PRECONCEPTION

Episode 1

INT. A+E MINORS - DAY

HARI, 33, slight, spiky-haired, walks into a curtained booth where a MOTHER sits waiting, her restless toddler SON sat on her lap. The mother looks exhausted, desperate.

HARI

Hi, sorry for the wait. I'm Hari.

She makes an exaggerated "hi" smile at the boy, then back to the mother.

HARI (CONT'D)

How can I help?

MOTHER

Well, um... I found a lump. I, my GP, it's hard to get an appointment, so...

HARI

(nodding) Mmhm, well I can
definitely take a look for you.
Where's the lump?

MOTHER

(shifting uncomfortably) It's, uh, it's in my groin? I'm probably being stupid.

HARI

Not at all, no. Do you want to pop onto the exam table and I'll take a look?

As the woman moves to lie on the table and pull down her waistband a little, Hari turns to her son.

HARI (CONT'D)

What's your name?

Sudden shyness. He twists his body to hide his face against the wall.

MOTHER

He's Aleksandr. It's Russian.

HARI

Ah. My name's welsh. I'm Angharad, but people call me Hari. Like Harry Potter.

The boy peeps at her then crushes his face back into the wall.

MOTHER

He can be shy.

Hari waves a hand never mind and squirts alcohol gel onto her hands before placing them on the woman's right groin crease.

HARI

Okay let's see.

A few seconds pass while Hari pushes at a small lump she finds.

HARI (CONT'D)

Cough for me?

The woman COUGHS.

HARI (CONT'D)

And again?

She COUGHS again.

HARI (CONT'D)

And you haven't found any other lumps? Any other symptoms at all? Cough, weight loss, bowel trouble?

MOTHER

No, nothing.

HARI

Okay, I don't think you have anything to worry about. It's firm and moves under the skin so it's either a lipoma - like a little fatty lump - or it could be a swollen gland.

A little face appears at the examination table, peeping.

HARI (CONT'D)

90p-

She bends and picks up the son, props him on the edge of the exam table.

HARI (CONT'D)

(to the mother) If it's still there in a couple of weeks, it's something to see your GP about just in case.

SON

What's that?

HART

That's a really good question. I think mummy must have eaten something and it's stuck down there below her tummy!

She GASPS. He is intriqued.

HARI (CONT'D)

But what do you think? Is it sweetcorn, or a pea?

He reaches out gently.

SON

Mama doesn't like sweetcorn.

HARI

(faux seriousness) Ah, see that's really important information. In that case, it's a pea. You've helped me a lot. (to mother) Mama, we've determined... it's a pea.

The mother smiles gratefully, pulling her clothes right then stands and gathers her stuff. Hari plops the boy back down and pulls open the booth curtain.

HARI (CONT'D)

If you feel worried, don't feel weird about coming back in. It's what we're here for.

The woman nods. There is a pause.

HARI (CONT'D)

... Was that everything?

The mother looks up, her eyes brimming with tears.

MOTHER

Um... it's just... everything's a bit... you know?

Hari pulls the curtain back across.

HARI

Tell me what's going on.

The woman bows her head and starts quietly crying. Hari takes her hand and sits her down.

RUN TITLES - CONCEPTION

INT. TOILET CUBICLE - DAY

Hari, dressed in hoodie and jeans, hair unbrushed, sleep deprived, braces herself against the cubicle walls. Her eyes are squeezed shut, she's taking deep breaths.

Nope, not gonna cut it - she rifles through her bag and pulls out her phone. Dials.

HARI

... Red, help me.

EXT. PARK - SAME TIME

MEREDITH, 37, is looking fabulous and she knows it. Sunglasses on, lips murder red, coffee in hand, she is living her best life. She talks on airpods.

MEREDITH

Hiya babes.

INT. TOILET CUBICLE - DAY/ EXT. PARK - DAY

Split screen.

HART

I can't do it.

MEREDITH

Is this brunch with the uni pals?

Hari starts beating her head against the cubicle wall.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

(glib) How many of them brought their husbands?

HART

...two.

MEREDITH

Aaaaand how many of them brought their babies?

HART

...all of them.

Meredith laughs.

MEREDITH

Give me the highlights.

The faint sound of a DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING in Hari's background.

HARI

Rachel ordered a sofa online and it took six weeks to arrive, then it was green.

MEREDITH

What colour was it meant to be?

HARI

Green. But a "different green".

Hari sits, defeated.

HARI (CONT'D)

We spent thirty minutes talking about prams.

Meredith is loving this.

HARI (CONT'D)

They cost as much as cars now.

MEREDITH

Fuck off.

HARI

Why am I heeeeere?

MEREDITH

(mimicking her tone) Because you're
a people pleaserrrrr.

HARI

We used to have a laugh. We used to go on holidays. (faux-tantrum)

We used to do so many druuugs.

MEREDITH

But they grew up babes. Ditch them. Stick with me, young

HARI

(37)

MEREDITH

Footloose and child free. Yes 37 fuck you very much. Come out tonight.

FLUSHING in Hari's background.

Hari wipes her hand over her face and turns to unlock the cubicle.

HARI

Promise me, if I ever say I'm going to meet the unichums again, shoot me in the fucking face.

She stops abruptly. A blond, Cath Kidston clone is stood at the sink, face like thunder.

HARI (CONT'D)

Gotta go.

She hangs up and stares at the clone. Shifts awkwardly.

HARI (CONT'D)

Hi Rachel.

RACHEL is taking out her rage out on the paper towels, venomously wiping her hands.

RACHEL

Didn't know it was such a <u>chore</u> to be around us, Angharad.

HART

Oh noooo no no no. That was just my friend, she, uh... she....

Rachel spins and stalks toward the door. As she pulls it open, she turns.

RACHEL

And actually, sage and pistachio are completely different colours. Simon was devastated.

She storms out.

Hari looks at herself in the mirror. Takes a DEEP BREATH.

Shaking off the shame, she turns her chin up to look up her nostrils. Both clear. She turns to the side, sucks in her stomach and smooths her front. Lookin' good.

INT. CAFE - SECONDS LATER

Hari emerges from the toilets, HUMMING softly.

She looks up and stops in her tracks. Deflates.

At the table, four Cath Kidstons sit, glaring at Hari, surrounded by buggies and two pastel husbands. Rachel is slowly shaking her head.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT//POV HARI

DANCE MUSIC pounds. Neon lights wash over us. Visuals fade in and out, blurry and uneven.

INT. CLUB - SAME TIME

Hari dances with Meredith, PABLO and FABIAN. Fabian wears dramatic makeup. They are dripping with sweat, gurning and wild-eyed. They scream over the music to each other. We see snatches of the night.

Shots at the bar.

Hari embracing a drag queen. Meredith twerking in front of them.

Pablo and Fabian dancing close and looking lovingly at each other.

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

The group staggering down the street, chips in hand.

Hari hugging the others goodnight, boarding a night bus.

INT. NIGHT BUS - NIGHT

Hari leans her head against the window, thoughtful. She slowly falls asleep.

Jerked awake by the arrival next to her of a group of university students, still full of energy, night only just beginning.

EXT. BLOCK OF FLATS - NIGHT

Hari looks through both pockets and every pocket of her bag for her keys. Loose bank cards fall out. She pulls out a roque chip, eats it. Finally finds the keys.

INT. HARI'S FLAT - NIGHT

Un-unpacked boxes litter the flat, labelled with "Hari", one labelled with "George stuff". Dying plants are scattered around. A sort of shrine to Louis Theroux(?) Is next to the door. Hari kisses her hand and places it on Louis' face as she passes.

INT. HARI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Hari face plants onto the clothes on her bed.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. AMBULANCE BAY - DAY

Hari, wearing what looks like the same outfit, and looking at death's door, sways slightly on her feet as she slinks towards the A+E entrance.

INT. A+E - DAY

We follow her as she moves through the doors, a nod to reception, into the department... and with a swipe of an access card, she's into a changing room.

INT. CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Hari sits on a bench and covers her face, sighing.

INT. A+E CORRIDOR - DAY

FRIDAY, a nurse, huge and imposing but jolly, is passing the changing room door and SINGING loudly. Hari emerges and winces at the volume. Friday bursts out LAUGHING.

FRIDAY

Doctor Hari! Are you feeling magical today?

Hari nods and BURPS quietly.

HARI

So-magical-Friday-thank-you.

FRIDAY

My favourite doc, I'll go get you a coffee yes?

Hari turns and envelops Friday in a sorrowful hug.

HARI

(with deep sincerity) I love you.

Friday LAUGHS and heads out.

INT. A+E MAJORS - A FEW HOURS LATER

Hari sits at a computer, chugging coffee, frustrated.

BETH, sturdy, mousey, arrives with patient notes in hand.

BETH

Hey.

HART

I've tried two thousand times and it won't print.

Beth looks at the screen.

BETH

"Documents needed to open an account"?

HARI

Yeah I'm in Minors today.

Beth shakes her head, still puzzled.

HARI (CONT'D)

Old lady came in asking how to open a bank account.

BETH

To A+E...

HARI

(shrugs) She seemed lonely.

She clicks once more and finally the printer bursts to life.

BETH

You on lates today?

Hari glances at the clock - 4pm. She grabs the printout and makes to leave.

HARI

Nah, finish in four hours. (mock screaming) Four hours!

She punches the air with the rock-on symbol.

At that second, GEORGE wanders in, TALKING on the phone. He's Ken-doll handsome, as clean-cut as they come.

Hari transforms her rock-on handsign into a gun and mimes shooting herself in the head. She ducks down, next to Beth and out of George's eyeline.

GEORGE

(finishing call) Okay boss, sure thing.

He looks around briefly. Then addresses NIAMH, a ferocious looking staff nurse who stands at the control terminal.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Hi.

Nothing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Sister?

Still nothing.

George puts a piece of paper in front of Niamh, partially covering her screen, and points to a name scribbled on there.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Ortho. Where can I find Susan Lake?

NIAMH

(clenched teeth, strong Irish
accent)
Get. Your fucking. Paper. Off. My
screen.

GEORGE

I'm sorry?

Niamh's head snaps round to fix a stare at George. If her eyes could shoot fire, George would be ash.

NIAMH

I said. Get your paper...

She slashes at the paper with one hand, sending it flying into the air.

NIAMH (CONT'D)

...off my screen.

Hari leaps up and grabs the paper from the air, smiling apologetically and leading George away by the arm. His confused expression softens at the sight of her.

GEORGE

Hi.

INT. A+E CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Safely away from Niamh they stop.

HARI

Niamh can be a bit much.

GEORGE

How are you doing?

Hari SIGHS gently, looks him in the eye.

HARI

I'm good, George.

She glances down at his left hand - he wears a wedding ring. George looks at his ring and twirls it thoughtfully.

GEORGE

Did you get the-

He looks up but she's gone.

INT. A+E WAITING ROOM - DAY

At first just half full, gradually the room fills. Eventually it's standing room only.

A brawl starts, hospital security bundles them outside.

Someone collapses, and a gaggle of medical staff crowd around to tend to them and whisk them into the department.

Through the windows, the sky darkens, the street lights come on.

The clock sits at 10pm.

TNT. A+E MAJORS CLINICIAN STATION - EVENING

Hari types up some patient notes at a terminal.

Beth whisks by, carrying a request form of some kind. As she passes--

BETH

Go hoooome.

Hari GRUNTS, Bleary-eyed. She plonks the patient booklet she's working on to the "done" pile, opens the next one - there are still a bunch to get through. She rubs her eyes.

A bone-chilling WAIL echoes from somewhere else in the department.

Then another.

On the third WAIL, Hari looks around, trying to find someone to lock eyes with. There's no-one nearby.

HARI

What's-

Suddenly, Friday comes careering into Majors, skidding to a stop. He sees Hari.

FRIDAY

Hari, I need you.

Hari looks up at the clock.

HARI

Τ-

FRIDAY

I need you.

INT. SIDE ROOM - EVENING

A patient, SARAH, sits on the bed, covered with a sheet from the waist down, slight bump to her belly. She is in intense distress, WHIMPERING and occasionally SCREAMING in pain.

Friday is gowning up, a trolley of equipment next to him. Hari is shutting the door behind her.

HART

(quietly, to Friday) What's going on?

FRIDAY

She's pregnant. Bleeding for a few hours and now bad pain.

HARI

(to Sarah) We're here to help now.

She gowns and gloves up.

HARI (CONT'D)

(to Friday) Give her something for the pain.

FRIDAY

I've given her 5 of morphine.

HARI

Give her 5 more. Where's dad?

FRIDAY

She came in alone.

Friday starts drawing up the meds, and Hari squats to look under the sheet at what's going on.

HARI

Okay. (to Sarah) How far along are you?

SARAH

Six...sixteen weeks. Please, I don't want to-

A wave of pain causes her to stiffen and lay back.

HARI

Okay, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry but your baby is coming out.

SARAH

It's too early.

HARI

Yes.

She shares a look with Friday. She stands and moves next to the patient's face.

HARI (CONT'D)

I know this is probably the worst thing that's ever happened to you, I know that. But I need to be honest with you. You're losing your baby. And that's terrible. I cannot imagine how terrible. The only thing we can do right now, the only thing I can do for you, is make sure that happens safely.

The patient bursts into tears. Hari heads back down.

HARI (CONT'D)

Friday, can I have a speculum?

Friday passes it to her. She inserts it. She can't see. Friday appears with an eye torch and shines it for her.

HARI (CONT'D)

(quietly) Fuck.

She starts grabbing things off the trolley - gauze, a vomit bowl, some forceps.

HARI (CONT'D)

Bleep Gynae now. Tell them it's an emergency. The baby's stuck in the cervix.

Hari glances up at the obs machine - BP 110/75, HR 55.

Friday dashes out. Hari picks up the forceps and inserts them.

HARI (CONT'D)

You might feel a pinch, I'm really sorry!

Sarah cries out, and Hari twists and pulls. Loses grip. Checks the machine again.

BP 101/60, HR 50. She goes back in. Twists, pulls... and gets it. She brings something out and puts it into the vomit bowl. Covers it with gauze.

Sarah is still crying.

The machine - HR starting to ascend, BP now at 110/70. Relief for Hari.

HARI (CONT'D)

Okay, it's over now, it's over. No more poking and prodding. You did great.

She takes the bowl to the side of the room.

SARAH

Can I see him?

HARI

(a beat) Of course, one second.

She gets a clean bowl, and clean gauze, and transfers the contents. Gently, she brings the bowl up to the patient.

HARI (CONT'D)

Here he is.

Sarah looks at her baby. He's tiny, raw pink, but he looks like a baby. He looks asleep. She sobs.

SARAH

I'm so sorry, little one. My baby.

HARI

Do you- Is there anyone you want me to call?

SARAH

No, there's no-one.

Hari looks mildly confused.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I used a donor.

(to baby)

You're all mine.

Hari moves to start clearing away some of the equipment quietly.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What's your name?

HARI

I'm Hari. Sorry, I didn't... before... it was all...

Sarah shakes her head - it's okay.

SARAH

I'm Sarah.

Hari nods. A beat.

HART

Did you have a name for him?

Sarah's eyes well up again and she tries to swallow her tears back.

SARAH

(barely above a whisper) Jacob.

HARI

Jacob. It's a good name.

Sarah nods.

HARI (CONT'D)

(thickly) I'm just going to step out for a second. Gynae are on their way to see you. Do you need anything?

Sarah doesn't seem to have heard.

EXT. AMBULANCE BAY - SECONDS LATER

Hari comes out, paces the bay a few times.

She sinks down against the wall and takes a deep breath.

Friday sits down next to her.

FRIDAY

Tough one.

Hari nods. And suddenly she is sobbing. Sobbing with her whole body, big racking cries, tears all over her face. Some snot.

Friday pats her knee in consolation.

FRIDAY (CONT'D)

Sad for the little baby.

HARI

No, I'm just really hung over.

They both chuckle, and Hari goes back to sobbing. She nods.

They sit in companionable silence for a second.

HARI (CONT'D)

(still sobbing, but trying to continue a conversation) What time were you supposed to finish?

FRIDAY

(checks watch) 8 o clock. Almost three hours ago.

HARI

(laughs) Same.

FRIDAY

It was meant to be, huh.

A few beats more silence, save for Hari's continued racking sobs.

Someone CLEARS THEIR THROAT. It's the on call Gynae doctor, Josiah, young, wide-eyed, totally out of his depth. And without a single clue how to deal with a crying Hari.

JOSIAH

Gynae. Are you looking after the lady in the side room?

HARI

(still sobbing) Yeah.

Josiah looks at her in alarm.

HARI (CONT'D)

(gesturing to herself) Don't worry about this. It's literally just my body that's crying now. I don't know how to stop it.

He looks unsure.

HARI (CONT'D)

Probably some deep rooted trauma working its way out. No big deal. How can I help?

INT. SIDE ROOM - MINUTES LATER.

Sarah is lying still, eyes closed. The bowl is gone. Hari comes in. She has finally stopped crying.

HARI

Hi.

SARAH

(not opening her eyes) They took him.

HARI

Yeah.

She goes to the sink and fills a plastic tub with water, and grabs a packet of gauze from a shelf.

HARI (CONT'D)

I can clean you now, if that's okay?

Sarah nods.

Sarah's legs are covered in blood. There are streaks on her arms, her face.

Hari takes away the blood stained sheet from the bottom of the bed.

Then she begins. She dips the gauze in the water, and ever so gently wipes at Sarah's legs, her feet. The process is tender, almost loving. Hari hasn't been able to help this woman really - but this, she can do.

When she moves to wipe down Sarah's arms, Sarah reaches out with a hand and holds Hari's. Hari pauses and lets her.

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

A busy road, late night revellers staggering past. Hari dips into a kebab shop.

INT. KEBAB SHOP - NIGHT

Hari is the only customer. The turkish shop owner smiles at her when she walks in.

Hari slams a twenty pound note on the counter.

HARI

How much kebab can you give me for twenty quid.

SHOP OWNER

(chuckles) You want large? Extra large?

HARI

I want twenty quid of kebab. I need to be knocked out by kebab.

SHOP OWNER

Garlic sauce?

HART

All the sauce. Everything. Kebab me.

He shakes his head, smiling, and sets about making it. Hari rests her head on the counter.

INT. HARI'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

Hari bursts in, mouth chockfull of kebab, sauce streaming down her chin. She throws her bag on the floor then immediately trips over it. A slice of tomato lands on the "George stuff" box.

She exits the room, we hear the CLICK-CLICK of a light cord being pulled.

A beat, then the TINKLING of water into a toilet bowl.

Paper RUSTLING. A toilet FLUSH.

Hari re-emerges, still eating her kebab, walking out of her jeans as she makes her way to the sofa.

She sits cross legged, in knickers and hoodie, in kebab-y bliss.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

She stops, stares at the door, then tries to take a bite of her kebab in stealth mode.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Hari, open up.

Hari rolls her eyes, screams silently, then pads over to the door. Opens it and plods back to the sofa.

HART

(non-apologetic) I've got no
trousers on.

GEORGE

Of course you haven't.

HARI

Have you been waiting outside?

GEORGE

You asked me to come get my stuff tonight. I thought you were finishing at 8?

HARI

Mmm yeah, shift overran.

She pauses chewing, eyes welling up a little, then goes back to eating.

HARI (CONT'D)

Sorry. Genuinely. Your stuff is there. Weird how it got mixed up in my stuff, eh George. Lucky I found it when I was unpacking.

George looks a little guilty. He surveys the room, the many full boxes.

GEORGE

You're only just starting to unpack?

HARI

It's only been four months.

George nods as though that makes sense. He hesitates before trying to dig for info.

GEORGE

(stilted) What's next for Hari then?

Hari shrugs, mouth full of kebab. She gestures to herself.

HART

Does this scream "woman with a plan" to you.

He waits a few seconds for her to ask after him, but she doesn't. She has to be cruel to be kind. George picks up the box. He gives a pointed look at the slice of tomato, hanging limply off the corner.

HARI (CONT'D)

It's tomato. It's fresh, don't
worry.

George shifts to hold the box with one arm and plucks the tomato off before depositing it in the kitchen bin.

HARI (CONT'D)

Okay cool, thanks for picking up the stuff. Guess I'll see you, yeah?

George SIGHS and puts the box down on the table. It's clear he wants to have a **Conversation**. This is exactly what Hari did not want. She summons her inner strength and tries to stay calm.

GEORGE

Hari...

HARI

I can't have this conversation with you again, George.

GEORGE

I just don't understand it.

HARI

(pinching between her eyes) We've talked about it. Many times. I really don't want to be mean but I don't know how to be clearer.

GEORGE

But I think we're worth fighting for. I get that you got freaked out by it all. The big wedding, when all that stuff was happening with your mum...

HARI

Don't do that.

GEORGE

...then the mortgage stuff, kids... I've been thinking and we don't have to do any of that. It can just be us. You said you can't do a family, we don't have to do a family.

HART

Yeah, I know I <u>said</u> that George but actually I think it's more that I just don't know.

GEORGE

Don't know what? You think maybe you do want us to have a family?

HARI

No no no, God no.

GEORGE

Ouch.

HARI

I don't know what I want.

GEORGE

Well then-

HARI

I just know I don't want you.

A pause. That hurt both of them.

GEORGE

Why did you marry me then?

HARI

(exasperated, with herself more than anything) Because! I don't know! I think I got swept up with it all, I-

GEORGE

Swept up with it all? Are you bloody kidding me?

HARI

No I'm not George! I've never been "bloody kidding you"!

She waves her hands in frustration and the kebab slides out, hitting the wall near George's head. He stares at it in horror.

HARI (CONT'D)

That was an accident.

GEORGE

(in utter disbelief) Did you just... did you just throw a <u>kebab</u> at me?

Hari can't help it. She bursts out LAUGHING.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Don't laugh Hari, that's domestic violence.

HARI

(guffaws) Domestic violence!? What, death by doner??

George is upset. He picks up the box and makes for the door.

GEORGE

I can't talk to you when you're like this. Let's put a pin in it.

HARI

Put a pin in what?? (punctuating her words by miming putting a pin in thin air) There's nothing to put a pin in!

GEORGE

We'll have this conversation another time.

He leaves.

HARI

(weakly) We've already had this conversation, George.

She slams the door. Looks at the kebab, now smeared down the wall. She reaches out and puts her hand on it tenderly, "alas poor Yorick".

Her phone bleeps - a calendar reminder for the new day "Lunch at Geraint's".

HARI (CONT'D)

(wryly) Awesome.

She fires off a text to Geraint: "Should I bring anything to lunch?"

Immediate typing from Geraint.

A reply from Geraint: "It's gone midnight."

Hari texts: "Maybe a nice trifle?"

INT. HARI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hari walks in, staring at her phone, body slams into the bed.

Triple dots. They stop.

Triple dots for a longer time. They stop.

Triple dots. His reply: "Trifle is fine."

Phone down. Hari stares at the ceiling. Her eyes slowly blink shut, once... twice...

FLASH: An image of Jacob, so perfect and tiny.

Her eyes fly open again. A few seconds pass. Her eyes slowly shut once more...

FLASH: Silent image of Sarah talking to tiny Jacob, her features filled with sadness and love all at once.

Eyes open again. Hari reaches for her laptop - it's on the floor, buried under various items of discarded clothing. She hauls it onto the bed and flings it open.

COMPUTER SCREEN:

A Chrome browser is open at the results for "more wheels or doors in the world" - that conundrum will have to wait. The cursor clicks to open another tab and then in the url field, typing - "single woman adoption".

A variety of news articles, Cosmo pieces, and charity urls run down the screen.

INT. - HARI'S BEDROOM, CONTINUOUS

Hari clicks and scans a few links - we don't see which. She doesn't seem inspired. At one point she chuckles ruefully.

CUT TO:

INT. HARI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT, SOME TIME LATER

Hari is propped up on one elbow watching the screen. The glorious voice of Louis Theroux wafts towards her. It's the episode about open adoption:

LOUIS THEROUX (O.S.) How much would I be looking at paying just to sort of get on the books, as an adoptive couple?

AMERICAN LADY (O.S.) Each adoption costs 35, maybe even 40,000 dollars any more. There are different-

LOUIS THEROUX (O.S.)

To go all the way.

AMERICAN LADY (O.S.)

To go all the way, yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. HARI'S BEDROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Hari has finally dropped off, still propped up on her elbow but with her face now smushed in her palm. The episode is still playing.

SURROGATE (O.S.)

I am happy that I'm doing it, you know. I never thought I'd be in this position. Ever. But I don't have family and I know how it is to be by yourself and, and, that's so important to have stability and family and people to be there for you when you need them and I can't provide that for her so...

Typical scene-setting documentary music chimes out, the electric light tickling Hari's sleeping face.

CUT TO:

INT. HARI'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The sun streams in, cooking Hari, asleep in a hoodie. Hari bursts awake with an enormous gasp, like breaking the surface after a deep dive. She gazes around, eyes wide but not yet seeing, and wipes the drool from her chin. She smacks her lips - mouth dry as hell.

What time is it? She pats the bed a few times then finds her phone.

PHONE SCREEN:

10.45AM

TEXT NOTIFICATION: GERAINT

She clicks the notification to open the message.

"Actually Claire says Gigi is off dairy atm so don't bring trifle unless it's soy" (thumbs down emoji, cow emoji)

EXT. GERAINT'S HOUSE - DAY

Victorian terraced house in Hackney. Charming, deceptively expensive. Hari opens the gate and strolls up the path. Instead of ringing the bell, she knocks the living room window to the right of the door.

GERAINT, early 40s, chubby in a way that's crept up on him, with a friendly face, peers out the window.

Hari smacks her hand on the glass over his face.

He moves away and she returns to the front door, waiting.

INT. GERAINT'S KITCHEN/DINER - DAY

CLAIRE, 38, waif-like, Oliver Bonas type, floats around the kitchen moving chopped veggies into a salad bowl and whipping up a dressing.

At the table sits GIGI, 4, impossibly cute, her missing front teeth giving her a lisp. She's earnestly drawing. At the sound of the front door CLOSING, she cranes to see down the hallway and lights up at what she sees.

GIGI

(lisping) Auntie Hari! Sit here!

Hari enters, hangs her coat on the back of the door. Geraint goes to Claire and places a hand on her lower back in supportive husband mode.

HARI

(lisping) Sit here? Sit here? But that's daddy's seat!

Gigi squeals laughing as Hari crushes her in a hug and kisses her head many times. She releases her to carry on colouring in. Hari crosses to Claire.

HARI (CONT'D)

Hi Claire, smells great.

They air kiss.

HARI (CONT'D)

I didn't bring anything.

CLAIRE

No worries, that's okay. Lunch in literally ten seconds, grab a seat.

HARI

(lisping) A seat!

Gigi laughs again. Claire makes eyes at Geraint, tilting her head to a bottle of wine that stands breathing on the side. He leaps into action, taking it to the table.

GERAINT

Wine, Har?

HARI

Ah, I'm trying to quit.

She's joking, she offers her glass and he fills it.

CLAIRE

(not looking) Not pregnant are you?

GERAINT

Christ.

Claire and Geraint find this hilarious. Hari doesn't, but after a moment of hesitation decides to let it go.

Geraint sits. Claire comes over brandishing a cottage pie, placing it on an ovenproof mat on the table. Geraint serves.

CLAIRE

So, how's things?

HARI

Yeah good yeah.

CLAIRE

Settled into the flat okay?

HARI

Totally. Love it.

A pause. Claire looks at Geraint, who shakes his head slightly.

CLAIRE

Spoken to George recently?

Geraint pointedly busies himself chugging wine.

HARI

Um, yeah he came by yesterday. Seems okay.

CLAIRE

God, I'm still so sad about you guys. I really thought you had something special.

HART

Mm, you've said, yeah.

GERAINT

Gigi, tell Auntie Hari what happened on Friday at school!

Gigi ignores him. Claire doesn't take the hint.

CLAIRE

Maybe in a year or so you'll see how things lie?

HARI

Pretty sure I'll still not want to have sex with the bloke.

Geraint and Claire look, horrified, at Gigi but she's oblivious.

GERAINT

And work?

HARI

Good, had a pretty gnarly burn come in last week.

CLAIRE

Have you thought any more about training programs? You're just a staff grade now, right?

HARI

Yeah, "just" a staff grade.

GERAINT

GP could be good, nice routine, good hours?

HARI

Slowly losing the will to live?

Claire looks stung.

CLAIRE

I love being a GP.

HARI

(irritated in spite of herself) So much so that you do it, what, all of one day a week now?

Claire suddenly becomes interested in digging through the salad and spooning it onto plates. Geraint feels he has to defend her.

GERAINT

We do have Gigi, Har. Kids kind of limit your choices a bit.

HARI

If you're a woman, right?

Claire raises an eyebrow, slightly amused and waiting for Geraint's reply.

HARI (CONT'D)

Guess I wouldn't know, anyway, too busy with my Peter Pan complex, right?

GERAINT

Oh come on, I said that one time!

A tense moment.

Hari stabs her pie glumly.

HARI

I'm actually not massively hungry, is mam in the annex?

GERAINT

Yeah.

CLAIRE

(still a little stung) I made a plate for her.

She gestures to the counter. Hari grabs the plate of cottage pie and salad and moves towards the patio doors. As she passes Claire, she squeezes her shoulder.

HARI

Sorry, I can be a-(looks at Gigi) -female dog sometimes.

Claire pats her hand, olive branch accepted.

As Hari passes Geraint, she slaps him on the head. Gigi squeals.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

A tranquil oasis of calm - wildflowers, nicely mown lawn. An inanimate dolls tea party sit around a small rug, abandoned.

At the end of the garden, a summer house structure. Hari crosses to it.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Floral prints, summer colours. A window is propped open, allowing a breeze. A radio plays classic FM.

RHIANNON, 68, sits blank-faced on a cushioned wicker sofa.

HARI

Hiya mam.

She kisses her mum on the cheek and sits next to her, sets about cutting up the cottage pie into bite sized pieces.

Rhiannon gives out a little grunt. We see now that her hands are constantly moving in a debilitating tremor.

HARI (CONT'D)

Here.

She offers a forkful of pie to her mum, who moves her head away, nope.

HARI (CONT'D)

No?

She puts the plate down on a table and sinks back into the chair.

HARI (CONT'D)

I was thinking the other day, do you remember when I was in year 8, and I had to do a project about drugs for biology.

Rhiannon remains blank.

HARI (CONT'D)

And Geraint and I had just watched Scarface on one of Bampi's VHS's. So for this totally serious science project I made a fake diary for Tony Montana.

Rhiannon softly chuckles.

HARI (CONT'D)

Like, cocaine stocks, prices, order forms from celebrities, the lot.

Rhiannon picks up a hand and mimes sprinkling something, hand still tremoring.

RHIANNON

F...Flour...

HARI

(laughs) Yeah we sprinkled flour on the pages! Oh Jesus I think Mr Thomas actually had to actually test that. To make sure, like.

Hari takes Rhiannon's hovering hand and rests it down into her own, clasping it with both hands now.

HARI (CONT'D)

You didn't even bat an eyelid. You just thought what I did was great.

Rhiannon smiles faintly.

HARI (CONT'D)

Okay so this week on "Hari's trivia". Did you know that penguin, the word penguin, is welsh? From pen gwyn? White head?

Rhiannon's eyebrows raise slightly.

HARI (CONT'D)

Yup. And corgi is welsh too. Means dwarf dog. Maybe you knew that though.

Rhiannon smiles gently, her eyes still unfocussed.

Geraint appears in the doorway.

GERAINT

Whats the gossip?

RHIANNON

(weakly) Dwarves... Are... Welsh.

Geraint looks at Hari for an explanation.

GERAINT

I thought it was the elves that were Welsh?

HARI

What?

GERAINT

They're archers, Tolkien based elvish on welsh-

HARI

Oh my GOD for a guy with an actual honest-to-god child, you are such a virgin.

With difficulty, Rhiannon makes a tsk noise, raises a shaking finger to scold Hari for cheeking her brother.

HARI (CONT'D)

Huh, mam's insisting you're <u>not</u> a virgin. Weird hill to die on, mam.

Rhiannon swats at her - cheeky sod. Hari stands, then bends to kiss her mam.

HARI (CONT'D)

I've got a shift but I'll be back soon, promise. Caru ti.

RHIANNON

Caru... ti...

The cottage pie sits forgotten.

INT. GERAINT'S KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER

As Hari sweeps through the kitchen, she blows kisses to Claire and Gigi playfully. She picks up Gigi and licks her face.

GIGI

Ew!

HARI

(lisping) Seee you later, spit face.

She grabs her coat as she leaves.

INT. GERAINT'S HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER.

Hari is shrugging into her coat. She has to turn in a circle to achieve this, and as she does so, she spots something on the hallway noticeboard. A piece of paper, with a name and phone number on it. She snatches it down, immediately furious.

HART

What the fuck is this?

GERAINT

Oh shit.

HARI

What the fuck, Geraint?

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Little ears in here!

HARI

(hushed) Ger?

GERAINT

Look, I wasn't going to tell you.

HARI

(sarcy) Oh, that's okay then.

GERAINT

I haven't done anything yet...

HARI

Because this looks a lot like our dad's name next to a phone number, no?

A beat.

GERAINT

I got it from Auntie Pam.

HARI

Fucking Auntie Pam.

GERAINT

I've not called him yet, I've only been thinking about it. I might not even do it.

HARI

Well you will, because you keep saying "yet". How's that gonna go then? Ring ring, ring ring, "hiya dad, yeah you might not recognise this voice coz I couldn't even speak full sentences when you last saw me, but it's your son, supposedly."

GERAINT

Come on...

Hari pushes the paper into his hand.

HARI

How could you do that to mam?

GERAINT

I mean, it's not like she'd notice.

HARI

Oh you bastard.

Hari sits on the stairs, processing.

Geraint squishes in next to her. This is ambitious - he's a big guy. They end up crammed in.

HARI (CONT'D)

(straining) Are you planning on suffocating me into not caring about this?

He shuffles to free her a bit.

GERAINT

Are you okay, Har?

HARI

Right. Because it has to be something wrong with me that makes me mad at you, right? It's not even just mum is it. You know he didn't even pay child maintenance by choice, they had to take it from him?

GERAINT

I know.

HARI

We're fine without a dad.

GERAINT

Well. That's debatable. I think everyone needs a dad.

A pause.

GERAINT (CONT'D)

Maybe not <u>our</u> dad. Like, a good one. A passable one. Besides, I'm not thinking of this as "getting a dad". It's just curiosity.

HART

Or masochism.

GERAINT

Part of it was wondering if he was dead, to be honest.

HARI

I knew he wasn't dead. I've googled him.

Geraint gives her a look.

HARI (CONT'D)

Once or twice. Shut up, it's not the same.

They sit in silence.

GERAINT

Can't believe you said fucking auntie pam.

He lets out a naughty kid chuckle. Hari suppresses a giggle.

HARI

And I don't know actually. If I'm okay.

GERATNT

Yeah, I thought not.

HARI

Head's a bit full. Feels a bit like I'm doing okay but I'm also doing shit? Like failing. Or something. Hard to explain.

A pause.

GERAINT

I'll tell you. If I do call him.

Hari nods.

INT. PAEDIATRIC A+E DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An impossibly cramped cubbyhole - four office chairs essentially take up all floorspace. Along one wall, a large window looking into the waiting room, which is fairly busy. Hari sits at the desk, writing in a patient booklet.

Some commotion through the window - Hari looks up.

INT. PAEDIATRIC WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two women, SAFFRON (35, black, natural hair, trendy) and JANIE (34, scottish, pale, ginger) in complete panic, have dashed in. Saffron cradles a toddler, BELLA (2, white, ginger) who is covered in a rash and wheezing loudly.

JANIE

Please! We need help!

SAFFRON

It's our daughter, she can't breathe!

In a flash, Hari is there.

HARI

Can I get some help please!

A PAEDS NURSE runs over and they start leading the mums into a side room, Hari already with stethoscope on, listening to Bella's chest, checking inside her mouth.

HARI (CONT'D)

(to nurse) Bleep 2222.

The door shuts behind Hari. We stay with the nurse, who dashes to the doctor's office.

INT. PAEDIATRIC A+E DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS SHOT

The Paeds Nurse grabs the phone and hits 2222.

PAEDS NURSE

Resus call to Paeds A+E, anaphylactic reaction.

She slams the phone down and runs out.

Our viewpoint flies across to:

INT. A+E ADULT RESUS BAY - SAME TIME.

A team of doctors and nurses surround an unconscious patient. As a nurse performs chest compressions, an Anaesthetics SHO nervously poses at the patient's head with a laryngoscope, endotracheal tube halfway inserted. The ANAESTHETICS REGISTRAR stands behind him watching his every move.

From their bleeps:

AUTOMATED RECORDING Paediatric resuscitation team to paediatric A+E, paediatric resuscitation team to paediatric A+E.

Our viewpoint ascends through to the floor above:

INT. DOCTORS' MESS - CONTINUOUS

A Paediatric SHO stands with his hand on the microwave handle, watching his meal rotate inside as the counter counts down. 3... 2... 1...

As the microwave beeps, his bleep speaks.

AUTOMATED RECORDING Paediatric resuscitation team to paediatric A+E, paediatric resuscitation team to paediatric A+E.

He looks to the heavens in frustration - he's so hungry.

We move across to next door:

INT. DOCTORS' MESS TOILET CUBICLE, CONTINUOUS

A pair of trainers, scrub bottoms crumpled around them, hairy legs ascending to bent knees. From the crumpled waistband:

AUTOMATED RECORDING Paediatric resuscitation team to paediatric A+E...

The sound of panicked toilet roll scrabbling and mumbled swearing.

We move back down to:

INT. A+E HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Paediatric registrar, TOM, 30s, chunky, permanently smirking, aims for a solemn expression as he jogs down the hallway into:

INT. PAEDIATRIC WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS SHOT

Tom jogs across a busy waiting room, expertly dodging rogue toys strewn on the floor, to Bella's side room.

INT. BELLA'S SIDE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bella looks a lot better - rash faded, breathing comfortably. The Anaesthetics Registrar from resus listens to her chest. A nurse is just finishing hanging an IV bag that leads into Bella's hand, while the Paediatric SHO from the doctors' mess is inserting a cannula into the other hand.

Saffron and Janie clasp each other at the side of the room, watching. They are in shock. Hari talks to them.

HARI

No other allergies that you know of?

Janie and Saffron shake their heads.

HARI (CONT'D)

It looks like a lot but she's out of danger right now, I promise you.

The Anaesthetics Registrar, satisfied, goes to leave, passing Tom.

ANAESTHETICS REGISTRAR

Trigger happy SHO over there.

She nods to Hari.

MOT

Thanks for your help.

The Paediatric SHO also finishes up and makes his way out. The room can breathe now. A monitor gently bleeps with Bella's heartbeat.

Janie's mobile rings. She answers immediately and stands, clutching the phone to her ear as she moves outside to talk.

JANIE (O.S.)

Hi mum, yeah we're still there yeah, no she's doing ok...

She's gone. Saffron sits at the bedside - she is drinking in the sight of peaceful Bella.

MOT

What's the story then?

HARI

So this is Bella, she's two. Brought in by her mums this eveningMOT

"Mums"?

HARI

Yep, Saffron and Janie.

MOT

Oh right.

(points after Janie)

That was the biological one though, right?

Hari's eyes flick to Saffron, who remains fixed on Bella.

HARI

So they brought Bella in because she started having difficulty breathing after eating some houmous at home-

TOM

(shaking head and chuckling) Houmous.

Hari's not sure if he's laughing about class implications or lesbian parenting.

HARI

It was clear anaphylaxis but she responded well to the first shot of adrenaline, and we've got her on IV antihistamines and steroids now. Plan is to keep her in for a couple of hours' observation then reassess.

Tom checks the observation chart and nods approvingly.

TOM

Okay, let me know how she goes. I'll be in the mess.

HARI

Thanks.

Tom exits. Hari walks over to Bella and starts listening to her chest once more.

Saffron keeps her eyes on Bella. Hari finishes up and takes her earpieces out.

HARI (CONT'D)

Her chest sounds good now.

SAFFRON

Your boss is a peach.

HARI

Oh, he's not my... I'm sorry about that. Really, just... not okay.

SAFFRON

It's funny because it's actually me who gave birth to her. We used Janie's egg, but we implanted into my womb. Plan is to do the same but switched next time. Until then I quess I'm the odd one out.

Hari looks at Bella, wanting to ask something, not sure if she should.

HARI

How was it?

Saffron tilts her head, not understanding.

HARI (CONT'D)

The process, I mean. Making a baby. Like, without a man.

SAFFRON

(laughing) It wasn't easy. But from what I hear, having a baby's never smooth sailing.

FLASH: Little Jacob, curled up in the bowl.

HARI

Mmhm.

Saffron looks at her.

SAFFRON

Do you have kids?

HARI

No, no. I'm single.

SAFFRON

Doesn't have to stop you.

She rifles through her bag and pulls out a piece of paper, writes something on it. She hands it to Hari.

SAFFRON (CONT'D)

There's a group of us, we meet here every Wednesday. All stages of the journey.

HARI

Oh, I'm not sure-

SAFFRON

(shrugging) Up to you. It was just in case you wanted more info. To educate pricks like your boss.

HARI

He's not my boss.

A beat.

HARI (CONT'D)

(quietly) But yeah he is a bit of a prick.

They watch Bella sleep.

INT. PAEDIATRIC A+E DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Hari sits, staring at nothing, deep in thought.

Her eyes come to focus on something. It's Saffron and Janie. Saffron is carrying Bella, who is sleeping soundly. She nods at Hari. Hari raises a hand goodbye. Janie puts her hands in prayer position and bows her head, mouths "thank you". Places a hand on her heart and makes a grateful face. She takes Saffrons hand and they walk out of view.

Hari looks down at her notes. Her eyes cloud again - lost in thought once more.

EXT. COMEDY CLUB, LONDON - NIGHT

Hari, a weird chimera in scrubs and stethoscope but bulky denim jacket and backpack, sprints down a mostly deserted pavement in the gloom.

HARI

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck...

She slams through the club door.

INT. COMEDY CLUB STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

... and careers dangerously down the unkempt staircase.

HARI Fuck fuck fuck FUUUUCK-

She skids down the last three steps and has to grasp the handrail to save her spine. Righting herself and wiping her hand on her jacket, she trots through another set of double doors.

INT. COMEDY CLUB MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A darkened room, glowing optics behind a long bar stretching from the entrance down one wall. Opposite this, a packed audience of 100 or so punters watch Meredith, spotlit on stage - Hari's late to her set. Meredith holds a glass of wine one hand, the mic in the other. She glows. All eyes on her. Hari watches from the back, catching her breath.

MEREDITH

I don't have kids. Don't want them. And every time I tell people that, guess the next question?

Slightly asynchronous audience reply:

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

"Why not?"

Meredith finger guns - bingo.

MEREDITH

But "why not??", to me, is the complete opposite of how things should go. It should be that people ask "why??" if you say you DO want kids. Because it's a big decision, right?? Any other big decision and people worry. Like, when I left my fascinating career in HR to do comedy, my friends were all "are you sure? Oo that's a risk. What if it doesn't work?"

She takes a sip of wine.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

But if the comedy goes wrong, I'll just go back to writing p45s. The biggest risk? Is being alone in small rooms with the Nigels of this world. Meanwhile, the cocaine is fantastic.
Kids?

(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

You'll never sleep in past 7 again, you can quite literally ruin an actual person, and you'll become the kind of woman who has a nervous breakdown if their new sofa is the wrong shade of green.

Hari chuckles. The audience laugh.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Plus, kids always have terrible cocaine.

The audience laugh louder. Meredith spots Hari, makes eye contact and nods acknowledgement.

INT. CRAMPED STAIRWELL - A LITTLE LATER.

Hari starts climbing the stairs as Meredith swipes a bottle of bourbon from a pile of stock in the stairwell.

EXT. COMEDY CLUB ROOFTOP - NIGHT

No stars, but no matter. The city sparkles in a sea of stark neon and soft halogen. The faint sound of traffic, ever flowing, intermittent car horns. Our two weave across the rooftop to a couple of deckchairs that sit facing The Shard some distance away. Its red light winks on and off. They sit, with relieved sighs.

MEREDITH

(handing Hari the bourbon) Crack on, I'll roll.

She sets about rolling a joint as Hari nurses the bottle thoughtfully.

HARI

You used the sofa thing.

MEREDITH

Yeah it was perfect.

HARI

It wasn't quite a "breakdown".

MEREDITH

Poetic licence. Present a certain image, whatever works for the material. You know, like how I DON'T present the reality that I'm a borderline alcoholic with borderline personality Disorder.

Joint rolled, Meredith lights it and takes a large toke. She passes it to Hari.

HARI

Is it the same with the kid stuff?

She pulls on the joint. They continue passing it back and fore as they talk, getting progressively higher.

MEREDITH

Kinda. I mean it's true I don't
want them but it's not as cerebral
as that.

HARI

So why really, then?

MEREDITH

God babe, hashtag triggering question. Ummm, just literally never had the urge. I don't actively dislike kids. They're just, like, what's the one with the horses?

Hari looks blank.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Ferraris. Never crossed my mind to get one.

HARI

Cheaper than Ferraris though.

MEREDITH

Yeah, right. At least you can resell a Ferrari. People don't like it when you ebay your offspring.

A beat.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

The delivery costs are huge.

A longer pause. The sound of several car horns blaring from the street below followed by:

WOMAN ON STREET (O.S.)

Arsehole!

Without missing a beat:

MEREDITH AND HARI

Arsehole!

WOMAN ON STREET (O.S.)

Fuck you!

A beat.

MEREDITH

I'm doing queer cabaret tomorrow down Vauxhall, you should come.

HARI

Is that my scene?

MEREDITH

It's the only scene, babes.

HARI

I dunno. I love the stuff you take me to but... It can feel like when you go to a party in, say, France. And you've learned French, and everyone's super nice and talks to you. But, you're only really getting 70% of it.

MEREDITH

(high) I wanna go to a party in France now.

HARI

(also high) It's like your world is this amazing knickerbockerglory, with sauce and nuts and chocolate chips. And I'm the vanilla ice cream. I blend in great but I don't really add anything. I wish I was a chocolate chip.

MEREDITH

Oh babes, you <u>are</u> a chocolate chip. But you have a big serious job with big serious consequences. It can make body glitter feel childish.

HARI

Mmmm. But then other big serious job people are all cars and mortgages and "coffee with this one" eye roll emoji... nuh uh.

She mock-shudders, "not for me".

MEREDITH

(suddenly attentive) Oh fuck babe are you having an existential thing right now? Fuck, wait there.

She sits up, slaps her face to un-dopify herself and swigs some bourbon.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Okay, what are we thinking.

HARI

I'm thinking that maybe I wish I could do domestic bliss but I can't quite manage. Like the brainwaves that lets people do that get scrambled in my head.

MEREDITH

Woah.

HARI

And I think that leaves me somewhere in between.

Meredith ponders.

MEREDITH

Why are you worried about it?

HARI

Because essentially, I think... no, I do... I want a baby.

It's the first time she's let herself say it. There is a pause as Meredith thinks what to say. They stare at each other, both mildly panicking.

The city winks at them.

END OF EPISODE ONE.