IN THE GLOAMING EPISODE 1 October 2009: Dead Skinny

By

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Cast of Characters

Melmoth Darkleigh: Nathaniel Tapley

Donna:

Andy:
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SCENE 1: MELMOTH’S LAIR

(WE ARE IN MELMOTH DARKLEIGH’S LAIR. THE WIND WHISTLES EERILY. PLATES ARE SCRAPED, THERE ARE CHOMPING NOISES, AND SOUNDS OF WET THINGS SLIDING AROUND.)

MELMOTH DARKLEIGH
(WIPING HIS MOUTH)
Well, hello. Do excuse the mess, but I have had guests for dinner. And they were delicious. Let no one tell you that the French make the best pâté de foie gras. I find that the English do just as well, especially if you use plumpest, freshest children.

SOUND: A CHILD SOBS GENTLY

MELMOTH DARKLEIGH
Quiet, down there! It rubs the garlic butter on its skin, or else it gets the hose. Some people say that children are our greatest natural resource. And they are. Or will be when the bacon runs out.

SOUND: MELMOTH CLOSING A DOOR (LID?) AS CHILDREN MOAN.

SOUND: THE DOOR CLANGS SHUT. THERE IS SILENCE.

MELMOTH DARKLEIGH
Of course, gluttony is a sin, which is why I only eat the thin ones. Mummy wasn’t thin, but then I made her last a whole winter. She always described herself as big-boned. Turned out she was quite ordinary-size-boned, didn’t it, Mummy?

SOUND: TEETH CHATTERING

MELMOTH DARKLEIGH
People don’t know what to make of you, do they, Mummy?

SOUND: TEETH CHATTERING

MELMOTH DARKLEIGH
I intend to make stock. This next story chilled even Mummy to the marrow. Or would have, had I not had her marrow on toast with a delicate caper chutney. This next story shows the perils that befall those who go too far the other way. This next story is called ‘Dead Skinny’.

SOUND: MELMOTH CACKLING

MUSIC: IN THE GLOAMING THEME
SCENE 2: DONNA AND ANDY’S BEDROOM

(DONNA AND ANDY’S BEDROOM. THEY ARE TWO LIVERPUDLIANS. THEY ARE HAVING LOUD, FRANTIC SEX)

ANDY
Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

DONNA
Oh yeah! Come on! Come on, Andy! Oh yeah!

ANDY
(FASTER AND FASTER)
Yes, Donna! Yes, Donna! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!
Yeeeeeessssssssssss!

SOUND: PAUSE

ANDY
Ha! Beat you! In your face!

DONNA
(BEAT)
Yes. Yes, you did.

ANDY
In your face! And a little bit on your tits.

DONNA
Andy-

ANDY
In your stupid, unsatisfied face.
(SINGS)
I am the champion, my friends! And I’ll keep on something to the end. Doo doo.

DONNA
All right, calm down.

ANDY
No time for losers for I am the champions at sexual intercourse!

SOUND: A CLANKING NOISE

ANDY
I win again!

DONNA
Did you buy yourself a trophy?

ANDY
Yup.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DONNA
  Is it engraved?

ANDY
  Only with my name, date of birth, and the words
    All-Time Champion of Everything.

DONNA
  No. That says Champiob of Everything.

ANDY
  What? Bugger.

DONNA
  Champiob of everything except spelling. At which I
    beat you. Suffer! How long were you on the sunbeds
    today?

ANDY
  The maximum: fourteen minutes.

DONNA
  I disobeyed the maximum. 22 minutes, come on! You
    lose!

SOUND: BEAT.

ANDY
  God, you’re sexy. And slightly crispy.

DONNA
  Good, isn’t it?

ANDY
  You feel like my wallet. Sexy.

DONNA
  You come equal first at being sexy.

ANDY
  We share the sexy gold. High five!

SOUND: BEAT.

ANDY
  But I win the men’s event.

DONNA
  Obviously, and the women’s title is mine.

ANDY & DONNA
  (TOGETHER)
    Come on!
SCENE 3: DONNA & ANDY’S BATHROOM

(ECHOEY, BATHROOMY)

DONNA
It doesn’t matter. It’s only scales. Scales can be wrong. You can do this. Yes you can. You’re a winner. A winner who has lost weight.

SOUND: DONNA GETTING ON THE SCALES

DONNA
Doesn’t matter. You’re still a winner.

SCENE 4: DONNA AND ANDY’S KITCHEN

(THE KITCHEN. WE HEAR MILK BEING POURED ONTO CEREAL, AND CRUNCHING, MAYBE THE RADIO IS ON.)

SOUND: ANDY COMES INTO THE KITCHEN.

ANDY
What are you reading?

SOUND: A CUPBOARD OPENING, ANDY GETS A BOWL OUT.

DONNA
Scorch! magazine.

SOUND: CEREAL AND MILK BEING POURED INTO A BOWL.

ANDY
What’s it about?

SOUND: A SPOON IS PULLED FROM A DRAWER

DONNA
It’s just pictures of celebrities with big red rings around their physical imperfections.

ANDY
Sounds good.

DONNA
It is.

SOUND: ANDY PULLS A CHAIR UP TO THE TABLE

DONNA
Did you know that Linda Bellingham has a row of eight nipples running up her back in a diagonal line?

ANDY
(MOUTH FULL)
No.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: 5.

DONNA
Well she does. What have you got there?

ANDY
Weetabix in water. You?

DONNA
Cubes of balsa wood. Got to keep to the diet. It’s so simple. You can eat anything as long as it’s a wood.

ANDY
How much did you lose yesterday?

DONNA
Half a pound.

ANDY
Ha! A pound and a half, not including faeces. My metabolism once again proves superior to yours. Enjoy your wood, I’ll see you at work.

SOUND: ANDY RUNS OUT, SLAMMING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.

DONNA
Thanks. I will.

SOUND: DONNA CRUNCHING THROUGH WOOD.

DONNA
Ow!

SCENE 5: AN OFFICE

(AN OFFICE. THERE IS TYPING AND PHOTOCOPYING GOING ON IN THE BACKGROUND.)

RHIANNON
Oh. My. God. Have you seen the new issue of Scorch magazine?

DONNA
Got it on the first day it was out.

RHIANNON
Of course you did. But the thing about Shane Ritchie’s knees.

DONNA
You could tell, though. I remember the first time a saw him I thought: ‘I bet he’s got disgusting, wart-covered knees’. It ruined Eastenders for me.

RHIANNON
Are you coming for pizza at lunch?

(CONTINUED)
DONNA
   No way. I’ve got to lose more weight than Andy.

RHIANNON
   So what are you having.

SOUND: A DRAWER IS OPENED.

DONNA
   This.

RHIANNON
   A vacuum cleaner?

DONNA
   Precisely. He thinks I’m on the wood diet, but, instead of even eating wood, for lunch, I’m just going to do this for an hour.

SOUND: A SQUELCH, AND THEN THE SOUND OF A VACUUM CLEANER, MUFFLED.

RHIANNON
   Stop! Stop!

SOUND: WITH A POP! THE HOOVER BECOMES UNMUFFLED.

SOUND: THE HOOVER IS TURNED OFF.

DONNA
   By just vacuuming my mouth for my entire lunch break, I can’t take in any calories at all. In fact, I might even hoover some out.

RHIANNON
   You don’t think you’re perhaps taking this a little far.

DONNA
   Not at all. Every day, every day he manages to lose more than me. I hate it.

RHIANNON
   Well...

DONNA
   What?

RHIANNON
   I’ve got the name of this guy, a specialist, who helped my sister.

DONNA
   I thought she was bulimic.
RHIANNON
Yeah, he helped her become bulimic. She was really fat up until 2006. But the treatment’s a bit weird-

DONNA
What do you mean weird?

RHIANNON
Odd, strange. Eerie.

DONNA
I’m not sure...

BOSS
Guys, can I have everyone in the conference room, please, stat. Last month’s sales figures are in.

RHIANNON
So, do you want his number?

DONNA
No, I think I’d rather do it through willpower. Willpower and wood.

RHIANNON
If you’re sure...

DONNA
Yep. I’m sure. Let’s go and hear Andy’s miraculous sales figures.

SCENE 6: THE CONFERENCE ROOM

(THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE COUGHING, AND SHUFFLING ABOUT. THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY ALL PRESSED TOGETHER IN A ROOM THAT’S TOO SMALL.)

BOSS
OK, guys, settle down, I’m going to make this quick, hard and dirty. I like my sales meetings like I like my women, you know? Short... focussed... and, er, ideally Filipino. This month’s results have been a disaster. Toilet paper’s down, sanitary towels are down, we’re really relying on incontinence underwear to keep us out of the shit. Remember! AIDA. Attention. Interest. Decision.... Absolutely have their attention. You’ve got to have their attention. Right. Down to brass monkey’s balls. Once again, Andy and Donna are our two top sales people. I want everyone here to take a good look at them. That’s right. Don’t be shy. Lean on in, have a good old look. Touch them. Get to know what good sales people feel like. Smell them. Lick them. No, on second thoughts, you can’t lick them any more. Health and safety. I personally think that we’d all be a lot healthier and more safe if we didn’t have to wear trousers. Fewer zips. But the tribunal disagreed, and (MORE)
CONTINUED:

BOSS (cont’d)
here I am. Harvey, you can stop touching them now. I know they feel good. Just imagine how they’d taste... Without further ado, Andy’s total sales last month were £82,496, a new record for the month of September.

SOUND: POLITE, UNENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE

ANDY
Thank you, thank you, all. First, I’d like to say that I could never have done it without the help of you guys, the little people. It’s your hard work that-

BOSS
Woah, Andy, I’m going to have to stop you there. Because Donna smashed that record with total sales of £101,204.

SOUND: MORE APPLAUSE, SLIGHTLY MORE ENTHUSED

ANDY
She did what?

BOSS
Donna got total sales of-

DONNA
£101,204. Unlike Andy, I’m not going to take up a huge amount of everyone’s time making a huge speech. I’d just like to say: loser! Loser! Hello, my name’s Andy, and I can’t even sell shitbags properly.

BOSS
The term is ‘intimate hygiene products’, Donna.

DONNA
Instead of applauding me, I’d just like everyone to take a moment to point and laugh at Andy.

SOUND: LOTS OF PEOPLE LAUGHING AT ANDY, MOCKING HIM

ANDY
Stop it.

DONNA
Everyone laugh at the loser!

SOUND: THE LAUGHING GETS LOUDER AND MORE INTENSE.

ANDY
Stop it!

DONNA
The bottom has fallen out of his incontinence sales!

SOUND: DONNA SHRIEKS WITH LAUGHTER AND WORDS LIKE

(CONTINUED)
'RIDICULOUS HERBERT’, ‘BUMSALE FAILURE’, AND ‘POO RETAINER’ CAN BE HEARD

ANDY
Shut up! All of you shut up!

BOSS
Sorry, Andy, was there something you wanted to say? I couldn’t hear because I was too busy pointing and laughing at you.

ANDY
Her figures may be better than mine this month, but you know what isn’t? Her actual figure! Yeah? Yeah?

SOUND: EMBARRASSED PAUSE.

ANDY
She can’t even lose any weight. In the last week I’ve lost twice as much weight as her. She eats wood all day, but it doesn’t stop her waddling around like a diabetic hippopotamus. Look at her! Look at the grotesque, hideous freak! Her BMI is significantly higher than mine!

SOUND: EVERYONE STARTS LAUGHING AT DONNA, SAYING THINGS LIKE ‘ENORMOUS FACE’, ‘DOUGHY’, AND ‘MASSIVE ANKLES’

DONNA
Rhiannon?

RHIANNON
Yes?

DONNA
What’s the number of that specialist?

SCENE 7: THE STREET

(DONNA IS WALKING ALONG A STREET.)

DONNA
Number 18, Number 20, Number 22, ah! Here it is. Number 22a. How odd. I don’t remember seeing this here before. Oh well.

SCENE 8: EZLEEB’S CLINIC

(THERE ARE WEIRD TINKLING NOISES, GENTLE BUT INSISTENT IN THE BACKGROUND. AN ANIMAL SQUAWKS OCCASIONALLY. THERE ARE RATTLINGS AND RUSTLINGS IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM, SKITTERINGS THAT STOP WHEN YOU TURN YOUR EAR TOWARDS THEM.)

SOUND: A DOOR OPENING

(CONTINUED)
DONNA
Hello?

SOUND: PAUSE

DONNA
Hello? Dr Ezleeb? I have an appointment?

SOUND: THE DOOR SLAMS BEHIND HER, JANGLING ORNAMENTS THAT HANG FROM IT.

SOUND: SILENCE, EXCEPT FOR A SCUTTLING FAR OFF.

DONNA
Hello? I’m meant to be here now!

EZLEEB
(VERY CLOSE TO HER)
I very much doubt that.

DONNA
Oh! You scared me. Dr Ezleeb?

EZLEEB
It’s spelt ‘ezleeb’, it’s pronounced... ‘ezleeb’. Actually, you got it right. ‘Ezleeb’. Yes.

DONNA
Right-

EZLEEB
Actually, call me ‘Robert’.

DONNA
All right. Robert-

EZLEEB
No don’t do that. Call me ‘Dr Ezleeb.’ Why are you here?

DONNA
My friend gave me your number.

EZLEEB
Does your friend hate you?

DONNA
What?

EZLEEB
Nothing. Your friend is a fool. Your friend is weak. Your friend may turn out not to have been your friend after all. What do you want?

DONNA
I want to lose weight.
Then go on a diet, and leave me in peace. You won’t find anything to make you happy here.

I don’t want to be happy. I want to be thin.

How thin do you want to be?

Just thinner than my boyfriend. That’s all I want.

I think we may be able to come to some sort of... arrangement. How much are you willing to sacrifice?

Sacrifice?

I mean: ’pay’.

Whatever it costs.

The price is very steep.

What will it cost me?

Your immortal soul.

What?

It will cost you your immortal soul.

Oh thank God! I thought you said eighty thousand pounds. My immortal soul? Done.

You realise that once you die your soul will be my plaything for all eternity, to do with as I please? To keep in a box of poisonous centipedes if I so desire, centipedes that will prick it and claw at it.
EZLEEB (cont’d)
with their legs, and bite chunks from it for millions
of years before eternity has even started?

SOUND: SCUTTLING.

DONNA
I just want to lose more weight than Andy.

EZLEEB
Very well. In exchange for your immortal soul you
will, every morning, lose half a pound more than
‘Andy’.

DONNA
Deal!

SOUND: A CLAP OF THUNDER, AND THE SOUND OF A THOUSAND
SOULS WAILING, AND LIMBS BEING RENT FROM SPECTRAL TORSOS.

SOUND: ELZEEB CACKLES.

EZLEEB
Sorry, that door keeps doing that.

SOUND: A DOOR BEING CLOSED.

DONNA
What was all of that?

EZLEEB
Mice.

DONNA
But they were wailing.

EZLEEB
Unhappy mice.

DONNA
Right, because it says ‘soul store room’.

SOUND: BEAT.

EZLEEB
Do we have a deal or not?

DONNA
Well, I must say I thought you’d drive a harder
bargain, I was ready for it, I am in sales. Just my
immortal soul?

EZLEEB
You’re in sales?

(CONTINUED)
DONNA
Yes.

EZLEEB
Then I’m going to need five grand as well.

SCENE 9: DONNA & ANDY’S BEDROOM

(DONNA IS IN READING IN BED. WE HEAR THE PAGES TURNING)

SOUND: ANDY COMES IN AND LEAPS INTO BED

ANDY
What are you reading?

DONNA
‘War and Peace’.

ANDY
Oh, I read that ages ago. Not that bothered by it.

DONNA
What was your favourite bit?

ANDY
Generally the ‘peace’ bits I found best. Are you not reading your diet book?

DONNA
Nope. I’ve decided not to worry about it any more. I’m just going to eat sensibly and see what happens.

ANDY
Good for you!

DONNA
What?

ANDY
I think it’s healthy that you realise you can’t win, and decide not to try at all. It’s probably for the best, you were never going to beat me anyway.

DONNA
Well-

ANDY
And I lost another half a pound today, I just checked, so it’s best that you’ve given up now. But let me know if you’re planning on getting really fat, so that I can arrange a bigger bed.

DONNA
Oh, all right. I will.

(CONTINUED)
ANDY
  See you tomorrow.
SOUND: KISS.
SOUND: LIGHT BEING TURNED OFF, AND ANDY SETTLING IN BED.
ANDY
  Donna?
DONNA
  Yes, Andy?
ANDY
  I quite like the fuller figure on a woman, anyway.
DONNA
  Thank you for being so understanding.
ANDY
  Any time, babe, any- zzzzzz.
DONNA
  Sleep well, fatty...
SOUND: ANDY SNORING

SCENE 10: DONNA & ANDY’S BATHROOM
(AGAIN ECHOEY)
DONNA
  Come on. You’re a winner. You can do this.
SOUND: DONNA STEPPING ON TO THE SCALES
SOUND: DONNA GASPS.

SCENE 11: DONNA & ANDY’S KITCHEN.
MORNING
  (THERE IS THE SNAP AND CRACKLE OF FRYING FOOD. DONNA HUMS TO HERSELF, HAPPILY.)
ANDY
  (ENTERING, SNIFFING)
  What’s that smell? I can smell a smell. Something smells.
DONNA
  And good morning to you, too.
ANDY
  Why can I smell a smell. This is breakfast. Breakfast doesn’t smell.

(CONTINUED)
DONNA
It does when it’s bacon.

ANDY
But you don’t eat bacons. You’re too fat to eat bacons. How much weight did you lose yesterday?

DONNA
Two pounds.

ANDY
Ha! I lost... You lost how much?

DONNA
Two pounds.

ANDY
But that’s half a pound more than I lost!

DONNA
Is it? Want some bacon?

SOUND: BEAT.

ANDY
Do we have any of that wood left?

SCENE 12: A TUBE TRAIN

(THERE ARE THE SOUNDS OF A MOVING TUBE TRAIN)

DONNA
Are you going to keep this up all the way to work? Not saying anything?

SOUND: HE SAYS NOTHING.

DONNA
You are absolutely the most childish man I’ve ever met.

SOUND: PAUSE.

ANDY
The most childish?

DONNA
Yes.

ANDY
I win again.
SCENE 13: THE OFFICE

(PEOPLE ARE TYPING. OFFICE NOISES.)

BOSS
Andy, hi. I was just wondering if, some time this afternoon, you could find a way of squeezing this in?

ANDY
I am not fat!

SCENE 14: DONNA & ANDY’S KITCHEN

(THE GENTLE CLINK OF CUTLERY ON CROCKERY.)

ANDY
Aha! I don’t smell any bacon this morning! Didn’t turn out so well for you yesterday, eh? Start piling the pounds back on, did you?

SOUND: MORE CUTLERY.

ANDY
What’s that? What’s that you’re eating? What’s that you’re eating there?

DONNA
(THROUGH A FULL MOUTH)
Cake.

ANDY
What?

DONNA
Cake. I lost two pounds.

SOUND: BEAT.

ANDY
I hate you.

DONNA
Well, I love you.
(BEAT)
And I love cake.

ANDY
Aaaaugh!

SCENE 15: BOSS’ OFFICE

(MUTED TYPING, PHOTOCOPYING)

SOUND: A KNOCK ON A DOOR

(CONTINUED)
ANDY
Hello?

BOSS
Andy.

ANDY
Yeah. Sorry to bother you, I was just wondering if you’d come to a decision on the promotion yet?

BOSS
Come the tits in, Andy! Sit down, take a load off your feet.

ANDY
I don’t weigh a load!

BOSS
How in Christ’s name are you, Andy?

ANDY
I’m all right, I was just wondering if-

BOSS
It’s good to chat, Andy, good to chat. You and me. Man to man. Hell, yeah.

SOUND: PAUSE.

BOSS
We must do this more often. OK. Good to see you. Off you pop.

ANDY
The promotion?

BOSS
The what?

ANDY
The promotion. You said you’d think about it.

BOSS
That I did, Andy. That I did. And I’m a man of my word. I have thought about it. And I’m not going to lie to you, Andy. You’re a grown sales professional with massive balls. I’m going to put everything on the line.

ANDY
The balls?

BOSS
I’ve decided against giving you the promotion, Andy.

SOUND: PAUSE

(CONTINUED)
BOSS
Are you all right?

ANDY
I’m fine.

BOSS
Because you do seem to crying.

ANDY
I’m fine, really.

BOSS
Could you let go of my leg?

ANDY
What? Oh. Oh yeah. I wasn’t really expecting it anyway, truth be told. And it’s fine. It’s really fine. As long as you haven’t given it to Donna.

SOUND: ANDY LAUGHS WILDLY AT THIS RIDICULOUS IDEA.

ANDY
I said: ’As long as you haven’t given it to D-

BOSS
I know.

SOUND: ANDY’S LAUGHTER DIES IN HIS THROAT.

ANDY
Right. That’s fine. I’ll be off.

BOSS
You sure you’re OK?

ANDY
Fine.

BOSS
If that sweating hasn’t stopped in twenty minutes call an ambulance, OK?

ANDY
’K.

SOUND: ANDY GETS UP AND LEAVES THE ROOM, SHUTTING THE DOOR CAREFULLY BEHIND HIM.

ANDY
(OFF)
Fuck! Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck!

SOUND: SOMETHING NEXT DOOR IS BEING SMASHED.
CONTINUED:

BOSS
(TO HIMSELF)
Yes, sir, that was some pretty excellent managing you did there.

SOUND: SOMETHING ELSE SMASHES NEXT DOOR.

SCENE 16: DONNA & ANDY’S BEDROOM

(THERE IS THE SOUND OF FRENZIED PACKING, CLOTHES ARE BEING FLUNG INTO A SUITCASE. DONNA ENTERS)

DONNA
Um, what are you doing?

ANDY
Um, packing my clothes and leaving you.

DONNA
This isn’t because I’m so much thinner than you, is it?

ANDY
NO, it’s not because- What are you eating now?

DONNA
Lardons.

ANDY
Lardons?

DONNA
Cubes of fat. I don’t even really like them, but they’re really moreish.

ANDY
Fine. Well I’m leaving you. Shouldn’t those be cooked first?

DONNA
Shouldn’t you be on your way? Loser. Except of weight.

ANDY
I’m just going travelling for a while, you know. To find myself.

DONNA
You hate travellers.

ANDY
Yes. Well. This way I can bring down the travelling community from the inside.

SOUND: PAUSE.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ANDY
   Right. Well. Bye then.

DONNA
   Bye!

SOUND: ANDY MAKES FOR THE DOOR.

DONNA
   Oh, and Andy?

ANDY
   Yes?

DONNA
   If, one day, you do find yourself?

ANDY
   Yes?

DONNA
   Tell yourself to piss off from me, won’t you?

SOUND: PAUSE

ANDY
   Yeah. Of course.

SOUND: ANDY GOES DOWN THE STAIRS, AND THE FRONT DOOR SLAMS.

DONNA
   I wonder if this means he’ll stop dieting...

   SCENE 17: DONNA’S BEDROOM

   (EARLY MORNING SOUNDS)

SOUND: DONNA YAWNS

DONNA
   Morning, you fat- oh. Good. I’m glad he’s not here. I’m glad he’s not here.
   Fatting up my bed. Now to see if he’s still losing weight.

   SCENE 18: DONNA’S BATHROOM

   (THERE ARE EARLY MORNING SOUNDS, AND WE HEAR SOMEONE GETTING ONTO A SET OF SCALES)

DONNA
   Hm. Looks like he is, then. That’s good. Not a problem.
SCENE 19: DONNA’S NEW OFFICE

(OFFICE SOUNDS, BUT THEY ARE FARTHER AWAY, MUTED)

RHIANNON
Well, I have to say, Donna, this is one of the most impressive offices I’ve ever seen.

DONNA
Not ‘the most impressive’?

SOUND: THEY BOTH LAUGH

DONNA
But really. Not the most impressive?

RHIANNON
Eric from Accounting has nicer carpet in his. But you’ve got it all, now. A desk, an air vent, a bubblejet printer. You’re living the dream. And you’re a free woman. A free woman who’s lost an enormous amount of weight.

SOUND: KNOCKING

DONNA
Come in.

BOSS
Knock knock!

SOUND: BEAT.

DONNA
Come in.

BOSS
Right. Donna. Welcome to the big time. Just thought I’d pop my head around the door, and shake the hand of our newest Regional Team Leader. Well done.

DONNA
Thanks.

BOSS
I do actually want to shake your hand.

DONNA
Oh, right.

SOUND: DONNA GETTING UP FROM HER CHAIR.

SOUND: A HANDSHAKE.

(CONTINUED)
BOSS
  Congratulations! We’ll be presenting you with an award at the company’s annual dinner next week, so make sure you’ve got a nice frock on.

SOUND: A SMALL SNAPPING SOUND.

DONNA
  Ow!

BOSS
  What’s the matter?

DONNA
  It’s nothing. Just one of the small bones in my hand. They’ve been snapping a lot recently.

BOSS
  OK, I’ll leave you to it.

DONNA
  I’m in quite a lot of pain.

BOSS
  Good. You’re looking excellent by the way.

SOUND: BOSS LEAVES.

DONNA
  Ooooow!

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS AGAIN.

BOSS
  Oh, and don’t get too attached to the bubblejet. Eric from Accounting needs it.

SCENE 20: A CLOTHES SHOP

(SOME TASTEFUL MUSIC PLAYS GENTLY IN THE BACKGROUND)

DONNA
  What do you think?

RHIANNON
  It looks a bit baggy on you.

SHOP ASSISTANT
  Can I help?

RHIANNON
  She’s trying to find a dress for a dinner. They’re giving her an award.
CONTINUED:

SHOP ASSISTANT
Lovely. An exciting award?

DONNA
I’m the Most Successful South-East Sales Rep for Sanitary Products in Quarter Four.

SOUND: BEAT.

SHOP ASSISTANT
Well, that is good news. And you look divine in that one.

RHIANNON
You can see her ribs poking out.

SHOP ASSISTANT
I know! Marvellous, isn’t it? Keira Knightley wears one just like it.

DONNA
Does she?

SHOP ASSISTANT
Well, no one’s ever told me that she doesn’t.

RHIANNON
You can count the nubbins in her spine.

DONNA
You can.

SHOP ASSISTANT
Spines are very on trend this season.

RHIANNON
And I don’t mean to harp on about it but her ribs are clearly visible.

SHOP ASSISTANT
If you want, I’ve got the number of a man who can whip those right out. Believe me, you’ve never seen such a beautifully flat chest as one from which the ribcage has been removed. And it will be vital if you want to wear any of next year’s collections.

RHIANNON
She looks like a concentration camp victim.

SHOP ASSISTANT
Yes, she does. An incredibly sexy concentration camp victim.

DONNA
I’ll take it.
SCENE 21: DONNA’S BATHROOM

(ECHOEY)

SOUND: DONNA SIGHS.

SOUND: DONNA STEPPING ONTO THE SCALES.

DONNA
   He’s still losing weight? Must be pining for me. Yeah. Pining. That’s it.

SCENE 22: THE RED CARPET

(FLASH BULBS ARE POPPING, PAPPARAZZI ARE SHOUTING FROM BEHIND THE ROPE-LINE)

BOSS
   Donna, you’re here! You look amazing!

DONNA
   Hello, Donald.

BOSS
   I’d like you to meet the real life celebrity who will be presenting you with your award tonight, Michael Greco!

DONNA
   Who?

MICHAEL GRECO
   Beppe off Eastenders.

DONNA
   Oh wow! I thought you were really sexy about eight years ago.

MICHAEL GRECO
   I think you’re really sexy now.

DONNA
   Really?

MICHAEL GRECO
   Yeah. You look incredible. Like a sexy concentration camp victim.

DONNA
   Thanks.

MICHAEL GRECO
   Shall we go in?
SCENE 23: THE AWARDS CEREMONY

(MUSIC PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND, THERE IS THE TINKLE OF GLASSWARE AND CUTLERY)

DONNA
  Rhiannon, can I have your bread roll?

RHIANNON
  No.

DONNA
  Please.

RHIANNON
  No, you've had my starter and my main course. All I’m going to get, at this rate, is my bread roll, and dessert.

SOUND: BEAT.

DONNA
  You are going to want your dessert then?

RHIANNON
  Sh. They’re about to start the speeches.

BOSS
  (DISTANT, AT A PODIUM#)
  Gentiles and ladymen... That was a joke. Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking... That was another joke, I speak in public quite a lot.

SOUND: BOSS FADES DOWN, AND DONNA FADES UP.

DONNA
  Is there anything left in that bottle?

RHIANNON
  Shhhhh!

DONNA
  Oh, piss off!

RHIANNON
  How did you get so drunk so quickly?

DONNA
  With booze.

RHIANNON
  Now you don’t have any body fat, you’ve become a real lightweight.

DONNA
  Why, thank you.

( CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RHIANNON
It’s not a good thing.

DONNA
Oh shut up!

RHIANNON
Sh!

DONNA
No, you sh! Just be quiet, all of you. Shhhhh!

SOUND: DONNA GIGGLES AS THE SPEECH GOES ON.

DONNA
Boring! Blah blah blah. Could we have another bottle of the red here, please?

RHIANNON
Will you be quiet?

DONNA
No, actually, I will not be quiet. I’ve got a lot to say about Andy, who didn’t want to be with me any more. Because he’s a tosser. He tosses. A lot. Toss, toss, toss he goes, sprinkling his watery seed across the soft furnishings, skipping about the house, undersized member in one hand, and a book of sales techniques in the other, spraying his musk as he goes. It’s all about the penis with Andy: penis, penis, penis! Why is there a spotlight on me?

SOUND: UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE. THE SPEECHES HAVE STOPPED. EVERYONE HAS BEEN LISTENING TO DONNA FOR A WHILE.

BOSS
There she is, everybody, Donna. Donna, come and get your award.

DONNA
Is it a penis award?

BOSS
That’s Donna, she’s got a great sense of humour.

MICHAEL GRECO
(INTO THE MICROPHONE)
And quite good tits.

DONNA
(WALKING UP TO COLLECT HER AWARD)
They used to be bigger, but they’ve shrunk. Hello! Who are you? Can you hold my glass? I’m just going up to get an award from Beppe. Oooops!
(SHE CACKLES)
Who put that extra stair there?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MICHAEL GRECO
Donna.

DONNA
Yes.

MICHAEL GRECO
It gives me great pleasure to present you with this award for excellence in regional toiletry sales 2009.

DONNA
Thank you!

MICHAEL GRECO
There you go.

DONNA
Tha-

SOUND: CLUNKING NOISE

DONNA
It’s really heavy, isn’t it?

MICHAEL GRECO
Not really, no...

DONNA
Could you pick it up for me? I’m feeling quite weak. I’d just like to thank the company for this tremendous honour, and say "Woooooo! In your face, Andy!" I know Andy isn’t here, but I’d still like to put this in his face. Now, let’s all get pissed! Woooooo!

BOSS
And now we have a tribute to Ben Wickes, one of our administrative staff who died last month.

DONNA
Woooooo!

BOSS
We’re lucky enough to be joined by his widow, and child, and our thoughts are with them at this difficult time.

DONNA
Yes. Yes they are.

SCENE 24: THE DANCEFLOOR

(SLOW DANCE MUSIC)

MICHAEL GRECO
Donna.

(CONTINUED)
MICHAEL GRECO
   Donna, there’s something I want to... Are you asleep.

DONNA
   Just a few more minutes.

MICHAEL GRECO
   We’re in the middle of dancing.

DONNA
   Hm? Oh. It’s Beppe. Hello Beppe. I’m going to have sex with you.

MICHAEL GRECO
   Beppe shoots, Beppe scores.

DONNA
   Sexy, sexy sex with sexy Michael Beppo.

MICHAEL GRECO
   Yeah, I like the way you-

SOUND: DONNA RETCHING AND VOMITING.

MICHAEL GRECO
   Not on my shoes! These are my good shoes! These are my Beppe shoes.

DONNA
   Sorry.

BOSS
   Donna, I’d like you to meet-

SOUND: DONNA VOMITING EVEN MORE, LIQUID SPLASHES.

SOUND: A WOMAN CRYING, SOFTLY, AND RUNNING OFF.

BOSS
   Donna, you’ve turned her husband’s death into a tragedy. Why don’t you go home and get some rest?

DONNA
   All right. Fine. Come on, Michael, let’s go to my home and get some rest. By which I mean some sex.

MICHAEL GRECO
   No, I’m going to have to go and explain to my mum what’s happened to my shoes. She’ll have to spend ages cleaning them.

DONNA
   But- But-

SOUND: MICHAEL LEAVING.

(CONtinued)
CONTINUED:

DONNA
Call me!

BOSS
Donna, will you leave?

DONNA
Fine, I will.

SOUND: A COUPLE OF STEPS, THE SOUND OF SOMEONE SLIPPING IN VOMIT AND LANDING IN A HEAP ON THE FLOOR.

DONNA
It’s all right. I’m all right. I only slipped in vomit. I may have broken a thigh bone. But I am OK. All right. Could someone please call an ambulance.

BOSS
Donna, you’re a disgrace to the anal cleanliness industry. Don’t bother coming back to work. Now I’m going to have to go and by Michael Greco new shoes.

SOUND: BOSS STAMPING OFF.

DONNA
Rhiannon, could you help me up, please?

RHIANNON
Well, if you will drink so much...

DONNA
Rhiannon, I can’t help it if I don’t have pounds and pounds of fat on my arse to absorb alcohol.

SOUND: RHIANNON DROPPING HER AND WALKING OFF

DONNA
Rhiannon! Rhiannon! I didn’t mean it! Well, I kind of meant it, but in a good way. Rhiannon! I’m sitting in my own puke! (WEAKLY) And it’s getting really cold.

SCENE 25: DONNA’S BATHROOM

(ECHOEY)

DONNA
Come on, come on, come on.

SOUND: DONNA GETS ON THE SCALES.

DONNA
Why? Why won’t you stop losing weight, you idiot?
SCENE 26: DONNA’S HALLWAY

(THE DOORBELL RINGS)

SOUND: DONNA IS HUFFING AND PANTING, HEAVING HERSELF ALONG.

SOUND: THE DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.

DONNA
(WHEEZY)
I’m coming, I’m coming.

SOUND: THE DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENING.

RHIANNON
I’m not stopping, Donna, I just came to drop off your stuff from the- What’s happened to you?

DONNA
Good, isn’t it? I’m under four stone now.

RHIANNON
But you’re covered in... fur.

DONNA
Lanugo. It’s called lanugo. It’s a soft, downy fuzz the body develops to keep itself warm if you don’t have any body fat. It’s fuzzy. Do you want to feel?

RHIANNON
No! God no!

DONNA
Do you want to come in for a tea?

RHIANNON
I’ve just brought your stuff from your desk.

DONNA
Please come in for a tea.

RHIANNON
Well... Just a quick one; I’ve got to be getting back.

DONNA
Thanks. And, Rhiannon?

RHIANNON
Yes?

DONNA
Would you mind giving me a piggy back?
SCENE 27: DONNA’S LIVING ROOM

(THERE IS THE GENTLE CLINK OF A TEAPOT AND CROCKERY)

RHIANNON
There you go.

SOUND: A TEACUP, PLATE AND SPOON SHAKING AS THEY ARE BEING CARRIED TO A TABLE, SHAKING VIOLENTLY.

RHIANNON
Are you all right?

SOUND: STILL SHAKING

DONNA
Yes, thanks.

RHIANNON
Do you need a hand with that?

DONNA
No, I’m fine. I can manage it.

SOUND: CUP SMASHING ON THE FLOOR.

DONNA
I like it like that. I prefer it off the floor.

RHIANNON
I’ll just get a-

DONNA
Leave it!

RHIANNON
OK.

SOUND: RHIANNON SIPS HER TEA, AND THEN BEGINS TO CHOKE.

RHIANNON
Oh, God, what is this?

DONNA
Sorry, that’s a clump of my hair. It’s getting everywhere. But it’s good. I always had very full hair. It needed to think out a little.

RHIANNON
So you’re happy?

DONNA
Blissfully. I’m losing more weight than Andy, you know.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: 32.

RHIANNON
   What?

DONNA
   That’s what your man said. Your diet man. He said that every morning I would lose more weight than Andy.

RHIANNON
   Donna, I think you should see a doctor.

DONNA
   I wouldn’t expect you to understand.

RHIANNON
   What’s that meant to mean?

DONNA
   You’re so jealous.

RHIANNON
   Jealous of what?

DONNA
   Jealous that I’m the thin one. Jealous that everyone fancies me. Jealous that-

RHIANNON
   Jealous that of your hair falling out?

DONNA
   But I’ve got new hair, all over my body that you can only dream of.

RHIANNON
   Right. I’m off.

DONNA
   Fine, then, go!

SOUND: RHIANNON LEAVING

DONNA
   Off you go with your strapping, muscular legs that can easily hold your body weight.

SOUND: FRONT DOOR SLAMMING

DONNA
   Because they’re fat.

SOUND: DONNA SIGHS.
SCENE 28: DONNA ON THE PHONE
(SILENCE. WE HEAR, THROUGH A TELEPHONE LINE, A PHONE RINGING. IT IS PICKED UP.)

ANDY
(RECORDED, DISTORTED)
Hi, this is Andy. Yeah, I know, it is exciting. Leave your words after my curds. And by 'curds', I mean 'beep'.

SOUND: BEEP.

DONNA
(WEAKLY)
Hi, Andy, it’s Donna. I was just calling to find out how you were. I’m doing excellently. Really excellently. I haven’t stopped losing weight since you left, and I got an award at work, and I’ve touched Michael Greco, so... I was just calling to see if you were planning on losing any more weight. I might stop for a while, it’s gone so well. I’ve got to go, because there are some men who would like to have sex with me at the door, so... But do call back, I’ll stop having sex with them if you ring. It would be good to talk to you. Bye. Fatty

SCENE 29: DONNA’S HALL
(WE CAN HEAR OUTSIDE SOUNDS, BUT THEY ARE DISTANT. WE ARE INSIDE, THEY ARE NOT)

SOUND: THERE IS A KNOCKING ON THE DOOR.

DELIVERY MAN
Hello? Hello? Is anyone there?

DONNA
(FAINTLY, FROM THE FRONT ROOM)
In here.

DELIVERY MAN
Hello?

SOUND: A DOOR CREAKING OPEN

SCENE 30: DONNA’S LIVING ROOM
(WE CAN HEAR FLIES BUZZING IN THE CORNERS OF THE ROOM)

DELIVERY MAN
Hello? I’ve got your groceries, your online-

SOUND: THE DELIVERY MAN GAGS AND COUGHS

(CONTINUED)
DELIVERY MAN
Do you mind if I open a window. Something smells terrible in here.

DONNA
Oh, that’s just vomit. Vomit, and the smell of my stomach digesting itself. That’s what happens when you get really thin and sexy, you know.

DELIVERY MAN
Right, well, I’ll just open-

DONNA
No, don’t! It gets so cold. I get so cold now.

DELIVERY MAN
I’ll being your groceries in, shall I?

DONNA
Just put them in here. Where I can reach them.

DELIVERY MAN
Not in the kitchen?

DONNA
The kitchen’s so far away.

DELIVERY MAN
Right

SOUND: THE DELIVERY MAN GOES OUT.

DONNA
Bet he’s never seen anyone this thin before. Probably got some dumpy wife and children at home. I’ll bet he’s wild with desire at the thought of my naked body.

SOUND: THE DELIVERY MAN COMES BACK IN, AND DROPS SOME BAGS.

DELIVERY MAN
Right. They were all out of tampons, so they’ve put it an replacement.

DONNA
What’s the replacement?

DELIVERY MAN
Doritos.

DONNA
Doesn’t matter. I’ve stopped menstruating anyway.

DELIVERY MAN
Oh. Can I get your signature here.
DONNA
Yep. I’m completely infertile. I can have consequence-free sex with whomever I choose.

DELIVERY MAN
Right.

DONNA
Why don’t you sit down and have a snack?

DELIVERY MAN
I’ve really got to get a signature.

DONNA
I’ll sign if you’ll sit down.

DELIVERY MAN
Right.

SOUND: DELIVERY MAN SITS DOWN.

DELIVERY MAN
What are these? Little rice crackers?

DONNA
Those are fingernails. They’ve been coming out whole.

SOUND: DELIVERY MAN GETS UP AGAIN

DELIVERY MAN
I really need a signature.

DONNA
Oh, you don’t have to go so soon, surely. You can sit and stroke my hair.

DELIVERY MAN
No, I-

DONNA
Stroke. Stroke. Ow! That was the last bit. It’s just popped off. Do you want my last hairs?

DELIVERY MAN
It’s fine, I’ll sign for you.

DONNA
You can have them. I pulled them out for you. And some scalp, too. Look, you can have some sexy, sexy scalp! It hardly weighs anything.

SOUND: A CLATTER AS THE DELIVERY MAN RUNS FROM THE ROOM.

SOUND: THE FRONT DOOR SLAMS.

(CONTINUED)
DONNA
  Yeah. He wants me.

SCENE 31: DONNA’S BATHROOM

(ECHOEY)

DONNA
  Come on, Donna, you can do it. You ate 14,000 calories yesterday, you can put a pound back on. Half a pound. Or you could stay the same...

SOUND: DONNA GETTING ONTO THE SCALES. IT DOESN’T TAKE THEM LONG TO SETTLE.

DONNA
  Damn it!

SOUND: DONNA VOMITS AGAIN.

DONNA
  Oh no, there’s a tooth. I’ve lost a tooth. It burns. It’s burning inside my thr-

SOUND: SHE VOMITS AGAIN.

SOUND: THE DOORBELL.

DONNA
  I’m coming, I’m coming.

SOUND: DONNA GRUNTS AS SHE HEAVES HERSELF TO THE DOOR.

SCENE 32: THE FRONT HALL

(DONNA IS PANTING, EXHAUSTED.)

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS.

DONNA
  Oh, it’s you.

ANDY
  (WEAKLY)
  Hello.

DONNA
  Do you want to come in?

ANDY
  Can we just lie down here for a while?

DONNA
  OK.

SOUND: THEY BOTH SLUMP TO THE GROUND, PANTING.

(CONTINUED)
ANDY
You’ve lost some weight.

DONNA
You have too.

ANDY
Yeah, just a couple of pounds.

DONNA
How many pounds?

ANDY
Forty-six.

DONNA
Forty-seven. Loser.

ANDY
Shall we call it a day with the whole weight loss thing?

DONNA
You first.

ANDY
I think it would be better if you go first.

DONNA
No, you go first.

ANDY
I think-

DONNA
I can’t go first, Andy, I got some help from a specialist.

ANDY
Me too.

ANDY & DONNA
Dr Robert Ezleeb!

SCENE 33: THE STREET OUTSIDE

EZLEEB’S
(EXTERNAL STREET SOUNDS)

SOUND: A CAR PULLS UP, AND THE DOOR OPENS.

SOUND: DONNA AND ANDY EASE THEIR WAY SLOWLY OUT OF THE CAR.

ANDY
Thank y-

SOUND: THE CAR SPEEDS OFF

(CONTINUED)
ANDY
Keep the change. Well, here we are.

DONNA
But- But- It’s gone.

ANDY
It was right here.

DONNA
Between these two doors. It’s completely disappeared.

ANDY
What number was it?

DONNA
22a. I remember thinking-

ANDY
No, there it is. This is 18.

DONNA
Oh yeah. That’s it.

SCENE 34: EZLEEB’S SHOP

(TINKLING AND WEIRD MOANS AND MUFFLED SHRIEKS AGAIN)

SOUND: DONNA AND ANDY COME INTO THE SHOP, JINGLING THE BELL ABOVE THE DOOR.

EZLEEB
Ah! Back again, so soon? What can I do for you both this time: new noses? Limitless wealth? Extra sex organs?

DONNA
You sold us both the same treatment. I lose a pound more than him every morning.

ANDY
And I lose a pound more than her each evening.

EZLEEB
Oh, I’m terribly sorry. Has it not been working?

ANDY
It’s been working too well. My testes have shrivelled to the size of lentils.

EZLEEB
Lentils don’t weigh much at all.

DONNA
And all of my hair has fallen out.

(CONTINUED)
EZLEEB
Not all of it, you’re got a lovely covering of lanugo...

ANDY
Make it stop now, please.

EZLEEB
I’m afraid that’s quite out of the question.

DONNA
But why?

EZLEEB
Did you never stop to think about it before signing away your immortal souls-

DONNA
And five grand.

EZLEEB
And five grand. Did you not consider the consequences? Did you not look at my name? Robert Ezleeb. Do you know what that spells backwards?

ANDY
Hold on a second-

DONNA
Beelzetrebor.

EZLEEB

DONNA
That’s still only Beelze... bob.

EZLEEB
Look, my name’s not important.

ANDY
Bozlabubeb!

DONNA
We’d like to cancel out treatments, please.

ANDY
Is it Bozlabubeb?

EZLEEB
I’m afraid I can’t allow that. The contract is very clear.

DONNA
So, we’re going to keep on losing weight forever.

(CONTINUED)
EZLEEB
Oh no.

DONNA
Thank goodness.

EZLEEB
Only until you die. Then you’ll burn in a deep pit of hell forever.

DONNA
Right. That’s not much better. Well, what should we do?

EZLEEB
If I were you, I should make a will.

SOUND: EZLEEB CACKLES WILDLY.

SOUND: A SMALL EXPLOSION

SOUND: DONNA COUGHING

DONNA
He’s... he’s disappeared.

ANDY
Is it not Bozlabubeb?

DONNA
Come on, Andy, let’s go home.

SCENE 35: DONNA AND ANDY’S LIVING ROOM

(THE BUZZING OF THE FLIES IS MORE INSISTENT, NOW)

ANDY
I lost another pound this morning. I haven’t been this light since I was four years old.

SOUND: A GRINDING, SQUEALING CRUNCH

ANDY
What’s that sound?

DONNA
I think it’s my ribs. They’re squeezing inwards.

SOUND: A THUMP.

ANDY
Oh God!

(CONTINUED)
DONNA

What is it?

ANDY

My arm dropped off. My best arm just dropped off. It’s oozing some sort of yellow pus.

DONNA

I’d get the bandages, but I’m too weak to move.

SOUND: DONNA SPITTING REPEATEDLY.

ANDY

What’s that?

DONNA

More teeth. Who’d have thought you could have so many to lo- Aaaah!

SOUND: THE GRINDING AGAIN.

ANDY

My ribs are squeezing, too.

DONNA

I think this might be it, Andy.

ANDY

Hold my hand, Donna.

SOUND: DONNA GRUNTS.

DONNA

There you go.

ANDY

I meant the one that’s still attached to my body.

DONNA

It’s miles away, and—oh! It’s getting really hard to breathe.

ANDY

I’ll just wave at you.

SOUND: A WET PLOP.

ANDY

That was an eyeball. My skull just squeezed an eyeball out.

SOUND: A CRACKING NOISE, AND A SQUELCH.

SOUND: DONNA STARTS WHEEZING.
DONNA
That was my ribs. They’re really crushing my lungs now.

SOUND: HER BREATHING GETS SHALLOWER AND SHALLOWER

DONNA
The room’s getting really fuzzy now, I can’t actually breathe in. This is it.

ANDY
Well, I’ve only got one eye, but you look fantastic.

DONNA
You too, Andy, you too.

SOUND: WET PLOP

ANDY
My other eye! And now it’s constricting around my brain!

SOUND: SQUEEZING OF A MOIST SPONGE

ANDY
See you in eternity. Aaaah!

SOUND: THE SQUEEZING GETS LOUDER, UNTIL SOMETHING BURSTS WITH A DAMP SPLASH.

DONNA
Andy? Andy?

SOUND: HER BREATHING IS LABOURED, WHISTLING, FAINT.

DONNA
He’s gone. But it was what he would have wanted. Blood dribbling from his eye sockets, but very, very skinny. Dead skinny.

SOUND: DONNA’S LAST, WHEEZING, BREATH ESCAPES HER BODY, AND THEN THERE IS NO MORE.

SOUND: EZLEEB CHUCKLES TO HIMSELF.

SCENE 36: MELMOTH’S LAIR

(HAUNTING CHORDS)

MELMOTH DARKLEIGH
So, there you have it. Donna and Andy got exactly what they wished for. Unfortunately, they wished for the wrong things. Sleep well, and I’ll see you all again next month. All except you. Sweet screams...

(CONTINUED)
ANNOUNCER

That was In The Gloaming. Dead Skinny was... Don’t forget to catch Chest Pains, in two weeks’ time, or next month’s horrifying instalment of... In The Gloaming.