

The Postman's Reign

Pilot Episode By

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Note: This script is written in British English and uses British punctuation and spelling rules. Example, 'Mr' and 'Mrs' do not have periods.

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EXT. S.E.15, SOUTHEAST LONDON STREETS - DAY

It's a grim, working-class neighbourhood in southeast London, postal code SE15; a typical assortment of terraced houses and semidetached homes. A string of small shops and cafes on the high street. A Sainsbury's here, a Boots there.

VARIOUS NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTS each open their door or look out their window after hearing the familiar "clank" of the post slots in their doors. Today's post has arrived.

A SLEEPY SLACKER appears in his front window, still in pajamas. Shuffles toward his front door. Yawns as he picks up his letters. On to the next home...

A HARRIED MOTHER scoots her TODDLER'S push-toys aside on the front porch, trying to make a path for the POSTMAN. She takes her post from him, barely looks up from her tidying duties. Her toddler WAILS nearby.

The Postman's path goes on to the next home.

The next untidy garden reveals a JAMAICAN MAN, early thirties, sprawled out in a garden chair despite the lack of sunshine on this gloomy day. He smokes luxuriously and chats on a mobile phone. He has all the time in the world.

The Postman slips past him, drops the post through the slot, then glides like a ghost back to the sidewalk.

The Postman, MILO FINCH, 40, slips unnoticed past most of the residents on this route. Milo is average height, average appearance, average demeanour. Average, average, average. In his drab, dark blue Royal Mail uniform, his existence barely registers at all.

A petite, old woman, MRS KENDALL, 70s, opens her door. Smiles at Milo as he reaches her doorstep.

MRS KENDALL

Hello, Milo. How are you today?

He beams at her. But there's a hint of sympathy in his eyes.

MILO

Aces, Mrs Kendall.

MRS KENDALL

Anything nice for me today?

She rubs her hands in anticipation as he hands over her post.

MILO

No, sorry, love. Mostly junk mail.

Her crestfallen face says it all.

MRS KENDALL

Nothing from my daughter? She promised she'd write. Usually sends a lovely birthday card.

Milo doesn't need to check. He shakes his head apologetically.

MILO

That catalogue looks really nice though. Hours of enjoyment there, you can look through it, pick things out.

She tries to summon some enthusiasm.

MRS KENDALL

Oh, yes, I suppose so. Do some armchair window shopping, eh? Jolly good.

She takes her post, and smiles weakly before going inside.

MILO (V.O.)

Number 28 Welling Street, student loans three years in default now, third letter re: threat of wage garnishments...number 30, child support payments stopped three months ago, new lawyer on the case...lots of typos...not terribly professional...

ROADSIDE GARDEN WALL -- Milo leans on a garden wall halfway down the road. Makes notes in a small, unofficial-looking notebook.

He glances surreptitiously back at the homes of the first mail recipients, now focusing on the Jamaican Man.

MILO (V.O.)

Number 32 Welling Street...mother of his child still in prison on charges of selling marijuana, child stays with his sister...cold bastard...

Milo narrows his eyes in concentration...straining to remember before continuing with his notes.

MILO (V.O.)

...two letters a week from Holloway Prison... childlike handwriting....

Glances at his large satchel -- an envelope with a loose flap catches his eye. He pries the envelope open expertly

with one hand, snatches several £10 notes out of it, and pockets them.

MILO

Stupid man...sending cash to the insurance company. It says right on it, line five -- "do not send cash!" Leave it a drug dealer to pay his bills in cash.

MILO (V.O.)

And still nothing for Mrs Kendall, only bills and advertisement flyers. Daughter in...Nottingham? Son in Shropshire. But still...nothing.

A brash, loud voice breaks his concentration. Unnerves him.

KIKI

Milo! Hi Milo!

In a smooth, unobtrusive move Milo slips his notebook into his Royal Mail-issued coat pocket. Hops up, continues his route.

MILO

Hello, Kiki.

KIKI MONROE, a child-like presence in a chubby 23 year-old body with a moon-face, and a horribly unfashionable pixie haircut. She seems a bit over-excited to see him.

KIKI

Hi Milo. Hi. I saw you. I saw you a minute ago, and I ran down to see you. I ran down, just now!

MILO

Did you?

Milo starts on his route again, going from house to house, taking Kiki's following him in stride.

KIKI

You know where I just went? Milo?
Guess where I was!

Milo plays her game, patiently.

MILO

Does it start with a "B"?

She is joyous at his good guess. It is obvious by now that she is mildly retarded.

KIKI
 Yes! You know, Milo? Do you know
 where I was?

MILO
 I have a feeling I might.

She follows him as he drops more bundles of post into the
 front door slots along this quiet street.

KIKI
 Yeah, guess, Milo, guess! Keep
 guessing!

Her manner is blunt and demanding.

MILO
 And does it involve...hm...dog-racing?

She is ecstatic now at how good he is at her guessing game.

KIKI
 Yes! Yes!

Milo stops in his tracks, finally giving her his full
 attention, something she relishes in.

MILO
 Hm, let me see...

He pretends to be deep in thought, sorting out this puzzle.

MILO
 If I had to guess, I'd say you went to
 the bookie to place a bet on a dog.
 Although which dog, I can't say.

She jumps up and down, shouting her glee.

KIKI
 Yes! Mum gave me 28p and I placed a
 bet on "Wily Smiley." He's gonna win.

MILO
 What are the odds?

KIKI
 Eight to one.

MILO
 Twenty-eight pence? My God, Kiki, if
 you win, do you realize how much money
 you'll have?

She thrusts her arms up towards the heavens.

KIKI

Loads of money!

Milo can't help but smile at her glee. Her winnings might buy her a sandwich if she's lucky.

KIKI

You goin' to the Spanish cafe now? I can go, too. I've got my lunch, Maria lets me eat it there. I get tea. She brings me tea. I pay for it though.

MILO

Yes, she's very nice. It's not Spanish though, Kiki. It's Portuguese.

KIKI

Are you going now? It's 11:15. It's time, right? Time for the Spanish cafe?

Milo glances at his watch, amazed.

MILO

Cor, am I that predictable?

He hoists his big satchel onto his shoulder more securely.

MILO

I suppose I am.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

Kiki prances after Milo like a happy puppy. They cross the street, head for a small cafe, "Cataplana Cafe."

In the middle of the zebra crossing they pass a bookish-looking man, MR PERCY, 40s, with a large dog on a lead. The dog lags behind, eager to stop and sniff every new available tidbit in the street.

Kiki is delighted and tries to pet the dog as they meet half-way across the street - but Mr Percy yanks the lead harshly, drags the dog along.

Now across the street again from the dog and Mr Percy, both Kiki and Milo watch Mr Percy ramble down the street.

The poor, unknowing dog makes the mistake of stopping to sniff a promising-looking piece of rubbish. Feeling the tension in the lead, Mr Percy turns. Sees the dog lag behind.

MR PERCY

Come on, damn it!

With great strength he yanks the lead. The dog yelps in pain, momentarily knocked off her feet. Then literally dragged along the rough ground before skittering to her feet again.

Milo watches, jaw clenched. Silent, glaring contempt.

KIKI

He lives next door to me!

MILO

I know.

Kiki lunges forward.

KIKI

Hey! You! Don't pull that dog!
You're a mean man! You --

Milo stops her from darting out into the traffic-laden road.

Mr Percy, barely hearing, glances in their direction.

Milo pulls Kiki away. Turns them so they no longer face the dog man's direction. Feigns indifference to what has happened.

MILO

Shh!

He takes Kiki's arm, guides her with him toward the cafe.

MILO

That's no way to handle this.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - DAY

Lunchtime in the busy Portugal-themed cafe. Milo briefly jumps the queue at the cashier but only to hand over a stack of mail. The older gentleman manning the till, PEDRO, looks at the stack and jokingly waves it away.

PEDRO

No, no! Only bills! Take it away!

Milo laughs with him, but won't take the stack back, forcing Pedro to finally take it.

MILO

Sorry, mate. Got a stack of 'em myself at home.

Milo pauses at a table for two. Takes his coat off, tosses it onto the back of a chair. Takes his satchel and heads for the loo.

After he leaves, Kiki slinks over, sits in Milo's chair, quite pleased with herself. She caresses the fabric of his jacket.

INT. CATAPLANA LOO - DAY

Milo washes his hands. Instead of drying them he uses the water left on them to slick back his hair. The slicked-back look? No, he doesn't like that. He roughs it up a bit, making it spiky. A few seconds deliberation. Nah. He puts it back the way it was...just plain.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - DAY

Milo sees Kiki sitting in his chair reading the menu. He sighs. His tolerance is running out. He sidles up next to her.

MILO

Say, listen Kiki, actually I'm meeting my brother-in-law for lunch today, and I'd like to sit alone with him so we -

KIKI

(reads)

"Mr Paddy - receives cheques on the second Friday of every month. Number 128 Cody Avenue, Mrs Gibson, goes for hair appointment every other Friday..."

Shit! She's not reading the menu, she's got his notebook!

KIKI

Why do you need to know those things?

Milo whips his notebook out of her hands. His voice low, but frantic.

MILO

Kiki! That's my personal book!

He checks to see who might be in earshot of her brash voice.

KIKI

Are they your friends?

Milo's voice is missing his usual tolerant tone.

MILO

You really shouldn't read other people's things, you know.

His menacing tone is lost on her childlike interest in the subject of conversation.

MILO

You're in my seat.

He stuffs his notebook into his satchel as she gets out of his chair. She pulls a tattered green spiral notebook of her own out of her purse.

KIKI

I have a notebook too. I have friends too. Look, see?

Milo gives a cursory glance at her notebook. She opens a page to show him. He reads as he sits down and settles in.

MILO

Uh huh. "Red trousers, blue jumper. Red trousers, white blouse. Black skirt, pink jacket." What's that then?

Not sensing his true disinterest, Kiki happily explains. Milo scans the throngs of people in the cafe.

KIKI

That's what my mother wore last week. See, and..."yellow boots, white skirt, white jacket. Blue scarf, red shirt..." that's MY page. All my friends have pages. And my dog, well, he doesn't wear clothes, but he has his page, I keep track of what he eats every day, see here?

Milo isn't even looking at her anymore. He's scanning the faces in the cafe.

MILO

Look, Kiki, I'm meeting someone here for lunch. Didn't you say Maria gives you tea?

It's hard to stop Kiki's train of thought once it gets going.

KIKI

Your page is easy, Milo, you always wear the same thing.

A slight chuckle from Milo -- he is touched that he merits a place in her book. She flips to another page.

KIKI

"Blue trousers, blue shirt. Blue trousers, blue shirt. Blue trousers, blue shirt. Blue trousers --"

MILO

Ah, yes, I think I sense the pattern emerging. Um, Kiki? Doesn't Maria give you your own table? Gives you tea?

KIKI

Yes. She lets me sit there every day. I have my very own table. And Maria brings me tea.

MILO

Yes, I believe I've heard about that.

Milo's getting tired of this, and cranky. She turns around, cranes to find her spot.

KIKI

I'm gonna go eat now.

MILO

If you insist. Off you go.

At long last, Kiki meanders off to her own table.

A waitress, MARIA, approaches, seen in his peripheral vision, from the waist down. He offers a polite, wan smile. At last he manages to speak, but without looking up at her.

MILO

Hello, Maria. Can I get a menu?

MARIA

A *menu*? Since when?

Her voice is mellow, feminine, with a heavy Portuguese accent.

MILO

Meeting a mate for lunch.

MARIA

Oh, I see. Yes, I'll get you one.

She leaves.

A casual, yet dapper man, ARTHUR, mid-30s pulls out the other chair at Milo's table and plops down into it.

ARTHUR

Christ, I'm starving! Do we get bread to nosh on before we order?

Milo is at last at ease.

MILO

Well good morning, sunshine!

Arthur's good-looking, full of polite charm. Looks around.

ARTHUR

Oh, I don't know about this, mate. Spanish food usually does a number on my stomach. Janine will be grumbling all night.

MILO

Portuguese. Not Spanish, not at all like beans and rice and tacos. Christ, I've told you, *Portuguese*.

Looking at the menu Arthur finally clicks, points to the cafe's name printed on it.

ARTHUR

Ah, yes! "Cataplana Cafe"...it makes sense now.

Milo is none-the-wiser, laughs.

MILO

Does it?

ARTHUR

Yeah. "Cataplana"...those large hinged pans they use for steaming food in Portugal, big lid comes down like a clam shell, like this...

He "shows" Milo the shape by miming it for him.

MILO

Oh, listen to you, Nigella. Doesn't know Spain from Portugal, but he knows what a cataplana is.

As Arthur pours over the menu, Milo takes a casual, but intentional, glance at the till...and the stack of mail that Pedro has tossed onto the counter. Milo freezes when he sees Maria, the waitress, pick the stack up and flip through it.

ARTHUR

Hello? Anyone home?

Milo snaps his attention back to Arthur.

ARTHUR

What do you recommend? I don't know what half of this stuff is. Crikey... clams, sausage and ham...and that's all in one dish! Not Spanish at all, is it? Indeed.

Milo makes a conscious effort to relax again and get back into the moment with Arthur.

MILO

I usually get the white beans, onions and sausage with a huge amount of some of the best bread you've ever had.

ARTHUR

Onions AND sausage. Yeah, Janine will love me for that as well.

MILO

Keeping your delicate stomach in mind, as well as Janine's well-being later in the evening, I also recommend the *acorda a alentejana*.

Arthur raises a sarcastic brow.

ARTHUR

Oo, someone's been listening to his language tapes.

MILO

Delicious. A type of egg-drop soup with coriander and thickened with bread. Although it *does* contain enough garlic to blow a small safe.

Without looking up from his menu, Arthur asks the big question.

ARTHUR

So. Which one is she?

Milo looks around to make sure no one is listening. No one is.

ARTHUR

Knowing the sneaky bastard you are, I'd bet that you already know which tables are hers, so twenty to one odds the waitress that comes to take our order is our girl.

Milo instantly tenses up as Maria comes back. This gives Arthur his answer.

MARIA

Hello. Ready?

Arthur looks up at her. The first real close look at Maria. Natural, pretty, demure, mid 30s. Not an absurdly stunning creature, but a simple, ordinary beauty. One look at her confirms it -- Arthur smiles.

ARTHUR

Ah yes. Indeed.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - LATER

Evidence of a large and well-enjoyed meal litters the table.

MILO

My God, you've got all the time in the world. You've got no excuse! The world is at your feet! Just figure out what you want to do, and go do it. You've certainly got the time.

ARTHUR

This from a man who finishes work at half two every day.

MILO

Hey, that's because I work hard!

Milo plays at being insulted.

MILO

Okay, well actually it's because I walk fast. The other lads don't finish until about four. The faster you walk, the faster you finish.

ARTHUR

That's the secret to a successful career then, is it? Walk quickly?

They laugh. Finish their tea and coffee. Arthur shakes his head in mock disgust.

ARTHUR

Finishes at half two.

Arthur sees that Milo is distracted...

COUNTER -- Maria stands behind the counter, toys with her necklace. Winds the chain around her finger, then absent-mindedly brings the pendant to her lips, gently bites on it.

MILO AND ARTHUR'S TABLE -- Milo watches her play with her necklace, and has unconsciously mimicked her, his fingers are at his mouth, too. He nods over at her, with a shy smile.

MILO

She always does that...

Arthur hides his amused smile behind his cup of tea.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - LATER

Milo is all smiles and gregarious chat. That is, until Maria once more approaches the table. He then goes silent and awkward. Arthur, however, is still charming.

MARIA

How are we doing? Everything is okay?

ARTHUR

Delightful.

Arthur looks to Milo, a non-verbal cue to say something, say anything! Milo only nods with a silly fixed smile on his face. Arthur is amused at Milo's awkward situation.

ARTHUR

So...Maria is it? Your accent is beautiful. Isn't it Milo?

Again, Milo can only manage a "yeah" or "uh huh." Not much better than a schoolboy response.

MARIA

Oh, thank you very much. I am from Portugal. I've learned much English, but I still have this accent.

ARTHUR

It's nice, don't try and get rid of it.

MARIA

It's not...too much?

ARTHUR

Not at all. My wife...uh, Milo's sister...

Arthur uses any opportunity to throw the conversation to Milo...

ARTHUR

...teaches English as a second language to adults so you can believe me when I say your accent is just fine. Isn't it Milo?

Milo nods enthusiastically.

MILO

Yeah!

Arthur rolls his eyes at Milo.

MARIA

That is very kind of you to say.

ARTHUR

And your English is excellent. My wife's students' English isn't nearly as good. Hell, my WIFE'S English even. Yours is top notch.

MARIA

Top notch?

ARTHUR

Yeah...uh...you know, first rate.

She nods and smiles.

MARIA

"Top notch"...that refers to what?

Arthur is stumped.

ARTHUR

I have no idea. Do you know the origins of that phrase, Milo?

MILO

Uh, I believe that...no, I do not.

Arthur gives up. He pats her on the hand.

ARTHUR

Just the bill please, love.

As soon as she is out of earshot...

ARTHUR

I don't know how she can resist you with your witty repartee. "I believe that...I do not." Good God man, please

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

tell me you're not that silent with her when I'm not here! You've got to at least SPEAK to her!

MILO

I do. In my own way.

ARTHUR

In your own way...? Oh Jesus, not the letters again.

MILO

Shut up. I'm not good in person.

ARTHUR

Gosh, really? Blow me down!

Milo shrugs it off, plays with his empty teacup.

MILO

Doesn't matter. She has a boyfriend anyway. I just do it to make her feel good. Why make myself known and ruin it all?

INT. CATAPLANA KITCHEN - DAY

Maria finds an out of the way corner in the back kitchen. Pulls a small pale blue envelope out of her apron. It is good stationery, obviously well-chosen. She looks around to make sure no one is watching. No one is. Opens the letter. Smiles before she even sees the words.

MILO (V.O.)

Maria, sitting in the park today I was surrounded by beauty. Tall magnificent trees, scented blossoms, the natural glory of the earth and could not help but be reminded of you...

Milo's voice is unlike we've heard before. Full of tenderness and charming resonance. Clear, strong, confident. She reads on, savours each line.

MILO (V.O.)

Inspired to share the resplendence of the moment with you, I plucked a leaf for you, but discarded it, then another, wanting to find one as perfect as you. But alas, none of them could equal your natural, luminous beauty. This one...

She finds the enclosed leaf...

MILO

...cannot compare to you, and it is humbled to be a token for you of my affection...

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - DAY

Milo and Arthur are at the till about to pay for lunch.

A scruffily handsome man, FRANCO, 30, saunters into the cafe. From his colouring and accent, probably Spanish or Portuguese.

FRANCO

Hey Pedro. Maria off yet?

PEDRO

Yeah, she's in the back.

Franco nods toward behind the counter.

FRANCO

Mind?

PEDRO

Course not. Take some oyster stew. And there's bread.

Franco goes behind the counter. Stirs the pot on the hot plate.

FRANCO

Mmm. Yeah, I think I will. Thanks.

Though the young man is nothing but polite and friendly, Milo's eyes shoots silent daggers into him.

INT. CATAPLANA KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MILO (V.O.)

To adore you from afar, as Dulcinea was cherished by Don Quixote, is all I need to brighten my days. Ever yours, "Browning."

Maria hears Franco's voice. Tucks her love letter away.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - DAY

Maria comes out from the kitchen, takes her apron off and reaches for her coat. She uses her sweetest tone.

MARIA

Hello, Franco.

Franco ladles oyster stew into a take-away container.

FRANCO

Maria, you want some of this too?

Out of Maria's eyeline Franco takes a small wrapped box from his pocket. Makes the "shh" signal to Milo, Arthur and Pedro.

MARIA

No. No offence to Pedro, but I'm sick of the smell of it.

She winks to Pedro.

MARIA

And that's the last thing I want to take home with me.

At the till, Milo, Arthur and Pedro watch. Wait for Franco to spring his surprise.

FRANCO

Maybe you'd like this instead...

Franco hands her the present and she squeals in delight. Opens it immediately. Bright, shiny, gold hoop earrings with small decorative beaded fringe. Slightly garish, and very modern-day looking.

MARIA

Oh, baby, I love them! Oh my God, are they real gold?

FRANCO

Yes, of course! Well, plated.

Milo has seen enough, turns away as Maria kisses Franco.

Arthur reaches for his wallet, but Milo waves him back.

MILO

No, no. My pleasure.

Milo takes out his ill-gotten ten pound notes.

INT. MILO'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Milo's flat is small, but comfortable. Milo, wearing a well-worn track suit, drink in hand, turns on some lush music. He then does a graceful dance move over to his desk where he takes the lid off a shoebox. It's full of postcards.

MILO

What shall it be then?

Milo calls over his shoulder to someone.

MILO

Hm? Any preference? What do you think she'd like? You choose, Nicky.

Still no response from anyone else. He puts his drink down and flips through the cards.

MILO

Brighton? Nottingham? Ah...Loch Ness!

He pulls two postcards from the box and holds them up for NICKY to look at.

MILO

Which do you think? Brighton? Or Loch Ness?

Nicky - now seen to be a big, orange cat - looks at his master and gives an indifferent meow.

MILO

Yes, I think so too. Loch Ness it is!

INT. MILO'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Milo lies on the floor, on his back, pen in hand. Chews on the end of it. Nicky saunters over and demands attention. Milo looks at the cat and asks in all seriousness...

MILO

Help me out here, what letter do most names begin with?

Nicky gives an abbreviated meow, more of a "mrah!"

MILO

M? You think? Yeah, you may be right. Michael, Mark, Martin, Mitchell...Milo.

Milo rolls over onto his stomach and writes on the postcard. Finishes it off with a quick, messy flourish.

Grabs Nicky, rolls him over onto his back and gives a series of rapid fire kisses to the cat, and a good long ear-scratching.

MILO

Look at you, you gorgeous creature. Look at this fur...silky and luxurious. Who does your fur, darling? You're magnificent!

Nicky loves it, luxuriates in Milo's loving attention.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Milo winds his way through the huge carts of mail waiting to be sorted or delivered. He spots a large box of official-looking letters, all alike, hundreds of them. A furtive glance around, then Milo swiftly nicks about four or five of them. Tucks them away in his jacket, keeps walking.

INT. POST OFFICE - LATER

Milo sorts some post for his route. Stops now and then to take a closer look at some of the more interesting pieces.

He pops over to the franking machine, takes the postcard from his jacket pocket, and runs the postcard through it. Quickly he takes the postcard back, licks his finger and intentionally smudges the newly-inked postmark. He waves the postcard like a fan quickly to dry it.

BOB, a pale and weedy-looking young bloke steps up to Milo as he sorts his mail for the day. Another bored young postal worker, LENNY follows Bob.

BOB
(re: Milo)
Ah, the master.

LENNY
Bet he can't do five. No way.

BOB
You're on. How much?

LENNY
Ten quid.

Bob looks to Milo for reassurance. Milo gives a confident nod.

BOB
You're on.

MILO
Hand 'em over.

LENNY
Wait, wait, make sure they're facing
away...

Lenny makes sure the envelopes are all back to front, then hands Milo the five envelopes.

BOB
Watch this, you won't believe it.

Milo takes the one on top, looks only at the back of it.

MILO

Notice of disconnection from the water company. Blue envelope, smaller than average size. Recycle logo in blue, not black.

Then another...

MILO

Cheque issued from the national housing office...reimbursement department. Perforated edges means usually government issued, two main sizes, the larger ones are for housing.

And the rest...

MILO

Advertisement for "Buy six DVDs for One Pence." Light blue envelope, three pages folded twice over. And a late notice for a subscription to either Hello magazine, or one of its sister magazines -- pink envelope, "Basildon Recycled Paper Product" on the back.

The last one makes Milo roll his eyes.

MILO

Easy. Greeting card.

LENNY

Anyone can tell that, those are obvious.

Bob holds his hand up in a "wait, we're not done" gesture.

BOB

With...?

Milo takes the envelope again, holds it by the very edges, and tips it back and forth, then shakes it in a very particular manner. Listens carefully.

MILO

Cash, not cheque.

Lenny is amazed.

LENNY

How...?

MILO

Cheques are perfectly flat and slick
and when you shake it like this...

(mimes how to
shake envelope)

...the cheque easily slides back and
forth, you can hear it clack, clack,
clack. But cash is more uneven,
creased and not flat at all. When
you slide it with cash, nothing
happens, it's not slick enough to
move back and forth. But you can
feel it's thicker than a card with
nothing in it at all.

BOB

See? Milo is the Master!

LENNY

All right then, Mr Master of the Royal
Mail...how many pounds in there?

Milo takes the envelope and holds it to his head...he closes
his eyes in concentration.

MILO

Forty two pounds.

Bob and Lenny are dumbfounded, staring in awe. Milo breaks
into a grin and tosses it back to Bob.

MILO

I don't know, do I? What do you think
I am, bloody psychic?

Bob takes the card and with the precision of a surgeon opens
the envelope flap with his pocket knife. Sure enough, he
pulls out a young child's birthday card with a colourful clown
holding a balloon that says "You're SIX!" and a £20 note.

BOB

Pay up! Ten pounds please! Ladies
and gentleman, the Postal Savant of
S.E.15!

MILO

I should get a share of that! I do
all the work. I feel like a bloody
performing seal!

Lenny grudgingly hands over a ten pound note to Bob. Then
Lenny gets his greedy hands on the little kid's birthday
money. Bob plucks the ten pound note from Lenny's hand.

BOB

I'll take that.

Milo grabs the birthday card and birthday cash from Lenny.

MILO

And I'll take that.

LENNY

Hey, I gotta recoup my losses from somewhere.

Milo grabs some postal glue and expertly puts the birthday card back the way it was, cash and all.

MILO

Not from a six year-old kid you won't.

He tosses it into the proper cart to be delivered.

EXT. WILSON ROAD - DAY

It's raining quite hard, it's really coming down. Milo has his rain-gear on, hooded, but no umbrella. He takes a package from his satchel, approaches a house. The package is too big to fit through the slot. He knocks on the door.

Milo studies the return address name on the package as he waits. "Pyramid Products, Amsterdam". After a few seconds, Mr Percy - the man with the large dog - answers. The slanting rain enters the house.

MR PERCY

Arr! Come in, come in!

Milo darts in.

INT. MR PERCY'S LOUNGE - DAY

MR PERCY

Sorry about that, didn't mean to yell. Just didn't expect the rain like that.

Milo hands his package to him.

MILO

You sure get a lot of packages.

Mr Percy takes his parcel. Milo's eyes take a few seconds to adjust to the dim interior.

But then he sees the dog, ECHO. Echo is in a cage that is FAR too small for her. She is forced to crouch in an

unnatural position and she whines a pitiful cry. The dog looks sick and beaten. Watery, bloodshot eyes peer up at Milo. Milo covers his shock at the hideous sight.

MR PERCY

No umbrella, huh?

Milo tries to recover from seeing the poor dog, but Mr Percy sees that Milo has noticed her.

MILO

Uh, no, too awkward. Need my hands free.

MR PERCY

Echo, she gets into so much trouble. Gotta just keep her caged up a bit while I get some work done.

Milo nods, as if he doesn't care.

MILO

Uh huh. Well, I'm off.

MR PERCY

All right then. Mind how you go, don't slip. Try and keep dry!

Mr Percy opens the door for Milo.

EXT. MR PERCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Once outside Milo closes his eyes. Takes a few deep breaths.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Mentally handicapped men and women of all ages mill around a big, bright day room. Each one wears a different name tag saying "Butcher" or "Bus Driver" or "Poet" etc. They are asking each other questions in this role playing game. Kiki's name tag says "Nurse."

A tall, lean Chaperone woman tries to wrangle them all.

CHAPERONE

Remember, you can talk to different people. Move around. Don't spend too much time with one person.

Kiki trots to the refreshment table and crams a sandwich in her mouth.

CHAPERONE

Kiki, please join the group. Find someone to chat with.

KIKI

I'm eating.

CHAPERONE

Yes, I see. Please rejoin the group.

KIKI

Okay. After I eat.

The Chaperone approaches Kiki and speaks quietly.

CHAPERONE

Kiki, we'll all eat later. Together.

KIKI

Okay!

Kiki grabs some crisps, shoves them in her mouth.

KIKI

I'm eating now though.

The Chaperone takes a sterner tone.

CHAPERONE

Kiki Monroe, stop eating right now and rejoin the group.

Kiki stops chewing. Opens her mouth, lets the food fall out, back onto the table.

KIKI

Okay.

She grabs a cup of punch and heads back to the group.

A DISABLED TEEN with a "Doctor" name tag steps up to Kiki

DISABLED TEEN

I'm your boss.

KIKI

No, you're not.

DISABLED TEEN

I am! I'm a doctor so you're below me. You help me with sick people.

KIKI

No, I'm the boss! I'm older!

DISABLED TEEN

But I'm a doctor. You're only a nurse.

Kiki tosses her punch into the Disabled Teen's face.

CHAPERONE

Kiki!

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The Chaperone and Kiki sit off to the side. The Chaperone has gone from gentle to harsh, pointing her bony finger at Kiki.

CHAPERONE

You need to think before you act, Kiki!
Before you speak and before you act.
That kind of behavior isn't acceptable
in society.

Kiki scowls, fumes.

CHAPERONE

Do you hear me? You must not be so
impulsive! For punishment you are
going to sit here while we all have
our snacks.

The Chaperone turns and returns to the group.

KIKI

I already ate.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

Milo ducks in and out of the shops on the high street, his satchel lighter with each stop.

He nears Franco's Electronics, a small shop a few doors down from the Cataplana Cafe. He has the shop's post in his hand already. But before going in, he turns away from the shop.

He flips through the bundle of post. Removes some junk mail, a "Fly for Half-Off Oasis Travel" flyer, "Arrow's Florist" advert, and a few others. Slips them into his coat pocket.

INT. FRANCO'S ELECTRONICS - DAY

Maria's boyfriend Franco is behind the counter looking over an old London A-Z book. A few customers mill around looking at radios and electronic gadgets. Milo pops in and hands the bundle of letters to Franco.

FRANCO

Thanks.

Before Milo can leave, Franco looks up.

FRANCO

Hey, Milo, maybe you can help. You know all the local addresses. Where the bloody hell is 300 Denmark Hill?

MILO

Denmark Hill, that's over in Camberwell.

FRANCO

Yeah I know, but that street is a million miles long. Which end should I aim for?

MILO

A bit out of my region I'm afraid....

FRANCO

It's the Camberwell Community Center.

MILO

Oh! Yeah, the Community Center... it's right up past Ruskin Park. Just past the park, on the east side.

FRANCO

Right, okay. Near the hospital, yeah?

MILO

Right. Just opposite the hospital.

Franco grins at Milo.

FRANCO

Thanks. They're having a flower show. I'm taking Maria. She loves flowers. Says she misses the flowers of Portugal.

Milo considers this, nods.

FRANCO

I know, I know, like they don't have flowers here in England. Says she misses the semi-tropical ones that grew near her house as a child. She'll love it.

INT. POST OFFICE - BACK OFFICE - DAY

A COMPUTER SCREEN - It's the Google home page.

Milo taps away on a computer keyboard.

The office isn't personalized -- it's just a communal computer room. He keeps one eye on the office door in front of him. Luckily, the screen of the computer faces away from the door.

Milo watches the screen, clicks here and there, immersed in what the internet pages show him. He browses here for a minute, while still keeping an eye on the door.

Hearing VOICES in the hall, he clicks out of the site, gets up and leaves.

Male and female postal workers, ANDY and SANDY, coats in hand, pop into the computer room.

ANDY

Hang on a tick, just wanna check on my reservations.

SANDY

Careful, don't let Mr Stevens catch you using the internet for personal reasons. He yelled at Lenny for using it, so everyone's afraid to use it now.

Andy laughs at her.

ANDY

Yeah, like no one else does it.

Andy sits in the chair Milo has just vacated.

ANDY

Look...if you click on the scroll down arrow for this window, you can see all the sites that have been pulled up - bet you anything only about half are work-related. If that. Watch...

He does indeed click on it and pulls up the last site visited. They watch and wait while the site loads.

SANDY

Oh my God.

ANDY

That's disgusting. Who the hell was on here?

COMPUTER SCREEN - a few indecent pictures of boys and girls that seem to be *well below* the age of consent.

Andy and Sandy's faces register horror as they watch a few more photos appear onscreen.

SANDY

Jesus Christ, that's depraved.

INT. POST OFFICE - LATER

With his coat on and satchel on his shoulder, Milo stops at a 'bank teller's window' of an inner office. A YOUNG SALLOW MAN is busy making notes in a ledger alongside a MATRONLY WOMAN. Milo doesn't approach the glass, but hangs back a bit.

Milo gives a quiet whistle. This gets the Young Sallow Man's attention. He pulls a pile of papers off his desk and steps to the window. Milo slips a ten pound note through the hole in the window, and the Young Sallow Man slips a large pile of sheets of stamps through to Milo. Into Milo's coat pocket they go.

INT. THE FOX PUB - NIGHT

Arthur and Milo stand at the crowded bar sipping their lagers. For a change, Milo is out of his posting clothes, looking pretty decent in jeans, a black tee-shirt and black leather jacket.

MILO

...and the bastard just sits there sunning himself every day, like he's on bloody holiday or something.

ARTHUR

Doesn't even keep the kid, huh?

MILO

No! Shipped him off to his sister's in Cambridge. He's still dealing.

ARTHUR

And you know for sure he's letting her take the fall for him?

MILO

Oh yeah. I'm sure. She sends him letters, twice a week from Holloway. Bet he never even visits her. She's doing four years for him and she's still devoted to him. "It'll make our bond stronger...this is what true love is all about..."

Milo mimics her in an overly innocent tone.

ARTHUR

I don't even want to know how you know that. Ooh, now what about that one over there?

Milo follows Arthur's gaze over to a trendy, pretty WOMAN IN SUEDE JACKET.

MILO
You think? My league?

ARTHUR
Sure, why not? Now that you're out of your designer posting togs, you're looking mighty sexy, sweetheart.

Milo watches her casually for a few seconds. He takes a deep breath in, cringes, then looks to Arthur.

ARTHUR
Come on, you can do it. No problem. Turn the charm on.

Milo downs the rest of his lager. Then as casually as he can, makes his way toward the suede-clad woman who sits with her FEMALE FRIENDS at a table.

Milo just stands awkwardly in front of their table, they can't help but notice. Milo can only smile.

MILO
Hello.

The women are already leery and don't seem enthused.

WOMAN IN SUEDE JACKET
Hello.

Your turn Milo, speak! Say something!

Nothing.

WOMAN IN SUEDE JACKET
Did you want something?

Milo stammers. Leaves a far-too-long-pause. Awkward as hell.

MILO
No. No I didn't want anything.

He almost backs away, but seems caught halfway between leaving with dignity and facing her with courage.

MILO
Actually...I was wondering if YOU wanted anything.

The Woman in Suede Jacket seems incredulous at how bad his attempt to chat her up is.

WOMAN IN SUEDE JACKET

Do I want anything...?

She waits for more information from him.

MILO

To drink I mean...what I meant was,
can I buy you a drink? Or *another*
one after that one you already have
there....

Oh *forget* it. He backs away apologetically as she shakes her head no, not hiding her disdain.

Milo slinks back to the bar.

ARTHUR

Another lager?

MILO

God yes.

INT. MARIA'S FLAT - NIGHT

Maria lies on her bed in her cozy flat. It is a tiny self-contained one-room flat, but very homey. No room for a sofa, just a bed. She sips a cup of tea, fluffs the pillows and gets settled in just right. It's a ritual. She takes the pale blue envelope from her bedside table. It's already been opened.

She closes her eyes and says the first line from memory.

MARIA

My Maria, a Portuguese ray of light and
kindness in our drab, gray London days.

She opens her eyes and begins to read Milo's words, obviously not for the first time.

MILO (V.O.)

In my youth I spent many days in
Brighton, for without your golden
aura to warm me, I was forced to find
warmth and sunlight on its pebbled
beaches instead.

She snuggles down deeper into the bed. Gets as comfortable as possible as she continues to read. She holds a small stone in her hand.

MILO (V.O.)

It is said that stones that have
(MORE)

MILO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

natural holes in them provide protection, health, enhance psychic abilities and guard against nightmares. Brighton's beaches are known for having many holey stones. I found this one as a child, and have kept it as my own talisman. I now want to pass it on to you. It is my gift for Maria my love, something natural, wonderful and rare - a mirror of you. No store-bought shiny trinket will do for my earthy maiden.

She eyes the gift earrings from Franco that sit on her bedside table. Shiny. New. Garish.

MILO (V.O.)

Old stories tell that if you take the stone to a wild and lonely place, preferably by moonlight, and look through it, you will see visions.

She pauses, inspects the stone closely, rolls it in her fingers. She holds it to her eye and peers through.

MARIA

Who are you?

INT. THE FOX PUB - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR

She was no good for you anyway. Come on....

Arthur struggles for something bad to say about the Woman in Suede Jacket.

ARTHUR

Suede...come on, who wears *suede* anymore?

Milo laughs at his feeble attempt to make her seem undesirable.

ARTHUR

So how goes the wooing with the noble Portuguese waitress?

Milo shrugs.

MILO

The same really.

ARTHUR

Still anonymous?

MILO

Better that way. I can be really romantic in letters. When I have time to plan what I'm gonna say, and I can write and rewrite it, then I'm fine. Finding that just-right piece of poetry...you think that's easy?

ARTHUR

Yeah, yeah, you're Lord Byron at heart. But listen, no one falls in love through the post. Love poems, all that stuff - they *enhance* the wooing, but you've GOT to be there in person, Milo.

MILO

Oh yeah? What about Browning and Barrett? They wrote epic love poems and love letters to each other, and fell madly in love! "How do I love thee, let me count the ways..."

Arthur is really on his toes now.

ARTHUR

Ah yes! BUT! Did you know that even though they are known for all those love poems, that they never actually showed each other the poems until AFTER they were married?

Milo is stymied. He looks quite dejected.

MILO

You're kidding.

ARTHUR

No! Not many people know that. Sod this anonymous shit! Tell her how you feel!

MILO

Christ. I've based the whole foundation of my love life on a fallacy.

ARTHUR

Yeah, haven't we all? But come on, how can you say you're really in love with her? You hardly know anything about her.

MILO

Maybe that's why I like her so much.

INT. MARIA'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Maria still looks at her magical stone.

MILO (V.O.)

No nightmares will touch you tonight.
Sweet dreams. With my adoration,
"Browning."

She basks in the letter a moment more, touches where he signed it. Then opens a small elaborately carved wooden box. Many more pale blue letters are inside. She tucks his letter away gently.

She places the stone on a saucer that holds many leaves, carefully arranged.

INT. THE FOX PUB - CONTINUOUS

Arthur polishes off his drink.

ARTHUR

One more? I'll buy.

MILO

Nah, I gotta get going. Got something to do.

EXT. MILO'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Milo squats down, watches while Nicky poops in the litter box.

MILO

A little more, please.

Nicky covers his poop and hops out. Milo picks up the entire litter box.

MILO

Thanks, Nick. Just what I needed.

He pours the poopy litter into a large bin liner. Then he opens his refrigerator and breaks about ten eggs into the liner, as well as some nasty-looking leftover fish and whatever else is in there.

By the time Milo finishes, the bag is quite full. But before he ties it off he takes the junk mail and adverts with Franco's address on them and plants them deep into the disgusting rubbish.

There are three more very full bags of rubbish on the floor. He manages to pick them all up and leaves.

EXT. HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Under cover of night, Milo trots down the high street. He unties the bin liners and dumps the rubbish on the front steps of various businesses near Franco's Electronics. There's a joyful bounce in his step as he flings the rubbish.

EXT. HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Now empty-handed, Milo heads home down the nearly deserted high street, hands in pockets. Big grin on his face.

INT. ARTHUR AND JANINE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Arthur grabs three plates from a cabinet. JANINE, late 30s, calls over her shoulder from the stove.

JANINE

Actually Stevie's at me mum's tonight.

ARTHUR

That's right.

He puts one plate back.

JANINE

I hope she doesn't fill him full of sugar like she always does.

She holds her hand out for the plates. He hands them over. She fills the plates with food from the pots on the stove.

ARTHUR

I think it's safe to assume she will.

Arthur gathers silverware and glasses, sets them on the table.

JANINE

Why didn't you bring Milo back with you? He's probably home alone eating a cold Pot Noodle.

ARTHUR

He had something he had to go do.

JANINE

What?

ARTHUR

He didn't say.

JANINE

God, don't you men ever talk about anything?

ARTHUR

Well, as it happens, we did. He was telling me about a new woman in his life.

Janine stops mid-scoop, jaw open.

JANINE

What? Who? Tell me, tell me! Are they going out?

ARTHUR

Not exactly.

She frowns.

JANINE

What's that mean?

ARTHUR

He's still in the process of winning her heart.

She's deflated.

JANINE

Oh, no. Not those bloody letters again. Are you fucking kidding me? Please tell me you're kidding.

He digs in a cabinet, searching for something.

ARTHUR

Not kidding I'm afraid.

JANINE

Oh my god. Not sure I can handle this again.

She sighs as she finishes loading their plates with food.

JANINE

Little wonder he didn't pass the psych exam for The Met. He's my brother and I love him, but can you honestly see Milo as a police constable?

Arthur gives a meek shrug, still digging in the cabinet.

ARTHUR

I don't know. I think it's a bit sad that love letters, wooing and romance and all that is going out of fashion. It's a shame.

He pulls two candlesticks from the cabinet and puts them on the table. Janine notices.

JANINE

What are you doing?

ARTHUR

I thought maybe we could do with a bit of romance ourselves.

She bites her lip, both plates in hand and gestures to the TV over in the adjoining room.

JANINE

Oooh. But I kind of wanted to watch "Bixby and Riggs." It's the season finale.

ARTHUR

Oh. Right.

He puts the candlesticks back in the cabinet.

INT. FAST FOOD JOINT - NIGHT

Maria picks at her fries. Franco wolfs down his burger as he shares his story.

FRANCO

My cousin Elliot told me that he was at his dad's house, he took his motorcycle, and an old family friend told him that he always wanted to take a long ride through the countryside on a bike. But the old guy never learned to ride.

He dunks some of her fries in ketchup and gulps them down.

FRANCO

So Elliot ends up taking the old guy down to Brighton on the bike. Nice scenic route. They ate lunch at the beach, and then came up. The guy was so grateful he gave Elliot £200!

MARIA

Brighton.

FRANCO

Yeah! So Elliot thinks we should start a business where we take people who don't ride bikes out on day trips.

MARIA

You? Both of you?

FRANCO

Yeah. I bet there's lot of people that would love to take a bike ride but are too scared to do it themselves. Or just never learned to ride. Me and Elliot can take them!

MARIA

But you don't even have a bike.

FRANCO

Yeah. I know. But Elliot's friend has a bike he can sell me. Oh! I just got an idea! We can even do overnight trips! Like up to the Lake District, spend the night, back the next day.

MARIA

But what about your shop?

FRANCO

Um, I can hire someone to watch it.

MARIA

But that's money going out.

FRANCO

No, babe, we're going to make a lot of money with the bike thing! It'll be great!

MARIA

Yes, that could work.

She takes a long draw on her straw.

FRANCO

Why aren't you more excited?

She shrugs. Chews a French fry.

MARIA

Well. No, it's fine. It can work.

FRANCO

No, what were you going to say?

MARIA

You were going to give guitar lessons. Then you wanted to give Portuguese lessons. Those could've been done easily. In the back room of the shop. But still you didn't do it.

FRANCO

But this is a really good idea, babe.

MARIA

Yes. But you had no interest in this yesterday. And I think no interest tomorrow.

EXT. MRS KENDALL'S HOUSE - DAY

Mrs Kendall greets Milo, as usual, at her front door.

MRS KENDALL

Hello Milo. How we doing today?

MILO

Aces, Mrs Kendall. You know what? Got something good for you today.

Her face lights up as he hands her the postcard.

MRS KENDALL

Ooo! Loch Ness! Oh my!

Milo beams at her delight.

MRS KENDALL

(reads)

"Vivian, thought I'd drop you a line. I'm up in Loch Ness now. Thought of you the other day, how kind you were when I was a boarder with you years ago. I go fishing out on the loch quite a bit, in a spot that you can see on this postcard, the small bay on the bottom right hand corner..."

She flips the postcard over and finds that spot. She shows it to Milo. He looks at it as if for the first time.

MRS KENDALL

Look, I bet that's it right there!

She continues reading.

MRS KENDALL

"I remember you and I would often discuss fishing so know that someone in Scotland thinks of you every time he fishes!" Oh my!

She is truly touched.

MRS KENDALL

And it's signed....hmm...I can't quite make it out...starts with an M I think...Mmm...Can you make it out?

She hands it to Milo. He pretends to inspect the signature.

MRS KENDALL

I've had so many boarders over the years....

MILO

Yes, I *know*.

MRS KENDALL

Oh, yes, of course you do!

MILO

Uh, it looks like....Mmmm...Michael? Mmm...Mark...?

No recognition from her at all.

MILO

Mmm...Mmmmaaarrtin?

MRS KENDALL

Oh! Could it be *Marshall*?

MILO

Yup! That's it! Marshall!

MRS KENDALL

Oh, my...Marshall. What a dear lad... to think of me after all this time.

Milo hands her postcard back to her. She goes inside. Waves goodbye to him through the window. Milo waves back as he goes out to the street again.

Through her front lounge window Milo sees her re-reading her cherished postcard. Another satisfied customer.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

Kiki stands in a group of pedestrians on a busy street corner waiting to cross. It's taking too long. She's impatient. She sees the community center Chaperone standing a few feet away, also waiting to cross. They make eye contact, the Chaperone nods hello.

The wait is too long. Kiki bristles with impatience. She repeatedly kicks a metal trash can. BANG BANG BANG!

The Chaperone turns, gives Kiki a deliberate and disapproving finger wag and a scowl as the number 12 bus approaches.

Kiki frowns and suddenly shoves the Chaperone - hard! The woman goes flying backwards into the street! A split second before she is crushed under the wheels she is grabbed by a MAN and whisked out of the street.

Kiki watches -- impassive look on her face. Not understanding the gravity of what almost happened -- or perhaps not caring.

Is that a tiny smile creeping across her face?

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

Milo approaches Franco's Electronics. The door is propped wide open. From inside two arguing voices can be heard, Franco and somebody else. Milo pauses outside the door for a few seconds to catch the gist of the argument.

FRANCO (O.S.)

I told you! It's not mine! Why would I do that?

ARGUING MAN (O.S.)

I should bring it over here and dump it on YOUR steps!

Milo pops in for second, long enough to drop the post on the counter, then comes out again.

ARGUING MAN (O.S.)

You idiot! I know it was your rubbish!

Milo keeps on walking, with a smug little smile on his face. His smile can't help but turn into a joyous laugh.

Mid-laugh, Kiki appears out of nowhere and falls in step beside him. Seeing Milo laughing, she laughs too.

KIKI

What are you laughing at, Milo?

Now in a good mood, Milo puts his arm around her and jostles her good-naturedly. She continues to laugh with him, but without knowing why.

MILO
Hi Kiki! Wanna have lunch with me?
I'll buy!

She is wide-eyed. Nods vigorously.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Milo plonks the day's post on the counter. Heads to his normal table. Kiki traipses after him.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

At their table, Kiki is absorbed in the menu.

KIKI
I've never eaten here before!

Milo chuckles in surprise.

MILO
What do you mean you've never eaten here? You're here nearly every day.

KIKI
Yeah, but I always bring my own lunch.
Maria lets me. She brings me tea -

Milo cuts off this familiar conversation immediately.

MILO
Okay! So, what'll it be then?

KIKI
Uh....

She scans the menu. Up and down, up and down. Overwhelmed.

MILO
You wanna just get what I get?

She nods, perfectly happy to copy him. Maria approaches.

KIKI
Milo is buying me lunch!

Maria looks at Milo with genuine adoration.

MARIA

Well that's very sweet of him. Plus
you want your usual tea, Kiki?

Kiki nods.

MARIA

And you, Milo?

MILO

Yeah, give us the usual all the way
round.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Kiki seems absorbed in the conversation of the group of old ladies at the next table. Kiki watches a GENTLE GRANDMA delicately sipping her soup.

GENTLE GRANDMA

...and I couldn't get my shoes on!
My feet had swollen so much. I didn't
even get to Sainsbury's yesterday
because I couldn't get my shoes on,
and I surely wasn't going to wear my
slippers!

The Gentle Grandma titters at her own story. A CRABBY OLD PORTUGUESE WOMAN seems intent on one-upping her.

CRABBY OLD PORTUGUESE WOMAN

Oh, that's nothing, Ellen. Your feet
are fine *today*, aren't they?!

Her tone is a bit harsh considering the sweet demeanour of the Gentle Grandma.

CRABBY OLD PORTUGUESE WOMAN

You know nothing of suffering! Last
month I accidentally ate some peanuts -
some idiot put them in some Chinese
food if you can believe that!

Milo smirks overhearing their old lady hypochondriacal talk, but Kiki fumes.

CRABBY OLD PORTUGUESE WOMAN

I ate half of it before I realized it
had peanuts in it. My eyes swelled
shut for three days! I couldn't see
a thing! So don't you tell me about
not wearing shoes!

KIKI

You shouldn't be so mean to your friend!

Milo cringes, embarrassed as the two old ladies - as well as about three other tables of people - turn and look.

KIKI

You sound mean! Her feet hurt! You're a nasty old lady!

Maria has by this time come back with bread, catches the tail end of the conversation. She and Milo share a smirk as Kiki yells the types of things that everyone else wished they had the guts to say but never do.

MILO

Okay, Kiki. That's enough. Here, try some bread...

But Kiki is hellbent on taking out her notebook and documenting the injustice.

KIKI

(writes in her notebook)

Nasty woman yells at friend with hurt feet...

Maria does her best to divert Kiki's attention. Maria waves off the Crabby Old Portuguese Woman.

MARIA

(to Kiki)

Don't you worry about her. So Kiki, how was your Scottish dancing class at the community center the other night?

The Crabby Old Portuguese Woman is now forgotten, and Kiki is thrilled to tell Maria about her dancing...

KIKI

It was fun! Mum let me stay out until ten! We danced, and we kept messing up, but they had juice and crisps and pie. They took pictures too!

Milo watches with adoration as Maria chats with Kiki, calms her down.

MARIA

Good! Bring them, I would love to see them. Let me go get your tea.

KIKI

Okay!

Kiki is happy again as Maria leaves.

MILO

Scottish dancing, huh?

KIKI

Yeah. Mum makes me go with my group every week. To help me learn to socialize.

Milo smirks.

MILO

Yeah, well, it's working.

KIKI

There's ten of us. Some of the men are retarded though.

(off Milo's look)

I'm not retarded. Mum says -- I'm not retarded, I'm just a little slow.

Milo nods, picking at the bread, tries to look involved in the conversation.

KIKI

I have sex with some of the retarded men though.

Milo does a double take.

MILO

You have...?

KIKI

Uh huh. They are funny, they like to have sex with me. Sometimes they like me to have oral sex with them. The teacher likes it!

Milo is stunned. But fascinated....

MILO

Your teacher? Is he, uh, retarded too?

KIKI

No, silly!

MILO

Just slow?

KIKI

No. He's not slow. He's a teacher at the center. He's our chaperone when we go places. I like to go down on him. He's nice.

MILO

Shhh. Not so loud.

Milo leans forward, morbidly interested in this.

MILO

I bet he really likes it, too.

She nods vigorously, and laughs. Kiki senses Milo's sudden interest in the conversation. Leans in a bit.

KIKI

I could do it to you. I like you.

Milo blinks at her.

KIKI

My teacher says I'm very good at it!

INT. CATAPLANA KITCHEN - LATER

Another waitress, ALMA, about Maria's age, stands in the back doorway smoking. Waves the smoke out the door. Maria folds cloth napkins and piles them onto a tray.

ALMA

So how do you know it's not Franco sending 'em?

MARIA

Trust me, it's not Franco. Franco's nice, but he doesn't talk like that, he isn't that romantic.

ALMA

And you get a lot of them?

MARIA

A few a week.

ALMA

Are you SURE it's not Franco? Just messing with you? Trying to stitch you up?

MARIA

Stitch me...?

ALMA

You know, trick you. Write you letters,
see if you keep them a secret or not.

MARIA

No. It's not Franco. Can't be.

ALMA

One of Franco's cousins? You see
them all the time right? Maybe someone
from the disco?

Maria shrugs and dismisses the suggestions.

MARIA

Browning...he's so romantic without
being, you know, macho.

ALMA

Browning?

MARIA

That's how he signs his letters.
Told me that Robert Browning and
Elizabeth Barrett Browning started
out writing letters. Says he was
inspired to write to me by Browning,
so that's how he signs his name.

Alma stubs her cigarette out. Shuts the door. Helps Maria
stack the silverware and napkins.

ALMA

It's a bit creepy if you ask me. He
obviously knows where you work, he
could be watching you every day.

MARIA

I don't think it's creepy. He's noble.
He's a gentleman.

INT. CATAPLANA CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Milo sits back in his chair. Tears a chunk of bread off and
nibbles on it, but doesn't take his eyes off Kiki.

KIKI

Want to? We could do it in the loo
like we do at the community center.

He watches her. She eats the bread. Sloppy. Gets butter
all over her face.

KIKI

I could go down on you, Milo.

He exhales long and hard.

KIKI

You'd like it.

He looks over his shoulder to the bathroom. It beckons.
Looks back to Kiki. Butter glistens on her lips and chin.

MAXINE MONROE (O.S.)

Kiki! Where the hell have you been?!

MAXINE MONROE, 45, stands near the front of the restaurant.

KIKI

Hi, Mum!

MAXINE MONROE

We're supposed to be at the doctor in
twenty minutes. I told you to come
home straight away.

Kiki trudges toward her mum. Milo forgotten, they leave.

BEHIND COUNTER -- Alma and Maria file into the front dining
area from the kitchen.

MARIA

I'm so embarrassed with Franco. I
can't believe he did that. All the
storekeepers are furious with him!

ALMA

Not very 'noble' is it?

MARIA

No!

Milo sits in the background eating his lunch. Alone, unnoticed.

MARIA

(to Alma)

I tell you, I've nearly had it with
Franco lately.

ALMA

I always thought he was rather nice.

Milo, in the background, accidentally tips his tea over.

MARIA

Yes, yes, he is. He is very nice.
But...I don't know...

Milo walks over to the counter near Maria and Alma. Alma sees him out of the corner of her eye. Glances at him.

MILO

Made a bit of a mess with me tea...

Alma hands him some napkins, then turns back to Maria.

MARIA

It's just a lot of little things lately...sometimes I wonder if I'm settling.

Maria sighs in frustration.

MARIA

God, I wish so much sometimes that I could have *him*! Be with *him*!

ALMA

Huh? Franco?

MARIA

No, no, no. "*Browning*"!

A stunned Milo knocks over a sugar dispenser.

MARIA

Why won't he face me? He's just what I always dreamed of. Even the WAY he writes. One time he used ink...you know, the old-fashioned way? When you used to dip the pen...?

She mimes the process.

ALMA

Yeah. A fountain pen.

Milo strains to hear, struggles to scoop up the spilt sugar.

MARIA

It's so charming, that kind of pen.

Maria gazes off into space, stars in her eyes.

MARIA

Browning, come rescue me!

Milo's rooted to the spot. A handful of sugar, mouth open, wide-eyed shock.

END OF EPISODE ONE