

# **FAMILY MAN**

by  
Matthew Bardsley

Pilot Script

FADE IN

TITLE -- **FAMILY MAN** on BLACK SCREEN as we hear a group of men talking. One voice stands out --

PETER'S VOICE

...the fact is -- we need these people. Abramovich. Whoever. They bring money to the game --

WILL'S VOICE

Yeahh. But where's this money coming from?

PETER'S VOICE

Who cares? Premiership's attracting the top players in the world now.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Surely there should be some moral parameter --

PETER'S VOICE

Listen, we get 4 teams in the Champions League! 15 years ago, we couldn't bloody play in Europe --

STEVE'S VOICE

What do you mean? He's joking, right? We weren't in Europe?

PAUL'S VOICE

When exactly were you born?

STEVE'S VOICE

1987.

PAUL'S VOICE

Jesus. Anyone else beginning to feel old?

END CREDITS. QUICK FADE UP ON --

INT. HEALTH CENTRE - NIGHT

Six men dressed in casual clothes sit around a low table in an anonymous room -- PETER, WILL, STEVE, PAUL, MARK and CHARLIE. Pens and paper sit in front of them, but no writing has yet been done. Instead they sip on mugs of coffee and talk.

These people have never met before tonight.

MARK

Let me get this straight -- you'd accept anyone's money if it meant success for the club?

PETER

(duh)  
Yeahh --

MARK

What about Saddam Hussein?

A beat of silence. This has got Peter momentarily flummoxed --

PETER

Come on, that doesn't count. The guy's in prison --

WILL

I can't believe we're even talking about this. It's only bloody football.

PETER

Hello? Hello? Did I hear what I think I heard?

WILL

Twenty-two guys. A ball. Big deal.

PETER

Someone look down the front of his trousers and see if two testicles are attached.

WILL

You gotta love football to be a man, now?

PETER

Sport. Sport. What makes human beings different from the animals? Our capacity for rational thought. What makes men different from women? Our capacity to watch sport.

WILL

Bollocks.

The DOOR opens. A BLONDE WOMAN enters, cardigan clutched round her. Only Charlie half stands. She smiles at them --

WOMAN

Have you made your list?

CHARLIE

Sorry.

STEVE

We're still talking.

WILL

(low)

Talking? Huh --

WOMAN

(looking at watch)

Two more minutes then...

(another smile)

...I'm glad to see you're all taking this so seriously.

(half-closing door)

You have the makings of a very supportive group --

She exits. A beat. Charlie picks up a pen.

CHARLIE

Who wants to write?

PAUL

Not me. I don't make lists.

MARK

You don't make lists? How do you remember anything?

PAUL

If it's important, it sticks. If you forget, it wasn't important.

WILL

Bollocks.

PETER

Bollocks? This guy hardly says anything all night, then it's bollocks bollocks bollocks!

PAUL

(tapping head)

Your whole life's stored in here. To recall anything, you've gotta select. And selection's about --

WILL

-- making a list.

All the others look at him. In one voice --

ALL

Bollocks!

PAUL

Once words are on a list, I've gotta do what they say. If I don't, I disappoint someone. I don't like to disappoint anybody, so I don't make a list.

STEVE

The guy's got a point.

MARK

A list is a tool. It's not saying you have to do something if you don't want to.

CHARLES

Legally speaking, if it's in your handwriting...well, a jury would have to consider it as a document of intent.

PAUL

I'm not saying I've never made a list. I just don't want to list things I may not be able to commit to later.

WILL

Let me tell you something. You're already committed. That's why we're here.  
(looks around)  
Don't any of you understand that yet?

Silence.

INT. HEALTH CENTRE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Six heavily pregnant women of varying ages walk towards us in SLOW MOTION -- BETH, SACHA, KAREN, KATYA, YVONNE and ELEANOR. Beth holds a LIST. They are the partners of --

Mark, Peter, Paul, Will, Charlie and Steve who approach from the opposite way. Charlie holds the LIST.

We see -- POSTERS lining the wall showing Parents and Babies of all racial mixes in various poses of joyful interaction.

There is a feeling among the men of expectation and doom --

BLACK SCREEN

We hear a baby crying loudly. A soft light comes on and we find ourselves in --

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Peter, sleep-deprived and semi-naked, looks down at his crying 3 month old son, John. It's 3.00am.

PETER

Kerrist!

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sacha warms a bottle in a kettle. Peter appears holding the still crying John.

PETER

I've worked it out. He's an imposter. We ordered a John. He's really a Sam or a Maxi bloody millian. We've gotta take him back to the baby shop.

SACHA

(she's heard his theories before)  
Peter -- he's hungry.

PETER

He's always hungry.

SACHA

He's in a growth spurt.

PETER

He's been in a growth spurt for weeks.

SACHA

(drying bottle)  
Peter -- do you want to be Mummy?

PETER

Maybe, you know -- if we're in the baby shop anyway -- we could order an advanced model: ready weaned, four 'A' Levels, salary at 100k --

SACHA

(waving bottle)  
Hello?

Peter shrugs and moves towards Sacha as -- an impatient John lunges at Peter's left nipple.

PETER  
 (flinching)  
 Aah!  
 (aghast)  
 Sacha! He's...he's...the little  
 shit just bit my nipple!

SACHA  
 (smile)  
 Definitely your son then,  
 darling.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - DAY

An expanse of green: some tennis courts, children's play area, and in a corner by a road -- a special PLAYGROUND for babies and toddlers.

We can see the RIVER beyond as --

Peter and Charlie push state-of-the-art buggies towards the toddler playground. John and Charlie's daughter KATE are asleep.

They're talking broken nights.

CHARLIE  
 Drive around.

PETER  
 Drive around?

CHARLIE  
 Strap him in the car and drive  
 around. Everybody does. They  
 like the motion. He'll sleep in  
 no time.

PETER  
 But Charlie...drive where?

CHARLIE  
 (shrug)  
 The other night I ended up  
 at the Kent coast. Watched  
 the sun come up. Last time I did  
 that...Beth and I were both law  
 students.

PETER  
 (shakes head)  
 Nah. I'm a destination man. Not  
 a driving around man. I need to  
 know I'm gonna get somewhere.  
 Otherwise, what's the point?

CHARLIE

The point is: you want to be  
a sleeping man. Am I right?

EXT. TODDLER PLAYGROUND - DAY

Will is examining Mark's face, which is cut and bruised. Either side of them sit their respective buggies: Will's son George in a designer special and Mark's son ROBERT in an old-fashioned perambulator.

WILL

Jesus! I can't believe people  
actually assault firemen!

MARK

They were just kids. Throwing  
bricks. Happens all the time --

WILL

But Mark! You were putting out a  
fire for Chrissake!

Paul arrives for this last exchange. His daughter Rosie perched on his chest in a sling.

PAUL

It's the uniform. Uniform's  
authority. Authority's  
threatening.

(furtive look over  
shoulder)

You seen who's turned up?

They all look beyond Paul. Another FATHER is trying to cope with his three year old son as he makes a break across the park.

PAUL

Mr 'I own a restaurant and  
Julian's at a private bloody  
nursery'.

MARK

Prat.

PAUL

That kid'll be throwing bricks at  
you soon --

MARK

Cheers.

Will turns as Peter and Charlie approach. He reaches for some rolls of architectural drawings wedged under George's buggy seat --

WILL  
 (to Peter)  
 Hey Peter!  
 (indicates rolls of  
 paper)  
 Got the revised drawings for you.

PETER  
 More revised drawings? The  
 tender deadline's in two days.

They huddle together as Will unrolls the drawings. Using George's buggy hood as a makeshift table.

Charlie takes in Mark's face.

CHARLIE  
 What happened to your face?

MARK  
 Ask Paul. He's the expert.

PAUL  
 I didn't mean firemen. But  
 hitting cops. We've all wanted  
 to do that, haven't we?

Mark gives Charlie a sideways look --

AT GEORGE'S BUGGY

Will explains the changes to Peter:

WILL  
 I've redesigned the staircase in  
 steel. Can get it made off-site  
 and drop it in through the roof.

PETER  
 The tender will have to show for  
 a crane. When did the other  
 contractors get the revisions?

WILL  
 Yesterday. I'm sorry.

There is a shout from the other end of the playground. Steve is standing in the road with his beaten-up Oxfam pram, the threadbare hood customised in patchwork materials. Inside is Kimmie, his daughter. As ever, Steve looks a mess -- but Kimmie is immaculately turned out.

PAUL  
 Look at that. It's Tarzan of  
 South London.

Steve is waving for them to come over.

MARK

Better give him a hand...

Charlie, Mark and Paul move across towards Steve -- leaving Will and Peter together.

PETER

Can you tell me who I'm up against? I mean, are they small building firms like me or --

WILL

One big, one medium...and you.

PETER

Are there likely to be any more revisions before the deadline?

WILL

No.

(beat)

You know, Peter. If you feel the job's getting too big for you --

PETER

(takes DRAWINGS)

It's not too big. Just give me the same chance as the others. OK?

AT THE PLAYGROUND FENCE

Paul, Charlie and Mark help lift Steve's pram over the railings and deposit it carefully in the playground. Kimmie enjoying the ride --

STEVE

(climbing over)

...I said Kimmie's got to have some fresh air. Karen's sat at home with her all day. I'm just trying to give her a break and still I'm doing the wrong thing --

Steve stops talking as he realises that the others are not listening. Their attention has wandered to a couple of nubile 17 year old GIRLS who are walking up the road towards them.

PAUL

Will you look at that...

MARK

Not sure I'm allowed to...

CHARLIE

Young women are primordially  
attracted to men with children.  
I've heard.

Steve lands in the PLAYGROUND. He eyes the GIRLS with  
disinterest --

STEVE

What's the big deal?

The others just look at him.

PAUL

Moral dilemma: now we've  
got daughters -- are we still  
allowed to look at girls?

MARK

Not my problem. I've got a son.

PAUL

(to Charlie and Steve)  
Better stick together, boys.  
Sides are being taken --

EXT. PARK - DAY

Will, Mark, Paul, Steve, Charlie and Peter move away from  
the toddler playground. Their various buggies in  
formation.

PAUL

...the thing with women is --  
there's always a strategy.  
Steve's problem is: the more he  
does for Kimmie, the more pissed  
off his girlfriend gets. Right?

STEVE

Yeahh...

MARK

Unavoidable truth No. 1: if  
you're too good a father, women  
do not like it.

PAUL

Why? Their role as a mother is  
challenged. Answer?

PETER

Be useless.

WILL

She feels good about herself.

PAUL  
 And when you occasionally do  
 something right, she will reward  
 you --

They all stop as they see --

The PRAT FATHER now trying to discipline his three year old  
 in a mixture of barking authority and matey wheedling.  
 It's having no effect.

PETER  
 Jesus christ! Don't let us turn  
 out like him.

BLACK SCREEN

The distant sound of a baby crying. A light comes on and  
 we're in --

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter squints at his bedside clock. It's 4.06am And  
 Sacha's side of the bed is empty. The sound of John's  
 crying comes from downstairs.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

John is lying on the floor, his favorite toy FLOPPY COW  
 next to him.

Sacha sits on the sofa, stock still. She is crying.

PETER'S VOICE  
 Sach?

SACHA  
 I'm sorry.

PETER  
 Hey...  
 (moves to her)  
 It's alright.

SACHA  
 I can't do anything with him.

PETER  
 How long have you been down here?

SACHA  
 I don't know.

PETER  
 Why didn't you wake me?

SACHA  
What's the point of us both not  
getting any sleep?

PETER  
(picking up John)  
Bottle?

SACHA  
I fed him. Probably gave him too  
much. Maybe that's why he's  
crying. I don't know.

PETER  
Burp?

SACHA  
Yes.

PETER  
Bum?

SACHA  
Changed twice.

Peter starts to move around the room. John slowly stops  
crying.

SACHA  
If you keep moving, he's fine.  
But I'm so tired. I can hardly  
stand up anymore.

PETER  
Go to sleep.

SACHA  
I'm sorry.

PETER  
(soft)  
Sach -- I'll look after him.

SACHA  
But you've got to work.

PETER  
I'll be OK.

SACHA  
I'm a bad mother. I don't know  
what to do.

PETER  
You're a good mother. You're  
just knackered. Go. Please --

Sacha almost sleepwalks out of the room. Peter stops moving. John starts to cry again.

PETER  
You and I better have a talk --

EXT. LONDON STREETS - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

Peter drives through residential streets. The sound of John's crying gradually diminishes. Finally --

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A large house in a state of some disrepair. Peter's car pulls up outside outside.

PETER'S VOICE  
This is design. See?...

INT. PETER'S CAR - NIGHT

Peter talks to John, now happily chewing FLOPPY COW. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS are spread over the dashboard.

PETER  
(explaining plans)  
...Total gutting.  
Oak flooring. Computerised  
lighting system.  
After twelve years of poxy  
extensions, we've got the chance  
to work with a real architect...  
(looks at John)  
...This could be it, mate. Peter  
Doyle and Son move up to bigger  
things --

Peter is cut off as a car pulls up beside him. He looks across -- it's Will, with George strapped into the passenger seat. Will looks tired.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Will's kitchen. John and George consider each other from their respective car seats on the floor as Will gives Peter a mug of tea.

WILL  
Should be champagne, but anyway...  
(picks up his mug;  
raises it to Peter)  
...congratulations. You've got  
the job. If you still want it,  
that is --

PETER

(smile)

Yeahh? Really? Hell yes I want it!

WILL

Your tender was head and shoulders above the others.

PETER

Sacha's gonna be relieved. I've been a shit the last couple of weeks.

WILL

You are certain you can deliver the schedule? The penalty clause for any overrun is pretty stringent.

PETER

I don't set schedules I can't deliver Will.

WILL

Of course.

(beat)

Look, Peter -- use who you want on the job but...can I show you some work I had done in George's nursery?

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - GEORGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A wild colourful JUNGLE MURAL running along the bottom half of all four walls in George's room: animals, birds, flora.

Peter takes it in. George and John have been deposited in their seats on the floor.

PETER

Steve did this?

WILL

Katya wanted to have his room painted. Steve asked if he could do something special.

PETER

It's great!

WILL

I know he needs work. He'll turn his hand to anything --

He's cut off by a knock at the door. They turn to see -- Katya.

KATYA

(yawn)

Sorry to interrupt, boys. But your babies are asleep. Any chance of us getting some too?

Will and Peter look at their sons: sure enough, they're now finally asleep.

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Now covered in scaffolding -- with a temporary roof cover on top. At the front we see a skip, stored materials enclosed by security mesh, concrete mixer, a pre-fab office...all the joys of a major building sight.

Steve emerges from the house with a laden wheel-barrow and dumps half a wall into the skip. He takes off his hard-hat and wipes some sweat.

INT. PRE-FAB - DAY

Peter, at his desk, talking on the phone. There's a wall chart planner, samples on the floor...all in all, an efficient point of command.

PETER

(into phone)

...it makes a difference, Will! The crane is booked based on the staircase design you gave me. Any modification Will affect the weight differential...It's up to you...

Peter looks out a window. We see his POV of -- Karen pushing her pram towards the house.

PETER

...under the terms of the building contract I can't be held responsible for any delays your end...

(Karen turns into the house and confronts Steve)

...I've allowed two days to get the staircase in. Any more and we run into problems with the roofers. OK. You think about it

--

Peter cuts the line. He watches as Karen turns and storms off down the road. Leaving Steve with one hand on Kimmie's pram, and the other on his wheelbarrow.

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

WORKMEN are throwing good-natured jokes at Steve from the scaffolding. Peter approaches from the PRE-FAB:

PETER  
 (to WORKMEN)  
 Alright! Alright! That's  
 enough!  
 (looks at Steve)  
 What the hell's going on?

STEVE  
 Karen wants a few hours off --

PETER  
 So tell me, Steve: does Kimmie  
 go in the wheel-barrow? Or are  
 you gonna load up the pram --

STEVE  
 Just for a few hours. Please.

PETER  
 This is a site, Steve. Not a  
 creche. Health and Safety would  
 have me for breakfast --

Peter is cut off as Katya appears from the house. With George in a sling. She goes directly to Kimmie's pram:

KATYA  
 Is this Kimmie?  
 (bends down)  
 Look at those eyes. Aren't  
 they lovely, Peter?

PETER  
 Lovely.

KATYA  
 (to George)  
 Look, George! Kimmie's Daddy  
 painted your room --  
 (to Steve)  
 He loves his jungle. I bet  
 you've done something very  
 special for her --

STEVE  
 Karen doesn't really like...  
 (then)  
 She thinks our place is too  
 small.

PETER  
 (trying to be patient)  
 Uh, Katya. We've got a bit of a  
 problem here...

KATYA  
 You should paint her a golden  
 carriage! For a princess.  
 Where's your girlfriend. I must  
 talk to her --

PETER  
 That's our problem. She left  
 Kimmie with Steve. And he has to  
 work.

KATYA  
 No problem! I'll take her to the  
 park with George...

PETER  
 You'd be helping us out.

KATYA  
 (taking pram from Steve)  
 Where did you get her outfit?  
 It's adorable. You're so good  
 at colour. Blue's too cold for  
 George, I think...

STEVE  
 Did you try an indigo blue?

Peter stands transfixed. This conversation's now into an  
 eerily female area...

KATYA  
 I've put him in red, but  
 Will said he looked like a  
 clown...Or was it a cherry?

A WORKMAN (MIKE)shouts urgently down to Peter from the  
 scaffolding:

MIKE  
 Pete! Second floor! Quick!

Relieved, Peter moves off to the safer ground of his building  
 site. They don't even notice.

STEVE  
 Have you tried him in something  
 with a collar...?

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

The site: dust, ripped out walls, rubble, temporary ceiling props...and Peter on a ladder -- trying to deal with a pipe leaking water.

THROUGH A HOLE IN THE CEILING -- WE SEE Mike trying to stem the flow. In the middle of all this, Steve appears.

STEVE  
Peter! Peter!

PETER  
What is it?

STEVE  
When's uh Will gonna be here?

PETER  
Christ knows!  
(a cascade of water  
hits him)  
Ah shit!  
(shouts up)  
Where's this water coming from?

STEVE  
It's kind of important...

PETER  
(wiping face)  
Whaddya mean? Important?  
(points to pipe)  
This is important!

STEVE  
It's just...there's someone  
here to see Will.

PETER  
Who?

STEVE  
His uh daughter --

PETER  
Will hasn't got a daughter.

LOUISA  
(offscreen; scottish  
accent)  
Yes he has...

An eighteen year old girl appears beside Steve. She's smartly dressed.

LOUISA  
...Me.



SACHA

He's her father.

PETER

Yes. And her mother divorced him. Then moved 500 miles away. That's a six hour trip each way. Every weekend. And every weekend his daughter didn't understand why he had to go away again. So she cried. And later he cried because she'd cried. His ex-wife didn't want him there because it disrupted her new life. He didn't have a new life because he was either working or travelling to Scotland. Then his daughter started to get a Scottish accent. She stopped wanting to eat burgers with him every weekend. She wanted to be with her new friends who also had Scottish accents. And she didn't cry anymore when he left, she looked relieved. Every weekend.

SACHA

Will told you all this?

PETER

No. Katya did.

SACHA

And what would you do? Would you decide not to see John?

PETER

Would you make it difficult for me to see him? Take him to Italy to live with your mother?

SACHA

It would depend what you'd done.

Peter just looks at her. This is territory they've never been in before. He has no answer. Sacha stands.

SACHA

I'll go and warm his bottle.

PETER

Sacha, this is stupid --

But she is gone. Peter looks down at John.

PETER  
 Want my advice? Be a monk --

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sacha dries off the warmed bottle as Peter enters with John. She's still angry --

PETER  
 You know, he may not have seen Louisa for 12 years -- but Will didn't forget about her. Two weeks ago, on her 18th birthday, she got a letter from his solicitor -- written on the last day he saw her. Explaining everything. She also got a pretty big cheque...

SACHA  
 I don't want to talk about it anymore, Peter.

PETER  
 You know what she wants to spend the money on? Studying architecture. That says something, doesn't it?

SACHA  
 I don't know. Does it?  
 (holds out her arms)  
 Let me have him.

PETER  
 I can feed him.

SACHA  
 I'll do it.

PETER  
 I'd like to, Sach.

SACHA  
 No.

A beat as Peter looks at her. Sacha avoids eye contact. Peter relents.

SACHA  
 If you want to do something useful...

She exits with John.

SACHA'S VOICE  
 ...make dinner

She exits.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bubbling pasta sauce.

Peter finishes up laying the table.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

Peter quietly climbs the stairs. At the top we see a door with the name JOHN in wooden letters. He hesitates.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sacha sits on a nursing chair, holding John. He's asleep.

Peter hovers in the doorway as she puts him down in the cot.

Finally he joins her as she covers John up.

PETER  
(whisper)  
Out like a light.

SACHA  
(whisper)  
He's sleeping really well now.

PETER  
You're a good mother...

SACHA  
You're a good father.  
(she looks at him)  
I'm sorry for what I said

PETER  
I'm sorry. too.  
(he puts his arm  
around her; they both  
look down at John)

SACHA  
Sounds stupid, but...when  
you're out with John at the  
park -- you know, with Will  
and the others -- I sometimes  
feel there's something  
going on...

PETER  
Like what?

SACHA

I don't know. The ante-natal classes were supposed to bring the mothers together --

PETER

But none of you liked each other.

SACHA

They were alright. Just didn't want to be friends with them. I suppose they felt the same.

(beat)

I'm happy, Peter. I don't want anything to change.

PETER

Hey. The way things are, they'll only change for the better. OK? This job for Will's gonna be great for us. It'll put the business into a whole new league. And the park thing --

(he shrugs)

-- we just happen to all be there at the same time. Yeahh? It's nothing more than that --

EXT. PUB GARDEN - DAY

Peter, Will, Paul, Steve, Mark and Charlie -- all feeding a bottle to their respective offspring. Then we realise --

it's a race. And they're sitting in a road-front PUB GARDEN.

First Will slams his empty bottle down on the table in the midst of nearly drained pint glasses. Then Steve, then Charlie, then Peter. Mark and Paul are now in a head to head. Mark (with ROBERT) is falling behind -- and the thought occurs to all the men at the same time:

WILL

Come on, Robert! You can't let Rosie win! She's a girl!

MARK

Don't pressure him!

PAUL

(leaning over)

None of my business -- but this could be a bleak omen for the next generation.

MARK

It's not Robert's feed-time!

PETER

That'll look good on the tomb  
of the Unknown Man: 'It wasn't  
my feed-time'.

MARK

You're putting him off, guys!

CHARLIE

I happen to think it's good  
that women are challenging men  
in their traditional roles --

STEVE

Come on Robert!

But Paul slams his bottle down first. Shakes of the head all  
round. Poor old Mark is flustered.

PAUL

Sorry, Mark. But everybody's  
gotta taste failure for the  
first time. It's best it happened  
when he didn't know it.

MARK

(slamming down bottle)  
I want to look at the teats. I'm  
on medium flow.

He looks at the others. They're not giving an inch --

MARK

How do I know somebody didn't fit  
a fast flow when I wasn't  
looking?

THE OTHERS

Your round!

MARK

I demand teat verification!

PETER

(pointing in turn at  
Steve, Paul, Will,  
Charlie and himself)  
Lager, bitter, bitter, shandy  
lager top. And one for yourself.

MARK

(points at ROBERT)  
No recriminations.

Mark moves into the PUB. The others settle at the table.

PAUL  
 (to Steve)  
 So...how'd it go with Karen?

STEVE  
 Huh?

PAUL  
 My thoughts on handling women?  
 The psychology of fatherhood?

STEVE  
 Oh yeahh. She sussed me straight  
 away. Told me not to be a prat  
 when I put the nappy on inside  
 out --

CHARLIE  
 I tried psychology with Beth.  
 When we were going out at  
 university. I thought I'd better  
 sow some wild oats -- you know,  
 as she was my first girlfriend  
 and I knew I wanted to marry her.  
 So I told her we should try an  
 open relationship...

He drains his pint of shandy. The others are all now looking  
 at him. But it seems that's the end of the story.

Will fiddles with his mobile phone.

PAUL  
 (prompting)  
 Yeahh? And...?

PETER  
 Wild oats. I wish I'd gone  
 to college. John's gonna go  
 to college...

STEVE  
 So what, Charlie? Did it, like,  
 work?

CHARLIE  
 Oh. No. She got invited  
 out every night, so I had  
 to spend the whole time  
 checking up on her -- you know,  
 I didn't want anything 'serious'  
 going on. After two  
 months I decided I wasn't  
 really a wild oats man, so  
 I proposed.

Paul, Steve, Will and Peter all just look at him.

INT. PUB - DAY

Mark pays for his round. The drinks on a tray.

LOUISA'S VOICE

(drunk)

You all enjoy playing Daddy,  
do you?

Mark turns. Looks at this young, fresh-faced girl in jeans and T-shirt. A drained glass of wine in front of her --

MARK

Excuse me?

LOUISA

I watched you all in the park.  
All concerned and attentive.  
Bonding with your children.

MARK

What's wrong with that?

LOUISA

It made me sick.

MARK

Whatever.

The BARMAN returns with his change.

LOUISA

Another glass of wine.

MARK

(low, to barman)

She's had a few too many.

LOUISA

Who do you think you are?  
(spits it out)  
My father?

MARK

(wanting to get out of  
this)

Sorry...

He picks up his tray and moves towards the garden. Louisa shouts after him --

LOUISA

You know, it's easy being a good  
father now. Just you wait a few  
years!

EXT. PUB GARDEN - DAY

Peter and Will are hunched at the pub table, looking at plans.

Steve, Paul and Charlie push their prams up and down, trying to get their offspring to sleep.

WILL  
...the staircase skeleton will be ready on the 19th.

PETER  
What about the reinforced glass?

WILL  
They'll be cut down within 4 days and delivered to site.

PETER  
This is the final revision --

But he's cut off as Will's mobile rings.

WILL  
(into mobile)  
Hello? Katya?...yeahh...

He moves off as Mark appears with the drinks.

Steve, Paul and Charlie approach, pushing their prams --

STEVE  
About time!

MARK  
Sorry, guys. Trouble at the bar --

PAUL  
(picking up his pint)  
What are you drinking today, Mark? Ribena?

MARK  
Ginger beer. Some of us have responsible jobs --

PAUL  
Ouch. I die for all us worthless furniture designers...  
(to all)  
No-one minds sitting on the ground, do they?

CHARLIE

(another non-sequitor)  
Technically I suppose you could  
be prosecuted for being drunk in  
charge of a pram. You'd have to  
be on a public highway...

But Mark is looking at something on his buggy.

MARK

OK. OK. Who's the smartarse.

He pulls something off the back of the buggy. Shows it to  
the rest: a hastily drawn 'L' plate on a large beer-mat.

MARK

I said no recriminations --

But he's cut off as Will returns. A cloud in his face.

WILL

Jesus bloody Christ!  
(downs a large swig of  
beer)  
Fatherhood. Who'd do it?

They all look at him. Holding their respective buggies.

WILL

(by way of explanation  
to Paul, Charlie and  
Mark)  
There's no reason why you should  
know...I have an 18 year old  
daughter.

Pregnant pause. No reaction from any of them --

WILL

(eye on Peter and Steve)  
OK. So you already know...

MARK

We heard.

PAUL

Actually, we're all kind of  
impressed.

WILL

Don't be. She sees me for the  
first time in 12 years. Now  
she's disappeared. My ex-wife's  
giving Katya hell down the phone  
because they're due to fly back  
to Scotland in an hour and a  
half. No Louisa.

(MORE)

WILL (cont'd)

I get the blame of course. From  
2 women this time --

LOUISA'S VOICE

Mum always said you didn't like  
women much...

They all turn. There's Louisa, another glass of wine in  
her hand. A little unsteady on her feet --

MARK

That's Louisa?

WILL

What the hell do you think you're  
doing? Your mother's frantic!  
Katya's on her way here in the  
car --

LOUISA

(suddenly distraught)  
I'm sorry! I just wanted  
to see you. To say goodbye.  
Then I saw you in the park. With  
George. I felt weird...watching  
you with him. Is that wrong?  
It was like I didn't belong.  
I really believed what you said  
in the letter.

WILL

I meant what I said in the  
letter.

LOUISA

Did you?

And she begins to slump, the alcohol intake taking over --

WILL

Louisa!

LOUISA

Oh shit --

Will darts forward and catches her before she hits the  
deck.

Katya screeches to a halt in her car. In time to see Will  
turn Louisa's head so she can be discreetly sick.

She winds the window down. Looks at the group of men with  
their prams as they try to take in the realities of  
fatherhood.

KATYA

Well, boys. How do you feel now  
you've seen what the future  
holds?

Paul, Steve, Charlie, Mark and Peter pull their prams  
closer to them.

PAUL

You mean, they don't stay like  
this?

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

A crane hoists a large steel through the air and down  
through the open roof.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Peter watches as the steel is positioned. More interior  
walls have come down. Cables hang loose. Then suddenly --

he notices a child's toy lying incongruously in the middle of  
the rubble. MIKE watches him as he picks the toy up and puts  
it in his pocket.

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Peter pops his head out of a window. The scaffolding still  
encloses the house. He looks across at --

Steve, who is doing repointing work.

PETER

OK?

STEVE

Yeahh.

PETER

How much longer?

STEVE

Two hours?

Peter then sees a feeding bottle sticking out of Steve's back  
pocket.

INT. PRE-FAB OFFICE - DAY

Peter, now at his desk in the PRE FAB OFFICE. He looks up as  
MIKE knocks at the open door.

MIKE

Wanted to see me?

PETER  
Yeahh. The third floor pipe  
run --

He stops. Focuses on a rattle which hangs from Mike's key-chain.

PETER  
Mike, how many children have  
you got?

MIKE  
None. You know the wife can't  
abide them --

Mike stops talking. Follows Peter's gaze down to the rattle. Gives a sickly smile.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Peter's on the march. WORKERS watch him as he moves at speed through the rooms.

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

The scaffolding. Steve is still at work repointing, but now there's no bottle in his back pocket.

He looks round as Peter appears through a window. A beat --

PETER  
Where's the bottle, Steve?

STEVE  
(feeling back pocket)  
Uh...

PETER  
Where's Kimmie, Steve?

Steve just looks at him.

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - SCAFFOLDING - DAY

Workers stop work and watch as Steve follows Peter towards the pre-fab office.

Steve pushes Kimmie in her pram.

Mike unhooks the rattle.

MIKE  
Steve!

STEVE

Stops and looks up. The rattle flies through the air towards him. He catches it, and nods a silent thanks.

PETER

Watches as more workers start to throw toys down to Steve: cuddly toys, plastic grips...

Peter can't believe it. Clearly the entire workforce has been helping Steve with Kimmie.

PETER

Alright! Show's over! Get back to work.

He looks down at Steve, who collects the toys he couldn't catch.

PETER

You've got some explaining to do -  
-

INT. PRE-FAB OFFICE - DAY

Steve stands facing Peter. Kimmie lies in her pram.

Peter juggles a pen.

STEVE

...Karen's been going crazy. Cooped up with Kimmie all day every day. She wanted to go to Glastonbury. I couldn't go...and I didn't want her taking Kimmie. What could I do? I've got no-one else to leave her with --

PETER

It's a safety question. I can't have a baby on site.

STEVE

Then I can't come to work.

PETER

Fine.

Steve takes off his hard hat and puts it on the desk.

STEVE

I'll see you around.

PETER

Yeahh.

Steve exits with Kimmie. Peter throws down his pen.

PETER

Shit.

He rubs his face. This is getting to him.

WILL'S VOICE

What's going on?

Peter looks up to see Will standing in the doorway. Briefcase in hand.

WILL

Steve mumbled something about being sacked?

PETER

He keeps bringing Kimmie on site. I had to let him go.

WILL

There must be a way around this. He needs this job!

PETER

It's none of your business.

WILL

I'm the bloody client!

PETER

(sharp)

And I'm the contractor. It's my decision who works on this site. I have to have discipline to get the job done properly. And that means no babies. End of story. Understood?

Will just looks at him.

INT. PETER'S CAR - NIGHT

Peter sits in his car. He counts out a number of £20 notes and wedges them in a wage packet. He licks it closed then writes Steve on the outside.

THROUGH THE WINDSCREEN

We see Steve emerge from his Housing Association building, pushing Kimmie in her pram.

He moves off down the road and turns a corner.

EXT. PETER'S CAR - NIGHT

Peter exits the car and walks towards Steve's building, bulging wage packet in hand.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The FRONT DOOR is opened to reveal -- Peter's parents, LIZ and OLIVER, wielding a bottle of champagne.

LIZ  
Where is he? Where is he?

PETER

Stands with a fixed smile on his face.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sacha's mother PAOLA is feeding John his bottle. Suddenly -- Liz is there, hovering over Paola and John.

PAOLA  
(italian accent)  
You go away! He's mine tonight!

Liz and Paola kiss. Liz kisses John. Paola grips John with the proverbial vice. Peter and Oliver enter in B.G.

PAOLA  
(to Liz)  
You see the bambino all the time, Doyle!  
(looks at Sacha)  
My daughter never comes to Italy!  
(a groan from Sacha;  
she's had this all day)

SACHA  
Mama...

Oliver quickly deposits the champagne on the laid dining table and slips out the back door. Peter and Sacha exchange a look.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - GARDEN - NIGHT

Oliver, emerging into the garden. He looks up at the sky and takes a deep breath.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peter opens the champagne as Paola and Liz coo over John. The bottle gives a LOUD pop -- and a startled John starts to cry. Paola, Liz and Sacha look daggers at Peter.

He picks up two glasses and exits out the back door.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - GARDEN - NIGHT

Oliver turns as Peter approaches.

PETER  
(holding up champagne)  
This is very kind of you, Dad.

OLIVER  
Don't know what it's like. Wine  
Society stuff your mother ordered  
last Christmas.

PETER  
(pouring champagne)  
Well...it's got bubbles, anyway.

OLIVER  
Yes.  
(silence as they  
both drink)  
Fine night.

PETER  
(looking up at stars)  
Mmm.  
(another silence)  
Dad -- do you feel like  
a grandfather?

OLIVER  
(considers)  
How does a grandfather feel?

INT. STEVE'S FLAT - NIGHT

A contrast to the extended family bonhomie.

Steve sits on a beaten-up chair in his sparsely furnished one bedroom flat. Peter's 'wage' packet sits open on the arm. He spoons cold baked beans from the tin into his mouth as he watches TV. Kimmie sleeps in a Moses basket on the floor.

Steve turns as Kimmie moans in her sleep -- she's trying to turn in the small basket which she has outgrown.

STEVE  
 (turns off sound;  
 soft to Kimmie)  
 We've gotta get you a cot,  
 don't we?

Kimmie sleeps on.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter, Sacha and Paola wave Liz and Oliver goodbye. It's drizzling outside.

PAOLA  
 You have a lovely mother,  
 Peter. But my god she can talk --

Peter shuts the DOOR as Liz and Oliver get into their car.

SACHA  
 Mama, you go to bed. We'll  
 clear up.

PAOLA  
 But, Sacha --

PETER  
 Please.

PAOLA  
 OK. Don't say I didn't offer.

As Paola climbs the stairs.

SACHA  
 (into Peter's ear)  
 Peace.

PAOLA  
 I heard that.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sacha and Peter enter the kitchen. They look at the mound of washing up awaiting them. Their faces fall. Peter pulls Sacha straight back out of the door.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter pulls Sacha to the sofa.

SACHA  
 I should check on John.

PETER  
I'll check on him. You relax.

SACHA  
What about the washing-up?

PETER  
Later.

And he envelopes her in a kiss.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Peter quickly nukes his teeth in the bathroom.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Peter pulls the blanket back over a sleeping John.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

Peter, at the top of the stairs, sees the light go off under Paola's door.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sacha clears away. Peter appears.

PETER  
(holding her from behind)  
Come with me. Now.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Sacha and Peter fall back onto the sofa. Kissing passionately.

PETER  
Remember when we used to do  
this at your house? Your  
parents upstairs with all  
the doors open?

SACHA  
My mother's still upstairs.

PETER  
But now it's our house!

Sacha giggles.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The mound of untouched washing-up sits in the kitchen. Sacha's giggles drift from the sofa.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

The noises are developing now. The breathing heavier.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

John's cot. We can make out his shape under the blanket. Sacha and Peter are very faint in the background. Instead we hear the sound of John's soft breathing. Then --

the breathing stops.

We hold as long as WE can bear it.

His breathing doesn't start again.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

An unmarked CID CAR, light flashing (NO SIREN), moves through the darkened city. The blue light reflects off the wet streets.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Blue lights of an AMBULANCE reflect off windows and windscreens of the numerous CARS already parked outside the house.

PEOPLE move in and out.

Paola stands like a statue outside, still in nightclothes.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter and Sacha. Standing together in the hallway. They look up the stairs as --

their GP emerges from John's room followed by the AMBULANCE CREW. Sacha grips Peter's arm as the grim-faced trio descend the stairs, the GP closing her bag.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The CID CAR pulls up outside Peter's house. Already there are numerous cars. An ambulance with lights flashing.

PEOPLE move in and out

Two CID OFFICERS exit the car. One of them is Mark. He considers the house as his COLLEAGUE joins him on the pavement.

A light wind blows.

MARK

I hate these calls. You're either trespassing where you're not wanted. Or you're somewhere you don't want to be.

His colleague pats him on the shoulder.

COLLEAGUE

That's a new father talking.

They move towards the house -- straightening their ties and hiking up their trousers as they go.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter and Sacha stand together in the hallway. It's like they're strangers in their own house.

AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS

Their GP emerges from John's room, followed by the AMBULANCE CREW.

Sacha starts to shake uncontrollably as the grim-faced trio descend the stairs. The GP closing her bag.

PETER

(to Sacha, whispering)  
Ssh. It's OK. It's OK...

But an involuntary, almost primeval moan erupts from deep inside her. Paola rushes from the sitting room, still in her nightclothes, where she has been sitting with Liz:

PAOLA

Sacha carissima! Viene qui...

Peter lets Paola take Sacha from his arms. He faces the GP as Paola and Sacha disappear into the sitting room.

GP

Peter, I've confirmed John as dead. I'm sending the crew away. There's nothing more they can do...

PETER

(nodding)  
Yes. Thank you.

In B.G., the ambulance crew start taking their gear out of the house, leaving the front door on the latch --

GP

John's back in his cot now. If you'd like to hold him...

PETER

Uh...I...no.  
(gritting teeth)  
You'd better ask Sacha first, doctor.

GP

Of course.  
(then)  
I'm really very sorry, Peter.

Peter nods again as the GP moves into the sitting room. Leaving Peter alone. The front door blows open in the light wind to reveal --

Mark and his colleague talking low to the crew, unaware that Peter is watching. Peter immediately turns away.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Oliver stands with a glass of wine. He turns as Peter enters and moves directly to the sink.

The washing-up still lies in piles on work surfaces.

OLIVER

Just...uh...finishing off the wine...from dinner...

PETER

(moving to sink)  
That's OK...

Peter slams on the taps and pushes in the plug.

OLIVER

Can I pour you a glass, son?

PETER

(squirting Fairy liquid)  
No. Thanks, Dad...

Oliver sips on his wine. Helpless.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mark enters with his colleague. They see Liz and Paola escorting Sacha up the stairs.

The GP stands in the hallway, ready to leave.

Mark shows his CID card.

MARK  
DS Hardy, CID. You are?

GP  
Doctor Kenny. Family GP.

MARK  
Have Child Protection made their  
presence felt yet?

GP  
(shakes head)  
CPA have been informed. But this  
is a natural death, sergeant.

MARK  
I hope so.  
(indicates stairs)  
The mother?

The GP nods. They both look up as Paola and Liz help Sacha to the top of the stairs. As Sacha turns towards John's room, Mark gets her profile. A quick bolt of half-recognition.

MARK  
(to GP)  
Where is the father?

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peter is now washing up. Oliver dries.

Silence.

Broken by a soft tap at the door. They both turn as --

Mark and his colleague enter. A beat as Peter and Mark take each other in. Peter now in incongruous pink rubber gloves.

COLLEAGUE  
(showing card)  
DS Hardy and DC Jenkins, sir.  
CID

PETER  
Mark. I thought it was you out  
there.

Colleague looks at Mark.

COLLEAGUE  
You know this family?

PETER  
Never did see you as a fireman.

MARK  
Policemen aren't everybody's  
favorite people. Makes life  
easier...  
(then)  
I can't tell you how sorry I am,  
Peter...

Peter nods. And turns back vaguely to his washing-up.  
Oliver just looks at them.

COLLEAGUE  
Mark -- a word?

MARK  
Excuse us...

Mark exits with his colleague as --

The doorbell rings. More people.

PETER  
(taking off gloves)  
Would you mind taking over, Dad?

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter emerges into the hallway. Mark and his colleague are  
now talking to the just-arrived WOMAN from the CPA.

CPA WOMAN  
Mr Doyle? I'm from the Child  
Protection Agency...

But Peter just turns and starts up the stairs. He doesn't  
want to face this now --

CPA WOMAN  
Mr Doyle?

Mark holds up a hand, cutting her off. Concerned for his  
friend.

PETER

Reaches the landing. He looks across at the open door to  
his and Sacha's room.

We hear Sacha crying, the sound of Paola's comforting  
words.

We see Liz's profile as she leans against the wall. She doesn't notice Peter standing there.

Peter looks back down the stairs. Mark, his colleague and the CPA woman are looking up at him.

In B.G., the ambulance crew enter to retrieve the last of their gear.

This house is full of people, and Peter feels cornered --

CPA WOMAN  
(softer now)  
Mr Doyle, I just need to ask you  
a few routine questions...

Peter quickly enters John's room and shuts the door. We hold on the wooden letters: JOHN.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter now sits in the nursing chair. He holds FLOPPY COW. He looks around the room. Everything is just the same: the cot, the lullaby on the floor where Sacha left it, the toys...only the little covered bundle inside the cot has changed everything.

There is a knock at the door and Mark enters -- followed by the CPA woman.

MARK  
Peter -- we...would you like  
a polaroid of John? And  
maybe a lock of hair?

Peter looks at him blankly

CPA WOMAN  
Parents often find it helpful,  
Mr Doyle. Later.

Peter tries to get his head around this decision.

PETER  
Uh...  
(fidgets with FLOPPY  
COW)  
...Sorry, I can't...  
(shakes his head)  
...A polaroid? You cut off  
his hair?

CPA WOMAN  
I know it seems painful, but...  
a lot of parents regret it  
if they don't. Keepsakes...

PETER

Yes. I see. Alright.

(then)

But don't do it in front of  
Sacha.

The CPA woman nods. Then exits. Mark closes the door behind her. A beat.

MARK

(soft)

Peter -- has anyone explained  
to you what will happen now?

Peter shakes his head. Mark moves towards him and squats down. Takes a breath.

MARK

OK: your doctor will arrange for  
John to be taken to a mortuary.  
Over the next day  
or two, whenever you're ready,  
the Coroner's Officer will  
want to take a statement from  
each of you concerning the hours  
leading up to John's death. This  
is just procedure. Do you  
understand that? He's not  
accusing you of anything.

Peter nods.

MARK

Then you will have to make some  
decisions so the correct forms  
can be processed: cremation  
or burial, for example. The  
Coroner will pay for a  
Pathologist to make a post  
mortem examination. It's  
unlikely an inquest will be  
held in this case. That's about  
it on the official side.

Silence.

MARK

Is there anything I can do?

Peter finally looks at Mark directly.

PETER

Just...keep it to yourself for  
a while. Yeahh?

(then)

You know, the other guys...

MARK  
I understand.  
(he stands)  
Any help. Anytime. Anything.  
You call. I mean it, Peter.

Mark holds out his hand. Peter takes it. Shakes.

PETER  
Thanks, Mark...

MARK  
No problem.

Mark turns to go. By mistake he nudges the lullaby with a foot.

It begins to play.

INT. CID CAR - DAWN

Mark sits with his colleague, the experience of the night weighing on them.

MARK  
(rubbing face)  
Jesus.

COLLEAGUE  
Yeahh.  
(starts car)  
Trespassing...

A beat as Mark looks at him. A sudden, strange look in his face --

MARK  
Can we make a quick stop before  
the station?

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Mark enters a darkened hallway and snaps on a low light.

He pauses for a beat, listening to the rhythm of the silent house.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Yvonne stirs in her bed. Sits up as she hears a noise.  
Snaps on her bedside light.

She looks at the time. 5.00am.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - ROBERT'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Yvonne tentatively pushes open the door and finds --

Mark, hugging the sleeping Robert to his chest. A sense of relief and overwhelming love in his face.

A beat as their eyes meet. Yvonne unclear why he's back so early.

MARK

Just needed to see my boy.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Steve pushes Kimmie in her pram up the street towards --  
Will's house. We can see the work continuing.

INT. PRE-FAB OFFICE - DAY

Peter, at his desk -- looking at a framed photo of John.

Steve enters, carrying Kimmie. She holds the wage packet.  
Steve takes it from her and puts it on Peter's desk.

STEVE

You gave me too much money.  
I didn't earn it.

Peter sits back in his chair.

PETER

Take it as an advance.

STEVE

You kicked me out.  
Why do I suddenly get an  
advance?

PETER

I made a mistake. You're  
a good worker, Steve. I want  
you back on the site.

STEVE

What about safety?

PETER

Kimmie can stay in here. She'll  
be out of the way. You can  
feed her in here. Change her.  
Whatever --

He's cut off as Mike enters, holding some plans.

MIKE

Pete --

He stops as he sees Steve and Kimmie. An immediate change of expression for the baby.

MIKE

Hello, little one...  
 (then he remembers where  
 he is)  
 Sorry, Pete...

PETER

(smile)  
 It's OK, Mike. I was being a  
 tosser. Steve's gonna work with us  
 again...I hope.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter lets himself into the house. He can smell cooking.

PETER

Sacha?

He dumps his briefcase and a roll of plans on the floor.  
 Moves towards the kitchen.

PETER

Sacha?

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Paola is cooking. Sadness in her face.

PETER'S VOICE

Where's Sacha?

Paola turns and looks at Peter. Motions 'upstairs'. A  
 tear rolls as she watches Peter exit --

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

Peter moves towards his bedroom. The door is closed. He  
 knocks.

PETER

Sach? It's Peter...

Silence. He tries the door. It's locked.

PETER

Sacha? Open up...

PAOLA'S VOICE

Pietro...

Peter looks down the stairs. Paola stands at the bottom.

PAOLA

Dinner is ready.

Peter makes his way back towards the stairs. Then stops. Something has caught his eye --

The wooden letters spelling out JOHN have been removed.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Peter bursts in to John's room. Already some clearing up has been done. John's cot has been dismantled.

In one corner we see a flat-pack box leaning against the wall. On the outside are the words: PLAYPEN.

A beat as Peter takes this in.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peter and Paola eat pasta in silence. Suddenly --

There is the sound of footsteps from above. Pacing up and down.

PAOLA

She's been walking up and down  
like that all evening. It stops.  
It starts again.

Peter stands, wanting to go up to her.

PAOLA

Leave her, Peter. Let her mourn  
in her own way. Eat. She'll  
come to you when she needs you --

Peter sits down and eats.

PAOLA

Your parents thought it might be  
a good idea if I went to stay  
with them. Until the funeral...

PETER

Yes...

PAOLA

If you want me to stay, I will.  
But...maybe it's better for you  
and Sacha to be alone together.

PETER  
 Whatever you think is best.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Oliver puts Paola's bags into the boot of his car.

He slams the boot shut, then moves to the driver's door.

Paola is already in the passenger seat, while Peter hovers vaguely by the car.

Oliver nods grimly at his son. Peter nods back.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter sits at his desk in the living room. It's late. He goes through plans and building schedules. He's tired.

There is a slight noise behind him. He turns to see --

Sacha standing in the doorway, watching him. Almost like a ghost in her nightdress.

PETER  
 Sacha?

Sacha moves directly to him and takes his hand. She pulls him gently from his chair and leads him to the sofa.

Without saying a word, she lies back, hikes up her nightdress and starts to undo Peter's trousers.

PETER  
 Sacha? For Christ's sake --

But she's determined. Peter tries to take her hands away from his belt. But she gets it undone.

SACHA  
 (undoing his flies)  
 I want --

PETER  
 Sacha! No --

Sacha looks at him hard.

SACHA  
 I want another baby --

PETER

Watches her as she roughly tugs down his trousers -- his pants -- as she moves on top of him -- as she pulls him into her --

-- like he wasn't really there.

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

The work continues. Will and Katya exit the front door. Will manoeuvring George's buggy around the discarded materials and the bulging skip.

A happy couple.

INT. PRE-FAB OFFICE - DAY

Peter looks through the venetian blind at Will with his wife and son.

He twists it shut then moves back to his desk.

KIMMIE

Sits in the now made-up PLAYPEN from John's room. The empty cardboard box leaning against a wall.

An assortment of makeshift toys lie around her: wooden spoon, cake tin lid...no Early Learning Centre rip-offs here.

A beat as Peter watches her.

INT. FUNERAL DIRECTORS - DAY

A row of coffins, baby-size. Some open, some closed.

Peter stands with the FUNERAL DIRECTOR as he considers his choice.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Peter leads a site inspection, followed by Mike and an assortment of other trades.

We see the extent of progress: walls have been made good, the double height space has been created, the new roof is going on...we are getting an idea of how the house is going to look. Suddenly --

Peter comes to a stop. He bends down and picks up one of Kimmie's toys which has been lying half concealed on the floor.

Peter brushes off the dirt and throws it to Mike.

A beat between them --

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Peter leads a couple of YOUNG SALESMEN around this cash-and-carry off-license. One of the salesmen pushes the industrial-sized trolley -- which has already been laden with a good amount of booze.

Peter stops by a pallet of champagne. He takes off cases and loads them up as the other salesman notes down the amount.

INT. PRE-FAB OFFICE - DAY

Peter eats a sandwich at his desk. He looks up to see Kimmie attempting to pull herself up on the bars of the playpen. Finally she succeeds --

She is standing!

Peter throws down his sandwich and rushes out --

EXT. SITE PORTALOO - DAY

Mike exits with a rolled up paper. He stops as he sees the entire workforce huddled in and out of the pre-fab office.

INT. PRE-FAB OFFICE - DAY

Mike pushes his way through the throng to find --

Kimmie smiling proudly at her equally chuffed Dad, still standing at the bars.

By Mike's reaction, you'd think he was her grandad --

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Peter finishes pushing furniture back against the walls to create more space in the middle of the room.

He rearranges new framed photos on his desk. There are all of John.

A beat as he suddenly looks around. Sacha is watching him from the door --

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

A skip lorry is backing up. Warning lights flashing.

Peter guides the driver --

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - DAY

A hearse backs up towards the house, guided by Peter -- who is now in black suit, white shirt and black tie.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A large group of MOURNERS walk slowly down a path. Gravestones stretch into the distance.

We move along the front of the group, picking out Liz and Oliver, Paola with Sacha and finally -- Peter, alone at the head.

He carries a small white coffin in his arms.

FLOPPY COW hangs out of his jacket pocket.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - DAY

Mourners are now packed into the sitting room -- eating and drinking. Suddenly the house is full of noise again --

In the middle of all this, Sacha sits on the sofa -- flanked by Paola and Liz. Sacha takes little part in the proceedings.

PETER

Pours out champagne. As he moves from group to group, mourners give him their condolences:

FEMALE MOURNER 1  
(touching Peter's hand)  
Poor Sacha. It must be so hard  
for her...

FEMALE MOURNER 2  
(dabbing hanky)  
He was such a little treasure!...

MALE MOURNER 1  
You look after Sacha, mate. Make  
sure of that...

MALE MOURNER 2  
How could it happen? How could  
it? Doesn't make sense!

PETER

Now comforts FEMALE MOURNER 3, who just cries uncontrollably on his shoulder. His face is set.

Behind them, the wake continues unabated.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Oliver enters, slightly the worse for wear. Peter is opening yet another bottle --

OLIVER  
Anything I can do, Peter?

PETER  
(holding out opened  
bottle)  
Thanks, Dad. Take this around if  
you like --

OLIVER  
(sudden emotion)  
I meant, IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN  
REALLY DO? I feel useless, Peter.  
Sodding USELESS!

Peter is stunned. This isn't Oliver's normal demeanor

PETER  
Hey...  
(moves to him)  
You're doing alright.

OLIVER  
I just don't know what to do.  
That's all.

PETER  
What are any of us supposed to  
do? I don't know. We carry on --

OLIVER  
Yes. You're right. You're  
always right.  
(then)  
I'll take the bottle round  
then...

PETER  
That would be good, Dad.

Silence.

OLIVER  
Take care of her, son. We're  
very fond of her, you know...

Oliver exits with the bottle. Peter stands still for a beat.

EXT. PARK - DAY

FAMILIES play on the swings and roundabouts.

Peter walks slowly across the grass to a bench, still wearing his suit -- but tie removed.

He settles on the bench. Tired. Digs in his pocket and pulls out a tube of mints. He takes one out and pops it in his mouth. Then he looks across the park --

KIDS play a kickabout game of football. Others run, playing tag. The usual activity of a normal day.

Peter starts to grip his tube of mints, clutching them for dear life. Tears begin to run down his face. Then he sees --

Will, Steve, Paul, Mark and Charlie entering the park, pushing their prams.

Peter quickly stands and starts to move in the opposite direction. Then we hear --

PAUL'S VOICE  
(shouting)  
Peter! Peter!

Peter turns. The team stands in pram formation, looking at him.

PAUL  
You gotta settle something for us.

None of them have noticed a thing. Only Mark betrays any notion that something has changed.

PETER

Approaches the group of new fathers.

WILL  
Where's John?

PETER  
(eye on Mark)  
He's got a bit of a cold.

MARK  
Children aren't compulsory.

PAUL  
(still on the same theme)  
Charlie's saying 85% of couples do not have sex until at least six months after their baby is born --

WILL  
-- but we haven't defined precisely what we mean by sex.

STEVE

Sex is sex, isn't it?

CHARLIE

Actually, legal and illegal sex varies from country to country.

PAUL

Charlie -- do you mind?

CHARLIE

For example -- in Massachusetts it's illegal for married couples to sleep in the nude in a rented room.

(by way of explanation)

Beth and I had our honeymoon there...

PAUL

We're getting off the point...

(he looks at Peter)

It's up to you. Define sex for us so we can get this thing settled once and for all --

They all look at Peter. Mark has been watching him during this whole exchange. Peter considers:

PETER

The six month thing. Does it count if couples have sex -- but not with each other?

A beat of silence. Then --

Cries of frustration from Paul and the others. Mark bursts into laughter. In the middle of all this, the FOOTBALL from the KIDS' game lands amongst them. Immediately --

Paul is off, dribbling the ball -- leaving ROSIE in her pram beside Peter. The six year old KIDS watch as Steve, Charlie and Will join him -- pushing their prams as they pass the ball.

Peter and Mark watch. A smile on Peter's face for the first time since John's death.

Mark puts a hand on Peter's shoulder as --

Paul lifts the ball in the air. It flies towards Peter.

A hand on Rosie's pram, he jumps into the air to head it.

FREEZE.

THE END