks up to the cottages. He crosses to the table, picks up the wine glass and drinks. He pours himself another. He becomes bothered by gnats. There is a distant rumble of thunder. He takes the wine bottle, the glass and the chair and enters the shed. After a couple of moments he exits the shed, crosses to the takeaway bag and returns to the shed with it. He enters the shed, closing the door behind him. Another rumble of thunder. Lights down.*

Act 2

Scene 1

*Saturday 9.30 a.m.*

*The same.*

*Birdsong. SAMANTHA enters through the USL door. She wears a dressing gown. She briefly scans the garden before taking a couple of deep breaths. She exits through the USL door. GINA enters through the USR door. She is dressed and carries a cup of tea and her mobile. She looks across to the SL cottage. She descends the steps into the garden and surveys the perimeter.*

GINA:                   *(Calling.)* Doug? Dougie? Doug?

*She checks her mobile. She dials. She gets through to DOUGLAS's voicemail. She hangs up. She starts to text a message. SAMANTHA looks out through the USL door. She holds a cup of tea.*

SAMANTHA:           Hello.

GINA:                   Oh!

SAMANTHA:           It's all right, it's only me.

GINA:                   Samantha. I didn't know you were here.

SAMANTHA:           No, I decided to come – for a bit of country air. How are you?

GINA:                   Fine... thanks.

SAMANTHA:           Happy anniversary for yesterday.

GINA:                   Oh... thanks.

SAMANTHA:           Chinese or Indian?

GINA:                   Sorry?

SAMANTHA:           Or neither perhaps – what you had for dinner? I noticed the bag that was here.

*GINA looks about for it.*

It was yours, wasn't it?

GINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Good. Just making sure someone up the road wasn't still waiting for their order – that the delivery person didn't drop it off at the wrong address.

GINA: No... it was ours. Chinese.

SAMANTHA: Douglas about?

GINA: Yes... somewhere.

SAMANTHA: Gone for a walk?

GINA: I think so.

SAMANTHA: Feel free to use our garden furniture – until you get yourselves sorted out. That chair's probably still quite wet. Took us a bit by surprise last night – the storm.

GINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Toby and I got soaked on the way to the pub – and on the way back. It's forecast again for today. Nothing too ominous looking at the moment. Shed's open – more chairs in there. Mind you, I can't guarantee those won't be soaked either. Toby tried to fix the roof where a branch fell on it. He threatens to have another go at it. Toby and DIY... they don't get on. Better take this up to his lordship. Perhaps we can share a cuppa together at some point – the four of us. Although if you'd prefer your own privacy I quite understand – especially this weekend.

GINA: This weekend?

SAMANTHA: Anniversary.

GINA: Oh... yes.

SAMANTHA: Let me know if you do?

GINA: Want some privacy?

SAMANTHA: Or want a cuppa together.

GINA: Yes... thanks.

SAMANTHA: Everything all right?

GINA: No – yes, fine. Just... wondering where Doug might have got to.

SAMANTHA: Perhaps he's planning a surprise.

GINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Better take this up.

*SAMANTHA exits through the USL door.*

GINA: *(To herself.)* Oh!

*GINA checks her mobile again. She dials. She gets through to DOUGLAS's voicemail once more.*

*(To mobile.)* Douggie, wherever you are, come back. We need to talk. Please. Or just call me. Or text me. Something.

*GINA hangs up. There is a thump from within the shed.*

JASPER: *(Within shed.)* Ow!

GINA: Doug?

*GINA approaches the shed.*

Douggie? Are you in there? Douglas? Doug?

*GINA tentatively opens the shed door. She screams and jumps back.*

Who – who are you!

*JASPER exits the shed.*

JASPER: It's okay.

GINA: Who are you?

JASPER: I'm Knight.

GINA: Night?

JASPER: Knight with a K. Casper, Casper Knight – Mr Harper's colleague – from the agency – estate agency.

GINA: What were you... in there?

JASPER: Doing?

GINA: Yes.

JASPER: Just... going through some paperwork. He keeps it in there – we do – our files – some of them – the not so important ones.

GINA: Really?

JASPER: Yes. Quite inconvenient really. All the toing and froing involved from the office to the shed, the shed to the office... back here to the shed again. I keep telling him it's an impractical system. Will he change it? Excuse appearances, we like to keep it casual on Saturdays. You are?

GINA: Gina – Gina Fuller.

JASPER: Fuller. Ah, you must be with him, I assume – Douglas.

GINA: He's my husband, yes. Have you met him?

JASPER: Yes, I've met him.

GINA: This morning?

JASPER: Not this morning – yesterday.

GINA: You were here yesterday too?

JASPER: In and out the shed, yes – and the office. He didn't tell you we'd met then?

GINA: No.

JASPER: He may have also bumped into my colleague – Mr Duckworth, Ethan. He was around and about yesterday too. Not today – it's his day off. Did he mention him?

GINA: No.

JASPER: Well, no reason why he should, I suppose. Yes, Douglas and I were having quite a nice little chat together yesterday. I must say, he was actually making quite a tempting case for it.

GINA: For what?

JASPER: Coming out to live in the country. All sounded quite free

and easy, here... in the country... easy and free.

GINA: Yes... sometimes it is, I suppose.

JASPER: There's a place up the road – on our books for sale – maybe I should put an offer down on that. Think my budget will stretch that far – just about. Perhaps that will make me eligible... to join in with *things*... here... be free and easy too... be part of the club – if you call it a club – and if you're welcoming new members... so to speak. Perhaps one has to be proposed first, seconded and all that. If I'm required to show my credentials I'll be quite happy to oblige. Maybe there's a trial period for newbie's – termination of membership if we don't live up to expectations. But just between you and me, Gina, I'm more than confident you won't be disappointed... when it's our turn.

GINA: I'm sorry, Mr Knight, I've absolutely no idea what you're talking about.

JASPER: Casper, please, Gina.

GINA: Casper.

JASPER: It's okay, Douglas told me all about it.

GINA: All about what?

JASPER: The club.

GINA: What club?

JASPER: The 'arrangement' then you have between you all. The free exchange of your... 'personal assets', let's say.

GINA: Personal assets?

JASPER: Personal 'assets'.

GINA: What... you mean like... garden furniture – things like that?

JASPER: Yes... hedge-trimmers, rakes, secateurs, hosepipes... husbands, wives.

GINA: Husbands, wives? Oh... I see. He told you, did he, about...?

JASPER: It's all right, Gina, you've probably gathered by now I'm no judgemental prude. And we estate agents are very open-minded. We have to be with what we're exposed to on a daily

basis – people’s ‘living arrangements’ I mean. Believe me, what’s going on here between you is pretty tame... for Kent.

GINA: What did he say?

JASPER: About the ‘arrangement’?

GINA: He called it that?

JASPER: Don’t you?

GINA: Well no, *I* wouldn’t, but he might, I suppose, to manage it – emotionally.

JASPER: I’m not with you.

GINA: Knowing about me and Toby.

JASPER: Oh I see, keeping it all quite business-like you mean – sex only, mustn’t let love get involved, it could complicate things. Although, I would say, I think he’s failing with that one. You may need to have a word with him – or restate the terms and conditions at your next meeting.

GINA: Terms and conditions of what?

JASPER: Your ‘arrangement’.

GINA: Toby and me?

JASPER: Well, yes, you being one of the parties, Douglas and Samantha being the other. He didn’t mention neighbours, so I’m presuming it’s just between the four of you.

GINA: Douglas and Samantha?

JASPER: Yes.

GINA: What about them?

JASPER: Being the other party – in your ‘arrangement’. What, you didn’t think it was just you and Toby, did you?

GINA: What’s my husband been telling you, Mr Knight?

JASPER: Casper, please. Only what I assumed you knew already, Gina... Which it appears you don’t. So you don’t know about Douglas and Samantha?

GINA: You’re saying they’re...?

JASPER:           *He* did, yes.

GINA:               He told you he and Samantha were having a...

JASPER:           *Are* having a... Yes.

GINA:               Douglas and Samantha?

JASPER:           Yes.

GINA:               Together?

JASPER:           Well... yes, that's usually how it works.

GINA:               No, I'm sorry, Mr – Casper – I'm afraid you've got that completely wrong.

JASPER:           I'm afraid Douglas was very clear, Gina, he couldn't have been clearer in fact. I know, I found it hard to wrap my head around it too.

GINA:               Then it must have only just started if they are.

JASPER:           That depends by what you mean by 'only just'.

GINA:               Well what did he tell you?

JASPER:           At least nine months, he said.

GINA:               Nine... But we only took the cottage on here less than three months ago.

JASPER:           Then it seems Doug obviously took Samantha on before you both took on the cottage here.

GINA:               *(More to herself.)* He did come down here a couple of times in the past year or so to visit Bob – his cousin – when he was living here.

JASPER:           Sounds like there's your answer, Gina.

GINA:               So when I was here last and Toby and I were sneaking off together for a quick kiss and a cuddle behind hedgerows and bus stops, he and Samantha were back here... engaged in... up in our bed together.

JASPER:           Not a pleasant thought, I know.

GINA:               The... You wouldn't believe how wounded he was acting

when he found out about Toby and me.

JASPER: That's people for you. I'm presuming Toby doesn't know about them either.

GINA: No, he doesn't... I don't think – No, he can't.

JASPER: Are you going to tell him?

GINA: Oh yes, I'll tell him.

JASPER: Probably best for all for it all to be out in the open – however unpleasant. Clears the air... in my opinion. Sorry to be the bringer of bad news, Gina... if it is bad news.

GINA: It's very enlightening news, Casper.

JASPER: Yes it was for me too. Well, ought to get back to the office – head office that is, not shed office as we like to call it. A pleasure to have met you, Gina.

*JASPER kisses GINA's hand.*

I hope you and Toby manage to weather things through in the coming storm. He could do with the love of a good woman. Might help to jolly him up a bit about the office. I'll see myself out... (*looking about him*) this way.

*JASPER exits via the SR paved path. GINA checks her mobile. She crosses to the shed and is about to look inside. SAMANTHA enters through the USL door. She has dressed.*

SAMANTHA: Really, don't be shy, help yourself. Don't think there's anything too nasty lurking in there. A few spiders perhaps. Here, let me, don't want anything falling on you – i.e. the roof from Toby's dodgy 'repair' job. (*Feeling garden chair.*) Yes, this one's still damp. Hopefully the ones in here are dry.

*SAMANTHA enters the shed and brings out the opened chair.*

Toby says I'm the messy one, but he can be far worse than me – when he puts his mind to it. This one's fine. Here.

*SAMANTHA enters the shed again. She appears at the door holding the takeaway bag with the remnants of the Chinese meal in it.*

Wasn't this your anniversary dinner?

GINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: I'm presuming you and Douglas didn't have it in the shed.

GINA: No, we didn't.

SAMANTHA: Not the most romantic place for it, if you did.

GINA: We didn't.

SAMANTHA: Toby must've put it all in here last night to get it out of the rain – most of the rain. Strange he forgot about that chair though. He'd had a couple, so perhaps he overlooked it.

*SAMANTHA enters the shed again. She brings out a folded garden chair and the empty bottle of wine.*

Have to keep one's fingers away from the hinges with these – been caught out on more than one occasion. (*Opening chair.*) There. They're not the most comfortable either. I was pushing Toby to buy the more expensive ones, but he didn't want to spend the money. Please, sit. Douglas still on his walk?

GINA: He is.

SAMANTHA: Did he remember it or was he prompted – your anniversary?

GINA: He remembered.

SAMANTHA: Good for him. Please do sit.

*GINA sits.*

We've let ours slip, I'm afraid – for the past couple of years or so... probably more like five. I think I'll make a point of surprising him this year – that'll shock him. Might book us a spa break or something. I think I shocked him last night – showing up here – I was supposed to have a weekend with my group. I joined a group not so long ago. It's a sort of personal development thing – not religious or anything – we just sit around talking really, sharing experiences. We discuss relationships – marriages – quite a bit; how to improve things if they've gone off the boil... or off the rails. Actually, it was chiefly the reason I joined. Things have slightly gone off the boil with Toby and me. We just find ourselves doing our own thing a lot of the time these days – with other people. We need to start doing things together again – not just romantic things – but everyday things too, gardening together, taking walks,

things like that. You and Douglas look like you probably do plenty of things together – am I right?

GINA: We try.

SAMANTHA: Thought so, you seem like a close couple.

GINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Just between you and me, Gina, I have been... you know, tempted on occasion to... you know, 'play away' a little.

GINA: Really?

SAMANTHA: That's another reason why I joined the group. We like to do an exercise – which I'd recommend – we try to think back to why we got together with the person we're with; remember all their attractive qualities, the things that brought us together in the first place... the things we've lost sight of – over the years.

GINA: And how's that working out for you?

SAMANTHA: Well, I *think* it is. Keep up the exercise.

GINA: I've just been chatting to one of your husband's colleagues – here in the garden.

SAMANTHA: Oh, which one?

GINA: A Mr Casper Knight.

SAMANTHA: Casper Knight?

GINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Ah... you probably mean Jasper Wright.

GINA: No, Casper Knight.

SAMANTHA: I see. (*More to herself.*) He's still here?

GINA: No he just left. He was finishing off in the shed.

SAMANTHA: Finishing off – in the shed?

GINA: Doing his paperwork.

SAMANTHA: I'm sorry?

GINA: Business.

SAMANTHA: What business?

GINA: Estate agent business.

SAMANTHA: What did he say?

GINA: He told me.

SAMANTHA: About...? Ah. He told you? Look, Gina, it's... just a silly fling. I'm just getting something out of my system, that's all.

GINA: Oh... well that's all right then, isn't it.

SAMANTHA: It just went on a little longer than expected.

GINA: Nine months?

SAMANTHA: Ah, he told you that too. Oh God, now you must think I'm a complete hypocrite in light of what I've just been saying. Yes, I am, Gina, I hold up my hand – hypocrite as charged. But I've told him it's over now. I really do want to make things work between me and Toby. Look, Gina, Toby doesn't know about it yet – I will tell him, when the time's right, but if you would keep it under your hat – so to speak – I'd be really, really, grateful.

GINA: Under my hat!

SAMANTHA: If you could.

GINA: What about him?

SAMANTHA: Who?

GINA: Douglas. Do you want me to keep it under my hat from him too?

SAMANTHA: If you could, Gina, you know how things spread. You're looking very disapproving of me, Gina. Are you? Maybe I've offended your principles – religious ones perhaps. If I have, I know I've sinned and am now repenting. (*Pointing up.*) And I will be asking Him – or Her – for forgiveness for it.

GINA: Good... Well, good... Good for you!

*GINA hurries up the steps and exits through the USR door.*

SAMANTHA: (*To herself.*) Oh God! Jasper.

*SAMANTHA crosses to the SL paved path.*

*(Calling quietly.) Jasper?... Jasper?... Are you there?... Jasper?*

*She crosses to the perimeter of the garden and calls out.*

*Jasper?... Jasper?... Jasper?*

*TOBY enters through the USL door.*

TOBY: Sam?

SAMANTHA: *(Turning 'Jasper' into a rasping cough.)* Rasper! Rasper!

TOBY: Are you all right?

SAMANTHA: Yes – swallowed a fly.

TOBY: Want me to get you some...?

SAMANTHA: I'm okay. He's gone down now.

TOBY: *(Garden furniture.)* Expecting company?

SAMANTHA: No... just giving them an airing.

TOBY: Anyone about?

SAMANTHA: Yes, I... I just said a brief hello to Gina.

TOBY: Ah. How is she?

SAMANTHA: Fine... fine – I think.

TOBY: You think?

SAMANTHA: No, she's... she's fine.

TOBY: Douglas about?

SAMANTHA: He's off walking, apparently.

TOBY: Listen, Sam, I've been thinking – about what you were saying in the pub last night – about us doing things together more – spending more quality time together.

SAMANTHA: Yes?

TOBY: Yes. I was thinking we do really need to tackle the garden – at home, don't we? We've been saying that for some time, haven't we? That we really need to tackle the garden... at home.

SAMANTHA: Yes... we have.

TOBY: Perfect weather for it – today – to get to grips with it. To hack back the ivy, pull up some weeds and generally tidy things up... together. Quality time together. What do you say?

SAMANTHA: Yes, good idea.

TOBY: Great! We can grab some breakfast on the way.

SAMANTHA: Yes.

TOBY: Perhaps you want to chuck those things into the... (*Seeing takeaway bag.*) That's their... anniversary dinner, isn't it?

SAMANTHA: The remains of, yes.

TOBY: What's it doing there?

SAMANTHA: I took it out of the shed.

TOBY: What was it doing in the shed?

SAMANTHA: Didn't you put it in there – last night, to get it out of the rain?

TOBY: No.

SAMANTHA: Oh. Gina said it wasn't her or Douglas. (*Guessing.*) Ah.

TOBY: What?

SAMANTHA: It must've been a... a fox or something then – or a badger, perhaps.

TOBY: Yes, perhaps. (*Wine bottle.*) One who enjoys sweet German wine.

SAMANTHA: No idea.

TOBY: Me neither. I'll just sort out my... Oh, no need to say goodbye to them, is there? Don't want to set a precedent, do we – announcing our arrival, informing them of our departure every time?

SAMANTHA: No, certainly not.

TOBY: Won't be a mo.

*TOBY exits through the USL door. SAMANTHA surveys the perimeter of the garden again as she folds up a garden chair. She traps her finger in the chair.*

SAMANTHA: Ow! Bugger!

*DOUGLAS enters via the SR paved path. He is dressed in a white suit and wears a panama hat. A label still hangs from a sleeve. He carries a bunch of roses.*

DOUGLAS: Hello, Samantha.

SAMANTHA: Oh – Douglas!

DOUGLAS: Doug, please.

SAMANTHA: Good morning. Been for a walk, I hear?

DOUGLAS: Yes... yes I have.

SAMANTHA: Looking smart.

DOUGLAS: Yes... thanks.

SAMANTHA: Saturday best is it?

DOUGLAS: Not usually, no – thought I'd make an effort... today.

SAMANTHA: Happy anniversary – for yesterday.

DOUGLAS: Thanks. Is she around – Gina?

SAMANTHA: Yes, she's... inside.

DOUGLAS: How are your parents?

SAMANTHA: My parents?

DOUGLAS: Yes.

SAMANTHA: They're... fine... last time I spoke to them.

DOUGLAS: You're not too worried about them then?

SAMANTHA: No. Should I be?

DOUGLAS: Well not if you're not I suppose. Toby said you were poised to hurry off to see them – yesterday.

SAMANTHA: Did he?

DOUGLAS: Not today either?

SAMANTHA: No. Bit of a schlep, they're in Berlin.

DOUGLAS: Berlin?

SAMANTHA: On an away break.

DOUGLAS: I see. Well they're obviously still pretty mobile then. Excuse me, I...

SAMANTHA: Douglas... Doug?

DOUGLAS: Yes?

SAMANTHA: When you see Gina... she might... she might tell you things – about me... things she's found out about me – from someone – well... one thing in particular really.

DOUGLAS: Yes?

SAMANTHA: Yes. This someone has told her something – something I'm not proud of – and something I'm rectifying – have rectified. Toby doesn't know about it – yet – and I'd rather he didn't hear about it from anyone other than me. So if you could keep it to yourself, Doug – *yourselves*, you and Gina – I'd very much appreciate it.

DOUGLAS: Right.

SAMANTHA: I'm sure you're wondering what this awful thing is I've done, Doug – although no doubt you've probably guessed by now.

DOUGLAS: Ah... not really, no.

SAMANTHA: Are you both church goers – you and Gina, Doug?

DOUGLAS: No, I'm afraid not.

SAMANTHA: Just Gina then.

DOUGLAS: Well...

SAMANTHA: But I hope you won't be too disapproving of me either when I tell you. I've been seeing someone – a man – romantically speaking.

DOUGLAS: Ah.

SAMANTHA: It was a foolish thing... a foolish fling.

DOUGLAS: I see.

SAMANTHA: You seem to be taking it better than Gina did anyway.

DOUGLAS: She was disapproving you say?

SAMANTHA: Incredibly. I think she may be eager to expose this wicked sinner.

DOUGLAS: Well I don't think she's in a position to expose anyone – especially not for something like that.

SAMANTHA: No?

DOUGLAS: No, I've just found out she's been carrying on with someone herself behind my back for quite some time.

SAMANTHA: Gina has?

DOUGLAS: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Well, well, well... that is interesting.

DOUGLAS: Devastating more like.

SAMANTHA: Yes, of course – to you, Doug. I'm so sorry to hear it. Someone you know?

DOUGLAS: Not until yesterday. A man called Ethan Duckworth. He and Gina had arranged to spend this weekend together.

SAMANTHA: What, with you here too?

DOUGLAS: No, I'm not supposed to be here.

SAMANTHA: No?

DOUGLAS: No, she insisted she wanted to be here without me. She needed thinking time, she said – alone. I came partly out of suspicion – I had a feeling in my gut that something was perhaps... 'going on', behind my back – and partly out of

wanting to surprise her – for our anniversary. I hoped if there was something ‘occurring’ with someone, it hadn’t gone too far between them, but meeting Duckworth yesterday and hearing him talk – and considering the time they’ve been together – my hopes were soon extinguished – although Gina tried to convince me nothing had ‘happened’ – you know... of that...

SAMANTHA: Yes.

DOUGLAS: I was going backwards and forwards practically the whole night, last night, in The Swan – in my head I mean – I booked a room there – wondering how I should... approach things this morning – with Gina – and Duckworth... if he’s still here. On the one hand trying to manage my attacks –

SAMANTHA: Attacks?

DOUGLAS: I have panic attacks – quite debilitating when they take hold. They stem from abandonment issues – one of my clients at work told me. He seems to be quite knowledgeable about it all.

SAMANTHA: Psychiatrist?

DOUGLAS: No, he’s a coach driver – for National Express. So that was on the one hand and on the other hand... I’ve forgotten what was on the other hand – Oh yes, I’m resolved not to meekly back down – like I always do – at least not without a show of defiance. If she’s going to choose another over me, then I’m damn well going to show her that I’m not going to be crushed – emotionally, mentally, physically, and that I can smile, smile in the face of knowing that she... knowing that she would rather be with... with this... this Duckworth instead of... instead of...

*DOUGLAS starts to weep.*

SAMANTHA: Doug? Doug?

DOUGLAS: Sorry, I...

SAMANTHA: It’s okay, Doug. Breathe. Breathe.

*SAMANTHA puts her hand on DOUGLAS’s shoulder.  
GINA has opened the USR door and notices them together. She exits back through the USR door.  
DOUGLAS performs his breathing exercise.*

DOUGLAS: Sorry, I was determined not to... not to let myself be...

SAMANTHA: It’s all right, Doug, it’s better out than in.

DOUGLAS: Yes, yes, I suppose so.

*GINA enters through the USR door. She holds the vase of flowers. She descends the steps.*

Gina?

GINA: I think these were meant for her, weren't they?

DOUGLAS: Her?

GINA: Her!

*GINA removes the flowers from the vase and throws the water over SAMANTHA.*

SAMANTHA: Oh! You...!

DOUGLAS: Gina!

*GINA throws the flowers at DOUGLAS and hurries back up the steps and exits through the USR door.*

I have no idea why she did that.

SAMANTHA: She's a self-righteous hypocrite that's why. God!

DOUGLAS: Let me get you something to...

SAMANTHA: It's okay, I'm okay.

DOUGLAS: Really, let me –

SAMANTHA: I'm fine.

DOUGLAS: (*GINA.*) Perhaps I should...

SAMANTHA: Yes, you should.

DOUGLAS: Are you sure I can't –

SAMANTHA: No! Please just... go to her.

DOUGLAS: Sorry.

*DOUGLAS ascends the steps and exits through the USR door. TOBY enters through the USL doors.*

TOBY: Ready? Are you okay?

SAMANTHA: No.

TOBY: What is it? You're wet.

SAMANTHA: Yes... yes I am. The bitch just threw a vase of water over me.

TOBY: Which bitch?

SAMANTHA: The bitch next door.

TOBY: Gina?

SAMANTHA: Yes, Gina.

TOBY: Ah. For any particular reason?

SAMANTHA: Oh, Toby, I didn't want you to find out like this.

TOBY: Find out? Find out what?

SAMANTHA: What I'm about to tell you. She's no doubt wanting to expose the cheating harlot so you might as well hear it from me.

TOBY: Cheating harlot?

SAMANTHA: Yes.

TOBY: Her?

SAMANTHA: Me.

TOBY: You.

SAMANTHA: And her.

TOBY: You and her?

SAMANTHA: Yes, but perhaps we ought to talk about this cheating harlot first. I've been... seeing someone, Toby. It's not love. It was just a... thing – a stupid... thing. I've ended it now. I was going to tell you in the pub last night, but... I didn't.

TOBY: I see. Who?

SAMANTHA: A man called Jasper Wright. It's no-one you know. Is it?

TOBY: No.

SAMANTHA: Listen, Toby... I'm so so sorry.

TOBY: *(Haughtily.)* Yes... well... I see... I see.

SAMANTHA: Toby, if you could possibly view this as... as perhaps more a cry for help... a cry for love... Toby.

TOBY: *(Haughtily again.)* Well...

SAMANTHA: I really did mean what I said in the pub last night about wanting us to... wanting us to do things together more, rediscover the things that we've... we've let slip. I do really want that, Toby. Tony?

TOBY: So why did she?

SAMANTHA: What?

TOBY: Why did she throw a vase of water over you?

SAMANTHA: Because she disapproves of my immoral behaviour.

TOBY: She does?

SAMANTHA: It's the only thing I can think it is – religious sanctimony.

TOBY: So who's the other?

SAMANTHA: What?

TOBY: Cheating harlot?

SAMANTHA: Her.

TOBY: *(Nervously.)* Her?

SAMANTHA: Yes, apparently the sanctimonious hypocrite has herself been carrying on behind Doug's back with someone else.

TOBY: Really?

SAMANTHA: So Doug's just told me.

TOBY: Did he... did he... did he say who?

SAMANTHA: Yes, he did.

TOBY: Ah.

SAMANTHA: Someone called Ethan Duckworth apparently.

TOBY: Ethan Duckworth!

SAMANTHA: You know him?

TOBY: No, no, never heard of him. Who's he?

SAMANTHA: The person she's been carrying on with.

TOBY: She told Doug that?

SAMANTHA: Yes.

TOBY: *(Relieved.)* Oh, well...

SAMANTHA: He showed up here apparently.

TOBY: Who did?

SAMANTHA: Ethan Duckworth.

TOBY: Ethan Duckworth did?

SAMANTHA: Yes.

TOBY: She *told* him that?

SAMANTHA: No, he met him.

TOBY: Who did?

SAMANTHA: Doug did.

TOBY: Doug met Duckworth?

SAMANTHA: Yes.

TOBY: When?

SAMANTHA: Yesterday he said.

TOBY: Really?

SAMANTHA: She'd arranged to meet him here.

TOBY: Ethan Duckworth?

SAMANTHA: Yes. She'd told Doug she wanted to be here alone to have some time to think, the little...! I know I can't talk, but at least I don't go about throwing vases of water over people. Look,

Toby, I need to change out of this before I get mildew. I hope we can talk, Toby, I really hope we can...

TOBY: *(Haughtily again.)* Yes, well... we'll see.

*SAMANTHA ascends the steps and exits through the USL door. TOBY briefly checks his mobile. He picks up the folded chair and takes it into the shed. DOUGLAS enters through the USR door. TOBY struggles with items in the shed.*

*(Within shed.)* Ah balls!

DOUGLAS: Who's that in there?

*There is a thump from within the shed.*

TOBY: *(Within shed.)* Ow!

DOUGLAS: Is that you, you swine, come out now!

*TOBY exits the shed. He holds a golf putter.*

Toby, it's you. I thought it was somebody else.

TOBY: Only me.

DOUGLAS: Have you seen Samantha?

TOBY: Yes, yes I have.

DOUGLAS: How is she?

TOBY: Wet. Getting changed.

DOUGLAS: I've no idea why she did it – Gina.

TOBY: She didn't say?

DOUGLAS: No. She's locked herself in the bathroom, refuses to answer me.

TOBY: She told me – Samantha did – about Duckworth.

DOUGLAS: Yes.

TOBY: She said he turned up here – yesterday.

DOUGLAS: Yes.

TOBY: In person.

DOUGLAS: Yes. I thought it was him, but it was you.

TOBY: What?

DOUGLAS: In the shed – just now.

TOBY: Oh. I see.

DOUGLAS: I was obviously correct – my gut was – with my assessment of the situation. Unfortunately I arrived nine months too late.

TOBY: Nine months?

DOUGLAS: That’s how long they’ve been...

TOBY: What Gina and Duckworth... nine months?

DOUGLAS: Yes.

TOBY: Is that what he told you?

DOUGLAS: Yes. Gina’s obviously more proficient at keeping things hidden from me than I’m giving her – or her neck – credit for. Perhaps it is to do with stress after all.

TOBY: Where did you meet him – Duckworth?

DOUGLAS: Coming out of your shed.

TOBY: You were?

DOUGLAS: No, Duckworth was.

TOBY: What was he doing in there?

DOUGLAS: Looking for badgers, he said.

TOBY: Badgers – in the shed?

DOUGLAS: He wasn’t though.

TOBY: No.

DOUGLAS: It was obviously just his cover story.

TOBY: Not a very convincing one. I wouldn’t think there’s too many badgers living in there.

DOUGLAS: That's what I thought. I guessed pretty soon who he really was, why he was really here.

TOBY: What did he tell you – about him and Gina?

DOUGLAS: More than I wanted to hear.

TOBY: Like... what – if you don't mind me asking?

DOUGLAS: He said he was very in love with her.

TOBY: Did he? I'm surprised you didn't take a swing at him, Doug.

DOUGLAS: It all took me on the back foot – and trying to manage my rising anxiety. Besides I'm not a violent man, Toby.

TOBY: Well, that's good.

DOUGLAS: I don't think it really ever solves anything... in the long run.

TOBY: Or the short run either really. And that way leads to prison – can do.

DOUGLAS: Yes. Although my client did say it was there within me – pent up inside.

TOBY: Violence?

DOUGLAS: Rage yes. He said my attacks were just a release valve for it – like mini eruptions to a volcano – and the right trigger could cause the volcano to erupt fully – with perhaps devastating consequences. He's says he's going to do some hypnotherapy on me next time we go through his tax returns – if we can find a moment.

TOBY: Right. Back to Duckworth, Doug.

DOUGLAS: Must we?

TOBY: How did you leave it with him?

DOUGLAS: He left it with me really. He just walked off – that way – threatening to slaughter the remainder of Kent's badger population.

TOBY: He sounds unhinged.

DOUGLAS: Yes, that was certainly my feeling about him.

TOBY: What did Gina have to say? You have spoken to her about him, I presume?

DOUGLAS: Yes, yesterday after she'd picked up our takeaway. She couldn't really deny it – knowing I'd actually met him in person.

TOBY: Did she tell you how and where they met?

DOUGLAS: No, we didn't get into details. I was too overcome, I had to get away. I spent the night in The Swan – in a room there. I haven't spoken to her since – except through the bathroom door, but that's so far been quite one sided.

TOBY: It's amazing isn't it – how little we know people. They appear to be an open book, but in truth they're anything but.

DOUGLAS: Yes. You're talking about Gina are you?

TOBY: Gina? Oh, no... no... No, I'm talking about Samantha. She's... just been telling me that she's been seeing someone herself.

DOUGLAS: She told you then?

TOBY: What, you know about it?

DOUGLAS: Yes, she told us both – separately that is.

TOBY: You and Gina?

DOUGLAS: She didn't want us to mention it until she'd told you herself.

TOBY: Well... seems like I'm the last to hear about it.

DOUGLAS: It's often the case.

TOBY: Yes.

DOUGLAS: Someone you know, Toby?

TOBY: No.

DOUGLAS: I'm sorry to hear it.

TOBY: Yes so was I. We're still no clearer however why Gina threw a vase of water over her.

DOUGLAS: No, it's a mystery.

TOBY: She's okay is she?

- DOUGLAS: Okay?
- TOBY: Health-wise... mentally?
- DOUGLAS: Yes, it's completely out of character. She's slammed a few doors on occasion, but nothing like that.
- TOBY: Well... perhaps we'll never know.
- DOUGLAS: I do intend to ask her... when she comes out of the bathroom.
- TOBY: Are you... going somewhere? You're dressed up like you're off to a garden party or something.
- DOUGLAS: No. Number three on the list: carry oneself with an air of confident nonchalance – or was it a nonchalant confidence? They probably amount to the same thing. It's very attractive – to the opposite sex – apparently. I thought if I could show Gina my indifference to Duckworth and that his existence is no impediment to my well-being – my confident nonchalance – she might view me in a new light. Unfortunately Duckworth seems to have a fair bit of it too.
- TOBY: Confident nonchalance?
- DOUGLAS: Yes, or nonchalant confidence – whatever it is.
- TOBY: Did number three on the list also specify a white suit and panama hat?
- DOUGLAS: No, I thought this gave me a –
- TOBY: Confident nonchalance.
- DOUGLAS: Yes. I got it from Country Squire in the village. Luckily they had my size.

*There is a the sound of breaking wood and a crashing from within the shed. A plume of dust billows through the door.*

- TOBY: What the...!
- JASPER: *(Within shed. Subdued.)* Ow!
- TOBY: Who's that? Who's in there? Who is it?

*JASPER slowly emerges from the shed holding his ribs.*

JASPER:               Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!

DOUGLAS:             Duckworth!

TOBY:                 Is that him?

DOUGLAS:             Yes... it is.

TOBY:                 I see. So you're Duckworth. I think we can now add criminal damage to trespassing, Mr Duckworth. I won't ask what you were doing up there on the roof of my shed. Actually, I will ask what you were doing up there on the roof of my shed. Well, what were you doing – up there on the roof of my shed. Well?

JASPER:               I'm winded, let me catch my breath.

TOBY:                 You're lucky this man doesn't knock the last remaining breath out of your body, Mr Duckworth. You probably didn't know Mr Fuller's a very proficient martial artist. Black belt in... what is it, Doug?

DOUGLAS:             Ah...

TOBY:                 Taekwondo, yes. He could tear you apart like the roof of that shed. You're lucky I'm holding him back. Stay back, Doug.

JASPER:               Who is he, your minder?

TOBY:                 He's not *my* minder. I'm minding him.

JASPER:               Well let's see if you're still minding him when he tells you what he told me yesterday. I presume you haven't, Douglas – yet?

DOUGLAS:             What?

JASPER:               Told him.

DOUGLAS:             I've told him, Duckworth, I've told him all about you.

TOBY:                 He's told me.

JASPER:               Yes, but has he told you about him?

TOBY:                 Him?

DOUGLAS:             Me?

JASPER: About you and her.

DOUGLAS: Who?

JASPER: His wife?

TOBY: My wife?

DOUGLAS: What about his wife?

JASPER: A little tongue-tied, are we Douglas, now you're standing right next to her husband – who's holding a golf putter? That is a putter, isn't it?

TOBY: What are you saying, Duckworth?

DOUGLAS: Yes, Duckworth, what are you saying?

JASPER: Only what you were quite happy to boast about yesterday – your 'arrangement', which I've subsequently found out isn't quite so unanimously agreed upon as yesterday you led me to believe, Douglas.

DOUGLAS: What arrangement?

TOBY: Yes, what arrangement?

JASPER: All right, since you're a little bashful today, Douglas, I'll tell him. This white-suited, Taekwondo champion, neighbour of yours, has been taking advantage of your semi-detached situation here to engage in a more fully attached one with your wife.

TOBY: With Samantha?

DOUGLAS: That is an absolute lie!

JASPER: It was an absolute truth yesterday, Douglas.

DOUGLAS: It was not!

JASPER: Ask her, she'll tell you – possibly.

TOBY: What you're saying that Douglas and Samantha are – ?

JASPER: In no uncertain terms, right Douglas?

DOUGLAS: Why you...! Not only are you... with Gina –

JASPER: What?

DOUGLAS: But now you accuse me of...

*DOUGLAS seizes the golf putter from TOBY.*

TOBY: Doug?

DOUGLAS: I'll...! I'll...!

*JASPER takes evasive action.*

JASPER: Okay, take it easy, Douglas.

TOBY: Doug?

*DOUGLAS lets out a pent up cry. He brings the golf club down hard on the table.*

JASPER: Jesus!

TOBY: Doug!

DOUGLAS: I'll...! I'll...! I don't care if it does mean prison!

JASPER: Listen, you may have –

*DOUGLAS roars and makes a run at JASPER.  
JASPER escapes via the SL paved path.*

TOBY: Doug! Douglas!

*DOUGLAS exits after JASPER. GINA has opened the  
USR door just in time to see JASPER and DOUGLAS  
exit.*

GINA: Toby? What's going on?

TOBY: It's Duckworth.

GINA: What?

TOBY: Ethan Duckworth.

GINA: It looked like Knight.

TOBY: What?

GINA: It's Knight, isn't it?

TOBY: Night?

GINA: Casper Knight – your other one.

TOBY: Other one?

GINA: Yes. It's Duckworth's day off, isn't it?

TOBY: What? Gina, have you been drinking?

GINA: No. Why's Doug chasing after Mr Knight with a golf club?

TOBY: That's Duckworth.

GINA: It's Knight – Casper Knight.

TOBY: No, it's Duckworth, Ethan Duckworth – *your* Ethan Duckworth.

GINA: *My* Ethan Duckworth?

TOBY: Yes.

GINA: He's not *my* Ethan Duckworth, he's *your* Ethan Duckworth.

TOBY: It's no good denying it, Gina, Doug's told me.

GINA: Told you what?

TOBY: About you and him.

GINA: Me and Doug?

TOBY: No, you and Duckworth.

GINA: What about me and Duckworth?

TOBY: That you're seeing him.

GINA: Ethan Duckworth?

TOBY: Yes.

GINA: What, how can I be seeing him, I don't even know him.

TOBY: Then how do you explain him?

GINA: That's Knight, Casper Knight, your colleague – your other one!

TOBY: (*Shouting.*) He is not my colleague, Gina!

GINA: Well he told me he was! And will you stop shouting, Toby, I don't like it!

TOBY: I'm just trying to get things clear!

GINA: Things don't get clearer by shouting, Toby.

TOBY: *(Calming.)* Okay, okay, okay. So just to get things clear, Gina, you're not having an affair with that man?

GINA: Casper Knight, no, I am not.

TOBY: Nor Ethan Duckworth?

GINA: No, Toby, I am not having an affair with either of them! I'm having an affair with you, remember?

TOBY: Shhhh!

GINA: Who told you I was?

TOBY: Doug did.

GINA: Whatever gave him that idea?

TOBY: You did.

GINA: Me!

TOBY: That's what he said.

GINA: Well, I didn't – and I'm not.

TOBY: Then who the hell is he and what's he doing here!

GINA: He told me he was Casper Knight your colleague – along with Ethan Duckworth – and that he was just going through some paperwork in the shed.

TOBY: Paperwork – in the shed?

GINA: Yes, he said you use it as an extension to your office – where you keep your files – the not so important ones.

TOBY: An extension to the office – that shed?

GINA: Yes.

TOBY: *(Shouting.)* It's a bloody garden shed, Gina!

GINA: I'm just telling you what he told me, that's all, Toby! And you're shouting again, I really don't like it! Is that why Doug's chasing him with a golf club because he thinks I'm seeing him?

TOBY: Yes... well, that's one of the reasons. Duckworth – or whoever he is – also accused Doug of having a thing with Samantha. Ridiculous idea.

GINA: Well, he is.

TOBY: He is!

GINA: That's what he told me.

TOBY: Doug did?

GINA: No, Casper Knight did.

TOBY: Well what does *he* know?

GINA: He said Doug told him he was.

TOBY: Doug told Casper Knight?

GINA: Yes. It's been going on for well over nine months apparently.

TOBY: Doug and Samantha?

GINA: Yes.

TOBY: Nine months! (*More to himself.*) As well as Wright.

GINA: What?

TOBY: Oh, just somebody else she's been seeing. Nine months.

GINA: Yes, which means they must've been seeing each other when Bob was living here.

TOBY: Yes. And I bet he knew about it too – *Bob*. I never trusted that mild-mannered swine. I knew he was hiding something from me.

DOUGLAS: (*Off. Calling.*) Duckworth!

*JASPER runs on via the SR paved path. He is minus his shoes, but carries one of them.*

JASPER:                   *(Calling back.)* I'm telling you, I'm not who you think I am!

*DOUGLAS runs on via the SL paved path. He is minus his hat. DOUGLAS roars again and wields the putter. JASPER hurls the shoe at him, it misses and goes inside the shed.*

DOUGLAS:                I'll... I'll...!

*DOUGLAS runs at JASPER. JASPER about turns and escapes via the SR paved path.*

GINA:                    Dougie! Doug!

TOBY:                    Douglas!

JASPER:                 *(Exiting.)* Call him off! Someone, call him off!

*DOUGLAS exits after him.*

GINA:                    Doug! Dougie!

DOUGLAS:               *(Off. Calling.)* Duckworth!

GINA:                    Toby, do something, he'll hurt him with that.

TOBY:                    Don't worry, he looks quite sprightly does Duckworth. He'll outrun him. So just to get things straight, Gina, Doug doesn't know about you and me?

GINA:                    I thought he did.

TOBY:                    But he obviously doesn't, otherwise he'd be chasing after *me* with a golf club, not Duckworth... unless it's my turn next.

GINA:                    So when Doug and I were talking yesterday, when I'd come back with the Chinese, I thought he was talking about you and he thought I was talking about him – Knight or Duckworth or whoever he is.

TOBY:                    Yes, that makes sense... I think.

GINA:                    Then why did he tell Doug he was Ethan Duckworth when he told me he was Casper Knight?

TOBY:                    Because the man's obviously a pathological liar. But as yet we're no clearer finding out who he *really* is or what the hell he's doing here.

*JASPER runs on via the SR paved path. He has removed his shirt. DOUGLAS follows after him. They are both more breathless and dishevelled.*

JASPER: I'm telling you, you great white-suited buffoon, I'm not him!  
Why won't you listen to me!

DOUGLAS: Buffoon eh! Buffoon!

GINA: Douggie!

*DOUGLAS roars and makes a run at JASPER. JASPER throws his shirt at DOUGLAS and escapes via the SL paved path.*

Doug!

*DOUGLAS about turns and exits via the SR paved path hoping to head off JASPER coming the other way.*

Douggie! Toby I'm worried.

TOBY: Like I say, he won't get near him. So, just to get this clear, when you were up at the pub meeting me last night, Doug ran into Duckworth coming out of the shed.

GINA: What was Doug doing in the shed?

TOBY: No, Duckworth was in the shed.

GINA: Finishing off.

TOBY: No! Looking for badgers... he said.

GINA: Badgers?

TOBY: He wasn't. It was just his ridiculous cover story.

GINA: His ridiculous cover story for what?

TOBY: For whatever the hell it is he *is* doing here!

GINA: Toby!

TOBY: *(More to himself. Resigned.)* God knows... perhaps he is just here to look for badgers and everyone thinks he's someone he isn't... including Duckworth it seems.

GINA: *Or...* perhaps he is who he says he is.

- TOBY: Sorry?
- GINA: Who he's told *me* he is – Casper Knight, a colleague of yours, someone from your office you've forgotten about?
- TOBY: You mean someone who works with me on a daily basis – with me, in my office... someone I've forgotten about, Gina?
- GINA: I'm just saying he could be someone who's quite new – and yes, who you've forgotten about – or someone who works in another branch perhaps. That's all I'm saying, Toby.
- TOBY: *(Politely on the point of exploding.)* There's one office, Gina – one office only of Harper White Residential Sales and Lettings – in Edenbridge – in the High Street – and to the best of my knowledge no Casper Knight – or Ethan Duckworth for that matter – presently work there – or indeed have ever worked there.
- GINA: Okay –
- TOBY: There's a Mr O'Rourke, a Mr Callaghan and a Ms Thomas – I certainly know of their existence, as I see them on a daily basis – but certainly no hint of a Knight of a sniff of a Duckworth.
- GINA: Okay, Toby!
- TOBY: Nor is this modest timber construction here – despite what Mr Knight might have led you to believe – a sub office to our high street shop, containing absolutely no paperwork, files, folders, floor plans, photographs or indeed anything in the slightest to do with the buying and selling of property!
- GINA: Toby!
- TOBY enters the shed and throws out the items as he lists them.*
- TOBY: *(Losing it.)* Just garden chairs... wellington boots... trugs... trowels... weed-killer... and plenty of pieces of broken roof – Gina!
- TOBY throws the pieces of broken roof to the ground.*
- GINA: *(Bursting into tears.)* Oh!
- GINA hurriedly ascends the steps and exits through the USR door. SAMANTHA enters through the USL*

*door.*

SAMANTHA: Toby? I heard shouting from the shower. Is everything all right?

TOBY: Yes... just... having a clear out, that's all.

*JASPER runs on via the SL paved path. He is now stripped down to his underwear. SAMANTHA lets out a cry. JASPER is exhausted. DOUGLAS enters via the SL paved path with JASPER's trousers round his shoulder. He too is exhausted, although he continues to wield the golf club in a delirious way.*

JASPER: Somebody – anybody – disarm this lunatic, before he kills someone – me!

SAMANTHA: Doug! Toby, take it away from him!

TOBY: Doug... Doug, now... Give me that... Douglas... Thank you.

*TOBY takes the golf club from DOUGLAS. DOUGLAS collapses into a garden chair – the one that was left out in the rain. The seat on the chair rips. DOUGLAS sinks through and remains stuck in the chair. GINA looks out through the USSR door. After the right moment she comes to join them.*

SAMANTHA: Jasper, what's going on?

JASPER: Tell this lunatic who I am, will you!

TOBY: Jasper?

JASPER: Yes.

TOBY: Jasper Wright?

JASPER: Thank you. Tell *him* that will you!

*TOBY takes a menacing step towards JASPER.*

TOBY: So you're Jasper Wright are you?

SAMANTHA: Toby!

*SAMANTHA seizes the golf club from TOBY. She holds it out to keep the peace.*

Everybody just stop, right now! I am not having the police investigating a murder in our garden... not without getting things absolutely clear between us first. Okay? Good. There's obviously been a fair bit of confusion here about who everybody is... and who we *think* they are. Okay, right, well... I'll start. This man here – in his underwear – is Jasper Wright. Yes, Toby the man I *was* seeing, now finished. Right Jasper?

JASPER: If you say so.

SAMANTHA: I do. It is, Toby.

DOUGLAS: And Gina too.

SAMANTHA: I'm getting to Gina and Duckworth, Doug.

DOUGLAS: No, he's Duckworth too.

SAMANTHA: What?

DOUGLAS: He's Ethan Duckworth as well as Wright. Right Duckworth?

SAMANTHA: You told him you were Ethan Duckworth, Jasper?

JASPER: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Why?

JASPER: It seemed like a good name – at the time.

GINA: And Knight.

SAMANTHA: What?

GINA: He told me he was Casper Knight.

SAMANTHA: Jasper?

JASPER: Casper Jasper, Wright Knight – it's not too far off.

GINA: And no, Doug, there's nothing going on between us – wherever you got *that* idea from.

DOUGLAS: I got it from him – Duckworth – or Wright – or Knight or whoever he is.

SAMANTHA: Wright, he's Jasper Wright.

JASPER: You didn't get it from me.

DOUGLAS: I did. He told me he was – yesterday.

JASPER: He didn't.

DOUGLAS: You did.

JASPER: Didn't.

SAMANTHA: Anyway, you obviously picked up the wrong end of the stick, Doug.

JASPER: Not just the wrong end, the wrong stick entirely.

GINA: Anyway, what about you, Doug?

DOUGLAS: Me?

GINA: Yes, you and Samantha.

DOUGLAS: Me and Samantha?

GINA: Yes.

SAMANTHA: Doug and me?

GINA: Yes.

DOUGLAS: What about us?

GINA: You've been seeing each other for the past nine months.

DOUGLAS: What!

SAMANTHA: What!

GINA: Haven't you?

SAMANTHA: Who told you that?

GINA: He did.

SAMANTHA: Did you?

JASPER: Yes... Yes I own up to that one.

SAMANTHA: Why?

JASPER: Because he told me you were.

DOUGLAS: No I didn't.

JASPER: You're still denying it? He told me he was yesterday.

DOUGLAS: I did not.

SAMANTHA: Well we're not – are we, Doug?

DOUGLAS: No.

SAMANTHA: It appears Doug's not the only one to have picked up the wrong stick.

JASPER: It was only the one that was given to me.

SAMANTHA: Okay, is that it? Or are there any other stray ends still to be knotted up? Jasper?

JASPER: All my ends are knotted, I think.

SAMANTHA: Doug?

DOUGLAS: Mine too.

SAMANTHA: Gina?... Gina?

TOBY: Yes, I think that's all ends knotted. Okay, well...

DOUGLAS: Actually, no... no they're not. Not all ends have been knotted.

SAMANTHA: No?

DOUGLAS: No. So if it wasn't Ethan Duckworth – or him – you were planning to meet here, Gina, then who was it we were talking about – you *thought* I was talking about – when we were discussing the person you'd come her to –

TOBY: Look – listen, no need to wash our dirty linen in public is there – any more than it has been done already, surely?

SAMANTHA: No, we need to wash it all – every sock and knicker of it. Gina?

DOUGLAS: Gina?

JASPER: Gina?

TOBY: (*Disguised pleading.*) Gina?

GINA: First of all, I owe you an apology, Samantha, for throwing a

vase of water over you. I made a mistake.

SAMANTHA: Yes well, if you suspected Doug and I were... I suppose that's quite forgivable.

GINA: Also I made another much bigger mistake – which isn't quite so forgivable – for which you'll no doubt want to throw a vase of water over me for too... the vase too most possibly.

TOBY: Gina, let's not –

GINA: Toby and I arranged to meet here together alone... to continue something we started... last time we were here – together. Something I thought – hoped – might've grown into something more... between us. If it's any consolation, nothing has actually 'happened' between us.

TOBY: Absolutely nothing.

GINA: Just kissing and cuddling, like I told you, Doug.

TOBY: Just that.

GINA: I hope you can forgive me, Samantha. And Doug, I don't expect you to forgive me –

DOUGLAS: *(Ready to forgive.)* Well...

GINA: But before you say anything, Doug, I just want to say: you were right about what you said, about things needing to be worked at, about complacency setting in, things becoming neglected – little things, that shouldn't be... neglected. Like you surprising me with flowers yesterday – even though I didn't want you to be here doing it at the time... I appreciate it now. I thought I was in love with Toby. I was wrong. I'd just lost sight of the man I really love.

JASPER: That's you, Douglas, by the way, just to be clear.

GINA: Doug, if you believe we can possibly... put this behind us and... make a fresh start... together... well, I'd very much like that... Doug. What do you say?

DOUGLAS: Yes, I'd very much like that too... if someone could help me out of this chair.

*GINA helps DOUGLAS out of the chair with SAMANTHA's assistance.*

Thank you.

*GINA picks up a flower and gives it to DOUGLAS.*

GINA: Not too late is it for an anniversary breakfast, Doug?

DOUGLAS: No, no it isn't.

*GINA and DOUGLAS ascend the steps and exit through the USR door.*

JASPER: Well... won't outstay my welcome... any more than I have done already. Okay...

*JASPER picks up his shirt and trousers.*

Shirt... Trousers.

*He checks his pockets.*

Wallet... Mobile... Something still missing. Ah, shoes.

*JASPER glances about the garden.*

If they turn up, perhaps you'd be good enough to post them to me. I'll... see myself off the premises.

*JASPER exits via the SL paved path.*

TOBY: Listen, Sam...

SAMANTHA: It's okay, Toby, there's no need to say anything. It's all been said.

TOBY: Yes. Well... *(Checks watch)* Goodness, almost lunchtime now. Perhaps I can... make us a couple of pick-me-up coffees first, before we... before we... Right. Won't be a mo.

*TOBY ascends the steps and exits through the USL door. After a moment, JASPER enters via the SL paved path. He is dressed and wears DOUGLAS's panama hat. He holds one of his shoes.*

JASPER: *(Off.)* Sorry to interrupt again... Just to say I've found one. Halves the postage cost now.

*JASPER hangs the hat on the diamond trim of the shed.*

Well... bye then.

SAMANTHA: Jasper...?

JASPER: Oh, just wanted to say too: I'm sure you're doing the right thing, sticking with him, resolving to work things out between you. Not letting the fact that someone – me – is still incredibly in love with you. Your group would approve. Notice I said group, not cult. I was probably being a little hard on them. *(Shoe.)* Yes, well, if you find the other one... Shame for them not to... be together.

*JASPER exits via the SL paved path. SAMANTHA catches sight of JASPER's other shoe within the shed. She enters the shed and exits with his shoe. She looks up to the house and then in the direction JASPER went... then back up to the house again.*

SAMANTHA: *(To herself.)* Oh! Samantha!

*She exits via the SL paved path.*

*(Off. Calling.)* Jasper?

*TOBY enters though the USL door with two cups of coffee.*

TOBY: *(Calling.)* Samantha? Sam?

*He notices the panama hat.*

You in the shed?

*TOBY descends the steps. He puts the coffee down and crosses to the shed. He looks inside, He takes the hat.*

Sam?... Samantha?... Anybody?

*There is a sudden and loud rumble of thunder. TOBY looks up.*

Ah.

*Lights down.*