

# Day of All Days

A Play in Two Acts

By

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# Day of All Days

## Characters

in order of appearance

Dan

Jean

Johnny

Monty

Sarah

Paula

Karen

Harry

Chris

Diane

George

### A short description of the characters

Dan, in his mid-fifties, Jean's husband.

Jean, in her early fifties, Dan's wife.

Johnny, in his mid-forties, Sarah's Step Uncle

Monty, in his early twenties, Sarah's boyfriend

Sarah, twenty-three years of age, Dan and Jean's daughter

Paula, in her early sixties, Jean's friend

Karen, in her mid-fifties, Jean's longtime friend

Harry, in his late fifties, Karen's husband

Chris, twenty-two years of age, Karen's adopted daughter

Diane, in her mid-fifties, Jean's friend

George, in his late fifties, Diane's partner

## Day of All Days

### *Synopsis*

*Jean is the perfect host and is well supported by her husband, Dan even though he feels her approach to organising celebrations for friends and family somewhat taxing.*

*Jean has planned a get together to celebrate their friends', Diane and George, 25-year partnership. Bringing everyone together has been a bit of a trial and things go wrong – the cake is destroyed in an accident involving Dan and Jean's best friend, Karen. Their daughter Sarah's boyfriend decides not to attend, Karen's husband Harry prefers to support his football team and to cap it all George's car breaks down, which results in the celebration being postponed to the following day – a day of all days!*

*It is discovered that about 23 years ago Dan and Karen had an affair and Dan is unaware that a child, Chris, born of the relationship was adopted rather than aborted. Dan thinks that Jean, although aware of the relationship, knows nothing about the child, but of course, she does. Dan has been living his life under a cloud of guilt ever since. Chris, now 22 years' old arrives at Dan and Jean's house! Five years ago Sarah had a one night stand with her step uncle Johnny, which she broadcasts to her parents.*

*The atmosphere becomes intense, moments before Diane and George finally arrive!*

### Production notes:

The setting is described within the script and the time of day is mentioned at the beginning of each scene. There are times when the stage lights are dimmed or go down in order to denote short passages of time.

The action takes place in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The Song, 'Just Friends' sung by Bobby Darin was written by John Klenner and lyrics by Sam M. Lewis (1931). The song has also been recorded by many Jazz Artists, including Sarah Vaughan and Stan Getz. This version by Bobby Darin is available on You Tube.

# Day of all Days

## Act One

### **Scene 1:** Jean and Dan's Lounge

Time: A Saturday morning in April in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

*Dan and Jean's lounge hasn't changed much from the late 1990's, but it is homely, stylish to a degree and simply furnished and is part of a four-bedroom house in a semi-rural setting in middle class South of England.*

*C on a slight angle to DR is a four seater floral print sofa. DR of sofa, on an angle to DL is a floral print armchair. Slightly DL of the sofa is a floral print armchair, on an angle to DR.*

*L against the wall is a sideboard, on top of which is a silver tray bearing bottles of spirits, and a smaller tray of drinking glasses. Also on the sideboard is a glass fluted bowl. On the wall behind the sideboard is a large contemporary painting*

*UC on the wall in a picture frame is a print of a countryside scene.*

*On the wall R above a modern stone fireplace is an ornate mirror. The mantelpiece is decorated with a few bric a brac items.*

*The walls are painted in a light beige colour.*

*Slightly DC of the sofa is a large rectangular dark wood coffee table.*

*There is a door UR in the corner of the room, leading to the kitchen. Between the door and the fireplace is an upright wooden occasional chair with a plain green covered seat.*

*UL is a door leading into the hall.*

*DL of the sideboard is another wooden occasional chair with a plain green covered seat. D of the chair but close to it is an occasional table upon which is a telephone.*

*The floor is covered with a large Persian style rug.*

*As the scene opens Dan, trouser-less in a white shirt and striped tie, is looking in the mirror above the fireplace R, fussing with his collar and tie.*

*Jean enters from the hall in a hurry and looks about the room as if searching for something. Dan turns from the mirror pulling at his collar. Jean continues her search. She looks up at him.*

Jean: What're you wearing that awful tie for?

Dan: You could say the same thing about this god awful shirt. I seem to have put on weight since I last wore it, and this collar's so bloody tight.

Jean: You need to exercise. And put your trousers on for pity's sake, but don't put your suit on yet, we've a number of things to do first.

Dan: I don't know why I agreed to this.

Jean: *(becoming exasperated)* We've been over this enough times Dan. It's going ahead and that's that.

*Dan shakes his head and sighs heavily*

*Jean resumes her search.*

Dan: Have you lost something?

Jean: My mobile phone. Have you seen it? I need to contact Karen.

Dan: It's in the kitchen.

Jean: Thanks dear. Put on that silvery tie I bought you; the one your wearing's so old.

Dan: What about the shirt?

Jean: Look in the wardrobe, you've plenty of others, and in the meantime, put on an old pair of trousers. I don't want you to crease your suit pants.

Dan: Do I then report to you for inspection?

*Jean gives him a strange look and Dan produces another false smile. Jean shakes her head and exits into the kitchen.*

*Dan is about to exit into the hall when Johnny enters from the hall in his dressing gown over his open necked shirt and trousers, carrying a glass of water.*

Johnny: What's the time?

Dan: Eight thirty I think.

*Dan smiles*

Johnny: Any chance of breakfast?

*He sips from the glass.*

Dan: Toast alright?

Johnny: *(unimpressed)* Oh yer.

*Jean enters with a mobile at her ear.*

Jean: Morning Johnny, you're up then?

Johnny: *(yawning and scratching his head)* Just about.

Jean: *(to Dan)* Karen doesn't appear to be home, no good leaving a message, she never responds.

*She places the phone in her apron pocket.*

Jean: Can I get you something for breakfast Johnny? Will scrambled eggs on toast do.

Johnny: *(impressed)* That's very kind of you Jean.

*He looks at Dan and smiles broadly.*

Johnny: For God's sake Dan, go and put your trousers on.

Dan: Don't you start.

Jean: Come on Johnny, I'll get your breakfast. *(gesturing at Dan's legs)* Dan, trousers.

*Johnny smiles broadly and exits with Jean.*

Dan: *(calling)* I hope it chokes you!

*He laughs briefly and goes to exit into hall, when a barefooted Monty sleepily enters, passing by him, wearing jeans and a coloured vest. He has tattoos on his arms and on the line of one side of his jaw, from chin to ear.*

Monty: Mornin' Mr. Evans

Dan: Where've you come from?

Monty: I slept here last night.

Dan: *(dubiously)* Oh yes, course you did. Where's Sarah?

Monty: Asleep I think. What's the time?

Dan: Go through to the kitchen, you might get a slap up breakfast if you hurry and don't forget to smile.

Monty: Nah, I'll just have coffee thanks.

Dan: From where I'm standing you could do with something more substantial.

Monty: I don't eat much.

Dan: *(smiling)* What do you do much? *(quickly)* Don't answer that.

*Monty grunts and exits into kitchen*

Dan: Christ, what does she see in him?

*At that moment Sarah enters the kitchen from the hall in her nightie over which she wears a tired thick toweling dressing gown and boot type slippers.*

Sarah: *(smiling)* Mornin' Dad.

Dan: Mornin' love. Lover boy's in the kitchen.

Sarah: I guess you're not impressed.

Dan: Well, you could do better.

Sarah: When he told me his tattoos were symbols of his last three girlfriends, I was immediately put off.

*Dan chuckles*

Dan: What a bloody fool.

Sarah: Yes, he's sulking, and serve him right. *(she chuckles briefly)* He didn't have his wicked way with me last night.

Dan: *(in mock shock)* Sarah, you're talking to your father.

Sarah: So what, I've always been able to be frank with you.

Dan: *(smiling broadly)* Frank? I thought we'd christened you Sarah.

*Sarah groans in response*

Sarah: Please Dad, it's too early to appreciate your whimsies.

Dan: Whimsies? I haven't heard that expression in years. So you won't be seeing him again.

Sarah: I should think so. He's OK as a friend.

Dan: You might be disappointed dear. He'll probably want something more than just friendship.

Sarah: Well, if he does, he'll have to go elsewhere. Why do men think that sex should be the main feature of a relationship?

Dan: That's a generalisation. *(slightly mockingly)*, but generally true.

Sarah: Oh Dad, look at you. Go and put your trousers on.

*She crosses to the door to the kitchen*

Dan: Yes, I shall. You have some breakfast. Your mother's in the kitchen with Uncle Johnny.

Sarah: *(she laughs)* With the latch?

Dan: *(smiling)* And Monty.

Sarah: What a combination.

Dan: Uncle Johnny, a latch?

*Sarah smiles and exits into the kitchen.*

*Dan pulls a face and exits into the hall*

***Lights down and up on the same scene later in the morning.***

*Jean, who is smartly dressed enters from the hall with the mobile at her ear.*

Jean: What time can I expect you? Good, don't be any later. I'll see you in half an hour then. Don't forget the cake. *(she sighs heavily as she listens to Karen's response)* Ask Harry to help you. What? He's not coming? Why not? Oh, the selfish sod! Oh for Pete's sake, bloody football. If you want, you can change here. No dear, it's no problem. *(firmly)* No, I mean it. Right then, just bring your things. What's that? Don't worry, I'll send Dan round to help you carry the cake and your bits and pieces. Yes, in a suitcase, *(laughs)* but not the cake. No, he won't mind. No, he says he doesn't. OK? He'll be around shortly. See you soon then.

*She opens the door and calls into the hall.*

Jean: Dan!

Dan: *(distantly off)* Yes?

Jean: Come here, I've a job for you!

Dan: *(gleefully sarcastic)* A job? I can't wait. Coming pet!

*He enters from the hall*



Dan: Reporting for duty ma'am.

*Jean quickly looks him up and down*

Jean: You've still got your old trousers on!

Dan: You told me to wear them.

*Jean slumps onto the sofa*

Jean: Did I?

*Dan sits beside her and holds her hand*

Dan: Are you alright?

*Jean smiles wearily*

Jean: It's getting to me a bit.

Dan: I knew it would.

Jean: You're not annoyed are you?

Dan: Do I ever get annoyed with you?

*Jean smiles and strokes Dan's face*

Jean: Yes, you do.

Dan: The trouble with you is you get carried away. All the fuss over what I should wear.

Jean: I want you to look your best. It's for a good cause.

Dan: No it's not.

Jean: What d'you mean?

Dan: It's not a charitable event is it?

Jean: In a way it is, yes.

Dan: If George heard you say that he'd hit the roof.

Jean: OK, it's for a good reason, a very special reason.

*He kisses her cheek*

Dan: I hope so.

Jean: Course it is. Why do you say that?

Dan: You do it all without much help and I just don't want the whole thing to blow up in your face, that's all. Think of it as just a get together, which is what it is really.

*Jean pats his hand and fusses with his shirt.*

Jean: (*kindly*) You're not thinking of wearing that shirt and tie, are you?

Dan: They seem fine to me.

Jean: What about the ones you bought in Italy last year?

*She stands and straightens her dress*

Dan: What?

Jean: I'll get them for you while you're out.

Dan: Out?

*He stands and looks at her intently*

Jean: Karen's having problems with the cake.

Dan: (*mocked concern*) Oh, I hope she didn't make it, did she?

Jean: She bought it yesterday. I don't want her dropping the thing, and she's changing here. Make sure she has her change of clothes, in a suitcase.

Dan: What about Harry?

Jean: He's gone to football.

Dan: What? Bloody Football? I s'pose he won't be coming.

Jean: I don't think so, but don't worry about him. I told her I want her here in half an hour. I need to complete everything before the others arrive. Be a darling and help her and don't be ages.

Dan: Very well.

*He sighs loudly and exits into the hall*

*Johnny enters from the hall in a smart suit, shirt and tie and socks, but without shoes.*

Johnny: Where's Dan going?

Jean: Helping Karen.

Johnny: That's good (*attempting to be theatrical*) I'm alone with you at last!

*Jean scoffs*

Jean: I'm flattered, I think.

*She crosses to the sofa and fusses with the pillows and looks about the room*

Johnny: (*again, theatrically*) I'm smitten to the core!

Jean: You were never much of an actor, Johnny.

Johnny: I dunno. I was in a few TV commercials a few years back and I was a staunch member of the local drama society at one time.

Jean: Yes, I remember seeing you in Jack and the Beanstalk. Well, I didn't actually see you, I heard you. The back half of Daisy the Cow wasn't it?

*Jean chuckles*

Johnny: You remembered. You must've been impressed. It was a supporting role. (*leering*) You should've seen the girl who played the front half.

*He laughs*

*Jean smiles*

Jean: Well, I'd better be going.

Johnny: Do I have time to call in at the local? I thought I might buy some booze for the get together.

Jean: We've plenty here and I'm sure Diane and George will bring some.

Johnny: You haven't got much Scotch though.

Jean: Who drinks it?

Johnny: I do and isn't Dan's still partial to a tippie?

Jean: No, it makes him angry.

*Johnny laughs*

Johnny: Really?

Jean: I've a lot to do, by all means throw booze down your throat and buy as many bottles of Scotch as you think fit, but it won't be a boozy affair.

*Johnny pulls a face. Jean crosses to exit into the kitchen and turns to him.*

Jean: I'm sorry for being a bit tetchy.

Johnny: That's alright my love. Perhaps you should have a drink or two before they arrive.

*Jean smiles*

Jean: Don't spend too much time in the local.

*She exits into the kitchen*

*Sarah enters from the hall.*

*Johnny smiles and holds out his arms.*

Johnny: The beautiful Sarah! Er, where's your beau?

*Sarah avoids him*

Sarah: Beau? You mean Monty? He's gone home to get ready for this afternoon.

Johnny: So it's still on. The full Monty.

*Sarah groans*

Sarah: Ha bloody ha! You're so original. He's just a good friend and that's all.

*Johnny chuckles*

Johnny: Unlike us at one stage.

Sarah: What did you say?

Johnny: Er.... forget it. I was out of order.

Sarah: Yes, you were, are!

Johnny: I'm sorry, but it happened so ...

Sarah: *(interrupting)* I wish it'd never happened and I've never forgiven myself. I'm really surprised that a man of your so called maturity should mention it.

*Sarah turns away*

Johnny: *(quietly)* I've never forgotten it.

Sarah: What? *(she scoffs)* Well I don't remember much about it. I was under the influence of alcohol, and the second time, the next morning, was out of sheer stupid curiosity on my part. Uncle? It was more like having it off with a fucking grandad!

Johnny: If I rightly recall, you enjoyed it.

Sarah: Oh my God! Listen to Don Juan, no, more like Rasputin!

Johnny: Who the bloody hell is he, some Spanish footballer?

*Sarah laughs*

Sarah: God, you're thick. Look him up on the internet, his antics might turn you on Uncle.

Johnny: Watch it and just remember I'm your *Step* Uncle.

Sarah: Oh, did you bed me with that in mind?

Johnny: What? Of course not; because I liked you, fancied you. I'd had a few drinks too, but I was obviously capable. It was something, well, beautiful.

Sarah: Beautiful, huh!

Johnny: You forget; we were very close. You used to say I was your favourite uncle.

Sarah: And then you pounced, like a shaggy old tom cat!

Johnny: Sarah, I thought a lot of you and I still do. It just happened. I'm sorry.

Sarah: It was a mad encounter. You were old enough to know better, and, OK, so was I. Thank God I realised it was all wrong, dirty! I thought I'd dismissed the whole sordid episode from my mind until you turned up again like a sour smell (*raising her voice*) You're lucky I was eighteen at the time, otherwise you would've been in trouble.

*Johnny steps towards her and with his finger to his lips.*

Johnny: (*quietly*) OK you've said your piece. We'll say nothing more about it, alright?

Sarah: God, you're pathetic. Just keep your sordid remarks to yourself in future. Just grow up and keep that thing you've got between your legs, in your pants.

Johnny: (*forcefully*) That's enough Sarah!

*Sarah intentionally steps on his socked feet as she pushes past him in the direction of the kitchen.*

Johnny: Oh shit! Christ!

*He hops, almost falling over*

*Sarah turns on him*

Sarah: *(hissing)* Stay away from me!

*Johnny winces and limps as he exits into the hall.*

***Lights down and up to denote the passing of a short passage of time.***

*The door from the hall opens slowly and Paula enters carrying a suitcase and a raincoat.*

Paula: *(cautiously and calls)* Hello, Jean? Is anyone at home?

*Jean enters from the kitchen*

Jean: What the...? Paula! My, you're early! Far too early.

Paula: That's a nice welcome I must say.

Jean: I'm sorry dear.

*They kiss*

Jean: Here let me take your case.

Paula: I can manage.

Jean: Cup of tea?

Paula: No thanks, I had one on the train.

*Paula sits in armchair DL and Jean takes her suitcase and raincoat, which she places near the door leading to the hall.*

Jean: *(kindly)* Why so early?

Paula: They cancelled the later train so I had to get up at the crack of dawn to catch the first one and then it was late. There's nothing more unpleasant than waiting for a train on a deserted platform.

Jean: I'm so pleased you could make it. Why didn't you ring, we could've picked you up from the station?

Paula: I enjoyed the walk in the sunshine, such pretty lanes, but it was becoming hot and heavy carrying the suitcase, so I hailed a taxi.

Jean: You were lucky.

Paula: You've certainly picked the right day for it, especially for April. Surprisingly warm.

Jean: Yes, I'm pleased. Relieved really.

Paula: You look tired dear.

Jean: I'm alright.

Paula: You shouldn't have done this Jean, it's too much work.

Jean: Oh come on, it's not that hard. You make it sound like a banquet.

Paula: Well, you do go overboard (*quickly*) and I mean that in the nicest possible way.

*Jean smiles*

Jean: Diane and George have been together for twenty-five years.

Paula: Yes, unmarried.

Jean: That sounded a bit priggish.

Paula: Well, it's not been a particularly smooth relationship has it?

Jean: It doesn't matter, we've all had our moments. They've stayed together and I feel they deserve something.

Paula: And what does George think?

*Jean laughs briefly*

Jean: I don't care what he thinks, but he'll appreciate the occasion in his own way and he won't find it overwhelming; there'll only be ten of us.

Paula: When will they be here?

Jean: I've told them, whenever.

Paula: That's a bit loose isn't it?

Jean: I said any time after one. They've a bit of a journey and George sometimes works on Saturday mornings.

Paula: Well, I must say it's a lovely gesture on your part. How did Diane react?

Jean: Hesitant at first, but she's glad it's a small gathering. Are you sure you wouldn't like a drink? A glass of wine?

Paula: No, no, it's far too early and it might loosen my tongue. You know what I'm like when I get going.

Jean: *(teasingly)* I hope you don't say anything out of order, dear.

Paula: *(quickly)* Oh no, don't worry, I'll be discreet, a good girl.

*Jean smiles and kisses her on the cheek*

Jean: I want this to be a happy occasion.

Paula: Of course.

Jean: Come on, I'll take you to your room.

*Jean crosses and picks up Paula's suitcase and raincoat. Paula follows her.*

Jean: *(opening the door into the hall)* You should be comfortable.

Paula: I'm sure I shall be.

*They exit into the hall.*

***Lights down and up to denote the passing of another short passage of time.***

*Jean enters from the kitchen with a tray of nibbles, which she places on the coffee table. She crosses UC, looks in the mirror and fusses with her hair. She is wearing a simple blue and white dress and slippers.*

*Paula enters from the hall wearing a smart floral print dress.*

*Jean turns to her smiling*

Jean: What a lovely dress.

Paula: Thank you dear. It's simple.

Jean: Simplicity can be so appealing.

Paula: I like to think so. It makes a pleasant change.

*Paula sits on the sofa. Jean sits in the armchair R*

Paula: I've always liked this room. Simply elegant.

*Jean smiles*

Jean: It's getting a bit dated.

*Paula: (smiling) Aren't we all?*



*Jean chuckles. She looks at her wristwatch.*

Jean: Dan's late. Karen's only ten minutes away by car. *(she laughs briefly)*  
I'm sure he does these things on purpose, just to annoy me.

Paula: Isn't that part of the male psyche or something?

Jean: I don't know. All I know, he's late.

Paula: How's he been these days.

Jean: I'm a bit unfair on him really. He's generally very supportive and understanding.

Paula: That's nice to know. I've always thought highly of Dan.

*Jean smiles*

*At that moment Dan hurriedly enters from the hall, trouser-less, wearing a jacket and carrying his screwed up trousers. He looks aghast at Jean and Paula and exits into the kitchen. Jean stands and is about to enter the kitchen when Karen enters from the hall struggling with a suitcase and choking back laughter. She drops the suitcase and coughs, holding her sides with laughter.*

*Jean and Paula look at each other amazed.*

Jean: What's happened?

*Karen crosses to and slumps into the sofa and wipes her eyes with a hand. She makes an effort to control her laughter.*

*At that moment Dan enters from kitchen holding his trousers.*

Jean: What's the matter with the pair of you?

Dan: Well.....

*Karen interrupts him*

Karen: It's not the pair of us is it? It's the pair of trousers!

*She roars with laughter. Dan stands helplessly.*

Karen: He...He put the suitcase in the boot while I was sitting in the front passenger seat, and I was holding the cake. I had a problem with the seat belt and placed the cake on the driver's seat, just as Dan leapt into the car and he..... *(she has a giggling fit)*

Jean: Oh no!

*Dan is unamused*

Dan: I sat on the bloody cake. Cream and jam everywhere, exploding out of the box all over me and the interior.

Karen: It sounded like a loud... fart!

*Karen imitates the noise and roars with laughter again, and wipes her eyes with a small handkerchief. Jean covers her mouth in an attempt to stifle her laughter. Paula turns away chuckling.*

Karen: You should have seen his face! It was a picture!

*Paula attempts to control her laughter.*

Dan: I tried to get the cream off, but my trousers are ruined! The car stinks of cream. It's a right mess.

*He holds up the cream splattered trousers for the others to see.*

Jean: Thank God they're not your suit ones.

Paula: You're lucky it's a convertible. The smell shouldn't be too bad.

Dan: Believe me, it smells.

*Dan opens his jacket, the jam and cream have splattered his shirt and tie.*

Dan: Good job they weren't my Italian ones.

*Jean tries to stifle her laughter again, but instead snorts loudly and they all burst out laughing.*

Dan: *(Through his laughter)* What a bloody good day this is turning out to be.

*Lights down*

**End of Scene 1**

**Scene 2** – The Lounge – later the same day

*There is no change in the set design*

*Lights up on Dan, dressed smartly in his shirt, tie, suit trousers and socks. He sits on the sofa drinking from a mug. Paula enters from the kitchen.*

Dan: What's the time?

Paula: About twelve thirty.

Dan: If they come, I can't see them coming before two.

Paula: What? After all, that Jean's done?

Dan: George can be a cantankerous sod.

Paula: He's not keen is he?

Dan: No, but I'm concerned about Jean, how she'll feel if they don't. Yet she's happy for Diane to come on her own.

Paula: How can we celebrate a twenty-five-year union with one of them missing?

Dan: if it's Diane on her own, Jean will come up with something. She's an amazing host.

Paula: You're right, she is.

*Sarah enters from the hall in jeans and a sloppy sweater, carrying a parcel, which she almost drops onto the coffee table.*

Dan: Careful love. What is it?

Sarah: *(belligerently)* It's a cake.

Dan: Well, don't let me near it, or Karen for that matter.

Sarah: Where shall I put it?

Dan: In the kitchen?

Sarah: Yes, Dad, but there's no room in the fridges, they're full.

Dan: Sarah, what's wrong?

Paula: It might dry out in the fridge, unless it's a.....

Sarah: Cream cake? *(annoyed)* It is; as creamy as bloody hell!

Paula: What a strange illusion.

*Dan stands and crosses to Sarah*

Dan: Hey, what's wrong Sarah?

Sarah: He's not coming is he. Monty. Says he's not interested anymore, or more to the point he hasn't had what he wants from me.

Dan: I'm sorry love. Just as well, eh?

Sarah: I'm not that upset, not really, but my pride's hurt, and please don't say I'm better off without him.

*Paula clears her throat.*

Paula: Come on Sarah, let me help you.

*She picks up Dan's mug and addresses Dan*

Paula: More coffee?

*Dan shakes his head*

Dan: I'm fine. I'll go and see if Jean's finished tarting herself up.

*Sarah picks up the cake and exits with Paula into the kitchen*

*Dan calls to them*

Dan: For God's sake, don't drop it!

*Dan is about to exit into the hall when Karen enters from the hall carrying her handbag. She crosses to and collapses onto the sofa.*

Dan: Are you OK Karen?

Karen: I'm shattered (*she smiles weakly*) I've never made so many sausage rolls, thirty-six of them, about twenty or so vol au vents, and enough beetroot dip to feed an army. And Jean, bless her, has peeled and cut up God knows how many avocados, and there's only nine of us sitting down.

Dan: Eight.

Karen: Oh, who else has dropped out apart from my Harry?

Dan: Sarah's friend, Monty.

Karen: Is she upset?

Dan: It seems he's no one special.

Karen: Well, that's good I suppose. Jean's upstairs getting ready.

Dan: I know.

*Karen stands and approaches him.*

Karen: You've been a lucky bastard Dan, having such a wonderful person as Jean to care for you.

*Dan smiles*

*Karen looks down at the floor and then turns away from him.*

Karen: Perhaps today's the wrong time to bring up the past; between us I mean.

Dan: Hey, hold on, that was a long time ago Karen and perhaps best forgotten.

Karen: D'you think so? I find it very difficult to forget.

Dan: *(slightly incredulously)* But Karen, you've been with Harry for years.

Karen: No, I wasn't referring to you and me, Dan. Not directly, anyway.

Dan: Who the hell were you....? Oh, you mean....?

*Karen nods*

Dan: I know it was a bloody awful time for you; it was difficult for both of us.

Karen: It was.

Dan: Of course, especially for you I know, but what you decided to do was for the best.

Karen: I want you to see this.

*Karen nervously snatches at the letter in her handbag on the coffee table and hands it to him.*

*Dan crosses DR reading the letter. He lowers the letter, trying to take it all in and then slowly turns to her.*

Dan: What...? Why does this person mention my name...as Dad? *(He scratches his head and carefully responds)* You did have an abortion.... didn't you?

*Karen shakes her head, picks up her handbag and crosses DL. She takes a handkerchief from her bag and dabs at her nose and eyes.*

Karen: *(softly)* I couldn't go through with it.

*Dan looks at the letter again and looks up at her.*

Dan: So, clearly, you had the child adopted and you've kept it to yourself all these years.

Karen: *(slightly irritated)* Well I....

Dan: *(interrupting and shaking the letter at her)* Come on Karen, why didn't you tell me at the time?

Karen: You didn't want me to have it.

Dan: But you did and I'm the father! I can't believe it!

*Karen scoffs and shakes her head*

*Dan stuffs his hands in his pockets, sighs heavily and turns away from her.*

Dan: I'm sorry that was a bit heartless, forgive me. It's come as such a bloody great shock.

Karen: You were married. I was OK, relationship wise. I didn't have anyone.

Dan: God, I have a second child.

*Dan sighs heavily again and turns to her*

Dan: Karen, d'you know what? *(for a moment he is lost for words)* I...I must've been a right bastard. I treated Jean badly; yet she was so ready to forgive me, which made me feel even more guilty. It's always amazed me how easily she forgave you, but I suppose you were such close friends. However, if she'd found out there was a child involved, I'm not sure what she would have done.

Karen: I believe most women would've disowned me. But Dan there's something you ought to know *(Dan interrupts her)*

Dan: And what a bastard I was in using you, and Jean! Thank God I eventually grew up.

Karen: No. I.... I adored you. In a funny sort of way, I still do. Thankfully, I met Harry two years later, which helped me forget you, I mean us, together. Now look at him, a football loving, boozy, fat sod.

*Dan wags a finger at her*

Dan: Who thinks the world of you.

*Karen smiles and slowly shakes her head*

*Sarah and Paula enter from the kitchen*

Paula: Oh, hello you two.

*Karen crosses to the sofa and sits*

*Dan turns away from the others.*

Sarah: You alright Dad?

*Dan nods his head and turns to her.*

Dan: *(softly)* I'm fine dear.

Sarah: You're not your usual bubbly self.

*Dan smiles*

Dan: Bubbly? I don't think I've ever been bubbly.

Sarah: *(approaches and hugs him)* Yes Daddy, you've always been that way to me.

*He kisses her forehead.*

*Karen gestures to Paula to leave. At first Paula does not understand, but after further gesticulating she becomes aware.*

Paula: Come on Sarah, let's see if your Mum's ready.

*Sarah looks at Dan and then at Karen, who smiles and nods.*

Sarah: Yes, OK.

*Sarah grins and kisses Dan on a cheek.*

Sarah: *(quietly and mockingly)* Behave yourself, Father.

Dan: Is that an order?

*Sarah grins and crosses to Paula, who smiles broadly at her.*

Paula: I think they want to organize a suitable time for cleaning the cake attacked car.

*She laughs and exits into the hall with Sarah.*

*Dan takes the letter from his pocket and scans it. He holds it out to Karen who crosses to him and takes the letter from him.*

Dan: It's Chris then; the child's name?

Karen: Yes, Christine.

Dan: Does my name appear on the birth certificate?

Karen: No.

Dan: Then how or why does she refer to me as her father in her letter?

Karen: It was in a moment of madness on my part. I wanted her to know she had a father and such a lovely one at that.

Dan: Oh no.

Karen: I'm sorry.

Dan: Have you told her everything?

Karen: Yes, virtually.

Dan: What d'you mean, virtually?

Karen: She doesn't know your second name; I've referred to you as Dan all along. Although it was a bit late, Chris was eighteen before she was encouraged to make any contact with me by her adoptive Mother, but Chris put it off. I think she was hurt, bitter, that I'd given her away. She wrote to me for the first time about a year ago, after her adoptive father suddenly died of a heart attack. All three of us met. It's been so amicable. And now she wants to meet you.

Dan: Oh dear. No, I couldn't. She must be ...what, twenty-one, twenty-two?

Karen: She's twenty-two.

Dan: God, she's only a year younger than Sarah. I'm not sure what to do. I've deceived Jean, and Sarah too. Incidentally, does Harry know about, er, Chris?

Karen: What! No, of course not. Any way, it's none of his business.

Dan: You're not serious?

Karen: It happened before I met him. Why tell him? In any case if he had got wind of your involvement he'd have knocked your block off by now.

Dan: Yes, I can understand that.

Karen: But so far as Jean's concerned I'd like you to know....

*Karen is interrupted by Sarah and Paula's entrance from the hall*

Dan: *(quietly to Karen)* We'll talk more about it later.

Paula: Have you two finished your meeting?



*She throws Karen a strong inquisitive look.*

Sarah: *(she laughs)* The creamy car duo.

Dan: Yes, thanks. We've decided to give the car a thorough clean up tomorrow.

Karen: Yes, and I'm holding the bucket.

*Karen chuckles*

Sarah: Why not get it cleaned by a valet service? They'd make a better job.

Dan: We'll see. Well, I suppose I'd better check up on your mother.

*He throws an awkward look at Karen, who smiles ruefully.*

Paula: She'll be down soon.

*The door opens from the kitchen and Johnny enters carrying a suitcase.*

Dan: What's up Johnny, going somewhere?

Johnny: Er yes, I think it'd be for the best.

Paula: What leaving? Why?

Johnny: Well, I don't know Diane and George very well and...

Dan: *(interrupting)* Of course you do. You can't suddenly take off. Jean and I would never forgive you.

Johnny: *(quite surprised)* Really? Well then I'm sorry, but I'm...

Sarah: *(interrupting and sarcastically)* Someone's got to eat all those sausage rolls and dip. And who would replace you as the life and soul of the party Uncle Johnny?

*Johnny looks at her sheepishly*

Dan: Come on Johnny, I can't have you running out on us.

*Dan takes his suitcase and gently pushes him towards the door to the hall.*

Dan: I was just about to find Jean. Come with me and we'll have a word with her.

Johnny: But I....

Dan: *(interrupting)* No buts, come on.

*He opens the door and pushes Johnny into the hall. Dan looks back into the room and smiles broadly at the others.*

Dan: We won't be long.

*He exits following Johnny*

Paula: Huh! The last time Johnny ran off was ten years ago when he left Jean's sister, Claire.

Karen: It wasn't the first time either. He's never had much backbone and he's not particularly bright. That sounds snobbish, but you know what I mean.

Paula: Yes, I do, but he works hard and is very handy

*Sarah sniggers*

Karen: Oh Sarah, forgive us, we shouldn't talk about him like that, in front of you.

Sarah: I don't mind. You're probably right.

Karen: Mind you, he did return to Claire when she was ill.

Sarah: *(thoughtfully)* I never really got to know Aunt Claire or her previous husband.

Karen: James? He was a charming man, but sadly he had a weak heart. He, like Claire died so young.

Paula: Claire was a lovely woman. A fighter, but leukemia got her in the end *(she sighs loudly)* but you're right Karen, Johnny nursed her for over a year, right up until the last.

*Karen looks at her watch*

Karen: Diane and George should be here soon surely.

Paula: It's a bit like waiting for the train that never arrives.

*The doorbell rings loudly, twice.*

Karen: Good they're here at last.

*Off stage we hear Dan and Jean greeting Harry.*

Karen: It's Harry!

*The door to the hall opens and Harry enters, dressed in the local football team's colours of gold and blue, including a large rosette attached to his*

*breast and carrying a bottle of beer, followed by Dan and Jean, who is attractively dressed in a purple and white trimmed suit.*

Karen: You've decided to come then.

Harry: I had every intention of coming, my love, but the team comes first.

Karen: Yes, before me.

Harry: Yes, sometimes dear.

*Karen is taken aback. Harry laughs and quickly kisses her on the cheek.*

Harry: We won, three, one. If we win next Saturday, we're in the play offs for next season's Premiership.

Sarah: But I thought they were playing this afternoon.

Harry: Well, it is the afternoon (*quickly looks at watch*) just. There was a clash with United over the fixture, so our team decided to play at eleven and United are playing at three. We could have played tomorrow, Sunday, but our opponents objected. Perhaps that's why they're called the Saints (*he chuckles*) Didn't matter really, we had a great crowd and we won. I've never felt such a buzz around the ground for ages, and the sun was shining!

*Sarah laughs*

Sarah: Did anyone understand all that?

Harry: Cheeky!

*He laughs and kisses Sarah lightly on a cheek*

Paula: I think I did.

Jean: Well, I'm pleased you're here Harry.

Karen: Don't you think you should go home and change?

Harry: What for, I'm decent aren't I? I don't think George, or Diane for that matter, would object to my appearance. We're friends for God's sake!

Paula: I do like your outfit Jean.

Jean: Thank you Paula. I know it might seem formal, but (*she chuckles*) If I don't wear it today, I never will.

Sarah: And your hair, makes you look ten years younger, Mum.

Jean: Now don't let's exaggerate.

Harry: You look beautiful darling! In fact, all you women look beautiful.

*The others laugh briefly*

*He looks at the bottle in his hand and offers it to Dan.*

Harry: How about a beer Dan?

Dan: It'll be a pleasure Harry.

*Dan takes the empty bottle, grins and exits into the kitchen*

Karen: I'm sure you've had enough. I'm concerned you drove here in your condition.

Harry: What condition? I'm in very good condition sweetheart.

Jean: I think we could all do with a drink.

Paula: A good idea. A large gin and tonic please.

*Johnny enters from the hall carrying a bag of bottles.*

Johnny: More supplies, mainly whisky.

Harry: Well if it isn't our pocket Romeo.

Johnny: Pocket what? *(a little concerned)* Someone been talking about me then?

*Harry laughs*

Sarah: *(sarcastically)* Oh my God, who would want to waste their time talking about you, Uncle?

*Sarah exits into the kitchen. Johnny looks after her.*

*The other women look at each other quizzically.*

Paula: There is something not right with those two.

*Lights down*

**End of Scene 2**

**Scene 3** – The lounge - later the same day

*There is no change in the set design*

*Harry is standing DR on an angle looking L when Karen enters from the kitchen. Harry is holding a glass of whisky from which he sips. Karen slowly crosses C, by the sofa.*

Karen: I wish you'd stop drinking.

*Harry turns and looks out front*

Harry: And I wish you'd stop nagging.

*Karen sighs and runs a hand through her hair*

Karen: The party hasn't started yet you know.

Harry: We'll all be pissed by the time they arrive, if they ever arrive.

*He crosses to the couch and sits, leaning back.*

Harry: If I'd known, I 'd have watched United play this afternoon.

Karen: Yes, I bet you would.

Harry: What's the time?

Karen: Two forty-five.

Harry: Bloody hell. I'm starving.

Karen: Come on they're all in the dining room, eating.

*Harry stands, downs the rest of his drink and places the glass on the coffee table.*

Harry: Do we have to go through the kitchen to get to the dining room?

Karen: Why, are you worried that someone might ask you to wash up?  
Guests are normally asked to enter from the hall, but we're just friends.

*Harry chuckles and bursts into a few bars of a song, 'Just Friends'. He puts an arm around Karen.*

Harry: *(singing)* Just friends, lovers no more.

Just friends, but not like before.

Karen: That's an oldie.

Harry: As you know, my dad loved it.

*He kisses Karen tenderly and she smiles and reciprocates.*

Karen: You can be so romantic when you try.

*Harry laughs*

Harry: Course I can.

Karen: It's a pity it's fuelled by alcohol.

Harry: Give it a rest dear (*He rubs his hands and claps*) Right, what are we eating?

Karen: Now that is romantic.

*Harry laughs*

Karen: We're having Roast Pork and fillet of beef.

Harry: Oh, very nice.

*He pats Karen's bottom*

Karen: Unless they haven't survived the long wait in the oven.

Harry: (*rubbing his hands*) Come on then, let's join the throng and get stuck in.

*He gives Karen a dig in her side.*

*Karen squeals quietly and they both laugh*

Harry: I'm after the pork. (*holding her behind by her shoulders*) I fancy a bit of cracklin'.

*He grabs Karen by the waist.*

*Karen squeals*

Karen: Take it easy with the drink!

Harry: I'll be fine; I tell yer.

*They exit into the kitchen laughing*

***The song 'Just Friends' sung by Bobby Darin is played and after a short period, fades.***

*Jean enters the lounge from the hall. She dabs her eyes and nose with a handkerchief and sniffs. She crosses to DC and holds her head in her hands. She sniffs loudly and sits on the sofa, holding her face in her hands. Dan enters from the kitchen.*

Dan: There you are.

*Jean sniffs and dabs at her eyes again*

*Dan crosses to her and sits beside her, taking her hand*

Jean: What a fiasco. I should have listened to you Dan.

Dan: It's like any project, when you take it so far you must aim to finish. Anyway, what the hell. Don't get down hearted (*He gestures to the kitchen door*)

*Jean sniffs and smiles*

Jean: It's ages since I've heard you speak like that.

Dan: (*smiling*) Perhaps you should listen to me more often then and take heed. They're are having a good feed and enjoying themselves. You've done a bloody good job my dear. I'm having a good time and so should you.

*Sarah enters quickly from the kitchen with a drink*

*She sits in the armchair slightly DR of the sofa and addresses Dan and Jean without looking at them.*

Sarah: Those two make me feel sick.

Dan: What's happened Sarah? Which two?

Sarah: Who d'you think? Johnny and Harry. They're annoying and making lewd remarks. I don't know what Karen sees in that man.

Jean: He's a bit of a rough diamond, but he loves her to pieces.

Dan: Underneath that sometimes harsh exterior is a heart of gold.

Sarah: Really? And what about the other one.

Dan: Johnny?

Jean: Johnny's Johnny. He's harmless, he's just an immature forty something Peter Pan.