

ACT 1 SCENE 2

THE LONGBOTTOM'S LIVING ROOM, TWO WEEKS LATER.

William enters, cheerfully whistling, puts the framed photograph on the wall, fiddles with it and then stands back, pleased with himself, viewing the portrait. Just then Mary enters wearing a coat and carrying a small case.

WILLIAM: Hya loves, give us a hug. *(They hug.)* I've missed you.

MARY: I've only been round Mums.

WILLIAM: Almost two weeks. Anyway, how is she?

MARY: As well as can be expected. To be honest, I think she was better before the funeral. She's gone all withdrawn and quiet.

WILLIAM: Good God! That's not like your mother. Cup of tea?

MARY: No thanks, not long had one.

WILLIAM: Notice anything different?

MARY: *(Looks around.)* No. *(Notices the picture.)* Oooh, Willy it's lovely! You shouldn't have. Thanks love. *(Kisses him on the cheek.)* Listen, we need to have a chat. It's about mum, she's going to be awfully lonely William-

WILLIAM: Please Mary! No, you don't want her to live here, do you?

MARY: Please!

WILLIAM: Oh, don't do it to us Mary! It's not fair!

MARY: Pretty please!

WILLIAM: There's no room! We've discussed this before. And the answers still no!

MARY: Oh, come on Willy, she's no trouble.

WILLIAM: No trouble?

MARY: What you want to do? Put her in a nursing home with Aunty Doreen?

WILLIAM: At least she'd have company.

MARY: I couldn't live with myself! And you know she couldn't cope with that, she's too ill.

WILLIAM: That's what nursing homes are for, ill people.... Where would she sleep?

MARY: With us.

WILLIAM: Bigger off! I'm not sleeping with your mother!

MARY: No! We'll put another bed in our room, its big enough.

WILLIAM: But we couldn't do anything.

MARY: What you mean?

WILLIAM: You know!

MARY: No I don't.

WILLIAM: Well that's just great! We haven't done it in so bloody long, you've forgotten what it is!

MARY: Errr, that? I never liked it much anyway. If you think we're going to start doing it again at our age you've got another thing coming.... Look, I can't see Madeline coming home anytime soon. She can have her room.

WILLIAM: Oh, I don't know.

MARY: Please!

WILLIAM: I don't think I could-

MARY: For me?

WILLIAM: But-

MARY: You won't have to do anything. I'd look after her, you wouldn't even know she's here.

WILLIAM: *(Softening.)* Ooooh!

MARY: Go on. Please!

WILLIAM: Oh, alright then.

MARY: *(Hugging him.)* Thanks Willy, I love you!

WILLIAM: God help me! Any trouble mind and she's out!

MARY: *(Running to the phone and dialling.)* Don't worry love, it's gonna be fine. *(On the phone.)* Hello Mum?.... It's me. Yes it's ok. We've just been

discussing it and William says you can stay.... I know, I'm really excited..... We'll be expecting you then..... Bye Mum.

WILLIAM: I suppose you'll want her to move in next month sometime.

MARY: Errrrr, William-

WILLIAM: At least it'll give me the chance to get used to the idea.

MARY: She'll be moving in a bit sooner than that loves.

WILLIAM: Bloody hell! Not next week?

MARY: Errr, no-

WILLIAM: Thank god for that! You nearly gave me a heart attack then!

MARY: She's coming today.

WILLIAM: What!?- Today?... She's coming today. You mean today's today? It's bad enough having to see her at all, but today? Oh Mary, you could have at least given me some time to get used to the idea.

MARY: I couldn't leave her in that house alone loves.

WILLIAM: What have I done to deserve this? I've not done any wrong to anyone!

MARY: Stop exaggerating William-

WILLIAM: I've tried to live a good life.

MARY: You're being bloody ridiculous now!

WILLIAM: I can hear her now.... This place can do with a lick of paint..... Why don't you get off your lazy arse and find a job! God help me!

MARY: She's not that bad!

WILLIAM: She's a bloody nightmare Mary!... Right, that's it, call her back and tell her we've changed our mind.

MARY: No!

WILLIAM: We'll put her in the garage then. There's plenty of room in there for her.

MARY: (*Shouting.*) Watch I don't put you in the bloody garage!

WILLIAM: (*Shouting back.*) At least I won't have her yapity yapping in my earhole all day there!

MARY: Why don't you move in the bloody garage then!

WILLIAM: Maybe I bloody will!

MARY: You do that! (*Door bell.*) That's Mum!

WILLIAM: What?!- She's here already?! You must have been hiding her at the bottom of the garden!

MARY: (*Off stage.*) Come on in Mum.

EZME: (*Entering with large bag followed my **Mary.***) Thanks loves. You too been arguing again?

MARY: What ever gave you that idea? Feeling better?

EZME: Not really loves. William! Bring my suitcase in!

WILLAM: Hello William. How are you William? (*Exits.*)

MARY: Now put your feet up and I'll do you a nice cup of tea.

EZME: Oh, thanks loves.

Mary exits to the kitchen. Ezme takes a quick look around the room showing her dislike. She moves to a small table down stage removes the vase of flowers and goes into her bag pulling out a photo of her late husband along with a large black urn. She opens it.

EZME: Well here we are.... I know it's not home but at least we got our Mary. You always said our house was too big and you aren't half the man you use to be so it'll probably look bigger now. You promised we'd spend our final years together in a bungalow overlooking the sea and where do we end up? On a bloody council estate in the middle of nowhere. Oh, I don't know.... Strange in it, always thought it be you carrying me around. Anyway, it wasn't to be.

She puts the top back on the urn, kisses it and places it on the cupboard.

WILLAM: (*Entering, he notices urn.*) I see you've settled in already then.

EZME: This place could do with a lick of paint! (*Replaces ornaments on cupboard with her own.*)

WILLAM: I've been meaning to but not had the time yet.

EZME: Your unemployed William! You have plenty of time! (*Finishing the display on the cupboard.*) That's better. (*Notices the wedding photograph on the wall and scrutinizes it.*)

WILLAM: What do you think?

EZME: Nice frame.

MARY: *(Entering with three cups.)* Come and sit down Mum. You must be tired.

EZME: Emotionally drained. Look loves, I'm gonna pop off to the loo to spend a penny, I won't be long. *(Exits.)*

MARY: Ok

WILLIAM: *(Pointing to the cupboard.)* My God! Mary! Look what she's brought with her

MARY: What?

WILLIAM: Quick look!

MARY: Ooooo! That's a nice vase. *(Realising what it is.)* Oh!

WILLIAM: It's bad enough I have to put up with your mother but I'm telling you now, I'm not having your father move in as well.

MARY: Now calm down! *(Sits on sofa.)* I don't want you upsetting her.

WILLIAM: *(Sitting next to Mary.)* Me upsetting her?

MARY: Leave it to me. I'll talk to her, ok?

WILLIAM: I should think so too.

EZME: *(Entering.)* Everything ok?

WILLAM: Bloody hell! You were quick.

MARY: *(Elbowing William.)* Come and sit down Mum.

Ezme Moves to sofa and stare at **William** who is sitting next to **Mary**. He moves and she sits in between them. She rummages in her bag and pulls out a packet of cigarettes, lighter and ashtray.

EZME: Oh, I almost forgot. *(Takes biscuits from her bag.)* I got your favourites... Garibaldi biscuits. Well go on, eat up!

Mary takes one.

WILLIAM: No thanks, I've just eaten.

EZME: I'm sure you can find room for one of these delirious garibaldi's.

WILLIAM: *(Correcting her.)* Delicious garibaldi!

EZME: I know, they're lovely aren't they. (*William takes one and he and Mary both pretend to enjoy.*) You've had your wedding photo enlarged.

MARY: Yes, William done it, isn't it nice?

EZME: A reminder of that farce?.... I'll always remember William's uncle Dennis that day. Lost his teeth in the snow. He slipped head over heels and went sliding down the street until he hit a snow drift. Completely vanished he did. It was almost ten minutes before he reappeared and as gummy as the day he was born. It was ten years before he got his new set, you know and a week later he died..... Heart attack!.... It was finding out about his son that did it.

MARY: What?.... Donald?

EZME: Yes, didn't you know?

MARY: No.

EZME: *(Mouthing the words.)* One of them.

MARY: What you mean?

EZME: *(Trying to be discreet.)* You know! One of them.

MARY: One of what?

EZME: *(Rolls eyes.)* One..... Of..... Them. *(Gestures a limp wrist.)*

MARY: Them?.... No-

EZME: Yes!... Dennis's Iris told me during the funeral. She said she suspected he was a hoo..... You know..... when he came home, one day, with his hair permed.

MARY: There's nothing wrong with that. Lots of young men got their hair permed in those days.

EZME: I know but he had a blue rinse to go with it. Hey, you never guess who I saw in the surgery yesterday.

WILLIAM: *(Sarcastically.)* A Doctor?

EZME: Doctor Lewis!

MARY: David?

EZME: Yes, he's still as handsome as ever, you know and it's been almost a year since his wife's died. I was telling him how disappointed I was, you two never got to tie the knot.

MARY: Mum!

EZME: He's done very well for himself. He's off to the Bahamas next week. He's really looking forward to it. He said the only thing missing is someone to share it with..... A nice lady friend. He asked about you of course. Well, he's never really gotten over you turning him down. I told him you haven't changed at all. You're as beautiful as ever.

MARY: Oh Mum! (*Showing a slight interest.*) What did he say?

EZME: He said next time you're in town to give him a call.

MARY: I don't have his number.

EZME: Don't worry, he gave it to me. It's in my bag.

WILLIAM: What? You're not going round his!

MARY: I wasn't going too.

EZME: Of course, he's always been a hard working young man.

WILLIAM: I can't work, my back is-

MARY: She's not on about you William.

EZME: It's a shame you didn't marry him.

MARY: I didn't love him Mum!

EZME: That shouldn't matter. I married your father didn't I? Anyway, he was telling me his mother died, only two months ago, poor dab, don't get much luck do he- In Tesco's. She was at the checkout buying angel cake and she went out like a light. That reminds me, you'll never guess, your Aunty Alice phoned this morning. Your Uncle Simon's kicked the bucket too-

WILLIAM: Do you have to talk about people dying all the time!

EZME: Death!..... is a fact of... life, William. We all have to go some time. But, for your sake, Claire Thomas had a baby girl last week.... Seven pounds two ounces.

WILLIAM: See? That wasn't too difficult was it?

EZME: Of course not. Mind you, she was rushed back into hospital a day later after a car crash. They don't think she's going to pull through-

WILLIAM: See you're at it again!

EZME: I can't help it! *(To Mary.)* I'm sorry love, I've not been right since your father past.

MARY: Now don't worry. We'll get you back to good health in no time.

EZME: It'll take a bloody miracle. Look at me, I'm shaking. Your David was only saying yesterday, if I spend any more time in that surgery, people will be talking about us. He's not my type mind, his do da's too big.

MARY: His what?

EZME: You know, do da, nose. Such a nice boy though, you'd have made a lovely couple.

WILLIAM: Excuse me!

MARY: Mum!

EZME: Oooo! Sorry I spoke!

MARY: Anyway, I can't wait to see Vicky tomorrow.

EZME: I'm looking forward to her surprise party.

MARY: It's not a party mum, just a bit of a welcome home with us and her friend Jenny.

EZME: Oh, not that one who doesn't speak?

MARY: She's a little shy that's all.

EZME: And there was me thinking she'd had her tongue cut out.

She holds the packet of garibaldi's up for Mary and William to eat. They look at each other with apprehension then back at Ezme who shakes the packet, forcing them to take and eat one.

MARY: Are you sure you don't want to keep some for later?

EZME: It's ok I've got another two packets in my bag. Hey, bet our Vicky will look gorgeous tomorrow. Follows after her granny see, proper little fashion icon. She'll be the ball of the party!

MARY: *(With mouth full.)* Bell of the ball.

WILLIAM: *(With mouth full.)* Life and soul of the party.

EZME: Hey, stop talking with your mouths full. Oh yes, I've invited the vicar.

WILLIAM: The vicar? You should have invited the church organist and choir too.

EZME: I did. It's their practise night and god knows they need it! Shame Madeline won't be here mind.

MARY: And we still haven't heard from her, Mum.

EZME: *(Referring to William.)* Well, it was his parents emigrating to Australia that did it. She do anything to be like his father. Why anyone would want to live in all that sun mind I'll never know. Far too hot! And foreigners? I wouldn't trust them as far as I could throw them. Pinch the teeth out of your mouth if you stood still long enough. Mind you, suit's his father down to the ground. If he'd stayed here much longer, the tax man would have caught up with him. You know me Mary, I love my granddaughter dearly but if truth be told she don't get her funny ways from our side of the family.

WILLIAM: Excuse me! There's nothing wrong with my family!

EZME: What?!... Nothing wrong with your family? Between your father and his crooked ways and you sponging benefits-

WILLIAM: You old cow!

MARY: William!

WILLIAM: You've gone too far now!

EZME: Are you going to let him talk to me like that! I told you, you should have married that David Lewis. At least he treats me with respect. Not like that lazy good for nothing-

WILLIAM: *(Standing.)* Right, that's it. I've had enough!

EZME: You've had enough! You've had enough!... I've had it up to here with you! All you do is put on my poor daughter!

MARY: Mum!

WILLIAM: Just shut up, will you!.... You vicious, spiteful, bitter.... Decrepit old witch!

MARY: William!

EZME: Old witch?.... I don't have to sit here and take this!

WILLIAM: Then stand up and get out! Go on, before I throw you out!

EZME: *(Standing.)* How dare you! Mary, kick him out!

MARY: William, please-

WILLIAM: Keep out of this. *(To Ezme, pointing at the door.)* Now get out!

MARY: Come on Mum, I'll take you home.

EZME: He's throwing a poor old women, out on the street. *(To the urn.)* I tried to get on with him Arthur, I really did but he's never liked me.

MARY: I think it's for the best Mum. Look, I'll stay with you tonight.

WILLIAM: Oh no you're not!

MARY: Oh yes I am!

WILLIAM: Oh no you're not!

EZME: Oh yes she is!

WILLIAM: Oh no she's not!

MARY: Oh yes I bloody am so shut up!

EZME: *(Clutching her chest.)* Mary! Help.... Help!.... I think it's my heart!

MARY: Mum!

EZME: *(Clutching her chest and pointing at William.)* Look... What... He's... done! *(Collapses on the floor.)*

MARY: *(Trying to recover Ezme. To William.)* Look what you've done! I'll never forgive you for this!

WILLIAM: Oh my God, I'm so sorry! I didn't realize she was so ill.

MARY: Mum, can you hear me?.... Mum?.... Oh, Mum. Mum please! *(To William.)* For God's sake, don't just stand there. Call the doctor! *(William rushes to the phone.)* Mum and I promised I'd look after you!

WILLIAM: *(Panicking.)* Mary, I can't find the number.

EZME: *(Lifting her head, faces the audience and rolls eyes.)* Doctor Lewis. In my bag. *(She is unconscious again as William rushes to her bag.)*

MARY: Mum? Wake up. Mum, please wake up!... I'm telling you now, if she dies we're through!

WILLIAM: I got it! (*Rushes back to phone and dials.*)

MARY: She's been good to you. Accepted you like one of her own she did and now you do this to her!

WILLIAM: (*On phone.*) Doctor Lewis?..... It's William Longbottom.... It's my Mother-in-law. She's seriously ill. I think it's a heart attack.... Its four Darwin Road. Yes. Please come quick. (*To **Mary**.*) He's on his way. (*Touching **Mary's** shoulder.*)

MARY: Don't touch me! I know she can be a bit difficult on times but she didn't deserve this! (*Exiting towards bedroom crying.*) I'm meant to be looking after her!

WILLIAM: Where you going?

MARY: To get her a pillow!

WILLIAM: I'm sorry-

MARY: Just stay here and watch her! (*Exits.*)

WILLIAM: Mary, I am. I'm sorry! (*Looking at **Ezme** lying on the floor. He realising he is between her and the urn he then starts to exits to the front door.*) I better check the door. (*He exits.*)

EZME: (*Opening her eyes and quickly sitting up, smiling.*) That will teach you William Longbottom. (*Laughs and lies down again.*)