

OLD  
49

The Unpacked Wedding

THE UNEXPECTED WEDDING

by

MAURICE ROWDON

CHARACTERS

REGINALD PAGE

JEAN PAGE

GORDON PAGE

KATE RIDOLFI

ESMERALDA RIDOLFI

GIORGIO RIDOLFI

COLIN TRELAWNY

REGISTRAR

GINO

ARTHUR WAINWRIGHT

LANGUAGE-CLASS PUPILS, SECRETARY,  
NURSE, RESTAURANT GUESTS ETC.

THE KITCHENETTE OF A SMALL S.W. LONDON HOUSE. JEAN PAGE, IN HER EARLY FORTIES, IS GETTING BREAKFAST AS THE TITLES COME UP. SHE PUTS TEA IN THE POT, POURS. THE TOAST POPS UP IN THE RACK. SHE WALKS QUICKLY NEXT DOOR TO THE LIVING ROOM, WHERE THE TABLE IS LAID FOR THREE. AT TWO OF THE PLACES THERE IS A BOILED EGG, KEEPING WARM UNDER EGG COVERS MARKED 'REG' AND 'JEAN'. JEAN GLANCES OUT OF THE WINDOW, WATCHES THE WEATHER FOR A MOMENT. THERE IS THE SOUND OF A FACTORY HOOTER OUTSIDE.

JEAN (CALLING) Reg! Come on!  
(AS SHE PUTS THE TEAPOT DOWN AND THEN THE COSY ON IT) Reg!

REG (VO) All right, give me a chance!

REG, ALSO IN HIS EARLY FORTIES, COMES BUSTLING IN IN HIS OVERALLS, RUBBING HIS HANDS TOGETHER.

REG: Blimey it's nippy. (SITTING DOWN) That thermostat all right?

JEAN: You've got thermostat on the brain. It's seventy-odd---- what more do you want?

REG (CRACKING HIS EGG) Where's our young son---preparing for a hard day's work?

JEAN (ALSO SITTING DOWN) I've given up calling him of a morning.

REG: Did I hear 'em talking down here last night, round about two? Him and young Kate? Of course, if you've got no work it makes no odds when you come in at night.

JEAN: Oh leave the boy alone.

REG: Words! Good God, that boy gets through some words in a day! Who the devil does he get it from?

JEAN: Mum.

REG: Yes but he talks sense.

JEAN: Ha ha.

REG: Sometimes.

KATE'S LAUGHTER BREAKS OVER. THEY GO ON EATING. JEAN STIRS HER TEA. REG BITES INTO TOAST, CRUNCH-CRNUCH.

CUT TO A COLLEGE LIBRARY, WITH KATE'S LAUGHTER STILL OVER. IN ONE OF THE CUBICLES KATE, AGED 20, and GORDON, AGED 19, ARE SITTING CLOSE TOGETHER. IT IS EVENING. SHE HAS BOOKS BEFORE HER. THE LIBRARY IS OTHERWISE DESERTED. KATE IS FINISHING A COLOURED CONTOUR MAP AND THERE ARE VARIOUS COLOURED INKS ON THE TABLE. GORDON IS TRYING TO DAB A SPOT OF RED INK FROM HIS NOSE WITH BLOTTING PAPER.

GORDON: It won't come off.

KATE: That was the idea.

HE DABS QUIETLY AND SHE RETURNS TO HER WORK.

GORDON (LOOKING ROUND) I wish I could work here. All these books. I sit and dream about this college.

KATE: Dreamy! Always dreaming! And still at school! Eternal school-boy!

GORDON SEIZES ONE OF THE INK POTS AS IF TO POUR IT OVER HER. SHE SHRIEK S WITH LAUGHTER AND DASHES AWAY FROM THE TABLE. HE CHASES <sup>her</sup> ROUND THE LIBRARY, AMONG THE SHADOWS. WE HEAR THEIR GASPED LAUGHTER. THEY STOP IN ONE OF THE UNLIGHTED CUBICLES AND WE DRAW INTO THEM.

KATE (IN A WHISPER) You'll wake up all the dead professors. We've got lots of dead professors!

GORDON PUTS HIS ARMS ROUND HER. THEY KISS, OUT OF BREATH, STILL GIGGLING.

KATE: I've got to finish (HE IS MORE INTERESTED IN KISSING) They gave me the key because they trusted me (LAUGHING AGAIN)!

SHE TRIES TO STRUGGLE FREE.

GORDON: Say something in Italian.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM FOR A MOMENT.

KATE: Sei un bischero tu!  
(SCREAMING WITH LAUGHTER)

GORDON (TICKLING HER) What does it mean?

KATE: No! No! Gordon----!  
It means---!

GORDON: Yes?

KATE (TRYING NOT TO LAUGH AGAIN)  
It means you're very beautiful.

GORDON: It doesn't! (TICKLING HER AGAIN) Say something else!

KATE: Sei tutto storto!

GORDON (IMITATING HER) To-to-to-to-to!

KATE: Say it! 'Sono tutto storto io'!

GORDON: Sonnoh tuttoh tortoh eeh!

KATE: Good! It means 'I'm completely twisted'!

MORE HELPLESS LAUGHTER AND TICKLING. SHE IMITATES A TWISTED MAN, WITH CROSS EYES.

SILENCE.

GORDON: What does it feel like--- having two countries?

KATE: Like being two people.

GORDON: Is that nice?

KATE: Yes. It means you have two lives.

SILENCE.

GORDON: It's funny---I've noticed--- you talk to your mother and father as if they were our age.

KATE: That's how they feel to me.

GORDON: I can't even think of my parents as human. I mean I love them and all that.

KATE: I've got to finish.

GORDON: You agree with them don't you?

KATE: Who?

GORDON: Your mum and dad. That we shouldn't be alone together. It's funny, you're English but you're not like Pam and Bren and that girl from Swansea. You want to keep your virginity.

KATE: You should go with them in that case.

GORDON: They're not in the same class. Say something real nice--- in Italian, go on.

KATE: Ti voglio bene.

MEANING 'I LOVE YOU': SHE SUBSIDES ON TO THE TABLE AND HE SOON FINDS HIMSELF LYING ON TOP OF HER.

GORDON (IN A WHISPER) Am I a school-boy?

KATE SHAKES HER HEAD.

KATE: You're beautiful. A beautiful man.

THEY BEGIN MAKING LOVE.

CUT BACK TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM. REG AND JEAN HAVE BEEN JOINED AT BREAKFAST BY GORDON, WHO IS EATING TOAST WITHOUT MUCH APPEARANCE OF APPETITE.

REG: Yes but what I mean is you can have a lay-in when you want to, not like other people who go out on a regular job. That's all I'm saying. I mean I know you study but it's not work like I mean it.

GORDON: Oh I see. So why do you want me to go to the university?

REG: I haven't said a blame word about it. All I know is what your teachers say---so I say, all right, let him have a go, let him try for the university and then maybe he'll get a better job than his dad. All parents want to see their sons better than themselves. I don't want you pulling up floorboards and flicking switches all your life, stands to reason.

GORDON: If your work's no good why do you do it?

REG: I've got to do something  
haven't I?

GORDON: Why?

REG: How would you and mum keep  
alive?

GORDON: You needn't have married.

REG (WITH A LAUGH) Well I needn't  
have been born come to that!

GORDON: I just don't get it.  
You're supposed to be marvellous  
because you've got a job, and I'm  
supposed to be a layabout because  
I read books, yet you don't want me  
to do your work---you don't want me  
to be marvellous like you!

JEAN (TICKLED) That's it Gordon!

REG: No I'm not saying that.  
I'm just saying you could get it  
easier than what I did maybe.

GORDON: Oh I see! We're all out  
for an easy time. That's the idea  
of going to the university is it?  
I still don't get it! I mean you  
must get some kick out of being an  
electrician, otherwise it's not worth  
being alive!

REG: Well I suppose I do get some.  
Otherwise I wouldn't do it.

GORDON: So you're doing what you  
want to do! Like I said!

REG: Yes but if I had a cushier  
job with a bit more money I'd be  
happier.

GORDON: Oh! The penny's dropped!  
I've got a cushy job waiting for me,  
that's why I want to go to the unive-  
sity! It's going to be dead easy!  
I get it!

REG: Well it stands to reason you'll  
get more money, if you qualify.

GORDON: That's wrong for a start.  
Half the arts students in the States  
are out of a job! And old Trelawny  
gets about half your money---

REG: Who's Trelawny for God's sake?

GORDON: My history teacher. And  
he doesn't get time and a half for  
fake overtime either!

REG: Yes and I don't get nice long holidays like he does!

GORDON: He works harder in the holidays than he does in term! And he likes his work! He can't stop doing it! He told me so himself.. All that private coaching he's giving me is for free. So we're not all out for a good time all the time!

SILENCE. REG POURS HIMSELF ANOTHER CUP OF TEA, EATING BUSILY.

REG (STIRRING) What beats me is how long you can go without doing anything---I mean with your hands.

GORDON: You're talking about yourself.

REG: Oh I see. (TO JEAN) I'm talking about myself. (TO GORDON) How's that?

GORDON: Well if you sat down without a paper or a pint of beer in front of you you'd have nothing in your head. Whereas I've got thoughts..

REG (HALF RISING) Oh you have have you you snotty bugger----!

JEAN (TO REG) All right! He's only taking the mike!

REG: You take the mike much more mate and I'll show you the back of my hand! You idling ponce!

GORDON PUSHES BACK HIS CHAIR WITH A CLATTER AND STAMPS OUT OF THE ROOM.

JEAN: What did you say that for? You know how he hates that word ponce.

REG: Oh----! You and him! I don't even know what the word means! It just comes out. He always had to walk off like that---can't finish anything---can't finish school---can't start university---can't start a job---Chris knows what that girl sees in him! She went to college when she was eighteen---not him! She's got her finals soon! And he hasn't started! (GIVING HER UNCONCERNED FACE A GLANCE) Expect me to be proud of that?

CUT TO A SMALL CLASSROOM AT GORDON'S SCHOOL. THERE ARE A FEW DESKS SET ROUND THE ROOM CASUALLY. ~~AND~~ COLIN TRELAWNY, A TEACHER IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES, AND GORDON ARE THE ONLY OCCUPANTS. THERE IS NO TEACHER'S ROSTRUM. THEY ARE SEATED NEAR EACH OTHER AND TRELAWNY HAS GORDON'S LATEST HANDWRITTEN PAPER BEFORE HIM.

TRELAWNY: Do you really see what I mean?

GORDON: I think so.

TRELAWNY GAZES AT HIM WITH SOME HESITATION.

COLIN: There's another point. You don't really believe that the peasants rebelled in the fourteenth century just because they couldn't bear conditions any more. Somebody once said that revolutions came out of hope, not despair. So perhaps conditions in the fourteenth century were better than they'd ever been before.

GORDON: Yes.

COLIN: So why do you say the opposite? I'll tell you why. Because it saves you trouble.

GORDON IS GAZING AHEAD. PAUSE.

COLIN: Did you get any of that?

GORDON: Yes.

COLIN: It's not much use me giving you private time if it's not going to lead anywhere is it? I mean you've got to pull your weight too.

GORDON: I do---I---!

COLIN: Yes, well, it's no# good getting emotional about it. You've taken three university entrances and you're not going to find a place anywhere unless you sit down and really swear to get through. Because you've got all it takes. ~~You're first-class university material---everybody knows that.~~

GORDON: It's no good swearing ----  
if I read any more I'll go blind.  
I mean, I think I read too much---  
I get muddled up---as soon as I sit  
down to write a paper it all fogs  
over.

COLIN: And what ideas have you  
got for later on---after university?  
Do you want to teach?

GORDON: No.

COLIN: Research?

GORDON: No.

SILENCE..

GORDON: Civil service or something  
like that?

GORDON: No.

COLIN: What then?

GORDON: I don't know.

CUT TO THE COLLEGE LIBRARY. STUDENTS  
ARE POURING INTO IT AT LUNCHTIME.  
THEY ARE SHUSHED QUIET BY THOSE STUDY-  
ING. WE FIND KATE AT A CROWDED  
TABLE IN ONE OF THE CUBICLES. SHE  
IS TAKING NOTES FROM A BOOK.

GORDON COMES IN, LOOKING ROUND.  
HE SEES KATE AND GOES OVER AND SITS  
OPPOSITE HER, GAZING AT HER WITH A  
SMILE. SHE IS STILL TAKING NOTES.  
THEN SOMETHING MAKES HER LOOK UP  
AND SHE SEES HIM. SHE MAKES A  
DELIGHTED SMILE. SHE TEARS A PAGE  
OUT OF HER NOTEBOOK AND WRITES SOME-  
THING ON IT IN PENCIL. WITH A  
GLANCE AT THE OTHER OCCUPANTS OF THE  
TABLE SHE PUSHES THE PAPER ACROSS TO  
GORDON. HE READS IT.

WE SEE THE PAPER FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW. IT  
READS, IN BLOCK CAPITALS, 'I AM  
PREGNANT'.

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM. REG  
IS WASHING AFTER WORK, AT THE SINK  
IN THE KITCHENETTE. JEAN IS MAKING  
TEA.

REG (STOOPED, AND BLINDED WITH WATER)  
Got a towel there mate?

JEAN (PUSHING A TOWEL IN HIS OUT-  
STRETCHED HAND) I wish to God  
you'd use the bathroom.

REG: Too nippy.

JEAN: Yes well I said we should have had a radiator put up there. Everybody has radiators in their bathrooms. But no!

REG DRIES HIMSELF BRISKLY.

REG: I went in his bedroom just now---books all over the bed---on the dresser---he must do some kind of work.

JEAN: He just needs leaving alone that's all.

REG: He needs a job! A boy of nineteen still at school!

CUT TO ESMERALDA'S LANGUAGE CLASS. ESMERALDA RUDOLFI IS KATE'S ITALIAN MOTHER. SHE IS IN HER LATE FORTIES, DRESSED RATHER PICTURESQUELY. SHE IS TEACHING FROM A ROSTRUM AND HAS A BLACKBOARD BEHIND HER. THERE ARE A DOZEN OR SO PUPILS, ALL OF THEM ADULT.

ESMERALDA: Io vorrei---'I would like'. But io voglio---'I want'. And io ti voglio bene---'I love you'! (A LITTLE SQUEAL OF LAUGHTER ESCAPES HER) So what is 'I want'?

PUPILS: Ioh vohlioh!

ESMERALDA: 'I would like'?

PUPILS (WITH MORE DIFFICULTY) Ioh vorray.

ESMERALDA: 'You would like'? (THEIR EFFORTS FAIL) Io vorresti! (ARCHLY) And 'I love you'?

PUPILS: Ioh----vohlioh---ti----vorrei----

ESMERALDA: Io ti voglio bene! Notice please, I cannot make 'you' formal---I cannot say io Le voglio bene---self-evidently, because we don't fall in love with strangers! (ANOTHER SQUEAL) Notice that we Italians reserve adoro and 'amo'---'I love', 'I adore'---for things rather than people. Io adoro la tua casa---I simply adore your house! Io adoro Mozart---io adoro Parigi---I love Paris! The reason? In Italy we have the battle of the sexes!

THE DOOR OPENS AND GORDON PEEPS INSIDE. ESMERALDA LOOKS ROUND. SHE SHOWS SOME SURPRISE.

ESMERALDA: Yes Gordon?

GORDON: Could I see you a minute?

SHE GAZES AT HIM FOR A MOMENT AND SEES THAT HE IS IN SOME DISTRESS.

ESMERALDA (TO THE CLASS) Will you excuse me un momentino? Notice we have one word for a 'tiny moment'. The diminutive is one of the most decorative features of our language. Now I am just going to have a word with this ragazzino---this 'little boy'---and I shall be back with you in un momentino!

SHE LEAVES THE ROOM WITH GORDON.

CUT TO THE LOBBY OUTSIDE ESMERALDA'S CLASS AS SHE AND GORDON COME OUT. THERE ARE HATS AND COATS HANGING EVERYWHERE.

ESMERALDA (GRIPPING HIS ARM) What happened? Why isn't Kate with you?

GORDON: She's got a lecture.

ESMERALDA (STILL GRIPPING HIS ARM) What happened? (FACES CLOSE TOGETHER)

GORDON: She's going to have a baby.

ESMERALDA: A---? (STARING AT HIM FOR SOME TIME WITH HER MOUTH OPEN)  
O Dio! No! No! Non è possibile!  
No! (STRIKING AT HIM WILDLY)  
Malscalzone---malscalzone che sei!  
Porcacione! Mia figlia! Mia  
ppvera figlia! O Dio! Che  
facio, che facio?

SOME OF THE PUPILS EMERGE FROM THE CLASS AND TRY TO RESTRAIN HER. SHE TEARS HER OWN COAT FROM THE WALL.

ESMERALDA (TO GORDON) Dove sta mia figlia? (GORDON FAILS TO UNDERSTAND) Dove sta?! Where is my daughter?

GORDON: At her college.

ESMERALDA: Do you still drive your father's car?

GORDON: Yes.

ESMERALDA: Then take me there!

GORDON: Where?

ESMERALDA: To my daughter!  
(GRABBING HIM) Andiamo! E poi  
ti sistemo subito eh? (PUSHING  
HIM OUTSIDE) Scemo! Sei un scemo!  
O Dio! Figlia mia! Che hai  
fatto?

ESMERALDA AND GORDON DISAPPEAR.

THE PUPILS GAZE AT EACH OTHER.

PUPIL 1: What's the trouble---  
anybody speak Italian round here?

PUPIL 2: She called him a lot of  
dirty names, that's all I know.  
Porcacione means a dirty pig.

PUPIL 3: I thought I heard him say  
her daughter was having a baby.

PUPIL 1: What! And he comes and  
tells her himself. He wants his  
brains testing!

PUPIL 2: That's English integrity.

PUPIL 1: English stupidity.

CUT TO// THE ENTRANCE HALL OF THE  
PAGE HOUSE. A TELEPHONE IS STAND-  
ING IN THE CORNER ON A SHELF.  
IT IS RINGING. THE LIVING ROOM DOOR  
OPENS AND REG EMERGES, EATING, IN  
HIS OVERALLS. HE TAKES UP THE  
RECEIVER AND MASTICATES STEADILY  
BEFORE BEING ABLE TO SAY HULLO.

REG: Hullo?

ESMERALDA (VO) Do I speak to his  
father? I wish you to come to me  
at once, can you get a bus, he has  
your car, I have something to speak,  
my husband is not in!

REG (GETTING RID OF THE LAST OF HIS  
FOOD PREMATURELY) Here, hold on,  
hold on! Have you got the right  
number?

ESMERALDA (VO) He is with me---  
you must come---he is here!

REG: Who the hell's he?

ESMERALDA (VO) What is your name?---  
Gordon! Gordon!

REG: What, my son? What's up  
then? Is he all right? Who are  
you?

ESMERALDA (VO, SCREAMING WITH IMPATIENCE) Her mother! Her mother!

REG: What do you mean, 'her'? You're talking about my son aren't you?

JEAN EMERGES FROM THE LIVING ROOM, ALSO EATING.

JEAN: Who is it?

REG: That's what I'd like to know!

ESMERALDA (VO) O Dio, che imbroglio!  
(SPEAKING TO KATE AT THE OTHER END)  
Caterina, Mieni tu! Suo babbo  
capisce fiaschi per fiaschi!

KATE (VO) Hullo, Mr Page? My mother would like you to come over and see us.

REG: What's that? Your mother? And who are you?

KATE (VO) I'm Kate.

REG: Oh, hullo Kate!

JEAN: Is Gordon all right---where is he?

REG (TO JEAN) Be quiet, for Christ sake! I can't listen to two lunatics at once! Hullo? Kate? What's up then?

KATE (VO) Nothing. Only mum would like you to come over and see her---right away.

REG: Well something must be up then mustn't it? Where's Gordon?

KATE (VO) He's here.

REG: 'He's here' she says! (WITH QUIET IRRITATION) Hand him over will you please dear?

GORDON (VO) Hullo dad.

REG: 'Hullo dad'. What's the trouble now? You in a Spanish prison or something?

GORDON (VO) It's Italian, not Spanish.

REG: All right, when you've finished giving me lip, what's wrong?

GORDON (VO) Kate's mother wants to see you right away!

REG: So there's trouble isn't there? Listen, are you too bloody educated to form a simple phrase?

GORDON: Well, she wants to see you that's all.

REG (SLOWLY) What---is---the---trouble?

GORDON (VO) Kate's having a baby.

REG: Oh blimey!

CUT TO THE LOCAL REGISTRY OFFICE. WE ARE FACING THE REGISTRAR WHO IS READING THE CIVIL WEDDING CEREMONY TO KATE AND GORDON.

REGISTRAR: ...Will you join hands please? Say after me, I Gordon Page, will take Catarina Maria Ridolfi.....

GORDON: I Gordon Page...;

REGISTRAR (TO KATE) Will you please say after me, I CATARINA Maria Ridolfi-----

A. WOMAN'S SOBS ARE HEARD. THE REGISTRAR LOOKS UP AND MAKES AN EMBARRASSED SMILE, THEN GOES ON.

REGISTRAR:----will take Gordon Page.....

KATE: I Catarina Maria Ridolfi will take Gordon Page.....

ESMERALDA'S SOBS CONTINUE. WE PULL BACK TO FIND REG AND JEAN TOGETHER AND, SOME SEATS AWAY, GIORGIO AND ESMERALDA RIDOLFI. GIORGIO IS A MILD ROMAN IN HIS EARLY MIDDLE AGE AND HE IS GIVING HER SOBBING ESMERALDA DRYLY IMPATIENT LOOKS. ALSO PRESENT AS WITNESS IS COLIN TRELAWNY.

REGISTRAR: Will you please put the ring on the lady's marriage finger?

GORDON DOES SO. THE SOBS CONTINUE.

REGISTRAR: Well, now you are married, and it remains for me to wish you a long and happy life together. You are both young---

ESMERALDA: Pur troppo!

GIORGIO GIVES HER A LONG DRY LOOK.

REGISTRAR: ---very young, at the beginning of your life and ---I am sure---careers too!

ESMERALDA (CYNICALLY) Ha!

REGISTRAR: Nowadays perhaps we tend to overlook the basic meaning of marriage, which is to have children.

ESMERALDA: O!

GIORGIO: Ma Esmeralda!

REGISTRAR: There is nothing else in marriage that can replace a child, and I hope---I hope with all my heart---that you will soon be a mother and father.

ESMERALDA: Sono già!

GIORGIO: Ma Esmeralda, vuoi che ti porto fuori?

ESMERALDA: Si! Portami <sup>al</sup> inferno!

GIORGIO (TO HIMSELF, GRITTING HIS TEETH) Mannaggia, misericordia!

REGISTRAR: Now we just have to sign the book-----

TRELAWNY/AS THE WITNESS MOVES FORWARD WITH GORDON AND KATE. EVERYONE FORMS A GROUP ROUND THE MARRIED COUPLE, THOUGH THERE IS NO REJOICING.

CUT TO GINO'S RESTAURANT IN SOHO. IT IS CROWDED MOSTLY WITH ITALIANS. A LONG TABLE IN THE CORNER HAS THE WEDDING PARTY ROUND IT---GORDON, KATE, TRELAWNY, GIORGIO, ESMERALDA, JEAN AND REG. THEY ARE ON THEIR FIRST COURSE---MELON AND SMOKED HAM. THERE ARE CARADES OF RED WINE AND SEVERAL PLATES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE CONTAINING BREAD AND CROSTINI IN CELLOPHANE PACKETS. LOUD ITALIAN TALK COMES OVER.

GIORGIO IS AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE AT ONE END, AND REG AT THE OTHER.

GORDON AND KATE ARE SEATED TOGETHER, WITH KATE NEXT TO REG, AND OPPOSITE THEM ARE ESMERALDA (ALSO NEXT TO REG), COLIN TRELAWNY AND JEAN PAGE (NEXT TO GIORGIO).

GINO HIMSELF IS LOOKING AFTER THE TABLE, WITH TWO YOUNG WIATERS GOING TO AND FRO. HE BENDS IN CONFERENCE WITH GIORGIO RIDOLFI.

ESMERALDA (ACROSS TO KATE) Come senti?

KATE. (WITH TENDER IMPATIENCE)  
Bene, mamma, bene! (TO GORDON)  
She always wants to know how I feel!

ESMERALDA (STILL TO KATE) Il prosciutto non ti ha fatto male eh?

KATE: No! Per carità! (TO GORDON)  
She says did the ham make me feel bad..

ESMERALDA.: If I wish to talk to Gordon I'm capable of doing so on my own behalf! I not only speak English but I teach it!

KATE: You teach Italian!

ESMERALDA (GIVING IT TO THE WHOLE TABLE) To some of them I teach English too---to those who are happier with a screwdriver in their hands, and a length of electric wire, than a book!

GORDON FINDS THIS THRUST AMUSING AND GLANCES AT REG.

JEAN: Oh we've got to have people working with their hands Mrs Ridoli (PRONOUNCED RIDDLE-Y).

ESMERALDA IS MAGNIFICENTLY UNAWARE OF JEAN.

REG (TO GORDON) What's so funny?

GORDON: No, I was just thinking I'd prefer a civilisation with candles.

REG: You try and get your central heating going with candles---I mean, you're not an enemy of central heating are you? Considering you put the thermostat up to 80-odd every time you come in the house!

JEAN (QUIETLY) All right, all right.

GIORGIO: Now what may I order?

ESMERALDA: Io prendo un carciofo, non condito!

KATE LAUGHS. GINO THE RESTAURATEUR SMILES DOUBTFULLY.

ESMERALDA: Ma si! Ora che c'ho un carciofo in famiglia---allora lo mangio!

KATE LAUGHS LOUDER.

GIORGIO (SCOLDING ESMERALDA)  
Esmeralda---un po' di educazione, no?

ESMERALDA (WITH A TOSS OF HER HEAD)  
'Educazione', 'educazione'!

KATE (TO GORDON) She says all she wants ~~to eat~~ is an artichoke without any dressing---she says she's got one in the family now, so she might as well eat one!

GORDON: Got what?

KATE: An artichoke! It means a fool!

GORDON (HIS SMILE SOURED) Oh thanks very much!

GIORGIO (TO JEAN) Now what would you like Mrs Page?

JEAN (WITH A HELPLESS GLANCE AT REG) Well, I'm not used to your food---I can find my way in Spanish---but---

REG: Let him order for you. You order what you think we'd like, Mr Ridolifi. We'll try anything---once! (WITH AN ATTEMPTED LAUGH)

GORDON: Oh dear!

JEAN (SOTTO VOCE, TO GORDON) Stop taking the mike!

GIORGIO: Well I know what's good here at Gino's---I recommend the saltimbocca alla romana.

REG (ENCOURAGINGLY) Oh yes.

GIORGIO GIVES THE ORDER TO GINO.

ESMERALDA: Literally it means 'leap into the mouth'---in the Roman way!

REG: Oh!

GINO LEAVES WITH THE ORDER.

JEAN: It isn't alive is it because (THE WINE GIVES HER A SUDDEN CONFIDENTIAL TONE) they told me once oysters was alive, and I never touched them again---you know, I couldn't!---I went cold all over---and I had it in my mouth!

ESMERALDA LEANS AWAY FROM HER.  
REG MAKES SYMPATHETIC LAUGHTER FOR JEAN.

ESMERALDA (LEVELLY, TO JEAN) Not only is saltimbocca very much alive, like all things Italian---it is impaled on a stick---in the cruellest way.

CUT TO A LARGE PLATTER BEARING A NUMBER OF SALTIMBOCCHES (STEAK WITH A SLICE OF BACON SECURED TO IT BY MEANS OF A TOOTHPICK) AS IT IS CARRIED SHOULDER-HIGH ACROSS THE ROOM. FOLLOW IT TO OUR PARTY, WHICH IS IN TALK EXCEPT FOR ESMERALDA.

THE DISH IS SERVED. WAITERS ALSO SERVE FRENCH FRIED AND SPINACH, ON SIDE PLATES. REG AND JEAN WATCH THE SALTIMBOCCA WITH SOME DOUBT.

REG (TO ESMERALDA) Well, I can recognise the top layer---it's a nice homely rasher of bacon, unless my eyes have been deceiving me again.

REG TOUCHES THE TOOTHPICK.

GORDON (TO REG) You've got to eat that.

REG:: Eh?

GORDON:: That's not a toothpick like it looks. It's a delicacy. From Naples.

REG: You're a scream today. Good thing you don't get married often.

COLIN TRELAWNY AND GIORGIO REMOVE THE TOOTHPICKS FROM THEIR MEAT. WITH A LOOK AT GORDON REG DOES THE SAME. GIORGIO RAISES HIS GLASS TOWARDS THE NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE.

GIORGIO: Le sposo! (TO JEAN) It means the bride and bridegroom.

JEAN: Oh yes!

REG., JEAN AND TRELAWNY RAISE THEIR GLASSES TOWARDS THE COUPLE. ESMERALDA REMAINS QUITE STILL.

GIORGIO (SHOCKED, TO ESMERALDA)  
Ma Esmeralda, veramente----!

SHE RAISES HER GLASS SLOWLY TOWARDS KATE.

ESMERALDA: A mia figlia! (DRINKING THE GLASS EMPTY, THEN WITH A SMACK OF THE LIPS:) Perchè ha fatto la sciocca!

THE WAITERS LOOK AT HER WITH ASTONISHMENT, UNCERTAIN WHETHER TO LAUGH. GIORGIO SHRUGS AND DECIDES TO TREAT IT AS A JOKE. BUT KATE IS STUNG BY HER MOTHER'S ~~REMARK~~ AND GLARES AT HER.

GIORGIO: Here's health!

THEY ALL DRINK EXCEPT ESMERALDA.

KATE (TO ESMERALDA, WITH ANGER)  
Perchè vuoi fare una scena? Sono sposata no? Allora? Ho scelto mio marito!

ESMERALDA (BURSTING INTO TEARS) Si, si, hai scelto! Ma hai scelto male! O Dio! Che disastro! Avevo un sogno---di un marito---per te! O Dio!

GORDON (TO KATE) What's she on about?

KATE (WITH GLARES AT HER MOTHER)  
She keeps on saying I've been stupid---and made a bad choice---and she always dreamed of a better husband---!

GIORGIO: Catarina!

GORDON: Oh that's nice!

JEAN: It's no good crying over spilt milk Mrs Ridoli. I mean I could have cried too (SHE NEARLY DOES, PUCKERING UP HER LIPS) I lost a boy of nineteen---an only son---your girl's twenty-one---

REG: Don't you start!

JEAN: And I don't know whether he did it! There's no proof he did it!

GORDON: Did what?

JEAN (TO GORDON) She could have had others! (FULL FLOOD NOW) There was no blood tests---nothing of that! Only what you said. (TO ESMERALDA)! I reckon we was pushed into it!

GIORGIO GAZES AT THE TWO WEEPING WOMEN WITH COOL SCEPTICISM, AND GIVES AN UPWARD GLANCE OF RESIGNATION TO ONE OF THE WAITERS. GINO BUSTLES ROUND HIM.

GINO (WITH JOY) All mothers cry on wedding days. Che bellezza!

GIORGIO (TO GINO) Fall the glasses up.

GINO DOES SO.

GINO (TO ESMERALDA, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT) Forza, signora! (TO JEAN) Courage, madam! (Bending down) Think of a beautiful grandson!

ESMERALDA: O Dio!

KATE: Well if it's going to be this kind of party I'm clearing off! (TO GORDON) Come on! Let's go and see a film!

GORDON AND KATE GET UP BUT BEFORE THEY GO KATE LEANS OVER TOWARDS JEAN.

KATE: And she didn't have others. She had this one because she loves him!

GIORGIO (ALSO RISING) Caterina, vieni quoi! Ma Vieni! cocca mia!

HE GOES TO HIS DAUGHTER LOVINGLY. SHE KISSES HIM, WITH A SPECIAL SMILE.

ESMERALFA (TO KATE) Si, vai via! Lascia la tua mamma! Si!

KATE (TO ESMERALDA) Well promise to behave then!

ESMERALDA (DRYING HER EYES) Si, si, I promise to behave!

KATE DRAWS GORDON BACK TO THE TABLE, AND GIORGIO MAKES A SATISFIED 'Oh-h-h!' AS HE SITS DOWN AGAIN.

ESMERALDA (STILL DRYING AND HEAVING, TO GORDON) Vieni qui, figlio mio!

KATE (TO GORDON) She says go over there. You're her son now.

ESMERALDA (EMBRACING GORDON) Da mi un baciutto!

KATE (TRANSLATING DRILY) Give her a kiss.

ESMERALDA (KISSING HIM, THEN STROKING HIS FACE) Seinbello! Sei anche bello!

KATE: You're beautiful.

GORDON: Yes I got that bit.

ESMERALDA: Mia figlia ha scelta bene!

KATE (FIXING HER MOTHER WITH HER EYES) 'My daughter' chose well'.

GIORGIO: Oh-h-h!

KATE (WITH A SIGH) Now perhaps we can eat. (TO GORDON) Come on!

GORDON RETURNS TO HIS PLACE.

GIORGIO (RAISING HIS GLASS AGAIN) Le sposo!

TRELAWNY (HE HAS BEEN SINKING WINE QUIETLY) Ley spossey!

THEY ALL DRINK. ESMERALDA DRINKS WITH SOMETHING LIKE DESPERATION, AND ALL BUT CHOKES. SHE PUTS THE EMPTY GLASS DOWN LIKE A HATCHET SHE IS BURYING WITH GREAT UNWILLINGNESS. SHE THEN BEGINS EATING, AFTER WITHDRAWING THE TOOTHPICK WITH A GESTURE OF CONTEMPT AND THROWING IT OVER HER SHOULDER. JEAN TACKLES HER FOOD WITH REMINISCENT SNIFFS.

CUT TO THE SAME RESTAURANT LATER. THERE ARE NO OTHER CLIENTS APART FROM THE WEDDING PARTY. THE DOOR TO THE STREET HAS BEEN CLOSED. THE PARTY IS NOW DIVIDED INTO GROUPS, SITTING AT VARIOUS TABLES. A WAITER IS SEATED NEAR THE KITCHEN ENTRANCE, SMOKING. THEY HAVE ALL BEEN DRINKING COFFEE. GIORGIO AND REG ARE SMOKING FAT CIGARS. COLIN TRELAWNY IS TALKING TO ESMERALDA AT ANOTHER TABLE. JEAN, GORDON AND KATE MAKE UP ANOTHER GROUP.

ESMERALDA IS MAKING UP HER FACE WITH IMPATIENT DETACHMENT AS COLIN TRELAWNY TALKS TO HER.

COLIN (HIS STOMACH STILL BOILING WITH CHIANTI) 'I thought that was marvellous---all alone in the Forum---yes, Rome in August!

ESMERALDA: Which is like saying you put your head in a hot oven for pleasure! Rome in August is unbearable.

COLIN: Well we had air conditioning of course. And you could always get a breeze up at the top of----

ESMERALDA (CUTTING HIM OFF) Tell me---I want the truth---will he (NODDING TOWARDS GORDON) pass his exams?

COLIN (CHIANTI TAKEN BY SURPRISE)  
No.

WE CUT TO JEAN~~g~~, KATE AND GORDON.

JEAN (SECRETIVELY FISHING IN HER BAG) Here--- (BRINGING OUT AN ENVELOPE AND GIVING IT TO GORDON)---take this--- don't let your dad see.

GORDON: What is it?

JEAN: You know what it is! I can tell by your eyes! It's what mum gave me to buy a colour TV set--- you have a good honeymoon son--- you'll get two weeks of fun out of that----

GORDON: But dad's already given me some.

JEAN: You won't get far on twenty pounds mate!

KATE (TO JEAN) But you shouldn't Mrs Page---my father's paid the hotel in advance---

JEAN: Well, you keep this for pure fun then. You've got to be clever in this world. I used to play my father some tricks. (TO KATE) He's gone now. He had more money tucked away than he ever said. All in the post office. Anyway (TO GORDON) you shouldn't touch her money (MEANING KATE'S)---start independent--- (WITH A WINK AT KATE) Eh, Kate?

GORDON (FEELING THE ENVELOPE IN HIS POCKET) It seems such a lot.

JEAN: It's the price of a colour TV. (TO KATE) Your mother's very emotional isn't she? Still I suppose it's the Italian blood.

KATE: No. It's just her. Daddy's not like that. She's always been the same. Her friends in Milan call her Theodora Dusa.

CUT TO REG AND GIORGIO. REG IS HAVING TROUBLE WITH HIS CIGAR.

REG: Yes I've often said to the wife let's go down to Italy this year but it always seems to be Spain.  
(PUFF AND EXPLOSIVE COUGH)

GORDON IS WATCHING HIM FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM AND IS AMUSED. REG REGISTERS THIS WITH A SCOWL. GIORGIO GAZES AT REG IN A PLACIDLY BEWILDERED WAY. HE TOUCHES REG'S ARM CONFIDENTIALLY AND DRAWS NEARER TO HIM.

GIORGIO: MrvPage, my wife and I were thinking---how will Caterina and Gordon live? I believe Gordon has his exams soon?

REG: That's right (PFAHH!) He is.

GIORGIO: What kind of career you visulaise for the boy, Mr Page?

REG: Well I mean that's really up to the boy isn't it? I mean you can dictate up to a certain point, can't you, but you've got to leave them a free hand haven't you?

GIORGIO: You see, we have to think of Caterina, only twenty-one, and there's the child, I'm afraid I don't know Gordon very well. It was all done rather quickly.

REG: You're telling me.

GIORGIO: Has he a good brain?

REG: Brain? That boy? You ought to hear him talk. It's marvellous. Some of the things he comes out with. 1141 this and 1705 that. He's got it all pat. You can't pull him up on anything! You're stumped from the word go where young Gordon's concerned (GIORGIO IS QUITE LOST NOW), you're on the floor! (GIORGIO GLANCES AT THE FLOOR) Of course I choke him off sometimes, when he gives me a bit too much lip---that's his trouble, My Ridolifi, he's got too much lip---

GIORGIO (STRAINING) Lip?

REG (WITH A LAUGH). I tell you, I could give him a lovely smack round

the chops sometimes! Oo (RUBBING THE PALM OF HIS HAND) it itches! Know what I mean?

GIORGIO (STARING DOWN AT REG'S HAND WITH SOMETHING LIKE FEAR) Oh yes.

REG: But I always hold back because I think that when you've got something upstairs, you've got a right to take the mickey, unlike most people, who tend to be solid from the neck up! I must say I think your wife's got all it takes---as far as noose goes---there are no flies on her!

GIORGIO (SCREWING UP HIS EYES IN DISTRESS) Flies? on my wife?

CUT TO A HOTEL BEDROOM AT A SEASIDE RESORT. GORDON IS IN BED READING A.L.SMITH'S 'CHURCH AND STATE IN THE MIDDLE AGES'. KATE, IN A NIGHT-DRESS, IS JUST COMING FROM THE BATHROOM, BRUSHING HER HAIR.

GORDON (LOOKING UP) Can you hear the sea?

KATE: I wish it was Italy.

GORDON: Still....

KATE (GAZING AT HIM) You read much more than I do don't you? Yet I sail through every time.

GORDON: You're just a mimic. You pour it in and then you pour it out. But I've got a brain.

SHE LAUGHS.

KATE (SITTING ON THE BED) No but honestly what's the trouble?

GORDON: I don't know! I reckon that if I lived in a place like this I could work alright. (FLICKING THROUGH THE PAGES) I've already read twenty pages. It's when I start thinking about it as work--- I try and work at it too much--- whereas with you it seems easy---

KATE: When I work?

GORDON: Yes. I mean you look as if you're enjoying it. And I make it a grind. That's how he talks--- dad. Unless it's a grind it's not work. So if you've got a happy face you're having it cushy. I think it gets inside you don't you---what your parents think? (KATE SHRUGS) Do you think we love each other?

KATE: I don't know. I don't care. I mean, we've never had anybody else have we?

SILENCE.

GORDON (TOUCHING HER STOMACH) Are you sure you've got something there? It's invisible.

KATE: You're looking in the ~~place~~ wrong place. It's here (INDICATING HER EYES)---can't you see I'm having a baby?

GORDON (WITH A LAUGH) YES!

SILENCE.

KATE: Do you think you'll get through this time?

HE GAZES AT HER.

GORDON: No. Not if I go back home.

KATE: Gordon---why don't you come and live with us?

GORDON SHAKES HIS HEAD MUTELY.

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM.  
IT IS EVENING. JEAN IS GETTING TEA AND REG IS DRYING HIS FACE AFTER A WASH.

JEAN (FROM THE KITCHENETTE) I wish you'd use the bathroom upstairs!

REG: Yes, you've said that before! If it'll keep you quiet I'll have another radiator put upstairs this week. We can use some of that money your mother gave you for a colour TV.

SILENCE. JEAN IS BUSY WITH THE TEA.

REG (EMERGING FROM THE TOWEL AGAIN) Did you put it in the post office?

JEAN: Yes.

REG: Well that's funny, I was in there Saturday morning and----

JEAN (SCREAMING) Now for Christ sake get those overalls off and sit down to your tea!

REG (LEAVING) I'm never late for plaice and chips!

HE TRIPS OUT OF THE ROOM PLAY-  
FULLY BUT THEN PUTS HIS HEAD BACK IN.

REG (IN A LOW VOICE) Is he in then?

JEAN (ALSO LOW) What?

REG: His light's on. Did he  
come back in?

JEAN: He must have done then.

REG: It's not right, I don't care  
what you say---a kid of that age  
married, only just out of school!

JEAN: We should have put our foot  
down. We were pushed into that  
nicely. I'd give her Esmeralda  
if I was her old man!

REG: You'd better put another  
couple of fillets on.

JEAN: All right---you look after  
your business and I'll look after  
mine---now get a decent shirt on!

HE LEAVES. She wanders back into  
the kitchenette.

JEAN: 'Couple of fillets'.

CUT TO GORDON'S BEDROOM. HE IS  
TRYING TO TAKE NOTES FROM A BOOK.  
HE CANNOT CONCENTRATE. HE STARTS  
CRYING TO HIMSELF.

JEAN (VO) Gordon?

GORDON: Yes?

JEAN (VO) I've got a nice piece of  
fried plaice down here for you!

GORDON: OK I'll be down.

JEAN (VO) Are you all right?

SHE HAS HEARD SOMETHING IN HIS  
VOICE AND IS COMING UPSTAIRS.  
HE TRIES TO HIDE HIS STATE BEFORE  
SHE COMES IN. JEAN PEEPS ROUND  
THE DOOR.

JEAN: Here, you've been crying.  
Has that woman been playing you up  
again?

REG (BEHIND HER) What's wrong with  
him?

REG APPEARS TOO.

GORDON (IN TEARS) I can't concentrate!  
It's no good!

JEAN GOES TO THE BED AND DRAWS HIS HEAD TOWARDS HER.

JEAN: There, don't you mind about that! Exams aren't everything. If you worried a bit less you might be all right.

REG: Esmeralda hasn't been at it again has she?

GORDON: No.

REG: You tell her where to stuff it when she starts leading off again. Tell her, just leave me alone Mrs Ridolfi, because it's me taking the exams not you.

GORDON: I wish you'd say her name right. It's Mrs Ridolfi.

JEAN: Anyway I've cooked a lovely bit of fish, duck. Come on. Then we'll go down and have a drink. And try and forget our worries eh?

CUT TO REG, GORDON AND JEAN AT THE PUB DOWN THE ROAD. JEAN AND GORDON ARE JUST ABOUT TO SIT DOWN, AND REG IS ABOUT TO GO TO THE BAR TO ORDER.

JEAN: I think I'll have a gin and tonic.

REG: What's yours, son?

GORDON: Glass of red wine, please.

JEAN: Getting quite Italian eh?

REG GOES TO THE BAR.

JEAN: Where's Kate these days?

GORDON: She's got her finals next week.

JEAN: I wonder you go round there at all. You seem to have lost your spirit son---you used to give your dad a bit of lip but now---

GORDON: I told you, she's got her exams.

JEAN (AS REG COMES WITH THE DRINKS) You should never have got married--- a couple of kids like you! Honestly, I don't know how that Esmeralda did it---she just wound us round her little finger! And this bloke (MEANING REG) was the first to say yes.

REG (LAYING DOWN THE DRINKS)  
What's that?

JEAN: Nothing. (TO GORDON)  
You ought to get yourself digs at  
least. Just you and her. It's  
wrong not living together.

GORDON: Where do I get the money?

JEAN: Oh we might be able to cough  
up something. I can go back to the  
Co-op---

REG: You're not going back to that  
Co-op!

GORDON DOWNS HIS GLASS IN ONE GO.

JEAN (TO REG) Are you going to let  
her look down her nose at him for the  
rest of his life then? Anyway I  
enjoyed that job at the Co-op.

REG (TO GORDON) Blimey, that was  
quick wasn't it?

JEAN: Oh go on! Let him enjoy  
himself!

CUT TO GORDON'S BEDROOM. HE PUSHES  
OPEN THE DOOR UNSTEADILY, HAVING HAD  
SEVERAL GLASSES OF WINE. HE LOOKS  
ROUND AT HIS BOOKS. HE MARCHES TO  
THE BED AND CLOSES THEM ALL. HE  
PACKS THEM RESOLUTELY INTO PILES  
AND STACKS THEM ON THE CHEST OF  
DRAWERS. HE THROWS AWAY HIS BOOK  
OF NOTES. HE LEAVES THE ROOM.

CUT TO GIORGIO RIDOLFI'S OFFICE.  
HE IS CLEARLY IN THE TOURIST BUSINESS.  
THERE ARE POSTERS ROUND THE WALL  
ADVERTISING ITALY. HE IS WORKING  
AT HIS DESK IN HIS SHIRTSLEEVES.  
THE INTERCOM BUZZES.

GIORGIO (PRESSING THE CONTACT) Si?

SECRETARY (VO) C'è un signore, un  
giovanotto---dice/che Le conosce---

GIORGIO (STILL ATTENDING TO HIS  
WORK) Come si chiama?

SECRETARY (VO) Gordon Page.

GIORGIO: Ah---è il mio genero--- può  
si mandarlo a me!

SECRETARY (VO) Va bene.

GIORGIO GOES ON WORKING. THE DOOR  
OPENS AND THE SECRETARY USHERS IN  
GORDON. GIORGIO GETS UP AND GOES  
ROUND HIS DESK TO SHAKE HANDS AFFECT-  
IONATELY.

GIORGIO (SHOWING HIM TO A CHAIR)  
Here. Such a sad face.

GORDON (WITH A SHRUG) Oh!

GIORGIO (PULLING UP ANOTHER CHAIR  
CLOSE TO HIM) You lunch with me?

GORDON: Oh thanks.

GIORGIO: Any trouble?

GORDON: I'm not trying for the  
university any more. I thought  
I'd get a job. I wondered if you  
could help me.

GIORGIO GAZES AT HIM FOR SOME TIME.

GIORGIO: Why you give up?

GORDON: I know it's no good.

GIORGIO: Are you sure?

GORDON: Yes.

GIORGIO GOES TO THE DESK AND TAKES  
UP A PHONE. STILL GAZING AT GORDON  
HE DIALS A NUMBER. ESMERALDA  
ANSWERS AT THE OTHER END.

ESMERALDA (VO) Pronto?

GIORGIO: E Giorgio. Vieni qui  
subito. Trattata di Gordon.

ESMERALDA (VO) Ch'è successo?

GIORGIO: Niente. Vieni qui!

ESMERALDA (VO) Vengo subito!

GIORGIO (AS HE PUTS THE PHONE  
DOWN AGAIN) My wife's coming right  
now.

CUT TO ESMERALDA PUFFINGLY CLIMB-  
ING CEMENT STAIRS. SHE REACHES  
THE LITTLE CLOAKROOM OUTSIDE HER  
CLASS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF HER  
PUPILS STANDING AROUND.

ESMERALDA (TO ANY OF THEM) Have you  
seen Mr Wainwright?

PUPIL 1: He's here (INDICATING THE  
CLASSROOM).

SHE PASSES THROUGH TO THE CLASSROOM.  
HERE ARTHUR WAINWRIGHT, A SHAGGY  
MIDDLE-AGED TEACHER, IS DRINKING A  
CUP OF TEA.

WAINWRIGHT: Hello Mrs Ridolfi.

ESMERALDA: My son-in-law must  
learn Italian right away!

WAINWRIGHT STARES AT HER FOR A MOMENT IN SURPRISE.

WAINWRIGHT: You mean to say that pretty daughter of yours got married? I thought you had her all lined up for me!

ESMERALDA (SOARING PAST HIS FACETIOUSNESS) Could he come to my Italian class?

WAINWRIGHT: Well, of course he could, Mrs Ridolfi, that's for you to say.

ESMERALDA: But it's not up to me to pay---that's what I want to avoid!

WAINWRIGHT (WITH A SMILE) Ah!

ESMERALDA: Couldn't he take some of the English classes for foreign students, the elementary ones, and make it up that way?

WAINWRIGHT: Well you are quick on the drawer! We're butter in your fingers, aren't we, Mrs Ridolfi, eh? Has he got his A levels?

ESMERALDA: Oh yes, one or two, and a few O levels too. All the levels except a level head!

CUT TO A CORRIDOR IN KATE'S COLLEGE. SHE IS JUST LEAVING THE LIBRARY, CARRYING A BRIEFCASE FAT WITH BOOKS. SHE IS BEGINNING TO SHOW SIGNS OF PREGNANCY. SHE HURRIES ALONG. SOMEONE CALLS HER FROM BEHIND. IT IS COLIN TRELAWNY. SHE TURNS.

COLIN (APPROACHING) Mrs Page!

KATE: Hullo. I'm not used to being called that.

TRELAWNY: I've been looking for you everywhere. I got an hour off from school.

KATE (DARKENING) It's about Gordon?

TRELAWNY: You know he wants to give up and find a job don't you?

KATE: What?

TRELAWNY: He didn't tell you?

KATE: No!

TRELAWNY: Your father's found him a job.

KATE (OUTRAGED) My father!

TRELAWNY: You know, it's broken my heart. It seems mad---just a couple of A levels and--- You know he nearly got a history place at Cambridge last year don't you? They wrote me a special letter about him.

BURST IN WITH THE SOUNDS OF A FOOTBALL MATCH AND CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM WHERE REG IS WATCHING AN INTERNATIONAL GAME ON TV. JEAN IS AT HIS SIDE EATING CHOCOLATES. THE TV FLICKERS IN THEIR FACES.

REG: Go on! Go on! Oh Blimey! Honest, he thinks you play with your hands, that feller. What's his name?

JEAN SHRUGS AND GOES ON EATING.

REG: He always doe<sup>s</sup> that---he---

A RING AT THE FRONT-DOOR BELL.

JEAN: That must be Gordon. If he forgets his key again I'll tie it round his bloody neck. (GETTING UP SLOWLY)

REG: Oh! (DANCING IN HIS SEAT) YOU cockeyed ponce---!

THE BELL RINGS AGAIN.

JEAN (AS SHE REACHES THE DOOR, TURNING BACK) And don't use that word!

REG (GLUED TO THE SEAT) Cord love old Ireland---fidgetarsing about between goalposts!

JEAN (VO) Oh Hullo Kate. Good evening Mr Trelawny, this is a nice surprise.

REG COCKS AN EAR. HE HUMPS UP, TIGHTENS HIS TROUSERS WHICH WERE LOOSE, DIVES TO THE TV SET AND SWITCHES IT OFF.

JEAN (VO) Reggy?

REG (STANDING AT THE READY) Yes dear?

JEAN (VO) It's Kate and Mr Trelawny.

REG: Oh that's nice!

KATE AND COLIN TRELAWNY COME IN,

FOLLOWED BY JEAN.

JEAN: Well how are you keeping Kate?

KATE: I'm fine, thank you.

JEAN (WITH A GLANCE AT KATE'S TUMMY) That's right.

REG: Make you self comfortable Mr Trelawny (AS THEY ALL SIT DOWN).

TRELAWNY: Well I'll cut a long story short by saying we've come about Gordon.

JEAN: What's up with Gordon?

TRELAWNY: He won't be going to the university after all.

REG: Since when?

TRELAWNY: So you don't know either?

REG: Not us.

TRELAWNY: Well he came to me yesterday with all his books. He said Kate's father had offered him a job. I asked Kate about it and she said she didn't know. He didn't have a word with you beforehand?

JEAN: What sort of a job would that be then?

KATE: My father works in a tourist company and he wants Gordon to be one of his couriers----

JEAN: Oh! That sounds nice!

REG: What would the work consist of exactly, looking after charabanc loads I expect, seeing to the fun and games side, we had a courier in Spain, do you remember Jean, he was a scream! He put that thing in our bed-----

JEAN: Oh yes!

REG (TO TRELAWNY) You know, they're little bits of plastic got up to look like dog's business. Talk about laugh!

JEAN: I didn't laugh, not when I saw it. And I can't see Gordon

playing that sort of joke.

TRELAWNY: I just thought it was a terrible tragedy him giving up the university. He's got just the sort of mind you need. I thought you might be able to help. He's still living at home after all. He's not with us at school any more but I'm prepared to go on with the private coaching.

REG: And what does his wife say about it?

KATE: I don't mind him having a job. But I don't think he'd be happy. I mean he won't be doing what he wants to do.

JEAN: Yes but this was his own decision wasn't it? And if it brings him a good job----I mean he obviously wasn't satisfied with the way his life was going was he?

REG (TO KATE) You and Gordon are the limit, honestly! Aren't you in contact?

JEAN: All right Reg.

KATE: The thing is I've got my finals---before the child comes along---

REG: I can see why he wants to get a job. Can't you Kate? He wants to look after his wife and child. It stands to reason.

JEAN (TO KATE, PROUDLY) He went straight to your dad then?

KATE: Yes.

JEAN: Where would this currying be then?

KATE: In Italy.

JEAN: Oh!

KATE: Dad wants him to take charge of a group of hotels eventually, when he knows enough Italian.

JEAN (WITH A LAUGH) Well, we've got our holidays mapped out for us then! No more Majorca, and Brighton in the lean years, eh Reg?

REG STROKES HIS CHIN, SEEING HER

POINT WITH RELISH BUT NOT DARING TO SHOW IT.

CUT TO ESMERALDA'S LANGUAGE CLASS. SHE AND GORDON ARE THE ONLY ONES THERE.

ESMERALDA: So---what were we saying at the beginning? Io ho dieci sterline da spendere---'I have ten pounds to spend'. How much have I to spend?

GORDON: Ten.

ESMERALDA (ICILY) In Italian please.

GORDON: Er---

ESMERALDA: Dieci. And what is the currency, of which I have ten to spend?

GORDON: Er---

ESMERALDA: Sterline---pounds. AND who has ten pounds to spend?

GORDON: Er---

ESMERALDA: Io. 'I' have. Not 'you'---'you' is what?

GORDON: Du.

ESMERALDA: 'Du', Gordon, is German. We are speaking Italian. (GAZING AT HIM) Gordon, what are you thinking about all the time?

HE GAZES BACK AT HER.

GORDON: Mediaeval history.

CUT TO THE HOTEL BEDROOM WHERE KATE AND GORDON HONEYMOONED. GORDON IS IN BED AS BEFORE, AND AGAIN HE IS READING 'CHURCH AND STATE IN THE MIDDLE AGES'. KATE DRIFTS IN FROM THE BEDROOM. SHE IS GETTING UNDRESSED.

KATE: You've got a fix on the middle ages haven't you?

GORDON: Well, life was simpler then.

KATE: People lived like dogs.

GORDON: Some did. Whereas you like factories and fast roads, don't you?

KATE: Yes.

GORDON: Why?

KATE: Because I'm Italian. We had the middle ages too long.

GORDON (TAKING A LETTER FROM THE BACK OF HIS BOOK) Mr. Trelawny wrote me a letter. Like to have a look?

SHE TAKES THE LETTER.

KATE (READING IT) What papers is he talking about? Have you been sending him essays?

GORDON: Yes.

KATE (WITH A LAUGH) But you've given it all up! You are a goof! I mean you're not at school or university or even half way between the two!

GORDON: I know, that's what he says.

KATE (READING) 'What's the use Gordon? These papers are first-class but who's going to read them apart from me?' Well there you are. (GAZING AT HIM) Do you want to try for Sussex, one last shot? Why not Gordon?

GORDON: It'd be the same. The minute I know I've got to do it I stop enjoying it. I mean I think you need freedom to think. I don't know how all these people do it---- think to order! I have to think when I feel like it!

KATE: Anyway, you're here to learn Italian from me. That's the idea of sending us here isn't it? And ever since you got here you've had your head stuck in that book--- (playfully trying to wrestle the book away from him).

THEY LAUGH, STRUGGLE, KISS.

GORDON: We'll have a lesson later. You can teach me the parts of the body.

KATE (LYING ON THE BED) Is that honestly what you've been doing, writing essays?

GORDON: Yes.

KATE: But why?

GORDON: Bexause it's useless.  
(SHE LAUGHS AGAIN) If somebody came along and said do it because it'll bring you in a bit of money I couldn't. But if the work isn't for something I can get interested. I don't feel anybody breathing down my neck. I'm just not interessted in exams, I'm interested in history, the people---what they did. And that's supposed to be wrong! You're supposed to learn history to get a job. Well, that's not being interested in history, it's being interested in a job. Do you see what I mean? The same with Italian. I could learn Italian if it wasn't going to get me anywhere. I'm interested in Italian, not in getting somewhere with it. And all those people who go to your mother's class aren't interested in Italian, they just want to make some money. And she blames me for not learning it like they do, like a lot of parrots. I don't know, people are so daft nowadays, they say make some money and then they tell you to read a book or learn a language. And they don't have anything to do with each other!

KATE: You ought to explain that to mum.

GORDON: Yes but then it'd be useful. So I couldn't. I can only explain it to you because it's useless. I mean, you believe in me anyway. So there's no point in telling you. That's why I tell you.

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM. IT IS EVENING. GORDON IS ALONE. HE IS AT THE TABLE WITH BOOKS BEFORE HIM, WRITING BUSILY. THERE IS A NOISE AT THE FRONT DOOR. HE STOPS. IT IS REG AND JEAN. HE PUTS THE PEN DOWN AND LEANS BACK. THERE IS THE SOUND OF STAMPING FEET ON THE MAT, AND WHEWING AND BLOWING SOUNDS.

REG (VO) Blimey, I reckon it's going to snow tonight.

REG AND JEAN COME IN, TAKING THEIR COATS OFF.

JEAN: Hullo, you back? I thought you was seeing Kate tonight.

REG SIMPLY GIVES GORDON A GLANCE AND GOES OUTSIDE TO HANG HIS COAT UP.

REG (TO JEAN) What about a cup of

tea?

JEAN: All right, let me get inside the door!

REG (WITH A LOOK AT GORDON'S BOOKS) Turning this place into your study then?

GORDON: I'll go upstairs.

REG: Listen, we had Madam Ridolifi here last night. She said you're not learning Italian. She says you don't go to her classes any more. She says you was sacked from teaching English to foreign students the first day---she said you talked about the middle ages all the time and they didn't understand a blime word! You're the limit aren't you? I reckon the idea of bringing you into the world was to break my heart---I can't see any other reason! You're spending me out of house and home---I can't go on forking out---and I'm not having your mother working at the Co-op again---

JEAN (GETTING THE TEA) All right all right!

REG (TURNING ON HER) Well, you tell me what to do then---is he going to stay with us all his life? And what about his kid? He's never going to see the kid at this rate. His kid'll be grown up and earning good money, and he'll be sitting at grandad's writing essays! And Madam Ridolifi told me all about Kate too. She said she passed all her exams with flying colours and she's going to find a decent job! Here---(LOWERING HIS HEAD TO GORDON'S LEVEL) I reckon you're soft in the head! That's what I reckon!

JEAN: All right all right!

REG (SITTING IN HIS CHAIR AND BEGINNING TO TAKE OFF HIS SHOES) A week at the sea to learn Italian! Double room and bath, meals all paid for! Lucky Esmeralda's got the money to do it because I couldn't. Not that you did learn any Italian, even from your own wife.

GORDON: I learned the parts of the body.

REG: Yes I know you blinkingly well did! She told me! What are

you going to do in Italy then,  
when you're running hotels---tell  
the manager what a big arse he's  
got! 'Parts of the body'! You  
make me sick!

CUT TO A HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM AS  
THE CRY OF A NEWBORN INFANT COMES  
OVER. ESMERALDA, GIORGIO, REG AND  
JEAN ARE WAITING ANXIOUSLY. A  
NURSE APPEARS AT THE DOOR AND SMILES  
AT THEM.

NURSE (QUIETLY) It's a boy. Five  
and a half pounds.

ESMERALDA: Un Figlio! (JUMPING UP  
AND GOING TO THE NURSE) Can we see  
her?

NURSE: Not quite yet. I'll  
let you know.

THE NURSE LEAVES. ESMERALDA GOES  
TO JEAN AND KISSES HER ON BOTH  
CHEEKS.

JEAN (EMBARRASSED) Five and a half  
pounds eh?

GIORGIO SHAKES HANDS WITH REG.

ESMERALADA (STILL HOLDING JEAN CLOSE)  
And the child's father?

JEAN: Well I don't know I'm sure!  
Reg---didn't he say he was on his  
way? (AS REG LOOKS BEWILDERED)  
Gordon!

REG: Isn't he here then? I thought  
he was inside with Kate.

ESMERALDA: Oh my God he's deserted  
her!

GIORGIO: Ma Esmeralda!

ESMERALDA: It happened to your  
cousin---in Bari---on the day of  
the birth---he was never seen again!

REG: He said he was coming. I  
mean, he's absent-minded but it's  
not like Gordon to be absent from a  
birth is it Jean?

ESMERALDA: You have such a funny  
son Mrs Page. Of course he's very  
dear to us both. And Kate adores  
him. Do you know what he told

me?---he says that if people ask him to think about one thing he starts thinking about the opposite, without meaning to. So he's probably gone to the cemetery, as this is a birth! And my daughter has a lifetime of Gordon in front of her---think of that!

JEAN: Well I'm sure he's some-where!

ESMERALDA (ICILY) I never doubted that.

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND GORDON COMES IN.

GORDON: It's a boy! Five and a half pounds!

REG: Yes we've just heard son.

GORDON: I've seen it all on television!

ESMERALDA: O Dio!

REG: You what?

GORDON: With some students. It's a closed circuit television. The matron let me. I think women are marvellous! I never knew women were like that! People don't realise---it's marvellous giving birth---I think women are marvellous! There isn't one of them isn't somebody big and important, do you see what I mean?---I mean we can't do anything like that, men can't!

REG: OK, son.

ESMERALDA (PUTTING HER ARMS ROUND GORDON WITH A LAUGH) You didn't think about something else then, while she was giving birth? You didn't think about old men, seeing a newborn baby?

GORDON (NOT UNDERSTANDING) No, why?

ESMERALDA (GIVING HIM A KISS) So my darling you can go on having babies for the rest of your life--- then people will forgive you everything, at least Italians will!

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM.  
GORDON IS SITTING AT THE TABLE.  
AGAIN WITH BOOKS BEFORE HIM.  
WE PAN ROUND TO FIND KATE ON THE  
OTHER SIDE, WATCHING HIM IN SILENCE.

KATE: I'd love it here. It's so peaceful. You're lucky being born in a working family.

GORDON: I know but---it's no good for this sort of thing (NODDING TOWARDS HIS BOOKS). At least it would be if money wasn't behind everything---

KATE: So it in the other class--- only worse.

GORDON: Yes but you can't get round it here, it's in the pavements, it sort of glitters up at you. Everybody seems to be thinking inside little schedules---they go out in the morning and they all come back at night, and it feels like a cemetery in the day. They've forgotten how to live.

KATE: So why go on doing that (INDICATING HIS BOOKS)?

GORDON: Well I can't any more--- it doesn't work---I just put the books here so as not just to stare into space and realise I'm a spare, I've got no job and----

KATE: Gordon, don't make me unhappy! Come and live with us, you know you'd love to be with the baby---mum's all right now, she keeps on asking about you, she's proud of you, it's an Italian thing, you've got a position now as a father!

GO DON: Why don't you divorce me?

KATE: Divorce! (SHE LAUGHS) It's not in my blood. Italians stand anything once they've got a child. Even things like you!

HE SMILES.

KATE: You seem about a hundred years older since the baby.

GORDON: I feel it.

KATE: Gordon, I've been offered a job. At a cartographer's. It's good money. I don't mind working while you stay at home and read. You could even try for a place again, you could take your time. My tutor was saying they like people to come up when they're about twenty-three, because they're more mature. Please Gordon---I

don't feel good living separate any more! (BEGINNING TO CRY)  
Dad wants you with us too! Italian families are different! They like to be together! They don't think anything of a man being idle, if that's really his nature... And if he's a father... Gordon!

SHE GOES OVER TO HIM.

GORDON: If I lived at your place. I'd feel even more unreal.

KATE: (WITH ESMERALDA'S ANGER FOR A MOMENT) What does it matter what you feel? You'd be with your own child!

GORDON: Yes, I know. Feelings don't matter. But---(WITH A SHRUG). I wouldn't know how to get away from them, not if I had nothing to do all day!

KATE: But you say you love reading! and writing papers for Trelawny!

GORDON: And he sends them back! Because it doesn't lead anywhere. That's what I hear in my brain all the time when I'm reading---it's not leading anywhere!

KATE: Then that makes you like your father! It means you agree with him!---that life's got to be a grind before it's real! Look at you sitting there, grinding at your books when you want to be outside with me or playing with the baby! You're the one who wants it to lead somewhere---why? If you're happy just reading why don't you do it instead of thinking where it's going to lead? You say you don't want to think about exams and jobs and money all the time, well then, come and live with us, and you can read all day, and you can play with the baby when you don't want to read! You could do lots of things---you might want to do an external course---you might start liking exams! You don't know how you'd change in a different place! (WITH A SIGH) Sometimes you seem stupid Gordon. And it's only because you dream. And you worry. And I know you'd hate yourself if you came to live with us...

GORDON: Yes I would. Seeing you and your mum and dad all go out in the morning, and leave me and the baby behind---I can imagine how it'd make me feel.

KATE (SLUMPING DOWN IN A CHAIR AGAIN) So there's no solution. No job, no university, no reading even. Just nothing.

GORDON: No I don't say that.

KATE: Well tell me what there is then? You leave school and say you're going to get a job, and you ask dad for a job and he offers you one, and then you can't learn Italian, and now you can't even read either--- because it doesn't lead anywhere. Yet you're supposed to believe in things not leading anywhere (PUTTING HER HAND TO HER HEAD IN CONFUSION)...

GORDON: I do believe in things not leading anywhere. I mean a man should just be interested in his subject and he shouldn't think of the money that comes out of it. You've got to have thinkers. That's the trouble nowadays, there's no one to think, there are only people scrambling and fighting each other for money, and they use whatever they've got for the fight---and I'm not going to use all this (NODDING TOWARDS THE BOOKS) for fighting. I'd rather work with my hands. You've got to have thinkers. That's the trouble today. Everything's going to get smashed up because of that. There's no one allowed to sit and think-things out. He's always somebody else's slave. Working for somebody else's idea. So he can't think straight in the end. That's what I think. Somebody's got to stop and say, I won't do it. Otherwise everything gets smashed up. I mean, everybody's blind. Things just happen nowadays. Nobody's in charge Kate, you see, because there's nobody allowed to think things out. One chap's a specialist in flat feet, another one does urine tests, somebody else makes precision instruments. And they've all got their noses down and can't see the whole picture, they can't ask themselves what's it all for because then if they didn't want to do it they'd starve, so everybody's helping to smash the world up, and I'm not going to.

KATE: Don't then. I don't want you to. I agree with what you say. So come and live with us. But you couldn't. You'd hate yourself! Why? It means you don't really believe in what you're saying!

GORDON: It means my upbringing's got under my skin. Yes, I agree there.

KATE: So why not get away?

GORDON: And sit and hate myself?

KATE (CRYING SILENTLY) Gordon...

GORDON: Listen, I'll find a place for us to live. That's the best answer of the lot isn't it?

KATE (NODDING AND TRYING TO SMILE) Yes!

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM IN THE EARLY MORNING. JEAN IS GETTING BREAKFAST. THE TABLE IS LAID FOR THREE.

JEAN (CALLING) Reg! It's past eight, come on!

REG (VO) I'll be there!

JEAN (CALLING) Gordon!

NO REPLY. REG COMES IN IN HIS OVERALLS.

REG: I smell eggs and bacon!

JEAN: And tomatoes. And fried bread.

REG: You're spoiling me. A Sunday breakfast every day! (SITTING DOWN) But don't think you can fool me, my girl. You're doing it to tickle his appetite aren't you? (AS SHE PUTS A STEAMING PLATE BEFORE HIM) That's it, a nice big helping for dad!

JEAN: Grandad you mean.

REG: Don't remind me. (TUCKING IN) I bet he don't eat it just the same.

JEAN (IN THE KITCHENETTE) I was thinking last night, she's turned out ever such a good little mother hasn't she? Did you see the way she did that nappy?

REG: She starts work next month then.

JEAN: Yes..

REG: I don't know!---his wife earning and ----

JEAN: Well it's no good harping on it!

GORDON COMES IN.

REG: Hullo mate.

GORDON: Morning.

JEAN: I was saying about Kate, she looks as if she's been pinning up nappies all her life.

GORDON (SITTING DOWN). Italian blood.

REG (DRINKING HIS TEA) That would have been the life eh?---if that hotel-idea had worked out and you'd have been sent out there to look after a whole network. Still, dreams! They can't stop us having them. can they mate?

GORDON: No.

JEAN BRINGS GORDON'S BREAKFAST.

GORDON (TO REG) I was going to ask you something.

REG: What?

GORDON: I've got to find a place for me and Kate to live.

REG.: Yes?

GORDON: Can you fix me up with a job down at the Electricity Board? I mean for a bit? I mean, I know how to do the work, I've watched you at it all my life.

JEAN STANDS GAZING AT HIM.

REG (ABASHED) Well, I don't know how they stand for giving jobs.

GORDON: I mean, what about it?

REG: I could have a bash, with the personnel manager.

JEAN: Yes but Gordon---

GORDON: Oh don't make it bad please! I've got to do it!

REG (GETTING UP) Here, son, you don'tvhave to get worked up about it (PUTTING HIS HAND ON GORDON'S SHOULDER)! You're all right. You're OK. I'll see what I can do.

GORDON: It's only for a bit.

REG: Of course it is. You'll make it some day. You don't need

a university education for what  
you're after.

GORDON: Yes but---(LOOKING UP AT  
HIM) what am I after?

REG (WALKING AWAY BACK TO HIS BREAK-  
FAST, WITH A SHRUG) A new kind of  
man, I suppose!

JEAN: Come on, eat your breakfast  
son.

GORDON LOOKS DOWN AT HIS BREAKFAST  
AND THEN BEGINS EATING WITHOUT APP-  
ETITE AS THE TITLES COME UP.

THE UNEXPECTED WEDDING

by

MAURICE ROWDON

KATE: I'd love it here. It's so peaceful. You're lucky being born in the working class.

GORDON: 'Working class'! Doesn't exist any more. There's money behind everything---

KATE: So there is in the other class---only worse.

GORDON: Yes but you can't get round it here, it's in the pavements, it sort of glitters up at you. Everybody seems to be thinking inside little schedules---they go out in the morning and they all come back at night, and it feels like a cemetery in the day. They've forgotten how to live.

KATE: So why go on doing that (INDICATING HIS BOOKS)?

GORDON: Well I can't any more--- it doesn't work---I just put the books here so as not just to stare into space and realise I'm a spare, I've got no job and---- (LOOKING AT HER EARNESTLY.) Why don't you divorce me?

KATE (WITH A LAUGH) It's not in my blood! Italians stand anything once they've got a child. Even things like you!

HE SMILES.

KATE: You seem about a hundred years older since the baby.

GORDON: I feel it.

KATE: I've been offered a job. At a cartographer's. I've been frightened to tell you. (THEY GAZE AT EACH OTHER IN SILENCE) It's good money. I don't mind working while you stay at home and read. You could even try for a place again, you could take your time. My tutor was saying they like people to come up when they're about twenty-three, because they're more mature. Please Gordon, I

CHARACTERS

REGINALD PAGE

JEAN PAGE

GORDON PAGE

KATE RIDOLFI

ESMERALDA RIDOLFI

GIORGIO RIDOLFI

COLIN TRELAWNY

REGISTRAR

GINO

ARTHUR WAINWRIGHT

LANGUAGE-CLASS PUPILS, SECRETARY,  
NURSE, RESTAURANT GUESTS ETC.

THE KITCHENETTE OF A SMALL S.W. LONDON HOUSE. JEAN PAGE, IN HER EARLY FORTIES, IS GETTING BREAKFAST AS THE TITLES COME UP. SHE PUTS TEA IN THE POT, POURS. THE TOAST POPS UP IN THE RACK. SHE WALKS QUICKLY NEXT DOOR TO THE LIVING ROOM, WHERE THE TABLE IS LAID FOR THREE. AT TWO OF THE PLACES THERE IS A BOILED EGG, KEEPING WARM UNDER EGG COVERS MARKED 'REG' AND 'JEAN'. JEAN GLANCES OUT OF THE WINDOW, WATCHES THE WEATHER FOR A MOMENT. THERE IS THE SOUND OF A FACTORY HOOTER OUTSIDE.

JEAN (CALLING) Reg! Come on!  
(AS SHE PUTS THE TEAPOT DOWN AND THEN THE COSY ON IT) Reg!

REG (VO) All right, give me a chance!

REG, ALSO IN HIS EARLY FORTIES, COMES BUSTLING IN IN HIS OVERALLS, RUBBING HIS HANDS TOGETHER.

REG: Blimey it's nippy. (SITTING DOWN) That thermostat all right?

JEAN: You've got thermostat on the brain. It's seventy-odd--- what more do you want?

REG (CRACKING HIS EGG) Where's our young son---preparing for a hard day's work?

JEAN (ALSO SITTING DOWN) I've given up calling him of a morning.

REG: Did I hear 'em talking down here last night, round about two? Him and young Kate? Of course, if you've got no work it makes no odds when you come in at night.

JEAN: Oh leave the boy alone.

REG: Words! Good God, that boy gets through some words in a day! Who the devil does he get it from?

GORDON: You agree with them don't you?

KATE: Who?

GORDON: Your mum and dad. That we shoulnd't be alone together. It's funny, y u're English but you're not like Pam and Bren and that girl from Swansea. You want to keep your virginity.

KATE: You should go with them in that case.

GORDON: They're not in the same class. Say something real nice--- in Italian, go on.

KATE: Ti voglio bene.

MEANING 'I LOVE YOU': SHE SUBSIDES ON TOTHE TABLE AND HE SOON FINDS HIMSELF LYING ON TOP OF HER.

GORDON (IN A WHISPER) Am I a school-boy?

KATE SHAKES HER HEAD.

KATE: You're beautiful. A beautiful man.

THEY BEGIN MAKING LOVE.

CUT BACK TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM. REG AND JEAN HAVE BEEN JOINED AT BREAKFAST BY GORDON, WHO IS EATING TOAST WITHOUT MUCH APPEARANCE OF APPETITE.

REG: Yes but what I mean is you can have a lay-in when you want to, not like other people who go out on a regular job. That's all I'm saying. I mean I know you study but it's not work like I mean it.

GORDON: Oh I see. So why do you want me to go to the university?

REG: I haven't said a blime word about it. All I know is what your teachers say---so I say, all right, let him have a go, let him try for the university and then maybe he'll get a better job than his dad. All parents want to see their sons better than theirselves. I don't want you pulling up floorboards and flicking switches all your life, stands to reason.

GORDON: If your work's no good why do you do it?

REG: I've got to do something haven't I?

GORDON: Why?

REG: How would you and mum keep alive?

GORDON: You needn't have married.

REG (WITH A LAUGH) Well I needn't have been born come to that!

GORDON: I just don't get it. You're supposed to be marvellous because you've got a job, and I'm supposed to be a layabout because I read books, yet you don't want me to do your work---you don't want me to be marvellous like you!

JEAN (TICKLED) That's it Gordon!

REG: No I'm not saying that. I'm just saying you could get it easier than what I did maybe.

GORDON: Oh I see! We're all out for an easy time. That's the idea of going to the university is it? I still don't get it! I mean you must get some kick out of being an electrician, otherwise it's not worth being alive!

REG: Well I suppose I do get some. Otherwise I wouldn't do it.

GORDON: So you're doing what you want to do! Like I said!

REG: Yes but if I had a cushier job with a bit more money I'd be happier.

GORDON: Oh! The penny's dropped! I've got a cushy job waiting for me, that's why I want to go to the university! It's going to be dead easy! I get it!

REG: Well it stands to reason you'll get more money, if you qualify.

GORDON: That's wrong for a start. Half the arts students in the States are out of a job! And old Trelawny gets about half your money---

REG: Who's Trelawny for God's sake ?

GORDON: My history teacher. And he doesn't get time and a half for fake overtime either!

JEAN: Mum.

REG: Yes but he talks sense.

JEAN: Ha ha.

REG: Sometimes.

KATE'S LAUGHTER BREAKS OVER. THEY GO ON EATING. JEAN STIRS HER TEA. REG BITES INTO TOAST, CRUNCH-CRNUCH.

CUT TO A COLLEGE LIBRARY, WITH KATE'S LAUGHTER STILL OVER. IN ONE OF THE CUBICLES KATE, AGED 20, and GORDON, AGED 19, ARE SITTING CLOSE TOGETHER. IT IS EVENING. SHE HAS BOOKS BEFORE HER. THE LIBRARY IS OTHERWISE DESERTED. KATE IS FINISHING A COLOURED CONTOUR MAP AND THERE ARE VARIOUS COLOURED INKS ON THE TABLE. GORDON IS TRYING TO DAB A SPOT OF RED INK FROM HIS NOSE WITH BLOTTING PAPER.

GORDON: It won't come off.

KATE: That was the idea.

HE DABS QUIETLY AND SHE RETURNS TO HER WORK.

GORDON (LOOKING ROUND) I wish I could work here. All these books. I sit and dream about this college.

KATE: Dreamy! Always dreaming! And still at school! Eternal school-boy!

GORDON SEIZES ONE OF THE INK POTS AS IF TO POUR IT OVER HER. SHE SHRIEK S WITH LAUGHTER AND DASHES AWAY FROM THE TABLE. HE CHASES ROUND THE LIBRARY, AMONG THE SHADOWS. WE HEAR THEIR GASPED LAUGHTER. THEY STOP IN ONE OF THE UNLIGHTED CUBICLES AND WE DRAW INTO THEM.

KATE (IN A WHISPER) You'll wake up all the dead professors. We've got lots of dead professors!

GORDON PUTS HIS ARMS ROUND HER. THEY KISS, OUT OF BREATH, STILL GIGGLING.

KATE: I've got to finish. (HE IS MORE INTERESTED IN KISSING) They gave me the key because they trusted me (LAUGHING AGAIN)!

SHE TRIES TO STRUGGLE FREE.

GORDON: Say something in Italian.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM FOR A MOMENT.

KATE: Sei un bischero tu!  
(SCREAMING WITH LAUGHTER)

GORDON (TICKLING HER) What does it mean?

KATE: No! No! Gordon----!  
It means----!

GORDON: Yes?

KATE (TRYING NOT TO LAUGH AGAIN)  
It means you're very beautiful.

GORDON: It doesn't! (TICKLING HER AGAIN) Say something else!

KATE: Sei tutto storto!

GORDON (IMITATING HER) To-to-to-to-to!

KATE: Say it! 'Sono tutto storto io'!

GORDON: Sonnoh tuttoh tortoh eech!

KATE: Good! It means 'I'm completely twisted'!

MORE HELPLESS LAUGHTER AND TICKLING. SHE IMITATES A TWISTED MAN, WITH CROSS EYES.

SILENCE.

GORDON: What does it feel like---  
having two countries?

KATE: Like being two people.

GORDON: Is that nice?

KATE: Yes. It means you have two lives.

SILENCE.

GORDON: It's funny---I've noticed---  
you talk to your mother and father  
as if they were our age.

KATE: That's how they feel to me.

GORDON: I can't even think of  
my parents as human. I mean I love  
them and all that.

KATE: I've got to finish.

REG: Yes and I don't get nice long holidays like he does!

GORDON: He works harder in the holidays than he does in term! And he likes his work! He can't stop doing it! He told me so himself. All that private coaching he's giving me is for free. So we're not all out for a good time all the time!

SILENCE. REG POURS HIMSELF ANOTHER CUP OF TEA, EATING BUSILY.

REG (STIRRING) What beats me is how long you can go without doing anything---I mean with your hands.

GORDON: You're talking about yourself.

REG: Oh I see. (TO JEAN) I'm talking about myself. (TO GORDON) How's that?

GORDON: Well if you sat down without a paper or a pint of beer in front of you you'd have nothing in your head. Whereas I've got thoughts.

REG (HALF RISING) Oh you have have you you snotty bugger----!

JEAN (TO REG) All right! He's only taking the mike!

REG: You take the mike much more mate and I'll show you the back of my hand! You idling ponce!

GORDON PUSHES BACK HIS CHAIR WITH A CLATTER AND STAMPS OUT OF THE ROOM.

JEAN: What did you say that for? You know how he hates that word ponce.

REG: Oh----! You and him! I don't even know what the word means! It just comes out. He always had to walk off like that---can't finish anything---can't finish school---can't start university---can't start a job---Chris knows what that girl sees in him! She went to college when she was eighteen---not him! She's got her finals soon! And he hasn't started! (GIVING HER UNCONCERNED FACE A GLANCE) Expect me to be proud of that?

CUT TO A SMALL CLASSROOM AT GORDON'S SCHOOL. THERE ARE A FEW DESKS SET ROUND THE ROOM CASUALLY, AND COLIN TRELAWNY, A TEACHER IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES, AND GORDON ARE THE ONLY OCCUPANTS. THERE IS NO TEACHER'S ROSTRUM. THEY ARE SEATED NEAR EACH OTHER AND TRELAWNY HAS GORDON'S LATEST HANDWRITTEN PAPER BEFORE HIM.

TRELAWNY: Do you really see what I mean?

GORDON: I think so.

TRELAWNY GAZES AT HIM WITH SOME HESITATION.

COLIN: There's another point. You don't really believe that the peasants rebelled in the fourteenth century just because they couldn't bear conditions any more. Somebody once said that revolutions came out of hope, not despair. So perhaps conditions in the fourteenth century were better than they'd ever been before.

GORDON: Yes.

COLIN: So why do you say the opposite? I'll tell you why. Because it saves you trouble.

GORDON IS GAZING AHEAD. PAUSE.

COLIN: Did you get any of that?

GORDON: Yes.

COLIN: It's not much use me giving you private time if it's not going to lead anywhere is it? I mean you've got to pull your weight too.

GORDON: I do---I---!

COLIN: Yes, well, it's not good getting emotional about it. You've taken three university entrances and you're not going to find a place anywhere unless you sit down and really swear to get through. Because you've got all it takes. You're first-class university material---everybody knows that.

GORDON: It's no good swearing ---  
if I read any more I'd go blind.  
I mean, I think I read too much---  
I get muddled up---as soon as I sit  
down to write a paper it all fogs  
over.

COLIN: And what ideas have you  
got for later on---after university?  
Do you want to teach?

GORDON: No.

COLIN: Research?

GORDON: No.

SILENCE.

GORDON: Civil service or something  
like that?

GORDON: No.

COLIN: What then?

GORDON: I don't know.

CUT TO THE COLLEGE LIBRARY. STUDENTS  
ARE POURING INTO IT AT LUNCHTIME.  
THEY ARE SHUSHED QUIET BY THOSE STUDY-  
ING. WE FIND KATE AT A CROWDED  
TABLE IN ONE OF THE CUBICLES. SHE  
IS TAKING NOTES FROM A BOOK.

GORDON COMES IN, LOOKING ROUND.  
HE SEES KATE AND GOES OVER AND SITS  
OPPOSITE HER, GAZING AT HER WITH A  
SMILE. SHE IS STILL TAKING NOTES.  
THEN SOMETHING MAKES HER LOOK UP  
AND SHE SEES HIM. SHE MAKES A  
DELIGHTED SMILE. SHE TEARS A PAGE  
OUT OF HER NOTEBOOK AND WRITES SOME-  
THING ON IT IN PENCIL. WITH A  
GLANCE AT THE OTHER OCCUPANTS OF THE  
TABLE SHE PUSHES THE PAPER ACROSS TO  
GORDON. HE READS IT.

WE SEE THE PAPER FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW. IT  
READS, IN BLOCK CAPITALS, 'I AM  
PREGNANT'.

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM. REG  
IS WASHING AFTER WORK, AT THE SINK  
IN THE KITCHENETTE. JEAN IS MAKING  
TEA.

REG (STOOPED, AND BLINDED WITH WATER)  
Got a towel there mate?

JEAN (PUSHING A TOWEL IN HIS OUT-  
STRETCHED HAND) I wish to God  
you'd use the bathroom.

REG: Too nippy.

JEAN: Yes well I said we should have had a radiator put up there. Everybody has radiators in their bathrooms. But no!

REG DRIES HIMSELF BRISKLY.

REG: I went in his bedroom just now---books all over the bed---on the dresser---he must do some kind of work.

JEAN: He just needs leaving alone that's all.

REG: He needs a job! A boy of nineteen still at school!

CUT TO ESMERALDA'S LANGUAGE CLASS. ESMERALDA REIDOLFI IS KATE'S ITALIAN MOTHER. SHE IS IN HER LATE FORTIES, DRESSED RATHER PICTURESQUELY. SHE IS TEACHING FROM A ROSTRUM AND HAS A BLACKBOARD BEHIND HER. THERE ARE A DOZEN OR SO PUPILS, ALL OF THEM ADULT.

ESMERALDA: Io vorrei---'I would like'. But io voglio---'I want'. And io ti voglio bene---'I love you'! (A LITTLE SQUEAL OF LAUGHTER ESCAPES HER) So what is 'I want'?

PUPILS: Ioh vohlich!

ESMERALDA: 'I would like'?

PUPILS (WITH MORE DIFFICULTY) Ioh vorray.

ESMERALDA: 'You would like'?  
(THEIR EFFORTS FAIL) Io vorresti!  
(ARCHLY) And 'I love you'?

PUPILS: Ioh---vohlich---ti---vorrei---

ESMERALDA: Io ti voglio bene!  
Notice please, I cannot make 'you' formal---I cannot say io Le voglio bene---self-evidently, because we don't fall in love with strangers! (ANOTHER SQUEAL) Notice that we Italians reserve adoro and 'amo'---'I love', 'I adore'---for things rather than people. Io adoro la tua casa---I simply adore your house! Io adoro Mozart---io adoro Parigi---I love Paris! The reason? In Italy we have the battle of the sexes!

THE DOOR OPENS AND GORDON PEEPS INSIDE. ESMERALDA LOOKS ROUND. SHE SHOWS SOME SURPRISE.

ESMERALDA: Yes Gordon?

GORDON: Could I see you a minute?

SHE GAZES AT HIM FOR A MOMENT AND SEES THAT HE IS IN SOME DISTRESS.

ESMERALDA (TO THE CLASS) Will you excuse me un momentino? Notice we have one word for a 'tiny moment'. The diminutive is one of the most decorative features of our language. Now I am just going to have a word with this ragazzino---this 'little boy'---and I shall be back with you in un momentino!

SHE LEAVES THE ROOM WITH GORDON.

CUT TO THE LOBBY OUTSIDE ESMERALDA'S CLASS AS SHE AND GORDON COME OUT. THERE ARE HATS AND COATS HANGING EVERYWHERE.

ESMERALDA (GRIPPING HIS ARM) What happened? Why isn't Kate with you?

GORDON: She's got a lecture.

ESMERALDA (STILL GRIPPING HIS ARM) What happened? (FACES CLOSE TOGETHER)

GORDON: She's going to have a baby.

ESMERALDA: A---? (STARING AT HIM FOR SOME TIME WITH HER MOUTH OPEN)  
O Dio! No! No! Non è possibile!  
No! (STRIKING AT HIM WILDLY)  
Malscalzone---malscalzone che sei!  
Porcacone! Mia figlia! Mia  
ppvera figlia! O Dio! Che  
facio, che facio?

SOME OF THE PUPILS EMERGE FROM THE CLASS AND TRY TO RESTRAIN HER. SHE TEARS HER OWN COAT FROM THE WALL.

ESMERALDA (TO GORDON) Dove sta  
mia figlia? (GORDON FAILS TO UNDER-  
STAND) Dove sta?! Where is my  
daughter?

GORDON: At her college.

ESMERALDA: Do you still drive your  
father's car?

GORDON: Yes.

ESMERALDA: Then take me there!

GORDON: Where?

ESMERALDA: To my daughter!  
(GRABBING HIM) Andiamo! E poi  
ti sistemo subito eh? (PUSHING  
HIM OUTSIDE) Scemo! Sei un scemo!  
O Dio! Figlia mia! Che hai  
fatto?

ESMERALDA AND GORDON DISAPPEAR.

THE PUPILS GAZE AT EACH OTHER.

PUPIL 1: What's the trouble----  
anybody speak Italian round here?

PUPIL 2: She called him a lot of  
dirty names, that's all I know.  
Porcacione means a dirty pig.

PUPIL 3: I thought I heard him say  
her daughter was having a baby.

PUPIL 1: What! And he comes and  
tells her himself. He wants his  
brains testing!

PUPIL 2: That's English integrity.

PUPIL 1: English stupidity.

CUT TO THE ENTRANCE HALL OF THE  
PAGE HOUSE. A TELEPHONE IS STAND-  
ING IN THE CORNER ON A SHELF.  
IT IS RINGING. THE LIVING ROOM DOOR  
OPENS AND REG EMERGES, EATING, IN  
HIS OVERALLS. HE TAKES UP THE  
RECEIVER AND MASTICATES STEADILY  
BEFORE BEING ABLE TO SAY HULLO.

REG: Hullo?

ESMERALDA (VO) Do I speak to his  
father? I wish you to come to me  
at once, can you get a bus, he has  
your car, I have something to speak,  
my husband is not in!

REG (GETTING RID OF THE LAST OF HIS  
FOOD PREMATURELY) Here, hold on,  
hold on! Have you got the right  
number?

ESMERALDA (VO) He is with me---  
you must come---he is here!

REG: Whothe hell's he?

ESMERALDA (VO) What is your name?---  
Gordon! Gordon!

REG: What, my son? What's up  
then? Is he all right? Who are  
you?

ESMERALDA (VO, SCREAMING WITH IMPATIENCE) Her mother! Her mother!

REG: What do you mean, 'her'? You're talking about my son aren't you?

JEAN EMERGES FROM THE LIVING ROOM, ALSO EATING.

JEAN: Who is it?

REG: That's what I'd like to know!

ESMERALDA (VO) O Dio, che imbroglio!  
(SPEAKING TO KATE AT THE OTHER END)  
Caterina, Vieni tu! Suo babbo  
capisce fischi per fiaschi!

KATE (VO) Hullo, Mr Page? My mother would like you to come over and see us.

REG: What's that? Your mother? And who are you?

KATE (VO) I'm Kate.

REG: Oh, hullo Kate!

JEAN: Is Gordon all right---where is he?

REG (TO JEAN) Be quiet, for Christ sake! I can't listen to two lunatics at once! Hullo? Kate? What's up then?

KATE (VO) Nothing. Only mum would like you to come over and see her---right away.

REG: Well something must be up then mustn't it? Where's Gordon?

KATE (VO) He's here.

REG: 'He's here' she says! (WITH QUIET IRRITATION) Hand him over will you please dear?

GORDON (VO) Hullo dad.

REG: 'Hullo dad'. What's the trouble now? You in a Spanish prison or something?

GORDON (VO) It's Italian, not Spanish.

REG: All right, when you've finished giving me lip, what's wrong?

GORDON (VO) Kate's mother wants to see you right away!

REG: So there's trouble isn't there? Listen, are you too bloody educated to form a simple phrase?

GORDON: Well, she wants to see you that's all.

REG (SLOWLY) What---is---the---trouble?

GORDON (VO) Kate's having a baby.

REG: Oh blimey!

CUT TO THE LOCAL REGISTRY OFFICE. WE ARE FACING THE REGISTRAR WHO IS READING THE CIVIL WEDDING CEREMONY TO KATE AND GORDON.

REGISTRAR: ...Will you join hands please? Say after me, I Gordon Page, will take Katarina Maria Ridolfi....

GORDON: I Gordon Page....;

REGISTRAR (TO KATE) Will you please say after me, I KATARINA Maria Ridolfi-----

A WOMAN'S SOBS ARE HEARD. THE REGISTRAR LOOKS UP AND MAKES AN EMBARRASSED SMILE, THEN GOES ON.

REGISTRAR:-----will take Gordon Page....

KATE: I Catarina Maria Ridolfi will take Gordon Page....

ESMERA:DA'S SOBS CONTINUE. WE PULL BACK TO FIND REG AND JEAN TOGETHER AND, SOME SEATS AWAY, GIORGIO AND ESMERALDA RIDOLFI. GIORGIO IS A MILD ROMAN IN HIS EARLY MIDDLE AGE AND HE IS GIVING HER SOBBING ESMERALDA DRYLY IMPATIENT LOOKS. ALSO PRESENT AS WITNESS IS COLIN TRELAWNY.

REGISTRAR: Will you please put the ring on the lady's marriage finger?

GORDON DOES SO. THE SOBS CONTINUE.

REGISTRAR: Well, now you are married, and it remains for me to wish you a long and happy life together. You are both young---

ESMERALDA: Pur troppo!

GIORGIO GIVES HER A LONG DRY LOOK.

REGISTRAR: ---very young, at the beginning of your life and ---I am sure---careers too!

ESMERALDA (CYNICALLY) Ha!

REGISTRAR: Nowadays perhaps we tend to overlook the basic meaning of marriage, which is to have children.

ESMERALDA: O!

GIORGIO: Ma Esmeralda!

REGISTRAR: There is nothing else in marriage that can replace a child, and I hope---I hope with all my heart---that you will soon be a mother and father.

ESMERALDA: Sono gia!

GIORGIO: Ma Esmeralda, vuoi che ti porto fuori?

ESMERALDA: Si! Portami in inferno!

GIORGIO (TO HIMSELF) GRITTING HIS TEETH) Mannaggia, misericordia!

REGISTRAR: Now we just have to sign the book----

TRELAWNYAS THE WITNESS MOVES FORWARD WITH GORDON AND KATE. EVERYONE FORMS A GROUP ROUND THE MARRIED COUPLE, THOUGH THERE IS NO REJOICING .

CUT TO GINO'S RESTAURANT IN SOHO. IT IS CROWDED MOSTLY WITH ITALIANS. A LONG TABLE IN THE CORNER HAS THE WEDDING PARTY ROUND IT---GORDON, KATE, TRELAWNY, GIORGIO, ESMERALDA, JEAN AND REG. THEY ARE ON THEIR FIRST COURSE---MELON AND SMOKED HAM. THERE ARE CARADES OF RED WINE AND SEVERAL PLATES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE CONTAINING BREAD AND CROSTINI IN CELLOPHANE PACKETS. LOUD ITALIAN TALK COMES OVER.

GIORGIO IS AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE AT ONE END, AND REG AT THE OTHER.

GORDON AND KATE ARE SEATED TOGETHER, WITH KATE NEXT TO REG, AND OPPOSITE THEM ARE ESMERALDA (ALSO NEXT TO REG), COLIN TRELAWNY AND JEAN PAGE (NEXT TO GIORGIO).

GINO HIMSELF IS LOOKING AFTER THE TABLE, WITH TWO YOUNG WAITERS GOING TO AND FRO. HE BENDS IN CONFERENCE WITH GIORGIO RIDOLFI.

ESMERALDA (ACROSS TO KATE) Come senti?

KATE (WITH TENDER IMPATIENCE) Bene, mamma, bene! (TO GORDON) She always wants to know how I feel!

ESMERALDA (STILL TO KATE) Il prosciutto non ti ha fatto male eh?

KATE: No! Per carità! (TO GORDON) She says did the ham make me feel bad.

ESMERALDA: If I wish to talk to Gordon I'm capable of doing so on my own behalf! I not only speak English but I teach it!

KATE: You teach Italian!

ESMERALDA (GIVING IT TO THE WHOLE TABLE) To some of them I teach English too---to those who are happier with a screwdriver in their hands, and a length of electric wire, than a book!

GORDON FINDS THIS THRUST AMUSING AND GLANCES AT REG.

JEAN: Oh we've got to have people working with their hands Mrs Ridoli (PRONOUNCED RIDDLE-Y).

ESMERALDA IS MAGNIFICENTLY UNAWARE OF JEAN.

REG (TO GORDON) What's so funny?

GORDON: No, I was just thinking I'd prefer a civilisation with candles.

REG: You try and get your central heating going with candles---I mean, you're not an enemy of central heating are you? Considering you put the thermostat up to 80-odd every time you come in the house!

JEAN (QUIETLY) All right, all right.

GIORGIO: Now what may I order?

ESMERALDA: Io prendo un carciofo, non condito!

KATE LAUGHS. GINO THE RESTAURATEUR SMILES DOUBTFULLY.

ESMERALDA: Ma si! Ora che c'ho un carciofo in famiglia---allora lo mangio!

KATE LAUGHS LOUDER.

GIORGIO (SCOLDING ESMERALDA)  
Esmeralda---un po' di educazione, no?

ESMERALDA (WITH A TOSS OF HER HEAD)  
'Educazione', 'educazione'!

KATE (TO GORDON) She says all she wants to eat is an artichoke without any dressing---she says she's got one in the family now, so she might as well eat one!

GORDON: Got what?

KATE: An artichoke! It means a fool!

GORDON (HIS SMILE SOURED) Oh thanks very much!

GIORGIO (TO JEAN) Now what would you like Mrs Page?

JEAN (WITH A HELPLESS GLANCE AT REG) Well, I'm not used to your food---I can find my way in Spanish---but---

REG: Let him order for you. You order what you think we'd like, Mr Ridolifi. We'll try anything---once! (WITH AN ATTEMPTED LAUGH)

GORDON: Oh dear!

JEAN (SOTTO VOCE, TO GORDON) Stop taking the mike!

GIORGIO: Well I know what's good here at Gino's---I recommend the saltimbocca alla romana.

REG (ENCOURAGINGLY) Oh yes.

GIORGIO GIVES THE ORDER TO GINO.

ESMERALDA: Literally it means 'leap into the mouth'---in the Roman way!

REG: Oh!

GINO LEAVES WITH THE ORDER.

JEAN: It isn't alive is it because (THE WINE GIVES HER A SUDDEN CONFIDENTIAL TONE) they told me once oysters was alive, and I never touched them again---you know, I couldn't!---I went cold all over--- and I had it in my mouth!

ESMERALDA LEANS AWAY FROM HER.  
REG MAKES SYMPATHETIC LAUGHTER FOR JEAN.

ESMERALDA (LEVELLY, TO JEAN) Not only is saltimbocca very much alive, like all things Italian---it is impaled on a stick---in the cruellest way.

CUT TO A LARGE PLATTER BEARING A NUMBER OF SALTIMBOCCHE (STEAK WITH A SLICE OF BACON SECURED TO IT BY MEANS OF A TOOTHPICK) AS IT IS CARRIED SHOULDER-HIGH ACROSS THE ROOM. FOLLOW IT TO OUR PARTY, WHICH IS IN TALK EXCEPT FOR ESMERALDA.

THE DISH IS SERVED. WAITERS ALSO SERVE FRENCH FRIED AND SPINACH, ON SIDE PLATES. REG AND JEAN WATCH THE SALTIMBOCCA WITH SOME DOUBT.

REG (TO ESMERALDA) Well, I can recognise the top layer---it's a nice homely rasher of bacon, unless my eyes have been deceiving me again.

REG TOUCHES THE TOOTHPICK.

GORDON (TO REG) You've got to eat that.

REG: Eh?

GORDON: That's not a toothpick like it looks. It's a delicacy. From Naples.

REG: You're a screamer today. Good thing you don't get married often.

COLIN TRELAWNY AND GIORGIO REMOVE THE TOOTHPICKS FROM THEIR MEAT. WITH A LOOK AT GORDON REG DOES THE SAME. GIORGIO RAISES HIS GLASS TOWARDS THE NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE.

GIORGIO: Le spose! (TO JEAN) It means the bride and bridegroom.

JEAN: Oh yes!

REG, JEAN AND TRELAWNY RAISE THEIR GLASSES TOWARDS THE COUPLE. ESMERALDA REMAINS QUITE STILL.

GIORGIO (SHOCKED, TO ESMERALDA)  
Ma Esmeralda, veramente----!

SHE RAISES HER GLASS SLOWLY TOWARDS KATE.

ESMERALDA: A mia figlia! (DRINKING THE GLASS EMPTY, THEN WITH A SMACK OF THE LIPS:) Perchè hai fatto la sciocca?

THE WAITERS LOOK AT HER WITH ASTONISHMENT, UNCERTAIN WHETHER TO LAUGH. GIORGIO SHRUGS AND DECIDES TO TREAT IT AS A JOKE. BUT KATE IS STUNG BY HER MOTHER'S QUESTION AND GLARES AT HER.

GIORGIO: Here's health!

THEY ALL DRINK EXCEPT ESMERALDA.

KATE (TO ESMERALDA, WITH ANGER)  
Perchè vuoi fare una scena? Sono sposata no? Allora? Ho scelto mio marito!

ESMERALDA (BURSTING INTO TEARS) Si, si, hai scelto! Ma hai scelto male! O Dio! Che disastro! Avevo un sogno---di un marito--- per te! O Dio!

GORDON (TO KATE) What's she on about?

KATE (WITH GLARES AT HER MOTHER)  
She keeps on saying I've been stupid---and made a bad choice--- and she always dreamed of a better husband---!

GIORGIO: Katarina!

GORDON: Oh that's nice!

JEAN: It's no good crying over spilt milk Mrs Ridoli. I mean I could have cried too (SHE NEARLY DOES, PUCKERING UP HER LIPS) I lost a boy of nineteen---an only son---your girl's twenty-one---!

REG: Don't you start!

JEAN: And I don't know whether he did it! There's no proof he did it!

GORDON: Did what?

JEAN (TO GORDON) She could have had others! (FULL FLOOD NOW) There was no blood tests---nothing of that! Only what you said (TO ESMERALDA)! I reckon we was pushed into it!

GIORGIO GAZES AT THE TWO WEEPING WOMEN WITH COOL SCEPTICISM, AND GIVES AN UPWARD GLANCE OF RESIGNATION TO ONE OF THE WAITERS. GINO BUSTLES ROUND HIM.

GINO (WITH JOY) All mothers cry on wedding days. Che bellezza!

GIORGIO (TO GINO) Fall the glasses up.

GINO DOES SO.

GINO (TO ESMERALDA, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT) Forza, signora! (TO JEAN) Courage, madam! (Bending down) Think of a beautiful grandson!

ESMERALDA: O Dio!

KATE: Well if it's going to be this kind of party I'm clearing off! (TO GORDON) Come on! Let's go and see a film!

GORDON AND KATE GET UP BUT BEFORE THEY GO KATE LEANS OVER TOWARDS JEAN.

KATE: And she didn't have others. She had this one because she loves him!

GIORGIO (ALSO RISING) Katerina, vieni quoi! Ma Vieni! cocca mia!

HE GOES TO HIS DAUGHTER LOVINGLY. SHE KISSES HIM, WITH A SPECIAL SMILE.

ESMERALDA (TO KATE) Si, vai via! Lascia la tua mamma! Si!

KATE (TO ESMERALDA) Well promise to behave then!

ESMERALDA (DRYING HER EYES) Si, si, I promise to behave!

KATE DRAWS GORDON BACK TO THE TABLE, AND GIORGIO MAKES A SATISFIED 'Oh-h-h!' AS HE SITS DOWN AGAIN.

ESMERALDA (STILL DRYING AND HEAVING, TO GORDON) Vieni qui, figlio mio!

KATE (TO GORDON) She says go over there. You're her son now.

ESMERALDA (EMBRACING GORDON) Da mi un baciutto!

KATE (TRANSLATING DRILY) Give her a kiss.

ESMERALDA (KISSING HIM, THEN STROKING HIS FACE) Sei bello! Sei anche bello!

KATE: You're beautiful.

GORDON: Yes I got that bit.

ESMERALDA: Mia figlia ha scelta bene!

KATE (FIXING HER MOTHER WITH HER EYES) 'My daughter chose well'.

GIORGIO: Oh-h-h!

KATE (WITH A SIGH) Now perhaps we can eat. (TO GORDON) Come on!

GO DOWN RETURN TO HIS PLACE.

GIORGIO (RAISING HIS GLASS AGAIN) Le sposo!

TRELAWNY (HE HAS BEEN SINKING WINE QUIETLY) Ley sposoey!

THEY ALL DRINK. ESMERALDA DRINKS WITH SOMETHING LIKE DESPARATION, AND ALL BUT CHOKES. SHE PUTS THE EMPTY GLASS DOWN LIKE A HATCHET SHE IS BURYING WITH GREAT UNWILLINGNESS. SHE THEN BEGINS EATING, AFTER WITHDRAWING THE TOOTHPICK WITH A GESTURE OF CONTEMPT AND THROWING IT OVER HER SHOULDER. JEAN TACKLES HER FOOD WITH REMINISCENT SNIFFS.

CUT TO THE SAME RESTAURANT LATER. THERE ARE NO OTHER CLIENTS APART FROM THE WEDDING PARTY. THE DOOR TO THE STREET HAS BEEN CLOSED. THE PARTY IS NOW DIVIDED INTO GROUPS, SITTING AT VARIOUS TABLES. A WAITER IS SEATED NEAR THE KITCHEN ENTRANCE, SMOKING. THEY HAVE ALL BEEN DRINKING COFFEE. GIORGIO AND REG ARE SMOKING FAT CIGARS. COLIN TRELAWNY IS TALKING TO ESMERALDA AT ANOTHER TABLE. JEAN, GORDON AND KATE MAKE UP ANOTHER GROUP.

ESMERALDA IS MAKING UP HER FACE WITH IMPATIENT DETACHMENT AS COLIN TRELAWNY TALKS TO HER.

COLIN (HIS STOMACH STILL BOILING WITH CHIANTI) I thought that was marvellous---all alone in the Forum---yes, Rome in August!

ESMERALDA: Which is like saying you put your head in a hot oven for pleasure! Rome in August is unbearable.

COLIN: Well we had air conditioning of course. And you could always get a breeze up at the top of----

ESMERALDA (CUTTING HIM OFF) Tell me---I want the truth---will he (NODDING TOWARDS GORDON) pass his exams?

COLIN (CHIANTI TAKEN BY SURPRISE) No.

WE CUT TO JEANO, KATE AND GORDON.

JEAN (SECRETIVELY FISHING IN HER BAG) Here--- (BRINGING OUT AN ENVELOP AND GIVING IT TO GORDON)---take this--- don't let your dad see.

GORDON: What is it?

JEAN: You know what it is! I can tell by your eyes! It's what mum gave me to buy a colour TV set--- you have a good honeymoon son--- you'll get two weeks of fun out of that---

GORDON: But dad's already given me some.

JEAN: You won't get far on twenty pounds mate!

KATE (TO JEAN) But you shouldn't Mrs Page---my father's paid the hotel in advance---

JEAN: Well, you keep this for pure fun then. You've got to be clever in this world. I used to play my father some tricks. (TO KATE) He's gone now. He had more money tucked away than he ever said. All in the post office. Anyway (TO GORDON) you shouldn't touch her money (MEANING KATE'S)---start independent--- (WITH A WINK AT KATE) Eh, Kate?

GORDON (FEELING THE ENVELOP IN HIS POCKET) It seems such a lot.

JEAN: It's the price of a colour TV. (TO KATE) Your mother's very emotional isn't she? Still I suppose it's the Italianblood.

KATE: No. It's just her. Daddy's not like that. She's always been the same. Her friends in Milan call her Theodora Dusa.

CUT TO REG AND GIORGIO. REG IS HAVING TROUBLE WITH HIS CIGAR.

REG: Yes I've often said to the wife let's go down to Italy this year but it always seems to be Spain.  
(PUFF AND EXPLOSIVE COUGH)

GORDON IS WATCHING HIM FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM AND IS AMUSED. REG REGISTERS THIS WITH A SCOWL. GIORGIO GAZES AT REG IN A PLACIDLY BEWILDERED WAY. HE TOUCHES REG'S ARM CONFIDENTIALLY AND DRAWS NEARER TO HIM.

GIORGIO: MrvPage, my wife and I were thinking---how will Katerina and Gordon live? I believe Gordon has his exams soon?

REG: That's right (PFAHH!) He is.

GIORGIO: What kind of career you visulaise for the boy, Mr Page?

REG: Well I mean that's really up to the boy isn't it? I mean you can dictate up to a certain point, can't you, but you've got to leave them a free hand haven't you?

GIORGIO: You see, we have to think of Katerina, only twenty-one, and there's the child, I'm afraid I don't know Gordon very well. It was all done rather quickly.

REG: You're telling me.

GIORGIO: Has he a good brain?

REG: Brain? That boy? You ought to hear him talk. It's marvellous. Some of the things he comes out with. 1141 this and 1705 that. He's got it all pat. You can't pull him up on anything! You're stumped from the word go where young Gordon's concerned (GIORGIO IS QUITE LOST NOW), you're on the floor! (GIORGIO BLANCES AT THE FLOOR) Of course I choke him off sometimes, when he gives me a bit too much lip---that's his trouble, My Ridolifi, he's got too much lip---

GIORGIO (STRAINING) Lip?

REG (WITH A LAUGH) I tell you, I could give him a lovely smack round

the chops sometimes! Oo (RUBBING THE PALM OF HIS HAND) it itches! Know what I mean?

GIORGIO (STARING DOWN AT REG'S HAND WITH SOMETHING LIKE FEAR) Oh yes.

REG: But I always hold back because I think that when you've got something upstairs, you've got a right to take the mickey, unlike most people, who tend to be solid from the neck up! I must say I think your wife's got all it takes---as far as noose goes---there are no flies on her!

GIORGIO (SCREWING UP HIS EYES IN DISTRESS) Flies? on my wife?

CUT TO A HOTEL BEDROOM AT A SEASIDE RESORT. GORDON IS IN BED READING A.L.SMITH'S 'CHURCH AND STATE IN THE MIDDLE AGES'. KATE, IN A NIGHT-DRESS, IS JUST COMING FROM THE BATHROOM, BRUSHING HER HAIR.

GORDON (LOOKING UP) Can you hear the sea?

KATE: I wish it was Italy.

GORDON: Still...

KATE (GAZING AT HIM) You read much more than I do don't you? Yet I sail through every time.

GORDON: You're just a mimic. You pour it in and then you pour it out. But I've got a brain.

SHE LAUGHS.

KATE (SITTING ON THE BED) No but honestly what's the trouble?

GORDON: I don't know! I reckon that if I lived in a place like this I could work alright. (FLICKING THROUGH THE PAGES) I've already read twenty pages. It's when I start thinking about it as work--- I try and work at it too much--- whereas with you it seems easy---

KATE: When I work?

GORDON: Yes. I mean you look as if you're enjoying it. And I make it a grind. That's how he talks--- dad. Unless it's a gring it's not work. So if you've got a happy face you're having it cushy. I think it gets inside you don't you---what your parents think? (KATE SHRUGS) Do you think we love each other?

KATE: I don't know. I don't care. I mean, we've never had anybody else have we?

SILENCE.

GORDON (TOUCHING HER STOMACH) Are you sure you've got something there? It's invisible.

KATE: You're looking in the ~~place~~ wrong place. It's here (INDICATING HER EYES)---can't you see I'm having a baby?

GORDON (WITH A LAUGH) YES!

SILENCE.

KATE: Do you think you'll get through this time?

HE GAZES AT HER.

GORDON: No. Not if I go back home.

KATE: Gordon---why don't you come and live with us?

GORDON SHAKES HIS HEAD MUTELY.

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM.  
IT IS EVENING. JEAN IS GETTING TEA AND REG IS DRYING HIS FACE AFTER A WASH.

JEAN (FROM THE KITCHENETTE) I wish you'd use the bathroom upstairs!

REG: Yes, you've said that before! If it'll keep you quiet I'll have another radiator put upstairs this week. We can use some of that money your mother gave you for a colour TV.

SILENCE. JEAN IS BUSY WITH THE TEA.

REG (EMERGING FROM THE TOWEL AGAIN) Did you put it in the post office?

JEAN: Yes.

REG: Well that's funny, I was in there Saturday morning and---

JEAN (SCREAMING) Now for Christ sake get those overalls off and sit down to your tea!

REG (LEAVING) I'm never late for plaice and chips!

HE TRIPS OUT OF THE ROOM PLAY-  
FULLY. BUT THEN PUTS HIS HEAD BACK IN.

REG (IN A LOW VOICE) Is he in then?

JEAN (ALSO LOW) What?

REG: His light's on. Did he  
come back in?

JEAN: He must have done then.

REG: It's not right, I don't care  
what you say---a kid of that age  
married, only just out of school!

JEAN: We should have put our foot  
down. We were pushed into that  
nicely. I'd give her Esmeralda  
if I was her old man!

REG: You'd better put another  
couple of fillets on.

JEAN: All right---you look after  
your business and I'll look after  
mine---now get a decent shirt on!

HE LEAVES. She wanders back into  
the kitchenette.

JEAN: 'Couple of fillets'.

CUT TO GORDON'S BEDROOM. HE IS  
TRYING TO TAKE NOTES FROM A BOOK.  
HE CANNOT CONCENTRATE. HE STARTS  
CRYING TO HIMSELF.

JEAN (VO) Gordon?

GORDON: Yes?

JEAN (VO) I've got a nice piece of  
fried plaice down here for you!

GORDON: OK I'll be down.

JEAN (VO) Are you all right?

SHE HAS HEARD SOMETHING IN HIS  
VOICE AND IS COMING UPSTAIRS.  
HE TRIES TO HIDE HIS STATE BEFORE  
SHE COMES IN. JEAN PEEPS ROUND  
THE DOOR.

JEAN: Here, you've been crying.  
Has that woman been playing you up  
again?

REG (BEHIND HER) What's wrong with  
him?

REG APPEARS TOO.

GORDON (IN TEARS) I can't concentrate!  
It's no good!

JEAN GOES TO THE BED AND DRAWS HIS HEAD TOWARDS HER.

JEAN: There, don't you mind about that! Exams aren't everything. If you worried a bit less you might be all right.

REG: Esmeralda hasn't been at it again has she?

GORDON: No.

REG: You tell her where to stuff it when she starts leading off again. Tell her, just leave me alone Mrs Ridolfi, because it's me taking the exams not you.

GORDON: I wish you'd say her name right. It's Mrs Ridolfi.

JEAN: Anyway I've cooked a lovely bit of fish, duck. Come on. Then we'll go down and have a drink. And try and forget our worries eh?

CUT TO REG, GORDON AND JEAN AT THE PUB DOWN THE ROAD. JEAN AND GORDON ARE JUST ABOUT TO SIT DOWN, AND REG IS ABOUT TO GO TO THE BAR TO ORDER.

JEAN: I think I'll have a gin and tonic.

REG: What's yours, son?

GORDON: Glass of red wine please.

JEAN: Getting quite Italian eh?

REG GOES TO THE BAR.

JEAN: Where's Kate these days?

GORDON: She's got her finals next week.

JEAN: I wonder you go round there at all. You seem to have lost your spirit son---you used to give your dad a bit of lip but now---

GORDON: I told you, she's got her exams.

JEAN (AS REG COMES WITH THE DRINKS) You should never have got married--- a couple of kids like you! Honestly, I don't know how that Esmeralda did it---she just wound us round her little finger! And this bloke (MEANING REG) was the first to say yes.

REG (LAYING DOWN THE DRINKS)  
What's that?

JEAN: Nothing. (TO GORDON)  
You ought to get yourself digs at  
least. Just you and her. It's  
wrong not living together.

GORDON: Where do I get the money?

JEAN: Oh we might be able to cough  
up something. I can go back to the  
Co-op---

REG: You're not going back to that  
Co-op!

GORDON DOWNS HIS GLASS IN ONE GO.

JEAN (TO REG) Are you going to let  
her look down her nose at him for the  
rest of his life then? Anyway I  
enjoyed that job at the Co-op.

REG (TO GORDON) Blimey, that was  
quick wasn't it?

JEAN: Oh go on! Let him enjoy  
himself!

CUT TO GORDON'S BEDROOM. HE PUSHES  
OPEN THE DOOR UNSTEADILY, HAVING HAD  
SEVERAL GLASSES OF WINE. HE LOOKS  
ROUND AT HIS BOOKS. HE MARCHES TO  
THE BED AND CLOSES THEM ALL. HE  
PACKS THEM RESOLUTELY INTO PILES  
AND STACKS THEM ON THE CHEST OF  
DRAWERS. HE THROWS AWAY HIS BOOK  
OF NOTES. HE LEAVES THE ROOM.

CUT TO GIORGIO RIDOLFI'S OFFICE.  
HE IS CLEARLY IN THE TOURIST BUSINESS.  
THERE ARE POSTERS ROUND THE WALL  
ADVERTISING ITALY. HE IS WORKING  
AT HIS DESK IN HIS SHIRTSLEEVES.  
THE INTERCOM BUZZES.

GIORGIO (PRESSING THE CONTACT) Si?

SECRETARY (VO) C'è un signore, un  
giovannotto---dice che Le conosce---

GIORGIO (STILL ATTENDING TO HIS  
WORK) Come si chiama?

SECRETARY (VO) Gordon Page.

GIORGIO: Ah---è il mio genero---  
si, mandarlo a me!

SECRETARY (VO) Va bene.

GIORGIO GOES ON WORKING. THE DOOR  
OPENS AND THE SECRETARY USHERS IN  
GORDON. GIORGIO GETS UP AND GOES  
ROUND HIS DESK TO SHAKE HANDS AFFECT-  
IONATELY.

GIORGIO (SHOWING HIM TO A CHAIR)  
Here. Such a sad face.

GORDON (WITH A SHRUG) Oh!

GIORGIO (PULLING UP ANOTHER CHAIR  
CLOSE TO HIM) You lunch with me?

GORDON: Oh thanks.

GIORGIO: Any trouble?

GORDON: I'm not trying for the  
university any more. I thought  
I'd get a job. I wondered if you  
could help me.

GIORGIO GAZES AT HIM FOR SOME TIME.

GIORGIO: Why you give up?

GORDON: I know it's no good.

GIORGIO: Are you sure?

GORDON: Yes.

GIORGIO GOES TO THE DESK AND TAKES  
UP A PHONE. STILL GAZING AT GORDON  
HE DIALS A NUMBER. ESMERALDA  
ANSWERS AT THE OTHER END.

ESMERALDA (VO) Pronto?

GIORGIO: E Giorgio. Vieni qui  
subito. Tratta di Gordon.

ESMERALDA (VO) Ch'è successo?

GIORGIO: Niente. Vieni qui!

ESMERALDA (VO) Vengo subito!

GIORGIO (AS HE PUTS THE PHONE  
DOWN AGAIN) My wife's coming right  
now.

CUT TO ESMERALDA PUFFINGLY CLIMB-  
ING CEMENT STAIRS. SHE REACHES  
THE LITTLE CLOAKROOM OUTSIDE HER  
CLASS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF HER  
PUPILS STANDING AROUND.

ESMERALDA (TO ANY OF THEM) Have you  
seen Mr Wainwright?

PUPIL 1: He's here (INDICATING THE  
CLASSROOM).

SHE PASSES THROUGH TO THE CLASSROOM.  
HERE ARTHUR WAINWRIGHT, A SHAGGY  
MIDDLE-AGED TEACHER, IS DRINKING A  
CUP OF TEA.

WAINWRIGHT: Hello Mrs Ridolfi.

ESMERALDA: My son-in-law must  
learn Italian right away!

WAINWRIGHT STARES AT HER FOR A MOMENT IN SURPRISE.

WAINWRIGHT: You mean to say that pretty daughter of yours got married? I thought you had her all lined up for me!

ESMERALDA (SOARING PAST HIS FACETIOUSNESS) Could he come to my Italian class?

WAINWRIGHT: Well of course he could, Mrs Ridolfi, that's for you to say.

ESMERALDA: But it's not up to me to pay---that's what I want to avoid!

WAINWRIGHT (WITH A SMILE) Ah!

ESMERALDA: Couldn't he take some of the English classes for foreign students, the elementary ones, and make it up that way?

WAINWRIGHT: Well you are quick on the drawer! We're butter in your fingers, aren't we, Mrs Ridolfi, eh? Has he got his A levels?

ESMERALDA: Oh yes, one or two, and a few O levels too. All the levels except a level head!

CUT TO A CORRIDOR IN KATE'S COLLEGE. SHE IS JUST LEAVING THE LIBRARY, CARRYING A BRIEFCASE FAT WITH BOOKS. SHE IS BEGINNING TO SHOW SIGNS OF PREGNANCY. SHE HURRIES ALONG. SOMEONE CALLS HER FROM BEHIND. IT IS COLIN TRELAWNY. SHE TURNS.

COLIN (APPROACHING) Mrs Page!

KATE: Hullo. I'm not used to being called that.

TRELAWNY: I've been looking for you everywhere. I got an hour off from school.

KATE (DARKENING) It's about Gordon.

TRELAWNY: You know he wants to give up and find a job don't you?

KATE: What?

TRELAWNY: He didn't tell you?

KATE: No!

TRELAWNY: Your father's found him a job.

KATE (OUTRAGED) My father!

TRELAWNY: You know, it's broken my heart. It seems mad---just a couple of A levels and--- You know he nearly got a history place at Cambridge last year don't you? They wrote me a special letter about him.

BURST IN WITH THE SOUNDS OF A FOOTBALL MATCH AND CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM WHERE REG IS WATCHING AN INTERNATIONAL GAME ON TV. JEAN IS AT HIS SIDE EATING CHOCOLATES. THE TV FLICKERS IN THEIR FACES.

REG: Go on! Go on! Oh Blimey! Honest, he thinks you play with your hands, that feller. What's his name?

JEAN SHRUGS AND GOES ON EATING.

REG: He always doe s that---he---

A RING AT THE FRONT-DOOR BELL.

JEAN: That must be Gordon. If he forgets his key again I'll tie it round his bloody neck. (GETTING UP SLOWLY)

REG: Oh! (DANCING IN HIS SEAT) YOU cockeyed ponce---!

THE BELL RINGS AGAIN.

JEAN (AS SHE REACHES THE DOOR, TURNING BACK) And don't use that word!

REG (GLUED TO THE SEAT) Cord love old Ireland---fidgetarsing about between goalposts!

JEAN (VO) Oh Hullo Kate. Good evening Mr Trelawny, this is a nice surprise.

REG COCKS AN EAR. HE HUMPS UP, TIGHTENS HIS TROUSERS WHICH WERE LOOSE, DIVES TO THE TV SET AND SWITCHES IT OFF.

JEAN (VO) Reggy?

REG (STANDING AT THE READY) Yes dear?

JEAN (VO) It's kate and Mr Trelawny.

REG: Oh that's nice!

KATE AND COLIN TRELAWNY COME IN,

FOLLOWED BY JEAN.

JEAN: Well how are you keeping Kate?

KATE: I'm fine, thank you.

JEAN (WITH A GLANCE AT KATE'S TUMMY) That's right.

REG: Make you self comfortable Mr Trelawny (AS THEY ALL SIT DOWN).

TRELAWNY: Well I'll cut a long story short by saying we've come about Gordon.

JEAN: What's up with Gordon?

TRELAWNY: He won't be going to the university after all.

REG: Since when?

TRELAWNY: So you don't know either?

REG: Not us.

TRELAWNY: Well he came to me yesterday with all his books. He said Kate's father had offered him a job. I asked Kate about it and she said she didn't know. He didn't have a word with you beforehand?

JEAN: What sort of a job would that be then?

KATE: My father works in a tourist company and he wants Gordon to be one of his couriers----

JEAN: Oh! That sounds nice!

REG: What would the work consist of exactly, looking after charabanc loads I expect, seeing to the fun and games side, we had a courier in Spain, do you remember Jean, he was a scream! He put that thing in our bed----

JEAN: Oh yes!

REG (TO TRELAWNY) You know, they're little bits of plastic got up to look like dog's business. Talk about laugh!

JEAN: I didn't laugh, not when I saw it. And I can't see Gordon

playing that sort of joke.

TRELAWNY: I just thought it was a terrible tragedy him giving up the university. He's got just the sort of mind you need. I thought you might be able to help. He's still living at home after all. He's not with us at school any more but I'm prepared to go on with the private coaching.

REG: And what does his wife say about it?

KATE: I don't mind him having a job. But I don't think he'd be happy. I mean he won't be doing what he wants to do.

JEAN: Yes but this was his own decision wasn't it? And if it brings him a good job----I mean he obviously wasn't satisfied with the way his life was going was he?

REG (TO KATE) You and Gordo are the limit, honestly! Aren't you in contact?

JEAN: All right Reg.

KATE: The thing is I've got my finals----before the child comes along---

REG: I can see why he wants to get a job. Can't you Kate? He wants to look after his wife and child. It stands to reason.

JEAN (TO KATE, PROUDLY) He went straight to your dad then?

KATE: Yes.

JEAN: Where would this currying be then?

KATE: In Italy.

JEAN: Oh!

KATE: Dad wants him to take charge of a group of hotels eventually, when he knows enough Italian.

JEAN (WITH A LAUGH) Well, we've got our holidays mapped out for us then! No more Majorca, and Brighton in the lean years, eh Reg?

REG STROKES HIS CHIN, SEEING HER

POINT WITH RELISH BUT NOT DARING TO SHOW IT.

CUT TO ESMERALDA'S LANGUAGE CLASS. SHE AND GORDON ARE THE ONLY ONES THERE.

ESMERALDA: So---what were we saying at the beginning? Io ho dieci sterlini da spendere---'I have ten pounds to spend'. How much have I to spend?

GORDON: Ten.

ESMERALDA (ICILY) In Italian please.

GORDON: Er---

ESMERALDA: Dieci. And what is the currency, of which I have ten to spend?

GORDON: Er---

ESMERALDA: Sterlini---pounds. AND who has ten pounds to spend?

GORDON: Er---

ESMERALDA: Io. 'I' have. Not 'you'---'you' is what?

GORDON: Du.

ESMERALDA: 'Du', Gordon, is German. We are speaking Italian. (GAZING AT HIM) Gordon, what are you thinking about all the time?

HE GAZES BACK AT HER.

GORDON: Mediaeval history.

CUT TO THE HOTEL BEDROOM WHERE KATE AND GORDON HONEYMOONED. GORDON IS IN BED AS BEFORE, AND AGAIN HE IS READING 'CHURCH AND STATE IN THE MIDDLE AGES'. KATE DRIFTS IN FROM THE BEDROOM. SHE IS GETTING UNDRESSED.

KATE: You've got a fix on the middle ages haven't you?

GORDON: Well, life was simpler then.

KATE: People lived like dogs.

GORDON: Some did. Whereas younlike factories and fast roads, don't you?

KATE: Yes.

GORDON: Why?

KATE: Because I'm Italian. We had the middle ages too long.

GORDON (TAKING A LETTER FROM THE BACK OF HIS BOOK) Mr Trelawny wrote me a letter. Like to have a look?

SHE TAKES THE LETTER.

KATE (READING IT) What papers is he talking about? Have you been sending him essays?

GORDON: Yes.

KATE (WITH A LAUGH) But you've given it all up! You are a goof! I mean you're not at school or university or even half way between the two!

GORDON: I know, that's what he says.

KATE (READING) 'What's the use Gordon? These papers are first class but who's going to read them apart from me?' Well there you are. (GAZING AT HIM) Do you want to try for Sussex, one last shot? Why not Gordon?

GORDON: It'd be the same. The minute I know I've got to do it I stop enjoying it. I mean I think you need freedom to think. I don't know how all these people do it---- think to order! I have to think when I feel like it!

KATE: Anyway, you're here to learn Italian from me. That's the idea of sending us here isn't it? And ever since you got here you've had your head stuck in that book--- (playfully trying to wrestle the book away from him).

THEY LAUGH, STRUGGLE, KISS.

GORDON: We'll have a lesson later. You can teach me the parts of the body.

KATE (LYING ON THE BED) Is that honestly what you've been doing, writing essays?

GORDON: Yes.

KATE: But why?

GORDON: Because it's useless.  
(SHE LAUGHS AGAIN) If somebody came along and said do it because it'll bring you in a bit of money I couldn't. But if the work isn't for something I can get interested. I don't feel anybody breathing down my neck. I'm just not interested in exams, I'm interested in history, the people---what they did. And that's supposed to be wrong! You're supposed to learn history to get a job. Well, that's not being interested in history, it's being interested in a job. Do you see what I mean? The same with Italian. I could learn Italian if it wasn't going to get me anywhere. I'm interested in Italian, not in getting somewhere with it. And all those people who go to your mother's class aren't interested in Italian, they just want to make some money. And she blames me for not learning it like they do, like a lot of parrots. I don't know, people are so daft nowadays, they say make some money and then they tell you to read a book or learn a language. And they don't have anything to do with each other!

KATE: You ought to explain that to mum.

GORDON: Yes but then it'd be useful. So I couldn't. I can only explain it to you because it's useless. I mean, you believe in me anyway. So there's no point in telling you. That's why I tell you.

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM. IT IS EVENING. GORDON IS ALONE. HE IS AT THE TABLE WITH BOOKS BEFORE HIM, WRITING BUSILY. THERE IS A NOISE AT THE FRONT DOOR. HE STOPS. IT IS REG AND JEAN. HE PUTS THE PEN DOWN AND LEANS BACK. THERE IS THE SOUND OF STAMPING FEET ON THE MAT, AND WHEWING AND BLOWING SOUNDS.

REG (VO) Blimey, I reckon it's going to snow tonight.

REG AND JEAN COME IN, TAKING THEIR COATS OFF.

JEAN: Hullo, you back? I thought you was seeing Kate tonight.

REG SIMPLY GIVES GORDON A GLANCE AND GOES OUTSIDE TO HANG HIS COAT UP.

REG (TO JEAN) What about a cup of

tea?

JEAN: All right, let me get inside the door!

REG (WITH A LOOK AT GORDON'S BOOKS)  
Turning this place into your study then?

GORDON: I'll go upstairs.

REG: Listen, we had Madam Ridolifi here last night. She said you're not learning Italian. She says you don't go to her classes any more. She says you was sacked from teaching English to foreign students the first day---she said you talked about the middle ages all the time and they didn't understand a blime word! You're the limit aren't you? I reckon the idea of bringing you into the world was to break my heart---I can't see any other reason! You're spending me out of house and home---I can't go on forking out---and I'm not having your mother working at the Co-op again---

JEAN (GETTING THE TEA) All right all right!

REG (TURNING ON HER) Well, you tell me what to do then---is he going to stay with us all his life? And what about his kid? He's never going to see the kid at this rate. His kid'll be grown up and earning good money, and he'll be sitting at grandad's writing essays! And Madam Ridolifi told me all about Kate too. She said she passed all her exams with flying colours and she's going to find a decent job! Here---(LOWER-ING HIS HEAD TO GORDON'S LEVEL) I reckon you're soft in the head! That's what I reckon!

JEAN: All right all right!

REG (SITTING IN HIS CHAIR AND BEGINNING TO TAKE OFF HIS SHOES)  
A week at the sea to learn Italian! Double room and bath, meals all paid for! Lucky Esmeralda's got the money to do it because I couldn't. Not that you did learn any Italian, even from your own wife.

GORDON: I learned the parts of the body.

REG: Yes I know you blinkingly well did! She told me! What are

you going to do in Italy then,  
when you're running hotels---tell  
the manager what a big arse he's  
got! 'Parts of the body'! You  
make me sick!

CUT TO A HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM AS  
THE CRY OF A NEWBORN INFANT COMES  
OVER. ESMERALDA, GIORGIO, REG AND  
JEAN ARE WAITING ANXIOUSLY. A  
NURSE APPEARS AT THE DOOR AND SMILES  
AT THEM.

NURSE (QUIETLY) It's a boy. Five  
and a half pounds.

ESMERALDA: Un Figlio! (JUMPING UP  
AND GOING TO THE NURSE) Can we see  
her?

NURSE: Not quite yet. I'll  
let you know.

THE NURSE LEAVES. ESMERALDA GOES  
TO JEAN AND KISSES HER ON BOTH  
CHEEKS.

JEAN (EMBARRASSED) Five and a half  
pounds eh?

GIORGIO SHAKES HANDS WITH REG.

ESMERALADA (STILL HOLDING JEAN CLOSE)  
And the child's father?

JEAN: Well I don't know I'm sure!  
Reg---didn't he say he was on his  
way? (AS REG LOOKS BEWILDERED)  
Gordon!

REG: Isn't he here then? I thought  
he was inside with Kate.

ESMERALDA: Oh my God he's deserted  
her!

GIORGIO: Ma Esmeralda!

ESMERALDA: It happened to your  
cousin---in Bari---on the day of  
the birth---he was never seen again!

REG: He said he was coming. I  
mean, he's absent-minded but it's  
not like Gordon to be absent from a  
birth is it Jean?

ESMERALDA: You have such a funny  
son Mrs Page. Of course he's very  
dear to us both. And Kate adores  
him. Do you know what he told

me?---he says that if people ask him to think about one thing he starts thinking about the opposite, without meaning to. So he's probably gone to the cemetery, as this is a birth! And my daughter has a lifetime of Gordon in front of her---think of that!

JEAN: Well I'm sure he's some-where!

ESMERALDA (ICILY) I never doubted that.

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND GORDON COMES IN.

GORDON: It's aboy! Five and a half pounds!

REG: Yes we've just heard son.

GORDON: I've seen it all on television!

ESMERALDA: O Dio!

REG: You what?

GORDON: With some staudents. It's a closed circuit television. The matron let me. I think women are marvellous! I never knew women were like that! People don't realise---it's marvellous giving birth---I think women are marvellous! There isn't one of them isn't somebody big and important, do you see what I mean?---I mean we can(t do anything like that, men can't!

REG: OK, son.

ESMERALDA (PUTTING HER ARMS ROUND GORDON WITH A LAUG.) You didn't think about something else then, while she was giving birth? You didn't think about old men, seeing a newborn baby?

GORDON (NOT UNDERSTANDING) No, why?

ESMERALDA (GIVING HIM A KISS) So my darling you can go on having babies for the rest of your life---then people will forgive you everything, at least Italians will!

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM.  
GORDON IS SITTING AT THE TABLE AGAIN WITH BOOKS BEFORE HIM.  
WE PAN ROUND TO FIND KATE ON THE OTHER SIDE, WATCHING HIM IN SILENCE.

KATE: I'd love it here. It's so peaceful. You're lucky being born in the working class.

GORDON: 'Working class'! Doesn't exist any more. There's money behind everything---

KATE: So there is in the other class---only worse.

GORDON: Yes but you can't get round it here, it's in the pavements, it sort of glitters up at you. Everybody seems to be thinking inside little schedules---they go out in the morning and they all come back at night, and it feels like a cemetery in the day. They've forgotten how to live.

KATE: So why go on doing that (INDICATING HIS BOOKS)?

GORDON: Well I can't any more--- it doesn't work---I just put the books here so as not just to stare into space and realise I'm a spare, I've got no job and---- (LOOKING AT HER EARNESTLY) Why don't you divorce me?

KATE (WITH A LAUGH) It's not in my blood! Italians stand anything once they've got a child. Even things like you!

HE SMILES.

KATE: You seem about a hundred years older since the baby.

GORDON: I feel it.

KATE: I've been offered a job. At a cartographer's. I've been frightened to tell you. (THEY GAZE AT EACH OTHER IN SILENCE) It's good money. I don't mind working while you stay at home and read. You could even try for a place again, you could take your time. My tutor was saying they like people to come up when they're about twenty-three, because they're more mature. Please Gordon, I

don't feel good living separate any more! (BEGINNING TO CRY) Dad wants you with us too! Italian families are different! They like to be together! They don't think anything of a man being idle, if that's really his nature... And if he's a father... Gordon!

SHE GOES OVER TO HIM.

GORDON: If I lived at your place I'd feel even more unreal.

KATE (WITH ESMERALDA'S ANGER FOR A MOMENT) What does it matter what you feel? You'd be with your own child!

GORDON: Yes, I know. Feelings don't matter. But---(WITH A SHRUG). I wouldn't know how to get away from them, not if I had nothing to do all day!

KATE: But you say you love reading! and writing papers for Trelawny!

GORDON: And he sends them back! Because it doesn't lead anywhere. That's what I hear in my brain all the time when I'm reading---it's not leading anywhere!

KATE: Then that makes you like your father! It means you agree with him!---that life's got to be a grind before it's real! Look at you sitting there, grinding at your books when you want to be outside with me or playing with the baby! You're the one who wants it to lead somewhere---why? If you're happy just reading why don't you do it instead of thinking where it's going to lead? You say you don't want to think about exams and jobs and money all the time, well then, come and live with us, and you can read all day, and you can play with the baby when you don't want to read! You could do lots of things---you might want to do an external course---you might start liking exams! You don't know how you'd change in a different place! (WITH A SIGH) Sometimes you seem stupid Gordon. And it's only because you dream. And you worry. And I know you'd hate yourself if you came to live with us...

GORDON: Yes I would. Seeing you and your mum and dad all go out in the morning, and leave me and the baby behind---I can imagine how it'd

KATE (SLUMPING DOWN IN A CHAIR AGAIN) So there's no solution. No job, no university, no reading even. Just nothing.

GORDON: No I don't say that.

KATE: Well tell me what there is then? You leave school and say you're going to get a job, and you ask dad for a job and he offers you one, and then you can't learn Italian, and now you can't even read either--- because it doesn't lead anywhere. Yet you're supposed to believe in things not leading anywhere (PUTTING HER HAND TO HER HEAD IN CONFUSION)...

GORDON: I do believe in things not leading anywhere. I mean a man should just be interested in his subject and he shouldn't think of the money that comes out of it. You've got to have thinkers. That's the trouble nowadays, there's no one to think, there are only people scrambling and fighting each other for money, and they use whatever they've got for the fight---and I'm not going to use all this (NODDING TOWARDS THE BOOKS) for fighting. I'd rather work with my hands. You've got to have thinkers. That's the trouble today. Everything's going to get smashed up because of that. There's no one allowed to sit and think things out. He's always somebody's else's slave. Working for somebody else's idea. So he can't think straight in the end. That's what I think. Somebody's got to stop and say, I won't do it. Otherwise everything gets smashed up. I mean, everybody's blind. Things just happen nowadays. Nobody's in charge Kate, you see, because there's nobody allowed to think things out. One chap's a specialist in flat feet, another one does urine tests, somebody else makes precision instruments. And they've all got their noses down and can't see the whole picture, they can't ask themselves what's it all for because then if they didn't want to do it they'd starve, so everybody's helping to smash the world up, and I'm not going to.

KATE: Don't then. I don't want you to. I agree with what you say. So come and live with us. But you couldn't. You'd hate yourself! Why? It means you don't really believe in what you're saying!

GORDON: It means my upbringing's got under my skin. Yes, I agree there.

KATE: So why not get away?

GORDON: And sit and hate myself?

KATE (CRYING SILENTLY) Gordon...

GORDON: Listen, I'll find a place for us to live. That's the best answer of the lot isn't it?

KATE (NODDING AND TRYING TO SMILE) Yes!

CUT TO THE PAGE LIVING ROOM IN THE EARLY MORNING. JEAN IS GETTING BREAKFAST. THE TABLE IS LAID FOR THREE.

JEAN (CALLING) Reg! It's past eight, come on!

REG (VO) I'll be there!

JEAN (CALLING) Gordon!

NO REPLY. REG COMES IN IN HIS OVERALLS.

REG: I smell eggs and bacon!

JEAN: And tomatoes. And fried bread.

REG: You're spoiling me. A Sunday breakfast every day! (SITTING DOWN) But don't think you can fool me, my girl. You're doing it to tickle his appetite aren't you? (AS SHE PUTS A STEAMING PLATE BEFORE HIM) That's it, a nice big helping for dad!

JEAN: Grandad you mean.

REG: Don't remind me. (TUCKING IN) I bet he don't eat it just the same.

JEAN (IN THE KITCHENETTE) I was thinking last night, she's turned out ever such a good little mother hasn't she? Bid you see the way she did that nappy?

REG: She starts work next month then.

JEAN: Yes.

REG: I don't know!---his wife earning and ----

JEAN: Well it's no good harping on it!

GORDON COMES IN.

REG: Hullo mate.

GORDON: Morning.

JEAN: I was saying about Kate, she looks as if she's been pinning up nappies all her life.

GORDON (SITTING DOWN) Italian blood.

REG (DRINKING HIS TEA) That would have been the life eh?---if that hotel-idea had worked out and you'd have been sent out there to look after a whole network. Still, dreams! They can't stop us having them can they mate?

GORDON: No.

JEAN BRINGS GORDON'S BREAKFAST.

GORDON (TO REG) I was going to ask you something.

REG: What?

GORDON: I've got to find a place for me and Kate to live.

REG: Yes?

GORDON: Can you fix me up with a job down at the Electricity Board? I mean for a bit? I mean, I know how to do the work, I've watched you at it all my life.

JEAN STANDS GAZING AT HIM.

REG (ABASHED) Well, I don't know how they stand for giving jobs.

GORDON: I mean, what about it?

REG: I could have a bash, with the personnel manager.

JEAN: Yes but Gordon---

GORDON: Oh don't make it bad please! I've got to do it!

REG (GETTING UP) Here, son, you don't have to get worked up about it (PUTTING HIS HAND ON GORDON'S SHOULDER)! You're all right. You're OK. I'll see what I can do.

GORDON: It's only for a bit.

REG: Of course it is. You'll make it some day. You don't need

a university education for what  
you're after.

GORDON: Yes but---(LOOKING UP AT  
HIM) what am I after?

REG (WALKING AWAY BACK TO HIS BREAK-  
FAST, WITH A SHRUG) A new kind of  
man, I suppose!

JEAN: Come on, eat your breakfast  
son.

GORDON LOOKS DOWN AT HIS BREAKFAST  
AND THEN BEGINS EATING WITHOUT APP-  
ETITE AS THE TITLES COME UP.