

THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL

by  
Ol Parker and Deborah Moggach

Based on the book 'These Foolish Things' by Deborah Moggach

22nd June, 2009

Blueprint Pictures  
43-45 Charlotte Street  
London W1T 1RS

+44 20 7580 6915

EXT/INT. GARDEN/COTTAGE - EARLY EVENING

The well-tended garden of a beautiful country cottage.

EVELYN is planting some bulbs. And talking on the telephone.

EVELYN

No really, I promise. It's no problem at all. You do the flowers, and I'll take care of the food, that's absolutely fine. Of course it takes more time, but I've got plenty of that on my hands. Alright? Lovely. Talk soon.

She hangs up, calls to someone.

EVELYN (cont'd)

All organised. I'm doing the catering for the charity do, Margery's on the flowers. No choice, really. I'm afraid her drop scones are more suited to a rockery.

She gets to her feet, surveys the garden with satisfaction.

EVELYN (cont'd)

Hugh darling, are you ready for dinner?

She turns, heads back into her house.

EVELYN (cont'd)

I was thinking that since the forecast is so lovely, perhaps we could take a drive this weekend.

Inside it's homely, rustic and comfortable. Evelyn heads down the passage.

EVELYN (cont'd)

Not that we need to wait for the weekend, of course, now that every day is -

She pushes open the door to the study, stops. She stares at something on the floor.

INT. NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - DAY

A young guy, EVAN, is showing DOUGLAS and JEAN around a very small, and very beige bungalow.

EVAN

So as I say, what you're looking at here is very competitively priced, ask my opinion, you can't get better value for your grey pound. And here's another little feature, may not be necessary right now, but give it a couple of years ... rails on the walls to help you get around more easily, and down here, a panic button in case of a sudden fall, brings the Warden running.

JEAN

What if we fell somewhere else?

EVAN

Sorry?

JEAN

It's just that we might not manage to plan our sudden fall in the exact corner where the button is.

DOUGLAS

(to Evan)

Could we have a moment, please?

EVAN

So anyway, as I say -

DOUGLAS

Thanks. Thanks so much.

Evan goes.

JEAN

This is really all we can afford?

DOUGLAS

Yes. This is all we can afford. I don't know what else you want me to say.

JEAN

That I should be able to live somewhere I'm not ashamed to invite my friends. That I should be able to buy the few clothes that still flatter me, to have a weekly wash and blow-dry, and stand-up tanning sessions whenever I feel like it. That I should be able to do all these things, but instead you've given all our money away so we have to live in sheltered bloody accomodation.

DOUGLAS

Would it help if I apologised  
again?

JEAN

No. But try it anyway.

EXT. CRICKET FIELD - DAY

A local game is going on. The bowler trundles in, the batsman plays and misses, and he's bowled.

On the boundary, GRAHAM is padded up, and ready to go in. He's by some margin the oldest of the players.

As he walks out, he goes past a couple of FIELDERS.

FIELDER 1

Ay ay. Looks like someone got let  
out of an old people's home for the  
day.

FIELDER 2

You alright walking, Grandad, or  
d'you need a piggy-back?

Graham smiles politely, keeps walking. He reaches the wicket. Where the WICKET KEEPER is waiting for him.

WICKET KEEPER

Don't listen to them, mate. They  
got no respect for their elders.  
Now one word of warning: this  
bowler's got quite a long run-up,  
so try not to die before he gets  
here, OK?

Graham doesn't respond, takes his guard.

WICKET KEEPER (cont'd)

And he's pretty nippy, so those  
watery eyes of yours won't even see  
the ball.

Again Graham doesn't react. The bowler runs in, lets it go.

It's a quick ball, but Graham meets it perfectly, sending it soaring away through the air, to land god knows where.

On the boundary, Graham's team whoop, applaud. He turns to the wicket keeper.

GRAHAM

You're absolutely right about my  
eyes, I'm afraid I can't see where  
that one's landed at all. Could  
you run and fetch it for me?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

MADGE is with her grandchildren LIAM and KATIE. They're crouched by the window.

MADGE

Now, obviously you'll say you did your homework, not me. And that you were in bed by eight, scrubbed and tubbed.

KATIE

Why can't you babysit every night, Granny Madge?

MADGE

A question your parents ask also.

LIAM

Because she has to keep looking for a husband. She hasn't got one at the moment.

MADGE

Thank you, Liam.

KATIE

How many husbands have you had?

MADGE

Including my own?

LIAM

I see someone!

MADGE

Alright. You know the drill.

KATIE

Ammunition.

Katie reaches into a bag, and passes her a frozen pea.

MADGE

Target range?

LIAM

Fifty feet. And closing.

MADGE

Here we go.

Madge puts the pea into a peashooter.

Across the street, a guy is walking his dog. He's getting nearer ...

MADGE (cont'd)  
That's right, my lovely. Keep  
coming ...

The kids can hardly breathe with excitement.

MADGE (cont'd)  
A little further ... now!

She blows the shooter. The guy recoils, puts his hand to his neck.

MADGE (cont'd)  
Down! Get down!

The three of them dive down.

The guy looks around, scratches his neck a couple of times, then shakes his head and walks on.

Liam peers over the windowsill.

LIAM  
All clear.

He slides back down to the floor. Where Madge and Katie are sitting, their shoulders shaking in silent laughter.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Staff bustle around a busy A & E ward. Muriel (70's) lies on a bed.

The Head Nurse, KAREN, rushes past. Muriel grabs her sleeve.

MURIEL  
Young lady. I want a cup of tea,  
and I want it now.

KAREN  
The trolley will be along shortly.

MURIEL  
I'm not holding my breath. Hours  
I've been lying here, and not a  
single doctor has come to see me.

KAREN  
Well now that's not quite true, is  
it Mrs Donnelly? A doctor did try  
and examine you, and you sent him  
away.

Muriel looks up to the far end of the ward, where she can see a doctor. He's black.

MURIEL

I want an English doctor.

KAREN

An English doctor? Why didn't you say so? I'll get one right away.

She goes away, comes back moments later with a tall, handsome doctor. The bad news for Muriel is ...

KAREN (cont'd)

This is Dr Ghujarapartidar. Happy now?

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Evelyn, whom we met in the first scene is talking to her lawyer, HAROLD.

He's just told Evelyn some shocking news.

EVELYN

I don't understand.

(beat)

I'm sorry, I don't understand.

(beat)

It's all gone? Everything?

Harold says nothing.

EVELYN (cont'd)

How? How could that happen?

HAROLD

It's happening everywhere. Due to the fall-out from the sub-prime market in the US, structured products are suffering huge losses worldwide. Unfortunately your pension and savings were put into a Ponzi scheme, which means -

EVELYN

Stop, please stop. I can't ...

HAROLD

I'm sorry.

EVELYN

Did Hugh ... did he ... he must've known the extent ...

HAROLD

Before he died he took out a second mortgage. He was obviously trying ... rather desperately ... to fix it all.

EVELYN  
Trying and failing.

HAROLD  
Yes.

EVELYN  
Did he talk to you? Had he mentioned anything at all?

HAROLD  
If he had, perhaps I could've -

EVELYN  
The car is on its last legs. The roof of the cottage needs doing. How am I supposed to pay for these things?

HAROLD  
You sell the car.

EVELYN  
And the ... and the cottage? My home?

There's an awful silence.

HAROLD  
You sell that too. You'll be left with a very modest pension.

EVELYN  
Is that all?

HAROLD  
My dear ...

Evelyn waits.

HAROLD (cont'd)  
Yes. That's all.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

JUDITH (40ish) is sitting opposite someone. We don't see whom.

JUDITH  
And then after that I worked as a systems analyst for a few years but I just found it ...  
(beat)  
I'm sorry.  
(more)

JUDITH (cont'd)

I was sure that on the form we all filled in they asked for our age, and the age bracket of the people we wanted to meet ... and in both cases I ticked 35-45.

Now we see the man she's talking to. It's NORMAN. He's at least 70.

NORMAN

That's right, yes. So did I.

They're at a speed dating evening. Numbered tables, no food, etc.

NORMAN (cont'd)

Anyway, don't stop. You were a systems analyst ...

JUDITH

How old are you?

NORMAN

Early 40's.

JUDITH

D'you mean you were born in the early 40's?

NORMAN

Judy, I know what you're asking -

JUDITH

It's Judith.

NORMAN

Judith. And trust me, I've still got it.

The bell goes; the signal for the women to get up and move along to the next table.

Judith gets up and leaves without looking back.

NORMAN (cont'd)

I just can't find anyone that wants it.

Another hopeful candidate arrives opposite Norman. And looks crestfallen at what's on offer.

INT. DELICATESSEN - DAY

Madge, whom we saw earlier shooting peas with her grandkids, is doing her shopping. TIZIO is serving her.

TIZIO  
34.18, Signora.

MADGE  
On the account, please.

TIZIO  
You forget our conversation? No  
more account till payment.

MADGE  
Just this once, darling. I forgot  
my chequebook.

TIZIO  
You say that last time.

MADGE  
You want me to go to the  
supermarket? D'you expect me to  
cook my own meals?

TIZIO  
No. But I want you to pay for when  
I cook them.

MADGE  
Tizio ...

TIZIO  
Signora ...

MADGE  
Did what we have mean nothing to  
you?

Beat.

TIZIO  
Next time you pay.

MADGE  
I promise.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Muriel is talking to Dr Ghujarapartidar. Whose first name is  
RAVI.

RAVI  
You need a new hip.

MURIEL  
You're not giving me one.

RAVI  
Not me personally, no.

MURIEL  
Not any of your lot.

RAVI  
I beg your pardon?

MURIEL  
And not him either.

She points at the black doctor further down the ward. Who's now washing his hands.

MURIEL (cont'd)  
He can wash all he likes. That colour's not coming out.

RAVI  
I see.

MURIEL  
So when do I have it? The operation.

RAVI  
Not for some time, I'm afraid. This is the NHS we're talking about. You'll be on a waiting list for at least a year and a half.

MURIEL  
I can't plan that far ahead at my age. I don't even buy green bananas.

RAVI  
There is another way. Our hospital trust is funding a new pilot scheme, that will enable us to outsource you to another hospital with whom we're affiliated, where they can perform the procedure almost immediately, and at a fraction of the cost.

MURIEL  
This other hospital, is it local?

RAVI  
That depends how you define local.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Evelyn is in Hugh's study, packing up his possessions. Putting books in a box marked 'Charity'.

In front of the books, the shelves have various framed family photos on them.

Evelyn picks up one of the pictures. It's of her and Hugh in younger days. Carefree and in love.

She looks at it for a while. Then puts it down and keeps packing.

Almost the entire shelf of books behind are about India. Histories of the Raj, of the Great Rebellion, picturebooks of Kerala and Rajasthan, etc.

Evelyn puts them into the box. Then she turns to the desk, where there's another book about India. This time it's a guide book.

She picks it up. And out falls the bookmark.

It's a leaflet. On it is a picture of a distinguished old building. Bearing the logo 'THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL'.

EXT/INT. GOLF COURSE/CLUB - DAY

Douglas and Jean, whom we earlier saw looking at sheltered housing, are playing a round of golf with their friends SIMON and PIPPA.

Douglas is addressing his ball. Simon watches.

SIMON

India? Why would you want to go to India?

DOUGLAS

Have you been?

(Simon shakes head)

Neither have I. That's why I want to go.

He hits a cracking shot.

CUT TO:

Elsewhere on the fairway, Jean's about to hit her ball.

PIPPA

It sounds wonderful. And they say it's awfully cheap out there.

JEAN

Do they? We hadn't given that much thought.

She slices the ball savagely into the nearest bush.

CUT TO:

Douglas and Simon are on the green. Simon misses his putt.

DOUGLAS

Unlucky.

SIMON

And you're going to a retirement home?

DOUGLAS

They don't call it that. It's a luxury development, where all the residents are in their golden years.

SIMON

Like the Costa Brava.

DOUGLAS

Yes. But with more elephants.

Douglas holes out.

CUT TO:

Jean and Pippa are sitting in the clubhouse bar, after the game.

JEAN

I mean, obviously one's read ones Kipling. And while one's not exactly anticipating talking animals and flashing-eyed men with moustaches smouldering seductively at one, a certain amount of that wouldn't go amiss.

CUT TO:

Douglas and Simon are at the bar.

SIMON

Well, this calls for some champagne.

(to the barman)

A bottle of your finest, please.

He turns to Douglas.

SIMON (cont'd)

I've forgotten, who won today?

DOUGLAS

Actually I did.

SIMON

Then this must be on you. Thanks, old boy.

Simon takes four glasses, goes to sit with the women.

The barman brings out the bottle; it's dusty and expensive. Douglas looks into his wallet.

INT. GRAHAM'S FLAT - DAY

Graham's flat is empty, his entire life has been packed away.

Removal men are carrying boxes out of the door, as Graham talks on the phone.

GRAHAM

Of course I'd love it if we could go together, but she's simply not fit for travel. Practically blind, and barely what you might call continent. I honestly think this is the best thing for both of us.

We see who's sitting next to him. An ancient pug.

GRAHAM (cont'd)

(to the pug)

Oh don't make that face at me.

INT. EVELYN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Evelyn is with her son CHRISTOPHER, and his wife POLLY.

Outside the window, a man is cheerfully whistling as he hammers a 'FOR SALE' sign at the end of the garden.

POLLY

We'll make it work. We'll make it work. The boys will share a room.

EVELYN

I can't ask them to do that,

CHRISTOPHER

They won't mind. They'll be happy to have you. As will we all.

POLLY

(to Christopher)

We could convert your study.

Slight pause.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, right. That's what we'll have to do. It shouldn't take long, Ma, and then we can have you installed by the time this place has sold, and all Dad's debts are -

EVELYN  
Stop, please stop. You're deciding  
everything for me.

CHRISTOPHER  
I'm trying to take care of you.

EVELYN  
Like your father did.

CHRISTOPHER  
That's right.

EVELYN  
And look how that worked out.

Her unexpected anger stings Christopher into silence.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
This is not how it was supposed to  
be. Do you understand? We had our  
lives planned. And that means we  
also had our deaths planned. We  
had to, times are hard. But we  
were safe. That's what he told me.  
He always told me we were safe.

(beat)  
You're both awfully kind. And of  
course I love the boys. But I  
don't think I will be coming to  
live with you.

POLLY  
We can't afford to put you anywhere  
else, Evelyn.

CHRISTOPHER  
There are no other options.

Silence. Then Evelyn comes to a decision.

EVELYN  
There is one.

She takes the leaflet she found on Hugh's desk out of her  
pocket.

CHRISTOPHER  
India? Are you serious?

Polly looks at the leaflet.

POLLY  
(reading)  
'Come and be treated like royalty,  
in an Indian palace with the  
sophistication of an English  
country manor.'  
(more)

POLLY (cont'd)

(beat)

I wouldn't mind going there myself.

CHRISTOPHER

It's a ridiculous idea.

POLLY

Everything else is outsourced. Why not retirement?

CHRISTOPHER

I mean her going. It's impossible.

POLLY

I don't see why.

CHRISTOPHER

Because she's never done anything without Dad, never. On her own she couldn't even make it to the airport.

Christopher turns to Evelyn.

CHRISTOPHER (cont'd)

I'm sorry, Ma. You simply would not be able to cope.

Beat.

EVELYN

That's what your father would've said.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

A few days later. The Departures board. A flight to Jaipur is showing.

Madge strides through the airport, with her daughter-in-law JESSICA, and grandkids Liam and Katie.

MADGE

I tell you, it's tough to get upgraded nowadays. I had to flirt so hard with the travel agent, it was practically phone sex.

JESSICA

I still don't understand this at all.

KATIE

She's hoping to marry a nice maharajah.

JESSICA

D'you really think that's going to happen?

LIAM

Especially now you're over the hill.

MADGE

What?

KATIE

Mummy told us you were over the hill.

MADGE

Perhaps we should say goodbye here.

The kids hug Madge.

KIDS

Goodbye Granny Madge.

MADGE

Don't let the buggers get you down.

She kisses them, then stands opposite Jessica.

MADGE (cont'd)

When you're over the hill ... you pick up speed.

She turns and walks towards the departure gate ...

Passing Norman, the lech from the speed dating, and his daughter PAULINE.

PAULINE

Now Dad, are you sure you're gonna be alright?

NORMAN

Better than alright. I've done some research. Read that book on India.

PAULINE

Which book?

NORMAN

The Karma Sutra. Turns out sex is the very basis of their culture. I'll be beating them off with a stick.

He heads towards the departure gate, passing ...

A nurse, KAREN, is pushing Muriel, in her wheelchair. And also lugging a huge suitcase.

MURIEL

I'm telling you they'll mess it up.  
Put the left hip in my right leg.

Karen bumps the suitcase against something.

MURIEL (cont'd)

Careful with that.

KAREN

What have you got in here anyway?

MURIEL

PG Tips. Brown sauce. Ten jars of Marmite. Pickled onions. Pickled eggs. Pickle. And thirty one packets of Chocolate Hobnobs.

They go on past Evelyn.

Who's standing alone. Nervous but determined.

INT. PLANE - DAY

People are still boarding. Graham is in one of the seats. He is sitting next to Jean.

JEAN

Of course we view it very much as an opportunity to explore another culture, as well as making some new friends. And a retired judge is just the class of guest one was hoping for, isn't it Douglas?

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry?

JEAN

Forgive him. I'm afraid these days my husband's ears are hairier than his head.

The FLIGHT ATTENDANT goes past them, showing Norman to his seat.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

So you're just here on the aisle.

NORMAN

You know you look like my fourth wife.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
How many times have you been  
married?

NORMAN  
Three.  
(beat)  
Oh, come back.

INT. CLUB CLASS - DAY

Up ahead, Madge has turned left on the plane. She's being led to her seat by the CHIEF STEWARD.

MADGE  
I wonder, is there a nice rich  
young man on the plane?

CHIEF STEWARD  
Actually, we do have one of those.

MADGE  
Pop me next to him, would you  
darling?

He leads her up the aisle.

MADGE (cont'd)  
Some pleasant conversation is what  
I need, that over the course of the  
flight grows into something more -

The steward reaches Madge's seat. Which is next to a young boy of about 8, KRISHNA, who's playing his PSP machine. His bodyguard sits in the seat behind, and despite his age, he exudes wealth and privilege. But that doesn't change the fact that he's 8.

Madge sighs, sits down.

MADGE (cont'd)  
Is that Grand Theft Auto? What  
level are you on?

KRISHNA  
Seven.

MADGE  
Then this could get interesting.  
First one to San Andreas wins the  
peanuts.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Back in Economy. Muriel is being lifted from the chair onto her seat by the Flight Attendant.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

So I'll just pop you in your seat.  
How's that?

MURIEL

If I could walk, I'd run.

Evelyn goes past her, heading for her seat. Which is directly behind Graham, Jean, and Douglas.

The overhead baggage compartment is pretty full, and Evelyn struggles to get her bag in. Douglas notices.

DOUGLAS

Please, let me help.

EVELYN

Thank you, you're very kind.

Douglas stows it efficiently.

DOUGLAS

Are you going to the Marigold  
Hotel?

EVELYN

Is it that obvious? Evelyn  
Greenslade.

DOUGLAS

Douglas Ainslie. And my wife Jean.

They shake hands. Then the voice comes over the tannoy.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, if you'd like  
to take your seats, ready for  
departure ...

Evelyn sits down, looks out of the window. And speaks quietly to herself.

EVELYN

What larks, Pip.

Douglas has overheard, smiles at Evelyn.

DOUGLAS

Let's hope so.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Later. They've been flying for several hours.

The Flight Attendant moves down the aisle to Muriel.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Yes?

Muriel points to her meal.

MURIEL

What is this?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Indian food, madam. Samber dhal.  
Aloo ghobi. And paratha.

MURIEL

If I can't pronounce it, I'm not  
eating it.

The flight attendant takes the tray, heads off up the aisle,  
passing Evelyn, Douglas, Jean and Graham. They're chatting.

EVELYN

I've been looking at some wonderful  
guidebooks. Trying to get to know  
the country.

JEAN

You don't have the air of an  
experienced traveller.

EVELYN

No. I haven't really been  
anywhere. But my husband died, and  
... and ...

GRAHAM

And here you are.

EVELYN

Yes.

The voice of the CAPTAIN comes over the tannoy.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is your  
Captain speaking. I regret to  
inform you that owing to bad  
weather at Jaipur, we will be  
rerouting and landing at Delhi  
instead.

General consternation. Except from Douglas.

DOUGLAS

Delhi. How wonderful!

INT. DELHI AIRPORT - DUSK

They've all just got their luggage, and are moving briskly through the pleasant, air-conditioned building. Norman is pushing Muriel's wheelchair.

NORMAN

If anyone asks, say you're my mother. I don't want people to think we're together.

MURIEL

In your dirty dreams.

DOUGLAS

I can't get my mobile to work.

JEAN

There's a surprise. Does anyone know where the trains go from?

Evelyn's leafing through her book.

EVELYN

I'm looking now.

GRAHAM

Mine works. I'll call the hotel.

Krishna goes past, calls to Madge.

KRISHNA

I'll check in with you on your Facebook page, alright Duchess?

Everyone looks at Madge.

NORMAN

Duchess?

MADGE

Yes well... let's get on.

She strides to the doorway, the others following ...

And there they are confronted by India. The stifling heat, the extraordinary noise, the chaos, the bustle, the grime, the crowds, the life.

Immediately they're surrounded by taxi drivers, baggage handlers, etc. All clamouring for their attention.

CROWD

Baba, Baba, Baba, where you go? I have taxi. Five hundred rupee? Baba, cheap hotel? Help you, Auntie? Carry bag, Baba? Souvenir? Four hundred rupee.  
(more)

CROWD (cont'd)  
 Auntie, pretty clothes? This way  
 rickshaw, Baba, number one comfy.  
 How many rupee you want? Baba, we  
 negotiate ...

Etc. They all just stand and stare.

EVELYN  
 Good lord.

GRAHAM  
 I can't get through to the hotel.  
 Just makes a strange noise.

He turns to someone, starts speaking in reasonably successful Hindi.

MADGE  
 It's like I'm a pop star, and these  
 are paparazzi. It's wonderful.

Douglas is shaking as many of the outstretched hands as possible.

DOUGLAS  
 Yes, it's awfully nice to meet you  
 too.

Graham thanks the guy he was talking to, shouts at them.

GRAHAM  
 Follow me! This way!

They follow him through the shouting hordes. Muriel is clutching her suitcase close to her chest.

GRAHAM (cont'd)  
 There's a bus goes from nearby,  
 takes us practically to the door.

JEAN  
 A bus? Is that necessary?

GRAHAM  
 Absolutely, it's the best way.  
 Come on!

They turn the corner. And see their bus.

It's absolutely rammed. People are practically hanging out of the windows.

MADGE  
 That's how we're getting to Jaipur?

EVELYN  
 There's not enough room.

GRAHAM

The first and only rule of India:  
there's always room.

They go to the bus, climb on board.

DULEEP is at the wheel.

GRAHAM (cont'd)

Hello there.

DULEEP

Welcome to my superior bus, my  
excellent friends. Please be  
making yourselves comfortable.

JEAN

How d'you suggest we do that?

Some of the younger passengers stand, relinquish their seats.

DOUGLAS

I say.

GRAHAM

Marvellous. Thanks so much.

They all head for their seats.

DULEEP

And now, to be holding on!

He lurches off. All the regular passengers have made sure  
they were holding onto something. Our heroes are not so  
lucky, get bumped around a bit.

The roads are chaos; cars, buses, even cows overtaking each  
other.

JEAN

How long is this journey?

GRAHAM

Five or six hours. Not too bad.

Duleep starts to pick up speed, overtaking another bus.

There's a car coming towards them.

NORMAN

See, what you've done there is pull  
out to overtake without checking  
first if there's anything coming  
the other way. And there is  
something coming the other way.

DULEEP

He is going to be braking.

NORMAN  
He's not braking.

DULEEP  
He is thinking I will.

The car's very close now ...

NORMAN  
What are you doing?

DULEEP  
Please be putting trust in me.

NORMAN  
Brake, you mad fool! Brake!

The other British passengers see what's going on. And scream. The Indians are totally unfazed.

At the last second, Duleep completes his overtaking of the car in front, and swerves back into the right lane, just avoiding disaster.

DULEEP  
Told you to be trusting me.

JEAN  
(to Douglas)  
Why are you grinning inanely like that?

DOUGLAS  
I find this all rather thrilling.

Evelyn is sitting next to Madge.

MADGE  
Are you alright? Struggling with the feeling you're not in control of your circumstances?

EVELYN  
A little.

MADGE  
Me too. But you know what the shortest prayer in the world is?

EVELYN  
No.

MADGE  
Fuck it.

Evelyn laughs.

MADGE (cont'd)  
 It's out of our hands, let someone  
 else take over. We can just enjoy  
 the ride.

The bus moves on through the night.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Later. The bus has stopped by the roadside. There's a  
 couple of shacks, but not much else. Harsh electric  
 lighting. And flies, lots of flies.

Douglas is watching a nice Indian family. They're having a  
 picnic.

The FATHER notices Douglas looking at them.

FATHER  
 Will you have some roti with us?

DOUGLAS  
 Gosh. Well, you know. When on a  
 bus to Rome ...

He takes some, eats.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
 Oh, that is wonderful.  
 (to Jean)  
 You must try some.

JEAN  
 Don't wave that in my face. I need  
 to use the lavatory.

GRAHAM  
 I wouldn't recommend it.

JEAN  
 What would you recommend I do  
 instead?

GRAHAM  
 It's that way.

She fights her way through the crowd.

JEAN  
 Coming through, coming through ...  
 just get out of my way.

She reaches the toilet, opens the door.

She wasn't expecting much. But it's worse than she imagined.

Meanwhile, Norman is introducing himself to an attractive YOUNG GIRL.

NORMAN

My name's Norman. To you this may be just a handshake, but to me it symbolises the union of our twin cultures. With the tantalising possibility that one day you and I could make that union more - and I think you know what I'm saying - literal.

The girl speaks in a broad Birmingham accent.

DAUGHTER

Up yours, Grandad.

NORMAN

Or we can just keep it symbolic, not a problem.

Graham sees Evelyn looking lost.

GRAHAM

It's an awful lot to cope with at first. But it does get easier.

EVELYN

You've been here before, haven't you?

GRAHAM

Many years ago.  
(beat)  
And now I'm back.

Evelyn waits for him to say more, but he doesn't elaborate.

Jean returns.

DOUGLAS

Everything alright?

JEAN

We must never speak of what went on in there.

Duleep beeps the horn, and calls out.

DULEEP

Everybody to be boarding again, please!

They all file back on. To find Muriel, who never got off in the first place.

DOUGLAS

Are you alright? Would you like  
some of this food? It really is  
absolutely -

MURIEL

I'm not hungry!

Duleep beeps the horn loudly, pulls out into the middle of  
the road again. Our heroes start to scream again.

Unseen by anyone, Muriel reaches into her bag, and carefully  
removes a Hobnob.

She surreptitiously lifts it to her mouth, and starts to  
chew.

EXT. JAIPUR STREET - DAWN

The sun rises. A beautiful, pearly dawn.

In an unseen mosque, a muezzin calls the faithful to prayer.  
And chattering monkeys leap through the branches of the  
trees.

The bus drives through the quiet morning streets. The  
buildings are a mixture of the old and the new; some stunning  
glass skyscrapers, run-down old shacks.

And the passengers can see an extraordinary sight; people are  
sitting up wearily from the flattened cardboard boxes on  
which they've been sleeping. They stand and stretch towards  
the brightening sky. It's as if the pavements themselves are  
sprouting people.

The bus pulls up outside some garden gates, disgorges its  
battered cargo. Out get the travellers, any trace of the  
optimism some of them may have felt the night before eroded  
by the hardship of their journey. They look tired and dirty.

GRAHAM

Well, we made it.

DOUGLAS

Everything's going to be OK now.  
We're here. We've arrived.

Madge has been looking through the garden gates.

MADGE

But arrived at what?

They all look. At the end of the garden stands the Marigold  
Hotel. Once a beautiful building, once possibly even  
luxurious, it is clearly in the process of being given at  
least half the facelift it badly needs. Parts of the walls  
are freshly painted, some of the tiles on the roof are new.

But it's not finished. And it's certainly not paradise.

They stand and stare in horror. Then SONNY KAPOOR (30ish) comes out onto the verandah. He spreads his arms wide.

SONNY  
Welcome to India!

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Indoors, as outside, is a mixture of the very old and the too new; threadbare carpets, and wet paint still gleaming on the walls.

Sonny is leading Douglas, Jean, Evelyn and Madge up the stairs.

SONNY  
Please follow me up the stairs, carefully avoiding that naughty one there. This is a building of utmost character and individuality, and when the wonderful refurbishments are finished it will be even more splendid. Perhaps it is best not to touch the walls either.

JEAN  
Why? Will they fall down?

SONNY  
On the absolute contrary. As the manager and chief executive supervising officer of the Marigold Hotel, it is my pride and honour to tell you that the building is 100% shipshape.

MADGE  
Is the paint dry?

SONNY  
Yes. Yes. Yes. No.

MADGE  
Is the water hot and clean?

SONNY  
Yes. Yes. Yes. And no.

MADGE  
But you have electricity?

SONNY  
Oh yes. Electricity we have. Yes yes yes.

There's a fizzing sound, and the power goes off.

SONNY (cont'd)

I mean no.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Norman is on the verandah. Graham is trying to get Muriel, in her wheelchair, up the steps.

NORMAN

This place has seen better days.

MURIEL

It's seen better centuries.

Graham's really struggling. Norman makes no move to help.

NORMAN

This is a noble effort, it hurts just to watch. Put your back into it, that's right. One more heave ... now you're cooking.

Finally, Graham gets Muriel up onto the verandah.

GRAHAM

We'll get you a ramp built.

MURIEL

I won't be here for long enough.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

Sonny escorts Madge down the passage to her room.

SONNY

And this is the corridor, leading us most successfully all the way to ... your bedroom!

The room is comfortable, and tastefully decorated. But there's no door.

MADGE

Where?

SONNY

Here. In here.

MADGE

My dear man. Rooms have doors. What you're showing me here is an alcove.

SONNY

The door is coming soon, it will be brought over.

MADGE

When?

SONNY

I'm having an argument with the builder about who owes money to whom and hasn't paid.

MADGE

Sonny, where do you sleep?

SONNY

At the end there.

MADGE

Does your room have a door?

SONNY

Oh yes.

MADGE

Then that's where I'll be staying.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Douglas and Jean have just arrived in their room.

DOUGLAS

Alright, I know it's not like it was in the brochure ...

JEAN

Name one thing in life that is. And for god's sake don't say marriage.

DOUGLAS

Parenthood.

JEAN

Don't mention Laura to me. There was a time I might have agreed with you. Now I think one only has children so that death doesn't come as such a disappointment.

DOUGLAS

Look, we're here now. I think we should try and see the glass as half-full.

JEAN

At this point I honestly don't care. I just want to drink what's in the glass.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Evelyn's room is pleasant and airy, but wholly unfinished. She starts to unpack.

She takes some books out of her suitcase, and places them on the shelf over her bed. The shelf promptly collapses.

Evelyn sits on the bed. She looks vulnerable. And very much alone.

EXT/INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

The sun rises. A beautiful, pearly dawn.

A washerman bicycles up to the hotel, a load of clean sheets balanced on his handlebars.

Evelyn is lying on her bed, watching a cockroach make its leisurely way across her floor.

EVELYN (V.O.)

*Dear Christopher, you always told me to make technology my friend ...*

CUT TO:

Evelyn comes out onto her balcony, looks out at the stunning view. Which brings her no joy.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)

*... and so in the spirit of all things new, I've borrowed this computer, and am trying to navigate my way around cyberspace.*

CUT TO:

Evelyn walks down the garden path, towards the gates of the hotel.

EVELYN (cont'd)

*Which is only slightly more surreal than where I am now.*

She reaches the gates, looks fearfully at the chaotic sea of humanity outside.

CUT TO:

Sonny is by the gate, hammering a sign into the ground.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*The hotel is run by a man named  
 Sonny, and his loyal helper, Young  
 Wasim.*

Sonny is hot and tired. He looks in irritation at YOUNG WASIM. Who is about 80. And is stretched out on the grass, fast asleep.

Sonny finishes, looks at the sign with pride. It reads 'THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL - OPEN FOR BUSINESS. NOW WITH GUESTS!'

CUT TO:

Sonny is in the kitchen, sweating over the stove.

Young Wasim sits in the corner, reading the paper.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*Between them, they do everything,  
 even cook. Yesterday they made a  
 stab at English food ...*

CUT TO:

The guests are in the restaurant, staring at what Sonny is about to serve them.

SONNY  
 A Sunday roast for my guests and  
 friends!

JEAN  
 But it's not Sunday.

MADGE  
 Roast what?

NORMAN  
 Serve it up, lad. Get it while  
 it's hot.

MADGE  
 Roast what?

SONNY  
 Roast goat. Roast goat and  
 Yorkingshire puddings!

EVELYN (V.O.)  
*With sadly predictable results ...*

CUT TO:

Evelyn goes into her toilet, shuts the door.

CUT TO:

Madge goes into her toilet, shuts the door.

CUT TO:

Douglas goes into his toilet, shuts the door.

CUT TO:

Graham goes into his toilet, shuts the door.

CUT TO:

Norman lies on his bed, reading the Karma Sutra. He spins the book round, in order to study an illustration more intently.

CUT TO:

A hospital corridor. The hospital is hi-tech, bright, and spanking clean.

Muriel, in a gown, being pushed along by a nurse, AJIT.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*Ironically, the guest in the best health is the one who's had an operation.*

MURIEL  
Are you my nurse, then?

AJIT  
I have that great honour.

Muriel looks at him suspiciously, but he has a poker face, and she can't tell if he's kidding.

An Indian DOCTOR goes past them.

DOCTOR  
Any pain today, Mrs Donnelly?

MURIEL  
Not too much. You must have got lucky.

DOCTOR  
You know it's strange. I find the more operations I perform, the luckier I get.

CUT TO:

Graham is in his room.

He's putting an extraordinary collage over one wall: an old map of Jaipur, sepia-tinted photographs, official documents yellowing with age, etc.

EVELYN (V.O.)  
*Of the rest, one in particular is  
 rather mysterious ...*

Graham stands back, studies the wall.

CUT TO:

Sonny comes running down the stairs, very excited.

EVELYN (V.O) (cont'd)  
*Others are rather keener to make  
 friends. Such as when new guests  
 arrive.*

SONNY  
 They are coming, they are coming!  
 Two women, most marvellous.

He heads for the door. Norman follows.

NORMAN  
 Fresh meat.  
 (to Madge)  
 I brushed all my teeth.

MADGE  
 Can't have taken long.

Two very old women enter. STELLA and her twin sister NOREEN.

SONNY  
 Ladies, you are most joyously  
 welcome to India. How was your  
 journey?

STELLA  
 Oh yes. I take it with quince, and  
 a little sherry.

Noreen nods in agreement.

Norman looks at them sadly.

NORMAN  
 The wheel is spinning. But the  
 hamster is dead.

CUT TO:

Evelyn is in Sonny's office, at the computer.

She thinks for a moment, then types.

EVELYN (V.O.)  
*You know, I'm sitting here, and I'm  
 trying to make light of it all.  
 But the truth is ...*

CUT TO:

Evelyn is at the gate again, staring out nervously.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*The truth is ...*

She turns back from the gate, goes back up the path towards the hotel.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*The truth is that I fear you were  
 right. That I can't actually do  
 this.*

CUT TO:

Evelyn at the computer.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*I should have listened to all of  
 you. Perhaps even now I should  
 just come home and ...*

She stops typing. And shakes off the self-pity.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
 No. Facing it, always facing it,  
 that's the way to get through.

She presses 'delete'.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
 Face it.

She closes the computer, and walks briskly out of the office.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Douglas is walking down the corridor. Evelyn lifts the sari she's using to cover her doorway, comes out.

EVELYN  
 Oh, hello.

DOUGLAS  
 Good morning.

EVELYN  
 How is Jean?

DOUGLAS

Still poorly, I'm afraid. We did rather see this one coming, took preventative measures. Laid down a firewall of immodium. But to no avail.

(beat)

Is everything alright?

EVELYN

I was just going to find Sonny. It's rather important that I call home, you see. To talk to my solicitor, about the sale of our house, my house ...

DOUGLAS

And the phone in your room doesn't work.

EVELYN

You guessed.

DOUGLAS

Nothing in the rooms works. May I?

He goes past her into the room, and she follows.

He picks up the very old-style phone.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

Did you try jigglng it a bit?

EVELYN

Yes, did that.

DOUGLAS

Did you kind of bang it lightly on the desk a few times?

EVELYN

That too.

DOUGLAS

Hmm.

He starts to twist off the mouthpiece of the receiver.

EVELYN

How did you come to be here? In India. If you don't mind me asking.

DOUGLAS

I don't mind at all. I invested our - well, my - retirement money in our daughter Laura's internet company. She couldn't get a loan;  
(more)

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
you know how banks these days  
aren't exactly lining up to help  
out. But she assured me that soon  
as the start-up actually started  
up, and the conversion from virtual  
to actual proved sufficiently  
viable, then she would be able to  
pay it all back.

He's got the mouthpiece off. He lifts the receiver  
carefully. And blows on it.

EVELYN  
I'm afraid I didn't understand what  
most of those words meant.

DOUGLAS  
It turned out neither did she. But  
it's a parental loan, isn't it?  
You give, if anything comes back  
that's marvellous. And if not ...

EVELYN  
You end up here.

DOUGLAS  
Everything happens for a reason.

EVELYN  
Do you believe that?

DOUGLAS  
No.

Evelyn laughs.

Douglas has put the mouthpiece back on, holds the receiver  
to his ear.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
There you are. Good as new.

EVELYN  
Really?

DOUGLAS  
No, of course not. I've got no  
idea what I'm doing.

Evelyn bursts out laughing again.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
Now would you like me to fix that  
shelf on the wall? Because I won't  
be able to do that either.

EVELYN

My husband, Hugh, practically built our house himself, with his bare hands.

DOUGLAS

Good, I'm glad you told me that. And it doesn't in any way make me feel inadequate.

Evelyn's still laughing.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

If you ask the children outside the gate, I'm sure they'll direct you somewhere. They're endlessly keen to help.

EVELYN

Perfect. That's what I'll do.

DOUGLAS

You must miss him very much. Hugh.

EVELYN

Yes. Yes I do.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Evelyn is at the gates again, still trying to pluck up the courage to go out.

She's surprised to see Madge making her way through the shouting hordes, perpetually under attack, but handling it serenely.

When she gets to the gates, Evelyn looks at her anxiously.

EVELYN

Are you alright?

MADGE

Marvellous, actually. All those pickpockets ... nearest thing I've had to a sex life in ages.

Madge goes on up the path towards the hotel. Evelyn takes a deep breath, and heads on out of the gates.

She's immediately assaulted, and slightly overwhelmed. Kids are laughing, shouting, doing tricks, begging.

EVELYN

Please, can anyone direct me ... telephone. I need a telephone.

Immediately many hands reach into pockets, and mobile phones are thrust at Evelyn. Most of them are ancient, don't have batteries, etc. But the thought is there.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
No, you're very kind. I mean a  
telephone exchange, a centre ...

There's lots of pointing. At a tall building at the far end of the street.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Thank you. Thank you, good day.

Evelyn starts to walk. To her surprise the crowd moves with her.

But she keeps on going.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Sonny is by the back door of the hotel, talking to a builder, NATESH. Natesh's men are lounging around, watching.

SONNY  
Yes of course I can pay you. Keep  
building, and do not doubt that I  
can pay you and all the other  
bills, with absolutely no worries.

NATESH  
Great.

SONNY  
Wonderful.

Natesh just stands there.

SONNY (cont'd)  
What are you waiting for?

NATESH  
You said you'd pay me.

SONNY  
Not now. Obviously I cannot pay  
right here at this immediate  
minute. But when the hotel is a  
success, which as soon as there are  
more guests it no question will be -

Natesh turns and walks off. His men follow.

SONNY (cont'd)  
Wait, where are you going? Please!  
If you finish building, they will  
come!

But Natesh is gone.

Sonny turns and goes back inside, through to the courtyard. Madge is passing.

SONNY (cont'd)  
Mrs Hardcastle. How is my room?

MADGE  
The bed creaks. The pillows are like bullets. The water is brown and infrequent. The curtain makes the sunshine brighter. And I know the cockroaches so well by now that I've given them all names.

SONNY  
Excellent, excellent.

He goes through to the dining room. Where Norman and a shirtless Young Wasim are playing cards.

SONNY (cont'd)  
All well, Mr Cousins?

NORMAN  
Put it this way. Young Wasim is not the person with whom I hoped to be playing strip poker.

SONNY  
Most amusing.

Sonny heads into the lobby. Stella and Noreen are moving slowly through.

SONNY (cont'd)  
Ladies, do you have anything positive to say?

STELLA  
Make sure the water is good and hot, and then close the lid tightly so you don't hear their screams.

SONNY  
Thank you.

He goes out onto the verandah, where Muriel is sitting in her wheelchair, looking furiously out at a view she doesn't want to see. Ajit the nurse sits close by, reading the paper.

SONNY (cont'd)  
Mrs Donnelly, is there anything I can get for you?

MURIEL  
A ticket home.

SONNY

You English, always joking. You  
kill me. You absolutely kill me.

He goes into his office. There's a huge pile of bills on the desk.

Sonny looks at the top one, psyching himself up, then tears it open. And reels back in horror at the large red number inside.

He opens a drawer, sweeps all the bills into it, and slams it shut.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Back on the verandah. Near to Muriel a female sweeper, ANOKHI, is washing the floor. She's not doing a great job, just flicking her rag around in a desultory manner.

MURIEL

You won't get the dirt out like  
that.

Anokhi just smiles at her radiantly.

MURIEL (cont'd)

I worked in service for years,  
looked after a lovely house. I  
kept it spotless. You need a bit  
of elbow grease.

Graham is walking past, on his way out.

GRAHAM

She won't speak English. She's  
what used to be called an  
Untouchable. Where is everyone?

MURIEL

Don't know, don't care. You go out  
somewhere every day. Is it a  
woman? Nip round there for a curry  
and a bit of afters.

GRAHAM

I don't think so. I'm homosexual.  
Although nowadays more in theory  
than action. Good day.

He smiles, leaves. Muriel stares at Anokhi.

MURIEL

What did he say she was?

AJIT  
 An outcast, born below society.  
 To a good Hindu, even her shadow is  
 polluted.

Muriel stares at him.

MURIEL  
 You're joking.

Ajit's poker face doesn't crack a smile.

Muriel thinks for a while, then turns to Anokhi.

MURIEL (cont'd)  
 Long old life, isn't it?

EXT. HOTEL GATES - DAY

Graham hails a rickshaw. The driver is PRAVESH.

GRAHAM  
 Good morning. D'you know this  
 address?

He hands him an address, written down.

PRAVESH  
 Oh yes boss. I know it very well.  
 Most well indeed boss.

GRAHAM  
 You haven't looked at it yet.

Pravesh looks.

PRAVESH  
 Yes, as I am saying, I know it most  
 exactly.

GRAHAM  
 Then let's go.

He gets in, and Pravesh starts to pedal.

GRAHAM (cont'd)  
 It's that way.

Pravesh does a u-turn, and they move off down the street.

INT. CALL CENTRE - DAY

Evelyn walks into a vast, brightly-lit open plan office. Low partitions divide off the cubicles. Within them sit row after row of young Indian kids, headsets clamped to their ears.

Evelyn approaches the nearest cubicle. A name-sign on it says 'Sally'. The occupant, SURINDA, a pretty young woman in jeans and t-shirt, is speaking on the phone.

SURINDA

(on phone)

Hi, I'm Sally. Isn't the rain shocking this morning?

Morning? Rain? Evelyn looks round.

The walls are covered with signs and graphs, all filled with maps, information and gossip about the UK. There's one about the weather. A chart of who's sleeping with who on 'Eastenders' and 'Coronation St'. Another chart in two sections; 'Royals We Like' (Diana at the top, then William, etc) and 'Royals We Don't Like' (Edward, Camilla, etc). And many more.

Surinda hangs up.

SURINDA (cont'd)

I'm not even sure that's anatomically possible.

She sees Evelyn, and removes her headset.

SURINDA (cont'd)

Hi, are you looking for someone?

EVELYN

Yes, I'm not sure this is the right ... I need to make a phone call to England.

SURINDA

I'm sorry, this is a call centre. We just sell things over the phone. Life insurance and pension plans.

EVELYN

Why do you say 'morning'? And talk about the rain?

SURINDA

If people in the UK know we're in Jaipur, they're even less inclined to buy from us.

She picks up the phone again. All she has to do is press one button, and the phone automatically hooks up to the computer, and dials the next number.

SURINDA (cont'd)

Hi, I'm Sally. Isn't the rain shocking this morning. Now would you rather talk about a great pension plan I've got for you, or -

The line goes dead.

SURINDA (cont'd)  
I'd hang up on me.

EVELYN  
I'm pretty sure I have done.

They laugh together.

SURINDA  
Listen, Mr Gupta prefers that we use a plastic bag under the desk, but I'm actually going to the toilet. Could you keep a lookout?

EVELYN  
Wait ... what if Mr Gupta comes along?

But Surinda's gone. Evelyn is left alone in the cubicle.

After a moment, she picks up the phone. She looks round to check that no one's near, then starts to dial.

But, as before with Surinda, the phone dials the next number automatically.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
No, what's happening? What are you doing?

She hears ringing at the other end.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
What? Oh dear.

And now someone has picked up.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
(into phone)  
Oh. Hello. I'm so sorry, where have I called? Dundee? Good lord, how extraordinary. I'm in India. Yes, India.

Surinda comes back, is surprised to find Evelyn on the phone. Evelyn shrugs apologetically, but Surinda is quite happy.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Well it's actually baking hot today. I mean it is every day to be honest, but one is getting used to it.

She looks at Surinda, who gestures for her to keep going.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
 Have you ever been here? You  
 should really think about it,  
 absolutely.

Surinda gestures to some paperwork.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
 (into phone)  
 Anyway the reason I'm calling, it's  
 hardly worth bothering you with  
 when you're having your morning cup  
 of tea ... I just wanted to check  
 that you and the people you love  
 have planned for the future.  
 Because you never know when that  
 future's going to change.

She smiles up at Surinda. Who smiles right back.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Graham is standing next to Pravesh's rickshaw.

They've arrived at their destination. Whatever it was, it's  
 now a vast building site.

Graham stares at it, fighting off a sense of hopelessness.

PRAVESH  
 This, boss? Here? Are you sure?

Graham says nothing, hands over some money.

PRAVESH (cont'd)  
 Thank you, boss. Good luck.

He pedals away.

Nearby, some kids are playing cricket on a wasteland. The  
 youngest of them, SANJAY, is batting.

GRAHAM  
 Excuse me.

SANJAY  
 Yes Baba?

GRAHAM  
 There was a house here.

SANJAY  
 Yes Baba. Destroyed knocked down.  
 Rupee?

GRAHAM  
And the people that lived there?  
The family?

SANJAY  
They move.

GRAHAM  
You don't know where?

Graham is desolate. Sanjay just stands there, smiling at him.

SANJAY  
Rupee?

GRAHAM  
Yes of course.

He gives Sanjay some money, turns to go. Then turns back.

GRAHAM (cont'd)  
I'll give you something else too.  
Don't grip so tightly with your  
right hand.

SANJAY  
Baba?

GRAHAM  
On the bat. The right is just a  
guide. Keep your left elbow high,  
play down the line of your arm, and  
then you'll hit through the ball.

SANJAY  
You want to join our game, Baba?

Graham smiles ruefully.

GRAHAM  
Yes. Why not? I'd love to.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Madge, Norman and Sonny are playing charades. Stella and Noreen are watching. Muriel is in her wheelchair, as always glaring balefully out of the window. Ajit is nearby.

Sonny shows six fingers.

MADGE  
Six words.

Sonny makes the 'film' sign.

NORMAN

Film.

Sonny shows another six.

MADGE

Sixth word.

Sonny falls to the ground.

NORMAN

Collapse. Tumble. Down.

That's not it. Sonny stands up, falls down again.

MADGE

Buckle. Topple. Crumple.

Sonny gets up, shaking his head. Then can't think of anything else to do, so he falls down again.

NORMAN

Why don't you try another word?

Sonny holds up two fingers.

NORMAN (cont'd)

Second word.

Sonny does the 'sounds like' sign.

MADGE

Sounds like ...

Sonny mimes putting something on his head.

NORMAN

Head. Bonce.

MADGE

Nonce. Noodle.

Sonny points again to the top of his head.

NORMAN

Receding hairline.

AJIT

I think he means 'hat'.

Sonny claps. Ajit's got it.

MADGE

Alright, sounds like hat and how does it end?

Sonny falls down again.

NORMAN

This is great. I'm loving this.

A voice comes from the doorway. This is the redoubtable MRS KAPOOR.

MRS KAPOOR

Dimwit. Idiot. Fathead.

Sonny stands up.

SONNY

Mummyji. What are you doing here?

Mrs Kapoor says something in Punjabi.

SONNY (cont'd)

I have everything under control.

MRS KAPOOR

That's not what the builder says.  
Or the bank. Or the neighbours.

SONNY

You called the neighbours?

MRS KAPOOR

The phone here doesn't work.

SONNY

The phone here does work.

MRS KAPOOR

Does it?

SONNY

Yes. Yes. Yes.

NORMAN

No.

SONNY

But I have everything under  
control.

Mrs Kapoor turns to Madge.

MRS KAPOOR

Glad to meet you. I am Mrs Kapoor.  
I'll be staying for a while.

SONNY

Please don't say those words.

MADGE

Can you cook?

MRS KAPOOR  
I taught Sonny everything he knows.

MADGE  
So no, then.

NORMAN  
Can we get back to the game? Where were we?

Muriel speaks without looking round.

MURIEL  
A Matter of Life and Death.

NORMAN  
Come again?

MURIEL  
It's A Matter of Life and Death.  
The film.

SONNY  
Thank you.

MRS KAPOOR  
I'll be in the office. Going through the books.

She heads out. Sonny calls after her.

SONNY  
No. You can't go in there. And you can't stay. Listen to me! I have everything under control!

INT. CALL CENTRE - DAY

Surinda is saying goodbye to Evelyn at the door.

SURINDA  
You must have done jobs like that back in England. Something like that.

EVELYN  
No, really. I actually never worked at all. I was just a wife.

SURINDA  
Well, you're a natural. Thank you.

EVELYN  
No, thank you. I've had the most -

The doors open. And Sonny comes in. He's shocked to see Evelyn.

SONNY

Oh.

EVELYN

Hello Sonny, what are you doing here?

SONNY

Um ... um ... our phones don't work. And I had to make a call.

Surinda looks surprised at this.

EVELYN

D'you know Surinda? This is my friend Surinda.

SONNY

No. I've absolutely never met her before. Not once.

SURINDA

What?

SONNY

How do you do?

SURINDA

Sonny, what is this?

SONNY

Work with me. How do you do?

SURINDA

Why are you trying to fool her? If we're going to be together -

SONNY

How can we be together now?

SURINDA

What?

SONNY

She's here. My mother's here. That's what I've come to tell you.

EVELYN

Why is that a problem?

SONNY

Until I am no longer dependent on my mother, she can arrange a marriage for me. The hotel is my chance to break free. And she doesn't think I can do it.

SURINDA

Your father left the hotel to you.

SONNY

You haven't met my mother.

(to Evelyn)

She was supposed to give me a chance first, to make a success of things on my own.

EVELYN

But you're not making a success of things.

SONNY

A little time, cannot a man have a little time? Must everyone be so impatient?

EVELYN

Sonny, I'm sure most of all your mother wants you to be happy.

SONNY

I don't know where you get that idea.

EVELYN

Nevertheless -

MR GUPTA (O.S.)

What is going on here?

It's MR GUPTA. And he's furious.

MR GUPTA (cont'd)

Why are you away from your desk?  
And who are these people?

SURINDA

I was just -

MR GUPTA

I don't care. You're fired. You understand?

Evelyn nudges Sonny, willing him to intervene. But he stays quiet.

MR GUPTA (cont'd)

Clear out your cubicle, you're done here.

SURINDA

Very well.

EVELYN

Sonny ...

SONNY

Wait!

They all turn to look at him.

MR GUPTA

Who are you?

SONNY

Who am I? Who am I? I'll tell you who am I. I work for an independent monitoring company, yes, that investigates human rights abuses throughout the world. The working conditions here egregiously violate at least fourteen laws, and should our friend here lose her job, I shall be reporting you most forthwith.

MR GUPTA

She can keep the job.

SONNY

That's what I'm talking about.

EVELYN

Is it even worth keeping?

MR GUPTA

Explain.

SONNY

Why don't you do that one?

EVELYN

People don't want to answer the phone to you anyway, but if you lie to them they'll only hate you more. This is a beautiful country, and if Surinda is anything to go by, your staff are lovely people. Let them talk honestly. Let them be themselves.

SONNY

Themselves.

MR GUPTA

Is there anything else?

EVELYN

Yes. Your wig is on backwards.  
Good day.

She leaves.

SONNY

Hah.

He follows.

Mr Gupta adjusts his toupee.

SURINDA

It's still a bit ...

He adjusts it some more.

SURINDA (cont'd)

Now tilt it left. There you go.

MR GUPTA

Get back to work.

INT. POLO CLUB - EVENING

A classic colonial bar, straight out of the English Raj.

Madge enters. She's superbly dressed, looks great.

She goes up to the BARMAN.

MADGE

Excuse me. I was recommended this place as somewhere frequented by wealthy single men. Maharajahs and the like.

BARMAN

No Maharajahs in right now.

MADGE

Wealthy and single will do.

BARMAN

There is one.

Madge puts some money into his breast pocket.

MADGE

Could you seat me next to him?

BARMAN

Come right this way.

He leads her along a line of booths. Madge follows, checking her hair, her breath, etc.

The barman reaches a booth at the end. There's someone sitting there, but the barman is blocking Madge's view.

BARMAN (cont'd)

You asked for an attractive woman.

He smiles proudly, steps aside. And Madge is left staring at Norman.

There's a pause. Then Madge reaches into the barman's breast pocket, and removes her money.

MADGE

I'll have that back, thank you very much.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - EVENING

Muriel's on the balcony, as always. Ajit is doing some gentle physiotherapy on her leg.

Anokhi goes past into the garden, starts to water the plants. Muriel talks to her.

MURIEL

I've done it too, you know. Spent years mopping up other people's shit, while they never even talked to me.

AJIT

Are you wanting me to translate?

MURIEL

I'm just beating my gums here.

Ajit talks to Anokhi in Hindi. She smiles, says something back.

MURIEL (cont'd)

What did she say?

AJIT

That you know what it is to be invisible as well.

Anokhi laughs. And speaks to Ajit.

MURIEL

What? What is it?

AJIT

She is happy you talk to her.

MURIEL

Well that makes a change.

INT. POLO LOUNGE - EVENING

Madge and Norman are in adjoining booths, looking out at the bar. Where an attractive older Indian lady is sitting.

NORMAN

I still think you're cramping my style.

MADGE

Please. You have no style to cramp.

NORMAN

That lady at the bar keeps looking at me.

MADGE

As one would something in a museum.

NORMAN

Why must you mock? I'm just here, a lonely soul, looking to take comfort in the arms of another. I want to feel young again, if only for one night, one wonderful night. Tell me you don't know how that feels.

Madge thinks for a moment.

MADGE

Did you mean all that?

NORMAN

Not a word.

But he's lying. And she knows it.

MADGE

Wait there.

She gets up, heads towards the bar. Where she sits a couple of seats away from the woman at the bar.

She sits there a moment, then sighs, and starts to talk to the barman.

MADGE (cont'd)

Rejected again. Many years ago, that man over there gave me the most extraordinary night of my life. And ever since then I have followed him, begging for another chance to experience that bliss. He may seem coarse and uncouth, but that only disguises a tenderness and exquisite sensitivity to a woman's needs. To describe his bedroom skill as technique would be to suggest that it is without passion, without an occasional ferocity that takes your ...

She stops talking. Her work is done.

The woman is making her way over to Norman's booth to introduce herself.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Morning. The city is waking, stretching and yawning.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Douglas is sitting on the bed. Jean crawls out of the bathroom. She looks terrible.

DOUGLAS  
Feeling any better?

JEAN  
In the four thousand years we've been married, you have asked many, many stupid questions. But that one beats them all.

DOUGLAS  
I suppose we should stay in today.

JEAN  
Oh really? I thought this might be the ideal time for a long train ride to Calcutta.

DOUGLAS  
Fine, we'll stay in.

JEAN  
I'm staying in. No more than six feet from that bowl. I'd rather you were nowhere near this room. I'm suffering enough as it is.

Douglas walks towards the door. Then he turns.

DOUGLAS  
You know you can be awfully unfair sometimes.

He goes. Jean speaks to an empty room.

JEAN  
Yes. I know.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL VERANDAH - DAY

Muriel is parked in her usual spot, watching Sonny.

He is building a wheelchair ramp, while Young Wasim watches, ruminatively munching an apple.

Madge comes out.

MADGE  
Good morning.

MURIEL  
No such thing.

MADGE  
A ray of sunshine as ever.

Norman comes bouncing out.

NORMAN  
Muriel, my little pudding of delight.

MADGE  
Someone looks hideously happy.

NORMAN  
Your Madgesty, I didn't see you there. I owe you one. I owe you ten. Name a number, that's what I owe you.

MADGE  
I gather the night went well.

NORMAN  
Would you like to hear about it?

MADGE  
Not in the least.

NORMAN  
Good. Because you're going to.

MURIEL  
Before he starts, could you just push me off this balcony?

NORMAN  
Two drinks, some sexually charged banter -

Douglas comes out, heads off down the path.

DOUGLAS  
Morning all. Lovely day.

MADGE  
Good morning.

They watch him leave.

NORMAN

Two drinks, some sexually charged  
banter -

MURIEL

Oh god.

NORMAN

And we were heading back to her  
place. Bidding the rickshaw  
farewell, I walked her to the door.  
And there, my young friends, I  
leaned forward, and I kissed her.

Beat.

MADGE

And?

NORMAN

And what?

MADGE

Is that all?

NORMAN

How d'you mean?

MADGE

Is that all you did? Just kissed  
her?

NORMAN

I used my tongue.

MADGE

You didn't go in?

NORMAN

We have a date tomorrow. I'll go  
in then.

MADGE

What is wrong with you?

NORMAN

I wanted to prolong the  
anticipation. To spend a day with  
the knowledge that soon I'm going  
to meet a woman, eat, drink, and  
laugh with her, hold her to me,  
kiss her softly. Then go back to  
her place and get my end away.

MURIEL

Kill me. Kill me now.

INT. REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY

Graham comes in to a chaotically busy office. Full of people, and oddly, some animals.

He goes up to the front desk.

GRAHAM

Hello, I'm here to see Mr Chindambaram. He may have some news for me. Graham Dashwood.

He sits down to wait. Next to him a family collect up their things, and leave.

GRAHAM (cont'd)

Excuse me. You forgot your chicken.

He hands it over, settles down to wait. Trying to resist the optimism surging through him.

MR CHINDAMBARAM (O.S.)

Mr Graham?

Graham looks up. Mr Chindambaram is standing over him.

One look at his face, and Graham's not optimistic any more.

EXT. JOHARI BAZAAR - DAY

Douglas is under seige from a whole bunch of kids.

He's completely surrounded. And totally happy in the eye of the storm.

DOUGLAS

No, you see, I've actually given away everything I have, I really don't think there's ... no wait, hang on. I have a pencil. Anybody want a pencil?

They all want a pencil.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

Take it, take it. But now I absolutely promise there's nothing else in my pockets. Only lint, and you don't want lint. I don't even know what lint is, or how it ...

He breaks off. He's seen Evelyn making her way through the fabulous market.

As Douglas watches, she stops at a stall selling beautiful linens.

Douglas moves through the crowds towards her. She's talking to the vendor, AKRAM.

EVELYN  
How much for this material, please?

AKRAM  
One thousand rupees.

EVELYN  
Thank you.

She reaches for her wallet. Then Douglas speaks from behind her.

DOUGLAS  
No no, forgive me. That's not how it works.

Evelyn turns, happy to see him.

EVELYN  
Good morning.

DOUGLAS  
And to you. Sorry to butt in, but you don't ask him how much he wants, you just tell him how much you'll pay.  
(to Archie)  
She'll give you two hundred. Absolutely no more, final offer.

AKRAM  
Sorry, no deal.

DOUGLAS  
Pity.  
(to Evelyn)  
Now walk away. Walk away.

EVELYN  
But -

DOUGLAS  
I know what I'm doing.

Evelyn complies, and they turn and walk away.

EVELYN  
Yes. The thing is, you see, I did actually want to buy that. To brighten up my room.

DOUGLAS  
He'll come after us.

EVELYN  
Do you think so?

DOUGLAS  
Absolutely. This is how the game  
is played. Just keep on walking.

They keep on walking.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
He's playing it cool, but he'll  
come.

They keep walking.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
He's playing it very cool.

They keep walking. Then Douglas stops.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
He's not coming.

CUT TO:

Moments later. They're back at Akram's stall. Evelyn counts  
out the money.

EVELYN  
Eight hundred and fifty, nine  
hundred, nine hundred and fifty,  
one thousand.

She turns to Douglas, smiles and shrugs.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Some days you're the pigeon, some  
days the statue.

AKRAM  
And please take this for absolutely  
free.

He hands Douglas a small figurine.

AKRAM (cont'd)  
It is Shree Ganesh, the God of good  
luck and auspiciousness.

EVELYN  
Thank you. We could all do with a  
bit of -

She stops. She's seen something.

DOUGLAS  
What?

He follows where she's looking.

Across the square, Graham is just leaving a municipal-looking building.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
 There's Graham.  
 (calling)  
 Graham!

But Graham doesn't hear, heads off in the other direction. He looks very upset.

Douglas and Evelyn look at each other. And then they're off, weaving through the crowds, in search of Graham.

They reach the building he came out of. The sign above it says 'Registry - for Births, Deaths, and Marriages'.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
 Curiouser and curiouser.

EXT. SWEEPER COLONY - EVENING

Ajit is pushing Muriel through a poverty-stricken slum. The people live on the streets, or in collapsing tin shacks. Everywhere there is struggle and deprivation.

But the pervasive atmosphere is nowhere near as depressing as we would expect. If sticks are all the kids have to play with, then that's what they'll play with.

MURIEL  
 Where are we? This is not our usual walk.

AJIT  
 They call it the Sweeper Colony. The slums of Jaipur.

MURIEL  
 And what are we doing in them?

AJIT  
 Anokhi has invited you to her home.

MURIEL  
 You should've told me that's where we were going.

AJIT  
 You'd have said no.

MURIEL  
 Can you blame me?

A limbless beggar wheels himself along on a trolley. He smiles toothlessly at Muriel.

MURIEL (cont'd)  
 Alright, Chief?  
 (to Ajit)  
 Why's he look so chirpy, then?

AJIT  
 He's alive.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Douglas and Evelyn are walking down some side streets, away from the market. The stunning Nahagar Fort looms above them, on a hill.

DOUGLAS  
 You're sure he went this way?

EVELYN  
 I thought so.

DOUGLAS  
 I read a fascinating chapter about that Fort up there. Fascinating.

EVELYN  
 Tell me more.

DOUGLAS  
 I would, if I could remember a word.

EVELYN  
 I know what you mean. The only thing I can retain now is water.

They laugh, turn a corner. And there, seated on a bench in an ornamental garden, is Graham. He's looking down at the ground.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
 There he is.

They walk slowly towards him. As they get near, he hears them, and lifts his head.

His face is wet with tears.

CUT TO:

A bit later. Graham is sitting on the bench. Talking to Evelyn and Douglas.

GRAHAM

I was eighteen. I'd grown up here. We had a servant, everyone did. One day he brought his son round. To meet me. So we met. And that was it.

(beat)

We had a few months, we had that. But then suddenly it was over. We'd fallen asleep, and they found us. I don't know what I could've done, but it should've been more than nothing. I put up no fight. I let them send him away.

(beat)

Soon afterwards I went back to England, to University. I returned as soon as I could, of course, but the whole family was gone. No one I asked knew anything. Or if they did, they wouldn't tell me.

(beat)

That was so long ago. I've had relationships since, some of them wonderful. But I always knew I must come back here, and find him again. I knew it would take time, and that's what I have now. So I must keep trying. I have to say that I'm sorry, and that I should have told everyone then what I know now. That I did truly love him.

INT. ANOKHI'S HUT - DAY

Muriel sits on the only chair in the cleaner's tiny hut. Plaster gods, plastic flowers. All the generations of Anokhi's family - Anokhi herself, her husband, mother, grandmother, and several children - all smile at her.

She turns to Ajit.

MURIEL

How soon can I go?

Anokhi speaks. Ajit translates.

AJIT

She wants to thank you for your kindness.

MURIEL

I haven't been kind.

AJIT

You're the only one that acknowledges her.

MURIEL

And doesn't that make me Mother  
Theresa. What's she doing now?

Anokhi brings out a plate of food.

ANOKHI

Tarkha dhal. Mutton chapati.

MURIEL

I'm not eating that.

AJIT

You will insult her very deeply if  
you do not.

Muriel looks round. They're all watching, waiting, smiling.

She looks at Anokhi's grandmother, as dignified as she is  
old.

Muriel reaches out, takes something off the tray. And has a  
bite. It's not too bad.

MURIEL

You know what? This is -

She looks out of the window. And sees her wheelchair being  
pushed past outside.

She's up in a flash, shouting through the window.

MURIEL (cont'd)

Oy, leave it! Leave it alone, you  
thieving bastards!

Several terrified faces turn. It's just a bunch of very  
young kids, using the wheelchair as a go-kart.

They look up at Muriel. One little girl starts to cry.

MURIEL (cont'd)

I didn't see. I'm sorry. I'm  
sorry.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Jean is coming slowly down the stairs. Graham walks in  
through the front door.

GRAHAM

Mrs Ainslie, how are you feeling  
today?

JEAN

A little unsteady, thank you.  
These are not words I ever expected  
to pass my lips, but I was rather  
hoping to find my husband.

GRAHAM

Oh, he's right behind me. In the  
next rickshaw.

JEAN

You've been with him today? I must  
say I rather like the thought of  
the two of you spending time  
together. Talking about me.

Douglas and Evelyn come in through the door. Happy and  
laughing.

DOUGLAS

Darling!

EVELYN

Jean, how are you? How are you  
feeling?

JEAN

Not much better, thank you. But  
how very kind of you to ask.  
Douglas, can I have a word?

DOUGLAS

Of course.

Evelyn and Graham make themselves scarce.

JEAN

We're going home.

DOUGLAS

Why? What? Why?

JEAN

I can't stay in this country. The  
heat is oppressive, the poverty  
unavoidable.

Sonny comes into the room behind her. Douglas sees him. But  
there's no stopping Jean.

JEAN (cont'd)

Which might all be alright, if the hotel we're staying in didn't somehow manage to be both antiquated and unfinished, and presided over by a man who seems to believe that 24-hour room service actually refers to the length of the time it takes for the order to arrive.

DOUGLAS

Darling, please -

JEAN

A man with the intelligence and acumen of a speed bump, who shouldn't be allowed to run a sodding wheelk-stall, let alone a bloody hotel.

DOUGLAS

He's standing behind you.

JEAN

Good. Then I can tell him to his face.

SONNY

There is no need. I heard every word.

JEAN

And do you have anything you wish to say?

Long pause.

SONNY

Thank you for your feedback.

She goes. Leaving Sonny wrestling with his pride, professionalism, and profound depression.

INT. DOUGLAS AND JEAN'S ROOM - DAY

Moments later. Jean comes on in, starts to pack.

Douglas follows.

DOUGLAS

You haven't given it a chance here.

JEAN

You may well be right. And it's something we can discuss on the plane.

DOUGLAS

You know what's waiting in England. The beige bungalow, with the panic button in the corner. You couldn't bear it, you know you couldn't.

JEAN

I can't bear this.

DOUGLAS

You've been ill. You're better now. Maybe you'll wake up tomorrow with a whole new attitude.

JEAN

I've prayed that every night for thirty years.

DOUGLAS

Then maybe out here will be the charm.

(beat)

Please. A little more time.

Jean thinks for a while. And closes her suitcase.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

For what it's worth, I'm sure this is the right thing.

JEAN

Yes, well. When I want your opinion, I'll give it to you.

EXT. HOTEL GARDEN - EVENING

Surinda comes through the garden gates. She's nervous but determined.

She approaches the verandah, where Stella and Noreen are sitting.

SURINDA

Excuse me, I'm looking for Sonny Kapoor.

STELLA

Ah, there you are. Good. This has to go off right away.

She hands Surinda a postcard. Surinda reads it.

SURINDA

'Having a wonderful time. Where am I?'

Noreen nods in agreement.

Sonny comes out. He's horrified to see Surinda.

SONNY  
What are you doing here?

SURINDA  
I've come to meet your mother.

SONNY  
Not yet.

SURINDA  
Sonny, you need to stand up to her.  
Not just for me; for the hotel,  
everything. It's time.

SONNY  
No. We have to wait.

SURINDA  
How long?

SONNY  
Until she dies. It can't take  
forever.

SURINDA  
But Sonny -

SONNY  
Please!

MRS KAPOOR (O.S.)  
Who is this?

Mrs Kapoor has arrived.

SONNY  
Mummyji. There you are.  
Excellent.

MRS KAPOOR  
I asked you a question.

SONNY  
I didn't hear it.

MRS KAPOOR  
Then I'll ask someone else.  
(to Surinda)  
Who are you, and why are you here?

Evelyn comes out.

EVELYN  
She's come to see me.

MRS KAPOOR  
I beg your pardon?

EVELYN  
I invited her to dinner, and here  
she is. Hello Surinda. Glad you  
made it.

Surinda looks at Sonny. He looks imploringly back at her.  
She turns to Evelyn.

SURINDA  
Hello Aunty.

EXT. BANK - DAY

A new day. Graham waits outside a European-style bank. Jean  
comes out.

GRAHAM  
How did it go?

JEAN  
It didn't.

They start to make their way across the crowded street.

JEAN (cont'd)  
It's very kind of you to escort me.  
I'd ask you not to tell my husband.

GRAHAM  
You're avoiding financial  
discussions with him?

JEAN  
I'm just avoiding him. Could you  
please get us out of here?

INT. TEA SHOP - DAY

Minutes later. Jean and Graham are sitting in a crowded tea  
shop. Jean is talking to a WAITER.

JEAN  
And is the milk pasteurized?

WAITER  
Oh yes madam. Very very  
pasteurized.

JEAN  
That's not true, is it? You're  
just lying to me right now.

GRAHAM  
It'll be fine.

The waiter goes.

JEAN  
Thank you.

GRAHAM  
No problem.

JEAN  
For putting up with me.

GRAHAM  
That's not how I'd describe it.

JEAN  
Just my luck. The first kind man I  
meet in twenty years, and he eats  
from the other side of the buffet.

Graham smiles.

JEAN (cont'd)  
Can I ask you something? Why do  
you like it here?

GRAHAM  
Because this is where I lost my  
heart, and hope to find it again.

JEAN  
And if you don't?

GRAHAM  
Then it's still a country of  
unutterable beauty, with the  
happiest, most generous people I  
could hope to meet. Who see life  
as a privilege not a right, and so  
teach me something every day.

A small kid comes up to the table, his hand outstretched. To  
Graham's surprise, Jean gives him some money.

JEAN  
Take it. Take it and go.

The kid leaves.

JEAN (cont'd)  
I'm sorry. They say it's something  
you understand when you've had a  
child; that you're not just a  
parent to them, but to every child  
in the world. You have to let that  
go when you come here.

(more)

JEAN (cont'd)  
Or you'd never stop crying.  
(beat)  
Shall we go?

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Sonny is wallpapering. He's atrocious at it.  
Mrs Kapoor comes in.

MRS KAPOOR  
Why don't you get Young Wasim to do that?

SONNY  
He has allergies. The paint fumes.

MRS KAPOOR  
I've finished going over the accounts.

SONNY  
We have more important matters to discuss.

MRS KAPOOR  
There are no more important matters. Air bubble there.

SONNY  
I don't like the fat rich woman from Number 44.

MRS KAPOOR  
So? Another bubble. Big bubble.

SONNY  
So I cannot marry her.

MRS KAPOOR  
You don't have to like the person you're married to. Peeling there.

SONNY  
You liked Papa.

Mrs Kapoor takes the roll of wallpaper from Sonny, starts to apply it. Very professionally.

MRS KAPOOR  
Your father and I were very happy for many years. And then we met. But the union was arranged, and so of course it was successful.

SONNY  
What was successful about it?

MRS KAPOOR  
 We bought the hotel, and had you.  
 You're right, it was a disaster.

She's finished. It looks great.

She turns and leaves. Sonny follows her through the lobby.

SONNY  
 Don't you want me to be happy,  
 Mummyji?

MRS KAPOOR  
 That's on my list. Below money and  
 grandchildren.

SONNY  
 If not for love, why else do people  
 get married?

MRS KAPOOR  
 Because after a while, you just get  
 tired of finishing your own  
 sentences.

They've reached the study.

MRS KAPOOR (cont'd)  
 I've had an offer for the hotel.

SONNY  
 What kind of offer?

MRS KAPOOR  
 The kind that involves a lot of  
 money.

She goes into the study, closes the door on Sonny.

INT. MEEHAR CLINIC - DAY

Norman is sitting in a waiting room. It's very seedy. And  
 absolutely everyone in there is smoking.

A NURSE comes out of the consulting room.

NURSE  
 Mr John Smith.

No response. The nurse looks at Norman, the only white man  
 in the room.

NURSE (cont'd)  
 Mr John Smith?

Norman jumps up.

NORMAN  
That's right! Me!

INT. CONSULTING ROOM - DAY

Norman is talking to DR RAMA.

NORMAN  
You see, the thing is Dr Rama ...  
can I call you Dr Rama?

DR RAMA  
I don't see why not.

NORMAN  
The reason I've come to see you ...  
is that I'm worried there's no lead  
in my pencil.

DR RAMA  
OK. I don't know what that means.

NORMAN  
No snap in my celery.

DR RAMA  
I'm still not quite with you.

NORMAN  
I plan to get jiggy tonight, but I  
can't guarantee that my love gun  
will fire.

DR RAMA  
Listen, I'm a doctor, so I'm  
supposed to help people, not hurt  
them -

NORMAN  
Will the lance dance, and the  
trouser lion roar?

DR RAMA  
But in your case I may make an  
exception.

NORMAN  
I don't know if I can still have  
sex.

DR RAMA  
Oh. Ah.

NORMAN  
It's been a while.

DR RAMA

How long?

NORMAN

What's today?

DR RAMA

Monday.

NORMAN

Six years.

DR RAMA

I've got some pills that'll help.

EXT. HOTEL VERANDAH - DAY

Evelyn is sitting on the bench on the verandah. There's some kind of noisy game going inside.

She's been there a little while when Madge comes out.

MADGE

I'm just avoiding a game of Charades. The old twins have joined in, and the image of their rendition of *9 And A Half Weeks* may never leave me.

She sees Evelyn's face. She's been crying.

MADGE (cont'd)

Oh dear.

EVELYN

I'm sorry.

Madge sits down next to her.

MADGE

Tell me.

EVELYN

I just got word. The sale of my house, our house, has gone through. Forty years, over just like that. I had to sell it to pay off Hugh's debts. He'd got into such a hole, borrowed more to try and get out of it, and just dug further. And all through it, all that time he told me nothing. What was the point of our marriage if we couldn't share that? Did he not trust me? Because if not, what was the point of me?

They sit for a while.

MADGE

Why do men always feel they need to protect us? When the truth is I never met one I couldn't beat up.

(beat)

He was ashamed. You can understand that.

EVELYN

Yes.

MADGE

But he was a good man.

EVELYN

How do you know?

MADGE

You wouldn't have loved him otherwise.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Anokhi is cleaning. Ajit wheels Muriel into the room.

MURIEL

Listen.

Anokhi looks up, smiles.

MURIEL (cont'd)

(to Ajit)

Tell her. I was glad she invited me. Glad to meet her family. Her grandmother. Her kids.

Ajit translates. Anokhi speaks.

AJIT

She asks if you have children?

MURIEL

I've looked after a few. And there was one ... I watched him grow, packed his bag for the first day of big school, had a hot tea waiting when he came home. I was still cooking that tea forty years later. But then he got sick, you see, and when he died it was like, it felt like my son, although of course I'd never said ... it wasn't my place.

(beat)

(more)

MURIEL (cont'd)

And it's not about money, it never was, but still you know, I expected to be provided for, I deserved that, I'd given my life ... but there was nothing in the will. And the next day they let me go. I'd say I was back on the street, but I could hardly remember having been there the first time.

(beat)

I got a flat in the end. I'm the only one in the building not a foreigner. But before I came here, my biggest problem was what to do with all the time I had. Because that flat's so small, I can have the whole place spotless in half an hour. And then what am I supposed to do for the rest of the day?

There's silence for a bit. Then Ajit speaks.

AJIT

Sorry, did you want me translate all of that as well?

Muriel smiles. It's the first time we've seen this.

She starts to chuckle, then laugh. Anokhi and Ajit are not sure what she's laughing at, but laugh with her, happy she's happy.

Muriel stops, thrusts something into Anokhi's hand.

MURIEL

I brought you these.

She wheels herself out, Ajit following. Anokhi looks at what she's been given.

A packet of Chocolate Hobnobs.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Outside in the garden Douglas, Jean, and Mrs Kapoor are all relaxing. Norman's lying in a hammock, reading the Karma Sutra. And Evelyn, Norman and Madge are playing croquet.

EVELYN

It's a beautiful day.

DOUGLAS

It's always a beautiful day.

JEAN

It's too hot.

NORMAN

Maybe you'd be better off in a swimsuit.

MADGE

You won't catch me in one. I don't have upper arms any more, I have wingspan.

Graham comes out.

GRAHAM

(to Madge)

It's not like you to use age as a reason not to do something.

DOUGLAS

Isn't that one of the few perks of being old?

NORMAN

I wouldn't know. I'm not old. I'm just in disguise.

He goes inside.

EVELYN

(to Graham)

You look happy.

GRAHAM

I think I may have a lead.

MADGE

Do you feel old, Judge?

GRAHAM

Not today.

He goes on out through the gate.

DOUGLAS

Whatever he's on, I want some of it.

JEAN

I'm afraid I do feel old. Not so much in years, but with the weight of regret. For the things I never did.

MADGE

I did them. I did all of them.

EVELYN

(to Jean)

There's still time.

JEAN

No. The worst part about being old, is that the path we're on is the path we'll stay on. Whether we're enjoying the journey or not.

There's silence for a moment.

MADGE

The worst part for me about being old is that it means I'm going to die soon. And that's just an absolute shame. I've had such a lovely time. And I don't want it to end. I really don't want that at all.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - EVENING

Mrs Kapoor walks down the passage. Then stops. She can hear something.

CUT TO:

Norman's in the shower. Singing 'Le Freak' lustily.

NORMAN

Aaaaaah, freak out!

He's washing his back.

Close-up on the soap, moving in concentric circles, going lower and lower ...

NORMAN (cont'd)

Le freak, c'est chic ...

Back up on his face. Which has an expression of unholy joy, as the soap cleans the parts that matter.

NORMAN (cont'd)

Aaaah, freak out!

CUT TO:

Mrs Kapoor shakes her head, and moves on down the corridor, as Norman howls on.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - EVENING

Norman comes out into the courtyard. Madge is walking through.

MADGE

Hello. Is this it?

NORMAN

This is it.

MADGE

I see that you've washed and strategically shaved. You don't look entirely unattractive.

NORMAN

Nor do you, Madge. You know if we'd met each other years ago, when we were young ...

MADGE

We'd probably have hated each other just as much then as well.

They both laugh.

MADGE (cont'd)

You're not worried about the danger of having sex at your age?

Norman shrugs.

NORMAN

If she dies, she dies.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Graham, Evelyn, and Douglas are walking down a quiet street.

GRAHAM

This is a false alarm. It's going to be nothing. Don't you think it's going to be nothing?

EVELYN

I think we should knock on the door and see.

They stop outside a house.

DOUGLAS

This is it?

GRAHAM

This is it. How do I look?

He smiles at them, incredibly endearing in his nervousness.

EVELYN

Young.

Graham walks up and knocks on the door.

An old woman, SAPRIYA, answers.

SAPRIYA

Yes?

GRAHAM

Hi. I'm sorry to disturb you so late ... it's Sapriya, isn't it?

SAPRIYA

Yes. I'm afraid I ...

GRAHAM

My name is Graham Dashwood. I knew you once. I knew your brother.

SAPRIYA

I remember. He was very fond of you.

There's an awful pause.

GRAHAM

Was? Is he ...

He stops. Sapriya is looking over his shoulder.

Graham turns slowly. Across the street, a group of old men are gathered around a chess table.

One of them, a lovely looking man called MANOJ, stands up.

They stare at each other. Then Graham walks slowly across the street.

He reaches Manoj. The two men just stand there for a moment. Then they hug very tightly.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Douglas and Evelyn are walking home.

DOUGLAS

You know you can go through life cynical as all get-out, and then you see something like that. And it just warms your cockles.

EVELYN

You're not cynical, are you?

DOUGLAS

Well, no. Not cynical. But nothing like that happened to me when I was younger.

EVELYN

Did you have a lot of girlfriends before Jean?

DOUGLAS

Oh god, millions of them. Shagger  
Ainslie, they used to call me.

EVELYN

No they didn't.

DOUGLAS

No they didn't.

They walk past a night-time cricket match. The floodlights  
illuminate their faces.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

There were a couple of women who  
were kind enough to ... but nothing  
serious. And then I met Jean. And  
she fell pregnant rather quickly,  
you see, and so of course we did  
what we had to do. Two weeks after  
our honeymoon, she lost the baby.  
But you know, we tried again, and a  
few years later we had Laura, so  
... I wouldn't change a thing. I  
really wouldn't. Except ... I just  
wish I'd realised how lucky I was.  
To be alive, healthy, adequate  
looking. I wish I'd enjoyed  
everything, and myself, more.

EVELYN

Youth is wasted on the young. I've  
often wished that -

They turn a corner.

DOUGLAS

My word.

In front of them, a procession of elephants is being led  
silently across the road. The full moon is bright above  
them. It's an extraordinary sight.

They stand there, lost in the magic of the moment.

Almost unconsciously, Evelyn reaches out and takes Douglas's  
hand.

He looks down at her hand in his. Then looks at her. She's  
still staring in wonder at the elephants. To him, at this  
moment, she looks utterly beautiful.

Suddenly she becomes aware that he's watching her. And then  
that she's holding his hand.

She snatches her hand away.

EVELYN  
I'm so sorry.

DOUGLAS  
It's fine.

EVELYN  
I didn't -

DOUGLAS  
Completely fine.

EVELYN  
Shall we walk on?

DOUGLAS  
Yes, let's.

They start walking. A little further apart than they were before.

EVELYN  
It's getting cold.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - NIGHT

Later.

It's the middle of the night, and everything's quiet. Or as quiet as it can be in the middle of the usual night-time Indian cacophony.

But in the Marigold Hotel, everyone sleeps.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - NIGHT

One of the bedroom windows is opened gently and quietly, and a figure climbs on in.

A shaft of moonlight shows us that it's Surinda, and she's smiling. She creeps towards the sleeping form in the bed.

SURINDA  
Wake up darling ... wake up.

The figure in the bed stirs.

MADGE  
A three a.m. booty call. How utterly marvellous.

Surinda screams. And Madge turns on the light.

SURINDA

Mrs ... I don't know what your name is, but I'm incredibly sorry. If you could please not -

There's a commotion outside, and Mrs Kapoor flings open the door.

MRS KAPOOR

What's going on?

MADGE

I appear to have pulled.

MRS KAPOOR

What are you doing here?

Sonny arrives.

SONNY

Let me through Mummyji, I'll handle this.

He sees Surinda.

SONNY (cont'd)

What are you doing here?

MADGE

Visiting me, rather thrillingly.

MRS KAPOOR

I don't think it was you she was visiting. Was it, Ms Chanderlal?

Beat.

SURINDA

No, it wasn't.

(beat)

Tell her, Sonny.

SONNY

I've never seen this woman before in my life.

MRS KAPOOR

Except for yesterday.

SONNY

Except, as you say, for yesterday. When I saw her for the first time. So this is the second.

Surinda just looks at him, then walks out.

Mrs Kapoor watches her go with satisfaction.

MRS KAPOOR  
And the last.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

Another extraordinary dawn.

Norman leaves a small house, closes the door quietly, and totters down the street.

The smile on his face is as wide as the sky.

EXT. HOTEL GARDEN/VERANDAH - MORNING

Norman comes through the gates, goes up the garden path.

Graham is sitting on the verandah.

NORMAN  
All well, my old fruit?

GRAHAM  
Thank you, Norman. All very well.

Norman smiles, goes up the steps. He's about to go in, when he stops.

NORMAN  
Graham ...

GRAHAM  
What can I do for you?

NORMAN  
I have seen the top of the mountain. And it is good.

GRAHAM  
Yes it is.

Norman goes on inside.

Graham settles back into his chair, looks out at the world.

GRAHAM (cont'd)  
Yes it is.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Norman comes into the dining room. Madge is sitting there.

MADGE  
I'm not ashamed to admit it. I've been waiting for hours. Actually I am ashamed to admit it.  
(more)

MADGE (cont'd)

But thank god you're not a gentleman, because those of us who are getting no action need you to tell all. Start anytime. Now.

NORMAN

Of course. Absolutely.

He's silent.

MADGE

Well? How was the night?

NORMAN

It was ... it was ...

MADGE

Yes?

NORMAN

It was really rather special.

This isn't what Madge was expecting.

MADGE

Did you close?

NORMAN

That's one way of putting it.

MADGE

Give me another.

NORMAN

I opened.

MADGE

What? What?

NORMAN

I'm very tired now. I should sleep a little.

MADGE

Norman?

NORMAN

I'm very tired.

He leaves. Madge just stares after him.

INT/EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

A bit later. Evelyn comes down the stairs. Douglas is on his way up.

DOUGLAS  
Good morning.

EVELYN  
And to you.

He's about to say something more, but she politely avoids him, proceeds on down.

He goes on up the stairs.

Evelyn comes down into the lobby, and sees Graham sitting on the verandah.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
You're back.

He doesn't turn round. She goes on out to him.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Can I get you a nice cup of tea,  
and then I want to hear all -

She breaks off. She's reached Graham.

He's dead.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL VERANDAH - DAY

Later. They're all out on the verandah.

Dr Rama is kneeling by the body. He stands up.

DR RAMA  
I'll contact the relevant  
authorities.

MRS KAPOOR  
Thank you, Doctor.

DOUGLAS  
(to Evelyn)  
Please. You should sit down.

EVELYN  
I'm fine.

MADGE  
(to Evelyn)  
You were with him last night,  
weren't you? Where did you go?

EVELYN  
We went to find someone. Someone  
Graham had been looking for, for a  
long time.

MADGE

Did you find him?

Evelyn sees Manoj walk in through the gates at the bottom of the garden. She goes to greet him.

Douglas watches her hug Manoj.

DOUGLAS

Yes. Yes we did.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A bit later. They're in the dining room. Still in a state of shock. Manoj is there too now, silent in a corner.

Norman comes in, with a cup of tea for Evelyn.

NORMAN

I brought you this.

MADGE

You did what?

EVELYN

Thank you so much, Norman.

Dr Rama comes in.

DR RAMA

They'll be here soon to take the body away.

JEAN

Where will they take him?

MRS KAPOOR

I will arrange for transport back to England. He'll be buried there.

And then Manoj speaks.

MANOJ

No.

MRS KAPOOR

Excuse me?

MANOJ

He should have an Indian burial. A sacred one, at Pushkar.

MRS KAPOOR

We can't be sure that's what he would've wanted.

EVELYN

It's exactly what he would've  
wanted.

(beat)

To stay in this country forever.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Evelyn is walking through the market. She doesn't know where she's going.

We hear Evelyn writing an email in voiceover.

EVELYN (V.O.)

*Of course it was inevitable. Put  
enough old people in the same  
place, it won't be long before one  
of them goes. But still, when it  
happens, it hurts.*

She's struggling with the attention of the usual beggars,  
children, and hangers-on.

EVELYN (cont'd)

Not today ... no ... please ...

CUT TO:

Evelyn in her room, packing a small suitcase.

EVELYN (cont'd)

*And now some of us have a journey  
to make ...*

CUT TO:

Douglas is packing a small suitcase. Jean comes in, sees him  
packing, starts to do the same.

EVELYN (cont'd)

*To bury our friend where he  
belongs.*

CUT TO:

Madge leaves her room, suitcase in hand. She's surprised to  
find Norman standing outside in the passage. He's got a  
suitcase as well.

EVELYN (cont'd)

*An unexpected trip indeed.*

CUT TO:

Evelyn, Douglas, Jean, Norman and Madge file out of the  
hotel, and down the steps.

In the garden, they pass Anokhi, who's showing Muriel how to make a garland of flowers.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*But then again, more or less  
 everything about this place has  
 been unexpected.*

CUT TO:

A train carriage. The train is old, and full, but Madge, Norman, and Douglas are chatting away to the other travellers, sharing their food, drinking chai tea. Right at home. Jean is, as always, less happy.

Evelyn turns away, looks out of the window.

EVELYN (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*Everything.*

EXT. LAKE OF PUSHKAR - DAY

A Hindu funeral. Graham's body lies on a pile of wood.

Around him is a staggering sight. Pushkar Lake is ringed by five hundred beautiful whitewashed temples, connected to the water by 52 *ghats* (steps leading down). The lake itself is strewn with rose petals.

The mourners burn incense and throw more flowers onto the pyre. A priest sprinkles holy water on the body.

PRIEST  
*"Eh ishwar hum asatya..."*

Among the mourners are the residents of the Marigold Hotel. Awestruck by what they are seeing.

Manoj is weeping freely. Evelyn comforts him.

Norman brushes something from his eye.

MADGE  
 Wait, was that a tear? Are you crying?

NORMAN  
 Guy back there gave me a bite of his samosa. Very hot. Made my eyes water.

CUT TO:

Douglas is staring out over the lake. It's the most beautiful thing he's ever seen.

JEAN  
Douglas? Are you alright?

DOUGLAS  
Don't you think it's extraordinary?

JEAN  
Yes. Apart from the smell.

DOUGLAS  
I honestly don't understand.

JEAN  
What? What don't you understand?

DOUGLAS  
How you cannot love this country.

CUT TO:

Evelyn watches as Manoj approaches the body, and lights the wood beneath it.

Flames leap up into the sky. And Graham goes out the way he would have wished.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Muriel and Anokhi are in the kitchen.

Muriel, still in her chair, is preparing food with immediately evident skill, while Anokhi helps.

Anokhi's kids are there as well, playing.

MURIEL  
So there's a process, they call it pickling. I have no idea what it is, or how they do it, but whoever invented it was a smart man. But the real genius was the guy who introduced an onion into the system. That I could never have thought of.

Anokhi has no idea what she's talking about, but is happy Muriel's happy.

Sonny enters.

SONNY  
What are you doing in my kitchen?  
And worse, what is she doing?

MURIEL  
She's helping me. She'll just take what's left of the food.

SONNY

With the greatest respect, you  
can't cook for everyone.

MURIEL

I've cooked dinners for many more  
than that in my time.

SONNY

With slightly less respect, I still  
say no.

MURIEL

Why not?

SONNY

Because it's not safe. With you in  
that chair.

MURIEL

This chair?

Trembling with the effort, she gets to her feet. And walks  
slowly but reasonably steadily over to the cooker.

The children cheer. Muriel turns to Sonny and smiles.

MURIEL (cont'd)

Now piss off, Sonny. You're a good  
soul, but you could burn a bloody  
salad.

INT. BHARATPUR PALACE HOTEL - DAY

Evelyn's in her room; which is somewhat reminiscent of the  
Marigold Hotel, but at least has a door. And an amazing view  
over the Lake.

There's a knock on the door.

EVELYN

Come in.

Douglas comes in.

DOUGLAS

Not used to these doors everywhere.  
I just wanted to check you were  
alright after the funeral.

EVELYN

I've never seen anything like that  
before. Extraordinary, wasn't it?

DOUGLAS

Yes it was.

Beat.

EVELYN

I'm going to miss him.

DOUGLAS

The priest told me something they say out here. That death is not the end, but the start of another journey.

EVELYN

Do you believe that?

DOUGLAS

No.

She laughs. Then she's crying.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

Oh ... oh ... dear Evelyn ...

He goes towards her, and she holds him.

EVELYN

I'm so sorry.

DOUGLAS

No ... you cry ... it's the start of getting better.

EVELYN

I'm getting snot on your shirt.

DOUGLAS

I never liked it anyway.

Evelyn pulls back a bit, looks up at him. Their faces are very close ...

Then Jean speaks from the doorway.

JEAN

I wonder, Mrs Greenslade, if I might have my husband back now.

They spring apart, look at Jean.

JEAN (cont'd)

Douglas?

She walks off down the passage. Douglas turns to Evelyn.

DOUGLAS

Forgive me, I should ...

EVELYN

Yes, of course.

DOUGLAS

Forgive me.

He leaves. Evelyn sits back down on the bed.

INT. DOUGLAS AND JEAN'S ROOM - DAY

Moments later. Jean is pacing. Douglas comes in.

DOUGLAS

She was upset. She needed a shoulder to cry on.

JEAN

Spare me your explanations. D'you think I'm jealous?

DOUGLAS

I don't see why else you would have embarrassed me. And Evelyn.

JEAN

You were already doing a perfectly good job of embarrassing yourself. Can you imagine how ghastly it's been for everyone to watch you mooning around after that simpering doe-eyed ex-housewife, taking advantage of her loneliness and -

DOUGLAS

God, can you hear yourself? Can you? Do you have any idea what a terrible person you've become?

Jean is stunned into silence.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

Maybe I didn't realise till we got here, till we were surrounded by these miracles. And all you give out is this constant barracking, an inability to see any kind of light and joy, and a desperate need to squash any trace of happiness in me or anyone else ... it's a wonder I don't fling myself at the first kind word or gesture that comes my way. But I don't. Out of some dried-out notion of loyalty and respect, neither of which I ever bloody get in return.

There's a long silence.

JEAN

I checked my emails. This came.

She hands a piece of paper. It's an e-ticket.

Douglas doesn't speak for a while.

JEAN (cont'd)  
First Class tickets. Laura's  
company must have come good.

DOUGLAS  
Yes.

JEAN  
We're going home.

INT. BHARATPUR PALACE HOTEL BAR - DAY

An impressive colonial-style bar. Madge sits alone,  
finishing her drink.

The BARMAN comes over.

BARMAN  
Another one?

Madge nods.

MADGE  
When someone dies, you look at your  
own life, you look at yourself.  
And for once, you're honest.  
(beat)  
It's time to admit I am twenty five  
years older than I think I am. I  
can't play like I used to.

The barman puts the new drink down. Evelyn comes in.

EVELYN  
Madge.

MADGE  
What's left of her. Are you  
alright?

EVELYN  
Perfectly. I just need some water.

She takes Madge's glass, and drains it.

MADGE  
That was a gin and tonic.

EVELYN  
Yes. I know that now.

MADGE  
What is it, Evelyn? What's -

She sees Douglas and Jean approaching them.

MADGE (cont'd)  
Oh. Ah. Oh.

EVELYN  
Stay close.

MADGE  
I'm not going anywhere.

Douglas comes up.

MADGE (cont'd)  
Good afternoon, the Ainslies. How  
are you both?

JEAN  
We're particularly well.

MADGE  
I'm so glad. Nothing like a good  
funeral to raise the spirits.

JEAN  
Douglas, tell them our news.

DOUGLAS  
I really don't ... well, what's  
happened is ... our news is that -

JEAN  
We're going home.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Mrs Kapoor comes out of the hotel.

MRS KAPOOR  
Sonny! Sonny! Where are you?

Sonny appears. He's on the roof.

SONNY  
Here. I'm up here.

MRS KAPOOR  
Don't do it. You have so much to  
live for.

SONNY  
I have nothing to live for.

MRS KAPOOR  
You're right. Jump.

SONNY

I'm inspecting the roof.  
Apparently a monsoon is coming.

MRS KAPOOR

Why don't you get Young Wasim to do  
it?

SONNY

He suffers from vertigo.

MRS KAPOOR

I need your help.

SONNY

Can't you see that I'm busy?

MRS KAPOOR

I need you to help me pack.

SONNY

What made you decide to leave?

MRS KAPOOR

I'm not leaving. The guests are.  
I've accepted the offer on the  
hotel.

She heads back inside.

SONNY

Wait, Mummyji! Wait!

Sonny goes to get down from the roof. Instead he puts his  
foot through it.

He stands there, at an angle. Trapped and defeated.

SONNY (cont'd)

Mummyji!

INT. TRAIN - DAY

The journey home from the funeral. The train is emptier this  
time.

Evelyn is sitting a little way away from Douglas, Jean, Madge  
and Norman.

Jean's chatting away.

JEAN

The whole thing is actually  
tremendously exciting. Not just  
getting on a plane, but getting on  
a plane and turning left.

(more)

JEAN (cont'd)  
 And home in time for our 40th  
 wedding anniversary. We haven't  
 yet decided how to mark the  
 occasion.

MADGE  
 Perhaps a minute's silence?

NORMAN  
 40 years married. That really is a  
 wonderful achievement.

Madge stares at him.

MADGE  
 Who are you, and what have you done  
 with my friend?

She gets up, goes over to sit with Evelyn.

MADGE (cont'd)  
 Either I join you, or I kill  
 someone. Your choice.

EVELYN  
 What? Oh, join me, please.

They sit for a while in silence.

MADGE  
 You're not two tons of fun either.

EVELYN  
 I'm sorry.  
 (beat)  
 Coming here ... it hasn't worked  
 out how I thought it would.

MADGE  
 Does anything ever?

EVELYN  
 I wanted to prove something to  
 myself.

MADGE  
 What?

EVELYN  
 That I could manage on my own.  
 That I was brave enough.

MADGE  
 Well, you've proved it to everyone  
 else.

EVELYN  
 I have?

MADGE

Oh yes. Courage doesn't always  
roar, my love.

EVELYN

Thank you.

EXT. STATION - DAY

Later. The train has arrived, and the funeral party  
disembarks.

NORMAN

This way.

DOUGLAS

Right with you.

The station is typically bustling. But as they move through  
the crowds, it doesn't even occur to them how confident they  
now are; at home in this strange city.

CUT TO:

They come out of the station, head for the taxis.

NORMAN

Two should fit us all, I think.

MADGE

Yes. Evelyn and I will go with the  
Ainslie's in one car, and you see  
if there's enough headroom in the  
other for you and your halo.

EVELYN

I'm actually going to walk. It  
would do me good, I think.

DOUGLAS

Perhaps you'd like one of us to  
accompany you.

EVELYN

No. Thank you so much.

JEAN

Come on, Douglas. Time and travel  
itineraries wait for no man.

DOUGLAS

Yes, of course.

EVELYN

I'll see you all later. Goodbye.

They all get into a cab, and Evelyn watches them drive off.

Then she goes back into the station.

INT. STATION CHAI STAND - DAY

Evelyn buys a lassi, takes it over to a bench in the corner. She has to step over some people sleeping on the floor to get there.

She sits on the bench for a bit. Then she starts to cry.

After a while, she wipes her nose on her sleeve. And notices a small kid, RANJANA, watching her solemnly.

RANJANA

Aunty?

EVELYN

I'm so sorry, I don't think I have any rupees.

Ranjana shakes her head, silently holds out a torn and very grimy tissue.

Evelyn is enormously touched.

EVELYN (cont'd)

Thank you.

She blows her nose. Then gives Ranjan her lassi.

EVELYN (cont'd)

Thank you.

Ranjan takes the lassi, and runs out, just as Sonny comes bursting into the station.

He sees Evelyn, comes over.

SONNY

Where are the others? There are things they must know. I have raced here, although the rain is coming, because I have information of vital importance that I must tell them before they leave for the hotel. Where are they?

EVELYN

They've left for the hotel.

SONNY

Oh dear god I am a failure.

He sits down next to her.

SONNY (cont'd)

My mother is selling the hotel.

EVELYN  
Don't let her.

SONNY  
I cannot prevent it.

They sit for a while.

SONNY (cont'd)  
How will I explain this to Surinda?

EVELYN  
Oh Sonny, for god's sake. Just  
tell the truth.

SONNY  
What?

EVELYN  
Tell the truth. To Surinda, to  
your mother, to anybody.

SONNY  
Well, it's an option.  
(beat)  
Tell the truth ...

EVELYN  
Whatever the consequences.

She stands up, heads for the door.

SONNY  
Mrs Greenslade ...

EVELYN  
Evelyn.

SONNY  
Mrs Evelyn Greenslade ... you are  
right!

He stands up.

SONNY (cont'd)  
I'm going to try it. I'm going to  
try it! I am running back to the  
hotel right now, to tell the truth.

EVELYN  
I'll come with you.

SONNY  
I'll go quicker if you don't. My  
legs are young and strong, while  
yours have many veins.  
(beat)  
(more)

SONNY (cont'd)  
 Let truth be told, or the heavens  
 fall down!

He runs out.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Douglas, Jean, Norman and Madge all get out of the cab, at the hotel gate.

Norman is paying the driver.

JEAN  
 Whatever he's asking for, give him  
 half. There's another thing I  
 won't miss.

She turns to Douglas.

JEAN (cont'd)  
 You're very quiet.

DOUGLAS  
 You seem to be filling the silences  
 quite adequately.

JEAN  
 I beg your pardon.

MADGE  
 What's going on?

They see what she's looking at.

All their suitcases are lined up on the verandah.

There's an ominous rumbling from the sky above them.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Minutes later. Douglas, Jean, Madge, Norman, Stella and Noreen are in the dining room. Where Mrs Kapoor is making an announcement.

MRS KAPOOR  
 Friends, partners, and guests ... I  
 have wonderful news. You are all  
 going home.

EVERYONE  
 What? When? How?

MRS KAPOOR  
 As soon as possible. I will pay  
 for your tickets.

JEAN

Not first-class, though. We're the only ones going first-class.

MADGE

Will you shut up about the sodding first-class?

DOUGLAS

I don't understand. Why are you sending everybody home?

Mr Gupta comes in.

MR GUPTA

Because soon there will be no hotel left for you to stay in.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Thunder, lightning, and serious rain.

Sonny runs down the road, as the storm explodes around him.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

The guests are still dealing with the shock.

Mr Gupta is storming around the room. Surinda is with him.

MRS KAPOOR

Ms Chanderlal. What are you doing here?

MADGE

She wants me. She can't keep away.

MR GUPTA

(to Surinda)

We will rase this place to the ground, and build a new giant call-centre. One thousand square feet, eight hundred phones, twenty seven thousand calls an hour. Plenty business.

MADGE

You're really going to make everyone go home?

MR GUPTA

You can stay here and work in the call centre. Your voice is most sexual.

MADGE  
It is, isn't it?

EXT/INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Sonny runs up the garden path, goes up the stairs and into the reception.

Young Wasim is napping behind the desk.

SONNY  
Young Wasim! I take no pleasure in this. No, wait. I do take pleasure in this. You're fired!

He runs towards the dining room. Then comes back.

SONNY (cont'd)  
You can keep your room, and live with us. But you will work here no more!

He runs off again. Young Wasim resumes his nap.

CUT TO:

Inside the dining room. Mr Gupta is still planning.

MR GUPTA  
Forget Wall Street, Tokyo town. India is the financial centre of the world, and here shall be its beating heart.

Sonny bursts in.

SONNY  
No! I forbid it!

MRS KAPOOR  
Sonny!

SONNY  
Mummyji, I forbid you to sell my hotel!

MR GUPTA  
Why is the investigator here?

SONNY  
What? Who do you think I am?

MRS KAPOOR  
Please excuse my son. He's having a nonentity crisis.  
(to Sonny)  
(more)

MRS KAPOOR (cont'd)  
The land this hotel sits on is a  
holy cash cow.

SONNY  
The hotel can make a profit.

MRS KAPOOR  
How? You don't have enough guests,  
and even they don't want to stay.

SONNY  
That is a fair point, well made.

There's a moment's silence.

NORMAN  
I do.

MRS KAPOOR  
What?

SONNY  
Norman, you mad old pervert. Say  
that again.

NORMAN  
I want to stay.

MADGE  
Because you've met a woman?

NORMAN  
I've met more than one, Madge.

They both smile. Their friendship is sealed.

MADGE  
I want to stay too.

Muriel speaks from the doorway.

MURIEL  
And me.

MRS KAPOOR  
What?

MURIEL  
I'm mending here.

MRS KAPOOR  
Your trip was paid for by the  
Council. They won't keep paying.

MURIEL  
Then I'll work as the cook.

MADGE  
Can you cook?

MURIEL  
Try this.

She gives Madge some food.

Sonny goes over to Stella and Noreen.

SONNY  
How about you, my lovelies? Are  
you in or are you out?

STELLA  
And I tore off the wrapping as fast  
as I could, and there underneath  
was a golden ticket.

Noreen nods in agreement.

SONNY  
They're in.

Madge is eating Muriel's food.

MADGE  
It's good.

MRS KAPOOR  
Better than mine?

MADGE  
Yours will always have a place in  
my heartburn.

EVELYN (O.S.)  
You should ask me too, Sonny.

Evelyn is in the doorway. She's soaked.

DOUGLAS  
Evelyn!

SONNY  
Mrs Evelyn Greenslade, patron saint  
of 24 hour truth ... will you stay  
at the hotel?

Evelyn looks briefly at Douglas. Everyone holds their  
breath.

EVELYN  
Yes. This is my home now.

MRS KAPOOR

Well, this is all very touching.  
But that's too few guests, so  
you're still marrying the fat rich  
one from Number 44.

SURINDA

We can get more.

MRS KAPOOR

What?

SONNY

What?

SURINDA

We have a database. At the centre.  
Long lists of pensioners, all  
crunched by the credit.

MRS KAPOOR

So?

SURINDA

If you hire us, we can call them.  
By the end of the week, the hotel  
will be so full, there'll be a  
waiting list.

MRS KAPOOR

(to Surinda)

And what do you have to do with  
anything?

Surinda is about to answer.

EVELYN

Don't ask her. Ask Sonny.

MRS KAPOOR

Ask him what?

EVELYN

Ask him what she's doing here. Ask  
him ... ask him if he loves her.

Mrs Kapoor turns to Sonny.

MRS KAPOOR

Do you? Do you love her?

SONNY

No. No. No. Yes.

Relief and approval all round. Except from Mrs Kapoor.

SONNY (cont'd)  
 Yes, I do. I love her. She's the  
 one I want to finish my sentences.

He crosses the room to Surinda.

SONNY (cont'd)  
 Surinda, the hotel is a success.  
 Will you marry me?

SURINDA  
 I knew you could do it.

SONNY  
 You didn't know I could do it.

SURINDA  
 I hoped you could do it.

SONNY  
 Then say that. From now on, I'm  
 all about the truth.

MR GUPTA  
 Will someone explain to me what in  
 the name of Shiva's arse is going  
 on here?

SONNY  
 Mr Gupta?

MR GUPTA  
 Yes?

SONNY  
 You have a gibbon on your head.

He turns to Surinda.

SONNY (cont'd)  
 You see?

SURINDA  
 My love.

They embrace.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAWN

The sun rises, the muezzin calls.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Douglas is carrying the suitcases down the stairs, and across  
 the hall.

Jean follows.

JEAN

I don't know why Sonny is insisting  
he drive us to the airport. Just  
our luck to die when we're finally  
about to get out of here.

They come out onto the verandah. Where Stella and Noreen are  
sitting.

Sonny is waiting by the car.

JEAN (cont'd)

There you are. Now, do you promise  
to drive at something approaching a  
sane speed?

SONNY

I have no choice. It's a festival;  
Dhulandi, the second day of Holi.

JEAN

What does that mean?

SONNY

You'll see.

Douglas has taken the Shree Ganesh figure he got at the  
market out of his pocket.

JEAN

Douglas?

DOUGLAS

Yes.

JEAN

What are you doing?

DOUGLAS

I forgot something. I'll be right  
back

JEAN

Well hurry.

Douglas goes back in.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Moments later. Douglas comes to Evelyn's door.

He's about to knock. Pauses.

Then he just leaves the Ganesh figurine on the door handle, turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

Evelyn is in her room, wide awake.

She listens to the footsteps going away.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Jean is still waiting by the car. She sees Stella and Noreen looking at her.

JEAN

Goodbye you two. Take care.

STELLA

Listen. It's never too late to be what you might have been.

Noreen nods in agreement. Silence.

JEAN

Yes, now did you just mean to say something significant, or was it pure coincidence?

STELLA

I had sex with Elvis Presley.

Noreen speaks for the first and only time.

NOREEN

So did I.

JEAN

Right.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Evelyn is in her room.

She goes to the door, opens it. And sees the figurine.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Moments later. Evelyn comes down the stairs fast, goes into the lobby.

She's too late. There's no one there.

She turns back towards the stairs, defeated. And then Douglas comes down.

EVELYN

Oh.

DOUGLAS

Evelyn.

EVELYN

Are you leaving? Now?

DOUGLAS

I am. Sonny's by the car. I just came back in to ...

EVELYN

Yes?

DOUGLAS

I just came back in.

Beat.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

I will miss this place very much.

EVELYN

It won't be the same without you.

Beat.

DOUGLAS

Above all I'll miss -

EVELYN

I mean, who will fix the telephones?

DOUGLAS

At least I'll know why you don't call.

Beat. Then Douglas tries one more time.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)

Evelyn ...

But she cuts him off.

EVELYN

Jean must be awfully excited about going home.

DOUGLAS

Oh yes. Turning left.

EVELYN

And how lovely to see Laura again. With her success.

Silence.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
I do wish you well.

DOUGLAS  
And I you.  
(beat)  
Goodbye Evelyn.

EVELYN  
Goodbye Douglas.

And he goes.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Jean's sitting in the car, looking at her watch.

Douglas comes out.

JEAN  
Douglas ...

DOUGLAS  
Couldn't find it. Not to worry.

He gets into the car.

DOUGLAS (cont'd)  
Let's go.

INT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - MORNING

Evelyn goes back into her room, walks slowly out onto the balcony.

And stares at the beautiful view with unseeing eyes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Madge and Norman are walking.

MADGE  
I'm looking forward to meeting her.

NORMAN  
You will. Some days I've got to say I wish I hadn't.

MADGE  
Norman ...

NORMAN

These were meant to be my wild years, you know? I was gonna be out here, spreading my gift around.

MADGE

And?

NORMAN

And it turns out I don't want to. Because she's lovely.

They walk in silence for a bit.

NORMAN (cont'd)

How about you?

MADGE

I'm single by choice. Just not my choice.

NORMAN

I thought you were meeting a man right now.

MADGE

Not a man, sadly. Although about as mature as one.

NORMAN

Then who ...?

A gorgeous car pulls up beside them, and the door opens. Out of it steps the kid from the flight from London, Krishna.

KRISHNA

Duchess!

MADGE

(to Norman)

We kept in touch.

(to Krishna)

Nice ride. Where'd you steal it?

KRISHNA

It's my grandfather's car. He's going around, visiting this part of town.

MADGE

And why would he do that?

KRISHNA

Because he owns this part of town.

MADGE

Tell me, is your grandmother here with him?

KRISHNA  
She died last year.

MADGE  
I'm so sorry. How absolutely  
tragic.

KRISHNA  
Would you mind if he comes and has  
lunch with us?

MADGE  
I'd like that very much.

She goes to get into the car, then turns, smiles at Norman.

MADGE (cont'd)  
Maybe I was wrong. We don't stop  
playing because we grow old. We  
grow old because we stop playing.

She climbs in, and drives away in style.

Norman watches her go, then turns and walks off.

Just as he's about to disappear round a corner, he does a  
little jump, clicks his heels together. Then he's gone.

INT/EXT. TAXI/STREET - DAY

Sonny, Douglas and Jean are sitting in an appalling traffic  
jam.

JEAN  
Time?

DOUGLAS  
We're doing alright.

SONNY  
No we're not.

DOUGLAS  
Thanks Sonny.

They sit in sweltering silence for a while.

SONNY  
It's funny. They call it rush  
hour, but nothing moves.  
(beat)  
It's not that funny.

JEAN  
This is bloody ridiculous.

She opens the car door.

SONNY

Don't get out of the car!

JEAN

Why ever not?

She gets out.

SONNY

Dhulandi.

Jean ignores him, looks on down the long line of stationary cars.

Suddenly she clutches her stomach.

JEAN

Ow!

DOUGLAS

What? What?

When Jean takes her hands away from her stomach, they're bright red. And there's a red patch spreading all over her chest ...

JEAN

Shot! I've been shot!

DOUGLAS

My god! Is there a doctor?  
Someone call a ... What are you  
laughing at?

SONNY

It's paint. Paint! Look around.

They do. Everywhere is a riot of extraordinary colour. People have mixed dust of various pigments into paint, and are throwing it each other, at cars and buildings. And oftentimes they don't even use the paint, they just throw the dust. Which rises on up into the sky like so many multicoloured clouds.

SONNY (cont'd)

The second day of Holi. The  
Festival of Colours.

Douglas can barely speak.

DOUGLAS

That is the most beautiful thing I  
have ever seen.

JEAN

We're never going to get out of  
here. We're trapped in an endless  
vortex, and there is no escape.

SONNY

Yes there is.

A rickshaw arrives next to them, swerving through the traffic. It is ridden by IFTI.

JEAN

You. Can you get us to the airport?

IFTI

Sorry long way sore legs not possible.

JEAN

I'll give you all the money I have.

IFTI

Step right in mind your head let's go.

JEAN

Come on, Douglas. Come on!

Douglas tears himself away from the wonderful vista, and gets the suitcases out of the trunk of Sonny's car.

IFTI

Sorry no manage people and cases.

JEAN

What?

IFTI

Not possible. Two people, no cases; one person, and cases.

JEAN

How about if I give you something else? My watch?

IFTI

Sure. Thank you. But is still not possible.

DOUGLAS

We can't leave our stuff. We'll get another flight.

JEAN

Douglas, I am catching this plane. I'm getting on it, and I'm turning left.

DOUGLAS

Then you do that. I'll get the next one, I'll come later.

JEAN  
When?

DOUGLAS  
Sorry?

JEAN  
When? How much later? When will  
you come?

Douglas says nothing.

JEAN (cont'd)  
Douglas? When will you come?

DOUGLAS  
I won't.  
(beat)  
I want to stay here.

Long silence.

SONNY  
That's what I'm talking about. 24  
hour truth.

DOUGLAS  
Sonny.

SONNY  
Yes?

DOUGLAS  
Get back in the car.

SONNY  
You might need some pointers.

DOUGLAS  
I'll be fine.

Sonny looks at him, smiles.

SONNY  
Yes you will.

He gets back in the car.

Douglas and Jean stand in silence for a moment.

JEAN  
Yes. I see. I do see.

DOUGLAS  
Jean ...

JEAN  
I should get going.

DOUGLAS

Wait.

JEAN

I really can't.

DOUGLAS

Will you be alright?

JEAN

Do you care?

DOUGLAS

Very much.

Jean smiles.

JEAN

I rather think I'll be more than alright.

She gets into the rickshaw.

JEAN (cont'd)

You're not the only one who deserves better than what we've had.

DOUGLAS

No.

JEAN

And like Stella says: it's never too late ...

(to Ifti)

Let's go.

IFTI

Do I get the watch?

JEAN

Just pedal.

They ride off. Jean doesn't look back.

Douglas picks up his suitcase, turns, and starts to walk back to the Marigold Hotel, through the clouds of coloured dust.

If the streets could normally be described as crowded, then today they're teeming. And it's not just loud, but deafening. The carnival atmosphere is everywhere.

Douglas responds to the energy, quickens his stride.

And now he's running. Through the street parties, through the paint. He's getting covered.

Then his suitcase bursts open. He goes to gather up the clothes that have fallen out, then gives up.

He leaves the suitcase and all its contents on the kerbside. And jogs on.

EXT. MARIGOLD HOTEL - DAY

Douglas is exhausted. But still going.

He heads through the gate, stumbles up the path towards the hotel.

And there, sitting on the verandah, is Evelyn.

She stands. They stare at each other.

She looks beautiful. He, on the other hand, is covered in multi-coloured dust. And looks as if he's about to die.

EVELYN  
Are you alright?

He opens his mouth to say something. But he can't catch his breath, and no words come.

DOUGLAS  
I ... I ...

EVELYN  
It's OK. Catch your breath. I can wait. I can wait.

He still can't speak, but he nods vigorously. Then suddenly he smiles.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
What?

He holds up eight fingers.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
What is it, what are you ...?  
Eight? What's ...? Oh I see. Is it eight words?

Douglas nods, shows one finger.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
First word ...

Douglas makes a 'W' with his fingers.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
W? What's W? Is it 'what', 'why'  
or ... or 'we'? Is it we?

Douglas nods, still panting. He shows five fingers.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Fifth word.

Douglas points to his watch.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Watch? We something with your  
watch?

Douglas shakes his head, points to his watch again. Then at Evelyn and himself.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Oh. I know what you're saying.

She smiles.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
We have all the time in the world.

ENDS.

OVER THE END TITLES ...

Upstairs Surinda flings open some shutters, looks happily at the scene below her.

On the verandah Norman is sitting with a nice looking woman. They're laughing as they watch Mrs Kapoor ranting at Sonny.

Stella wanders aimlessly in the garden, near to where Madge is chatting to a very handsome old man.

Muriel emerges from the kitchen side door, to take a fag break with Anokhi.

And Douglas and Evelyn come in through the gate, and walk hand in hand up the path towards their home.