ELSINORE

Written by
Stephen Beresford

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Shooting Script - 22 December 2025

Blue Revisions - 17th February 2026

1 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. OLIVIER STAGE 1989.** 1

Open on towers - crenelations on top of battlements, dry ice and smoke. Elsinore castle. An actor portraying the GHOST of OLD HAMLET is visible through the mist...

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST
I am thy father's spirit...
Doomed for a certain term to walk
the night and for the day confined
to fast in fires till the foul
crimes done in my days of nature
are burnt and purged away...

We see HAMLET facing him...

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST (CONT'D)
But that I am forbid to tell the
secrets of my prison house, I could
a tale unfold whose lightest word
would harrow up thy soul, freeze
thy young blood...

CUT TO:

2 **INT. OLIVIER AUDITORIUM. EVENING.** 2

We see the audience, spectacles twinkling in the crosslight - it's a full house...

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST (O.S.)
...Make thy two eyes, like stars,
start from their spheres... Thy
knotted and combinèd locks to
part...

CUT TO:

3 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. OLIVIER STAGE** 3

Back to the action on stage.

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST
And each particular hair to stand
an end, Like quills upon the
fearful porpentine. But this
eternal blazon must not be to ears
of flesh and blood. List, list, O
list! If thou didst ever thy dear
father love...

There's something wrong. HAMLET (Dark, good looking) seems not to be listening. The actor playing OLD HAMLET'S GHOST steps closer...

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST (CONT'D)
(Whispered)
Are you going to say your fucking line?

Stage left, The DSM on the book is watching from prompt corner. She looks at HAMLET and frowns slightly... The GHOST moves on to the next lines -

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

A few ACTORS are milling about, amongst them HORATIO, BERNARDO and MARCELLUS, all oblivious. One of them is messing about with the skull from the props table, pretending it's giving him a blow job...

Back to the action on stage. HAMLET still hasn't spoken.

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST (CONT'D)
Murder most foul, as in the best it is, but this most foul, strange, and unnatural...

HAMLET walks from the stage. We hear murmurs from the audience. The GHOST looks around, alarmed.

The DSM turns and along with a couple of the STAGE TECHNICIANS tries to intercept HAMLET and physically stop him for leaving. The other ACTORS look stunned.

DSM
Dan?

HAMLET pushes past them. The ACTOR messing about with the skull stares after him.

ACTOR 1
Shit...

We see the audience reacting - a lot of murmuring. OLD HAMLET'S GHOST turns to the wings to see HAMLET racing off

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST
(Whispered, gritted teeth towards the wings)
Now, what the fuck am I supposed to do?

One of the other ACTORS shrugs at the GHOST.

CUT TO:

4 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE STAGE DOOR - EVENING** 4

LINDA, the NT's celebrated stage door keeper (she smokes and has large round glasses) and a west Indian SECURITY GUARD are watching the action unfold on a black and white monitor above the desk....

LINDA lowers her cigarette in amazement...

CUT TO:

5 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE STAIRWELL - EVENING** 5

HAMLETS flees up the stairs.

6 **INT. DRESSING ROOMS. NATIONAL THEATRE. EVENING.** 6

The ACTORS are coming to their doors as a dresser runs past.

CUT TO:

7 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. STAGE DOOR.** 7

LINDA and the SECURITY GUARD are staring at the screen, open mouthed. LINDA'S cigarette has burned down to a tower of ash.

SECURITY GUARD
(Shaking his head)
Hamlet just walked off the stage.

LINDA nods.

LINDA
Well, that's not supposed to happen...

CUT TO:

8 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. OLIVIER STAGE** 8

OLD HAMLET'S GHOST has left, the AUDIENCE are now openly talking - concerned, fascinated, amused. The image we are left with is a vast, empty stage.

Main titles: **ELSINORE.**

CUT TO:

9 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 9

We hear music. The bathroom cabinet is closed by IAN CHARLESON revealing his reflection in the mirror. He's beautiful, dirty blonde, forty. When he speaks he has a warm, Edinburgh accent. He appears to be naked.

LEGEND ON SCREEN: **SIX MONTHS EARLIER.**

Behind his shoulder we can see a large poster of the film CHARIOTS OF FIRE. On it IAN is running through the surf with a group of other YOUNG MEN in 1920's running gear. Across the image we can glimpse 'Winner of four Academy Awards'

IAN regards himself for a moment, nods a little to the music - then reaches across the sink and picks something up. He holds the object up, and we see what it is. A hand held mirror. He positions it behind his neck... We hear his voice in voiceover -

IAN (V.O.)
What a piece of work is a man. how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty...

CUT TO:

10 **INT. AUDITION SUITE. DAY.** 10

IAN is standing in front of a VHS camera in an audition. He's talking but not reciting the speech.

IAN
In form and moving how express and admirable... in action how like an angel... in apprehension how like a God.

The Female CASTING director smiles. That was beautiful. A CAMERA OPERATOR shouts from off.

CAMERA OPERATOR (O.S.)
That's fine. Thank you! Just wanted a level.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Was that Shakespeare?

IAN
Hamlet.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Most people just tell us what they had for breakfast.

She hands him some pages.

CASTING DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
I'm afraid this is a little more... prosaic.

IAN
That's fine.

He glances over the sides.

CASTING DIRECTOR
He's a man of action.

IAN
Right -

CASTING DIRECTOR
But he does have a sensitive side. And when he turns up, he realises the person he's taking over from - is his ex-girlfriend.

IAN
Who among us has not been there, Sue?

CASTING DIRECTOR
Whenever you're ready.

A moment, then -

IAN
(American accent)
I've ordered back-up, but the one thing we don't have is time. I want eyes on all escape routes -

CASTING DIRECTOR
By what authority - ?

IAN
By the authority of ending this thing. Seal the perimeter fence.

CUT TO:

11 **INT. TUBE UNDERPASS. LONDON. NIGHT.** 11

SEAN and IAN walking through the covered exit of the station.

SEAN
Why are you even auditioning for that stuff? You were in one of the most celebrated films of all time -

IAN
Yeah, and the only thing anyone can remember is the theme music.

SEAN
You need to tell your agent, Ian - You're better than this.

IAN
I don't care about auditioning. I just... I wish I had something decent to audition for.

THEY PASS A LARGE RUN OF POSTERS ADVERTISING HAMLET AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE. THERE'S A PHOTO OF DANIEL DAY LEWIS HOLDING THE SKULL. IAN SLOWS. LOOKS AT THE POSTERS.

SEAN
You could always go back.

IAN
What?

SEAN
To the theatre -

IAN
Jesus, Sean - I can't just run back. I have to hold my nerve.

He walks on, IAN follows.

CUT TO:

12 **EXT. STREET. SOHO. NIGHT.** 12

They head for the door of a gay bar. Muffled, thumping music. A GAY MAN leaving gives IAN the eye as he passes. SEAN clocks this.

SEAN
Can we go somewhere else?

IAN looks at him. SEAN shrugs.

SEAN (CONT'D)
I don't want cock. I want carrot cake.

SEAN sets off, IAN follows - one quick glance back to the departing MAN...

CUT TO:

13 **INT. MAISON BERTAUX. SOHO. LONDON. NIGHT.** 13

Very crowded, smoky Bohemian French cafe. A popular hangout for queer people, theatre audiences, actors after a show. IAN and SEAN entering.

A MAN waves - It's IAN'S friend HILTON -

HILTON
Ian Charleson, repent! Return to the Presbyterian Church!

IAN
(Waving)
Jesus, half of Equity's in here.

They join the queue at the counter. IAN'S presence makes MICHELLE, a beautiful young French woman behind it, glow with delight.

IAN (CONT'D)
(To MICHELLE)
Michelle, ma vie! Ma raison de respirer!

She blows a kiss, turns to get them tea. SEAN spots a good looking man, a fellow actor GEORGIE RANDALL who is sitting with a YOUNGER MAN.

SEAN
Georgie's on a date.

IAN
(Waves)
Which we will now sabotage.

They go over to GEORGIE and his friend.

IAN (CONT'D)
(Kissing his cheek)
Hello Mum

GEORGIE
Hello, Mum.

YOUNG MAN
(Canadian accent)
How can you both be Mum?

GEORGIE
Paul doesn't understand camp. He's from Ottawa.

CUT TO:

14 **INT. MAISON BERTAUX. SOHO. LONDON. NIGHT.** 14

IAN sitting with GEORGIE, SEAN and the handsome YOUNG MAN. IAN is smoking roll ups. Tea and cake consumed. The place still buzzing.

IAN
So this Queen is on tour with the RSC. Titus Andronicus. He's only a bit part, but he spends the whole thing semi naked - You know, Roman slave, or something - and he's getting very successful with all the local talent...

GEORGIE
Is this story autobiographical, by any chance?

IAN
Anyway, this particular week they're in Brighton, and he is *inundated* -

SEAN
Well, one would be.

IAN
But the landlady of his digs has had enough. She says, if you bring another man into this house I'm throwing you out. So anyway - he's in the bar after the show, and some guy comes up to him - drop dead gorgeous, completely un-turn-down-able.
(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)
So he thinks, 'fuck it' We'll wait till the landlady's asleep, and then we'll go back to mine.

SEAN
Why didn't he get a hotel?

IAN
He was third spear from the left. How's he supposed to afford a hotel?

GEORGIE
Anyway -

IAN
Anyway. They wait until midnight, and then when they get to the front door, he has a flash of inspiration. He says - 'Listen. She sleeps on the ground floor. If she hears two sets of footsteps, she'll be out here like a fucking greyhound. Get on my back and I'll carry you up.

GEORGIE
For God's sake -

IAN
So the trade hops on his back and he starts to piggy back him up the stairs. Trouble is, he's quite heavy, so progress is laboured, to say the least. Anyway, sure enough the landlady hears the slow thump, thump as he makes his way up the stairs, and she puts on her dressing gown and comes into the hall. There he is, like a rabbit in the headlights, trade hanging off his back. And she leans against the doorframe, and says...
(*Landlady voice*)
'Oh, that's charming. You're bringing home cripples now.'

There is great general laughter.

IAN (CONT'D)
(Over laughter)
Her words not mine!

A MIDDLE AGED ACTOR appears.

MIDDLE AGED ACTOR
Just to warn you, dear... Derek Jarman is in the next room.

IAN takes his hand. ‘Smiles.’

IAN
I appreciate that, Neil. I know how you hate putting yourself in the centre of any kind of drama...

NEIL withdraws his hand, the others smirk.

MIDDLE AGED ACTOR
(Stung)
Just trying to help.

He sweeps out. The others laugh.

SEAN
Do you want to leave?

IAN shakes his head, looks over to the other room.

CUT TO:

15 **INT. MAISON BERTAUX. SOHO. LONDON. NIGHT.** 15

IAN is at the upright piano with his friend, HILTON. They are playing furious, loud boogie-woogie together. The whole joint is jumping.

After a moment, a figure appears. DEREK JARMAN. He’s dark, saturnine, charismatic. He has paint stained fingers and is holding a clutch of books to his chest.

He and IAN lock eyes. JARMAN walks past, With him is KEITH COLLINS, his companion. He is a handsome, tattooed Geordie. IAN stops playing whilst HILTON carries on, oblivious.

CUT TO:

16 **EXT. MAISON BERTAUX. SOHO. LONDON. NIGHT.** 16

JARMAN and KEITH are outside. IAN comes out after them.

IAN
Derek -

JARMAN
(To KEITH)
Keith, this is Ian Charleson.
(MORE)

JARMAN (CONT'D)
I gave him his first film role. Moves in much grander circles now.

KEITH
(Recognizing him)
Yeah... That film about running.

JARMAN
'Chariots of Fire' The first in a long line of heterosexual masquerades.

KEITH
I remember the soundtrack.

IAN
Everyone remembers the soundtrack.

JARMAN
Talking of which, I'm afraid we interrupted your little concert.

KEITH
(To JARMAN)
Derek, where's your scarf?
(Exasperated)
Jesus -

KEITH heads back in.

JARMAN
Without Keith, I'd leave the most alarming trail of ephemera.

IAN
I heard you were... unwell. I'm sorry.

A moment, then... JARMAN pulls down his fisherman's jersey to reveal a patch of darkened spots - Kaposi's Sarcoma.

JARMAN
Once you've entered the polka dot phase, they expect you to pack up and write your memoirs. Not me. I'm still fighting the enemy.

IAN
I wish I knew who that was.

JARMAN
It's the whole fucking system, Ian. But when you're a part of it, that's very difficult to see.

KEITH returns with JARMAN'S scarf.

KEITH
(To IAN)
You should come down to Dungeness some time. Derek's made a garden by the power plant.

JARMAN has a Sea Pink wild flower haphazardly stuck into his fisherman's sweater like a buttonhole. He plucks it...

JARMAN
Radiation and salt water. A Surprisingly fertile combination.

He hands IAN the flower.

IAN
What's this?

JARMAN
Sea Holly.

DEREK
Isn't that the one for fights?

JARMAN
(Amused)
Oh yes... They thought it was a cure for arguments.

IAN
Sounds good to me.

JARMAN's not letting it go easily. He smiles.

JARMAN
I like it because it's dense and spiky and *very* difficult to kill.... Nature is queer, Ian.

IAN looks down at the flower.

JARMAN (CONT'D)
Remember me.

They walk away.

CUT TO:

17 **EXT. MINI CAB RANK. SOHO. NIGHT.** 17

IAN and GEORGIE are waiting. SEAN is getting into a cab. IAN and GEORGIE wave him off. SEAN gets in, goes.

GEORGIE
You know he adores you.

IAN
Sean?

GEORGIE
Like 88 percent of the population.

IAN shakes his head. Don't be silly. Two members of the SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE are in the distance, distributing condoms in a large basket. We will later come to know them as SISTER JACK OFF ALL TRADE and MOTHER MANDRAGORA.

MOTHER MANDRAGORA (O.S.)
Condoms! Get your condoms!

IAN
What happened to *your* date?

GEORGIE
He left. I could always come back to yours.

IAN
I can't sleep with someone next to me. You know that.

A moment between them. GEORGIE rolls his eyes. A SISTER passes. IAN and GEORGIE are handed a condom.

SISTER JACK
Children - If they weareth not the glove - they gaineth not the love.

They take them. This is regular occurrence and IAN and GEORGIE behave as though it's completely normal.

IAN
Do you think it gives us insight?

GEORGIE
What?

IAN
Living with a time bomb inside us.

GEORGIE
Fuck, no. Insight about what?

IAN
Life. Death. Everyone knows they're going to die, but they live as though it'll never happen... Us, on the other hand, we have the curse of knowledge. We know it's imminent -

GEORGIE
Who says? We're both healthy. For now. Speaking for myself, I have rarely looked so radiant.

IAN
My doctor tells me to keep swimming.

GEORGIE
But not rimming.

IAN
Derek has the marks. K.S.

GEORGIE
Is that what brought this on?

IAN
I don't know...
(Sudden force)
It's taken everything from us, this fucking disease. The least it could do is give us something back.

GEORGIE
Like what?

IAN looks for the word. He's angry, frustrated.

IAN
Meaning.

CUT TO:

18 **INT. WAITING ROOM. DOCTOR'S SURGERY. DAY.** 18

IAN sitting flicking through a magazine. Here's a TV on the wall playing Morning Television. The screen changes and a familiar (to IAN) theme begins. It's the famous Vangelis theme to CHARIOTS OF FIRE.

IAN looks up to see his own face on screen, reacting to the music as it's played. It's a pre-recorded interview. On screen IAN 'smiles' as the host asks him -

TV AM HOST
I expect you remember that theme music -

IAN
(Ruefully)
Oh aye.

TV AM HOST
But now you're in an Italian horror movie, Ian. That's different, isn't it? To Chariots of Fire.

An OLDER LADY has spotted that it's him. She smiles. He moves slightly down in his seat to avoid identification. We hear the TV over.

IAN (O.S.) *
It is, it's... Yeah. 'Cos this is a *
horror, and that one was about *
running, so... *

A RECEPTIONIST calls. *

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.) *
Mr Charleson?

IAN gets up quickly.

IAN
(Whispered to himself)
Thank fuck for that... *

CUT TO:

19 **INT. DOCTOR'S SURGERY. DAY.** 19

IAN comes out from behind the screen, buttoning his shirt. A male DOCTOR is at the sink, washing his hands. His manner is brisk, uninterested.

DOCTOR
You still self examine?

IAN
Oh yes. Every morning I wake up and ask myself 'What's it all for?'

DOCTOR
I meant your body.

IAN
I.... Yes. I self examine.

DOCTOR
Spots and lesions. Those are the nasties.

IAN
Kaposi's Sarcoma.

DOCTOR
Precisely. Staying fit and healthy?

IAN
I suppose so. I still swim.

DOCTOR
Good. Swimming is good.

The DOCTOR nods. In the absence of anything else to say, he turns back to the sink, runs the tap again.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Remind me. Has anyone spoken to you about AZT?

IAN
Oh, yes. They said it was worse than the disease.

The DOCTOR turns.

DOCTOR
Who?

IAN
The poor bastards who've taken it.

DOCTOR
In the fight against HIV -

IAN
In the fight against HIV it does fuck all. It's a failed chemotherapy drug. I know the medical reps tell you to push it on us, but - with respect, Doc - I'd rather pass.

DOCTOR
(Slightly cold)
Right. Well. In that case... I don't see anything today that needs to concern us. We'll, erm.... we'll see each other again in a month's time.

A beat. IAN smiles. He's about to head to the door, when -

IAN
What *is* it all for do you think?

DOCTOR
I'm sorry?

IAN
Just wondering... Here you are at the coal face of the human condition... The apex of life and death... Any insights? Any pearls of wisdom to send me on my terminal way?

The DOCTOR looks uncomfortable.

DOCTOR
Well, I... erm... Speaking for myself, I... enjoy a round of golf.

IAN
Okay, that's... Thank you. I erm... I'll see you next month.

The DOCTOR nods and smiles. IAN reaches for the handle. The DOCTOR has turned and started soaping his hands again. IAN watches at the door.

IAN (CONT'D)
By the way... You've already done that...

The DOCTOR stops, caught. IAN leaves.

CUT TO:

20 **INT. IAN’S TERRACE. DAY.** 20

IAN is sitting with a sketch pad on his lap, in his garden. He’s painting a few stripes when he hears the door bell -

CUT TO:

21 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 21

IAN opens the door to PATSY (40’S, glamorous, tough, emotional) Her daughter, ALICE (17) is trailing behind her.

PATSY
Strong liquor, darling. As a matter of urgency.

She sweeps past. ALICE follows.

IAN
(To ALICE)
Now, what have you done?

ALICE rolls her eyes as she walks in.

CUT TO:

22 **INT. IAN’S FLAT. DAY.** 22

IAN is cooking, PATSY is sitting at the counter, elegantly smoking. ALICE is assisting IAN.

PATSY
Am I a bad mother?

IAN
No, Patsy.

PATSY
I let her have hoop earrings, I introduced her to Warren Beatty...

ALICE
That was work.

PATSY
Some people’s work is Woolworths, Alice.
(MORE)

PATSY (CONT'D)
Do you know what I'd have given to have a casting director for a mother?

IAN
(Amused)
What exactly has she done?

PATSY
You remember my Margaret Howell blouse?

IAN
The green one?

PATSY
She wore it to meet a boy. And not to the Caprice where a blouse like that *should* be worn - No. To the Wimpy on Barnes High Street.

IAN
Ketchup?

PATSY
Covered in it. I can only imagine she offered herself as a general hand towel.

IAN reaches for scissors.

IAN
Go outside and cut some herbs you brazen hussy.

ALICE
One spot of ketchup - literally.

ALICE comes to get the scissors, IAN holds them back from her

IAN
(To ALICE)
Is he pretty?

ALICE smiles.

ALICE
He looks like Nick Kamen.

IAN
Good for you, darling.

PATSY shakes her head.

PATSY
Why did I choose you for a father figure? Why didn't I get a nice, sensible Lesbian?

IAN *
You make a very good point. *

IAN pulls out some pans. PATSY watches him. *

PATSY
You're not happy.

IAN
Was that a question?

PATSY
It was an announcement.

IAN stops. Turns.

IAN
Time's running out, P.

PATSY
For what?

IAN
For something to happen. 'I have wasted time and now doth time waste me.'

He goes back to the setting up.

PATSY
There are people, you know, who find fulfillment in places other than their career...

IAN
I'm not the relationship type, darling. Or did you mean jigsaws?

PATSY
Do a play.

IAN
No.

PATSY
Go abroad. Take a break.

He shakes his head.

IAN
It’s fine. I’m fine. Just have to push forward don’t we? Keep buggering on.

He carries on working. PATSY watches unconvinced...

CUT TO:

23 **INT.IAN’S FLAT - SUNROOM - AFTERNOON.** 23

A beautiful lunch in a beautiful garden. Huge, healthy plants everywhere. Wine on the table. Classical music coming out of the flat. PATSY and IAN both smoking.

ALICE
Ian - Daniel Day Lewis is playing Hamlet.

IAN
I know.

ALICE
Will you take me to see it? Please?

IAN
Alice, as much as I welcome the arrival of your burgeoning sexuality -

ALICE
It’s not just about him. I want to see the play! I want to see it at the National Theatre.

IAN shakes his head.

IAN
(Groans)
That building -

PATSY
Don’t listen to him - He loves it. *

IAN
I love the feel of the place. The people. I don't love how hard you have to work - I don't love that you have to sweat like a wrestler just to make yourself heard.

PATSY
Didn't you play Hamlet once?

IAN
Not at the National.

ALICE
Why not?

IAN
Not posh enough. Anyway I made a mess of it.

PATSY
How?

IAN
I was too young. That part... You have to have the whole fucking world inside you. Especially at the National -

PATSY
They do this thing on opening night there - Tell her - *

IAN
What?

PATSY
The windows.

IAN
She's not interested. All she wants is Daniel Day Lewis in tights.

ALICE
I am. Tell me.

IAN
(To ALICE)
The National Theatre is actually three theatres, right? A small one, a medium one and a big one - where Hamlet's on. * * *
(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)
Three theatres, three companies of actors - all in dressing rooms that are - How do you describe it?

PATSY
All the dressing rooms - all the way up to the top of the building - they all face down into a central courtyard -

IAN
An atrium.

ALICE
Like prison?

IAN
Exactly like prison.

PATSY
And there's this tradition - I don't know who started it -

IAN
Every member of every company has a dressing room that looks down onto the courtyard - and when they call you to the stage for your first night -

PATSY
Who *did* start it?

IAN
Who knows. It's gone on for years.

ALICE is watching all this, wrapt.

ALICE
What? What happens?

IAN
All the other companies gather at the windows, and they...

IAN and PATSY exchange a look. IAN starts to hammer on the table, softly with his fists. PATSY, smiling, takes up the sound - The drumming gets louder -

IAN (CONT'D)
(Over drumming)
...Hammer on them.

ALICE laughs. She joins in.

ALICE
Isn't it terrifying?

PATSY stops, picks up the empty wine bottle and moves toward the kitchen.

PATSY
Of course. But life is terrifying, darling. Going on stage is terrifying. They're just -

IAN
We're all in it together. That's what they're saying - the terror, the, dread... It's a drum beat of glory. Soldiers going over the top.

IAN and ALICE stop drumming. IAN looks at her, smiles. He leans in. Speaks quietly while PATSY is at the fridge.

IAN (CONT'D)
Can I tell you a secret?

ALICE nods.

IAN (CONT'D)
It's the greatest part you can play, in the greatest theatre you can play it in. He'll be brilliant. And I am as jealous as fuck. *

ALICE smiles. IAN too. The phone starts ringing indoors.

CUT TO:

24 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 24

PATSY picks up the phone.

PATSY
(Into Phone)
Ian Charleson's residence. Please leave a message after the drumbeat of glory -

IAN (O.S.)
Who is it?

We can hear IAN approaching -

PATSY
(Into Phone)
Michael, darling, it's Patsy. What an amazing coincidence. I was just telling Ian to go back to the National -

IAN appears. PATSY resists handing over the receiver

IAN
Give me the phone.

PATSY
(Into phone)
Well, you're his agent, darling. If you want him to do something else, get off your arse and make it happen -

Ian snatches the phone away, PATSY walks back into the kitchen.

IAN
(Into phone)
Michael, It's Ian.

CUT TO:

25 **INT. MICHAEL WITEHALL'S OFFICE. DAY.** 25

We cut between the two locations...

MICHAEL WHITEHALL
What's all this about the National?

IAN (O.S.)
(Into the phone)
Nothing. We're just having lunch.

CUT TO:

26 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 26

IAN picks up something from the telephone table - a pencil, is it? Something to twirl distractedly.

MICHAEL WHITEHALL
(On phone)
Well, forget about the sodding theatre. They've come back about this film - And they absolutely loved your take on the character -

IAN
What character? I only saw one scene.

MICHAEL WHITEHALL
Well, that was all they needed, love. It's a straight offer. Four days in...
(Checks notes)
Borehamwood ... Which, admittedly, isn't Tahiti, but let's not be churlish -

IAN
And what exactly is the part?

We see him frantically thumbing through his notes, maybe the breakdown...

MICHAEL WHITEHALL (O.S
(On phone)
It's... a sort of...Well, it's...

Back to IAN'S.

MICHAEL WHITEHALL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Look, I haven't fucking read it. But this is good, Ian. This is... another crack at the whip... He's an action man. Butch. Heroic... Very talented director...

Silence. IAN'S thinking.

IAN
(Into Phone)
The lines I read weren't great...

MICHAEL WHITEHALL (O.S.)
That can all be changed. It's cinema. The magic of... Oh, and that reminds me - they want to know if you can...
(Glances at notes)
...ride a motorbike/horse.

IAN looks down at the object in his fingers. It's the sea pink DEREK gave him. A little less vibrant now and drying out.

CUT TO:

27 **OMITTED** 27

28 **INT. CAR. DAWN.** 28

IAN is sitting in the back of a unit car being driven to the set. The DRIVER is eyeing him in the rear view mirror.

DRIVER
That's a brilliant film... Chariots of Fire.

IAN
Yeah, I... Thanks. Thank you.

DRIVER
Funny old life, though, innit...? Sitting around on a set all day - waiting... What do you think about Daniel Day Lewis?

IAN
I... What about him?

DRIVER
Walked off stage.

IAN
What?

DRIVER
Walked off stage, right in the middle of a scene. It's in the paper.

He picks the Evening Standard off the passenger seat and flings it back to IAN who picks it up and begins rifling through it. A little silence.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
It'd bore my cock off, all that waiting. I'm a very active person. I've got three German Shepherds.

IAN has reached the page. We see a glimpse of the photograph - the inevitable skull pic. The DRIVER glances at IAN in the rearview mirror. He's reading, concentrating.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Not very professional is it?

IAN
(Reading)
It's a very tough part.

DRIVER
Shouldn't have taken it on then, should he? Not if he's not up to it.

IAN
Of course he's up to it. He's a brilliant actor... He must have...

IAN drifts back. He scans the page for more. A little silence.

DRIVER
You know what makes it a classic, don't you? Chariots of Fire?

IAN is absorbed in the article.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Dah dah dah dah dah-dah...

Silence. IAN's not engaging. The DRIVER persists.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
That soundtrack.

IAN
Oh - erm... Yeah...

DRIVER
Dah dah dah dah dah-dah. Dah dah dah dah-dah.

IAN lowers the paper, stares out of the window, deep in thought. He might hope that this was the beginning and end of the recital... But.... No, the DRIVER'S going in for the big chorus.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Dah dah dah dah-dah dah-dah dah-dah..

IAN, glances at his watch, how long is this ride?

CUT TO:

29 **OMITTED** 29

30 **OMITTED** 30

31 **OMITTED** 31

32 **OMITTED** 32

33 **OMITTED** 33

34 **INT. IAN'S TRAILER. DAY.** 34

IAN is lying on the couch, in costume, bored.

CUT TO:

35 **OMITTED** 35

36 **OMITTED** 36

37 **OMITTED** 37

38 **OMITTED** 38

39A **INT. IAN'S TRAILER. DAY.** 39A

IAN sits at the mirror, mumbling the lines. He hears some footsteps, voices. He sits up in anticipation, but... they pass. He drops his head onto the counter.

CUT TO:

39B **INT. IAN'S TRAILER. DAY.** 39B

IAN is trying to roll a satsuma down a slide he has built from objects in the room. The roll is a success. He acknowledges this faintly before sitting and staring back into the middle distance.

CUT TO:

39C **INT. FILM SET. DAY.** 39C

IAN is sitting side by side with a STUNT DOUBLE dressed identically to him. Both their faces are streaked with matching streaks of blood and filth. They sit up against some flats with the name of the film 'DEVILSEEKER' scrawled on it. Silence.

IAN
Rather you than me.

Silence. The STUNT DOUBLE is very deadpan. Finally...

STUNT DOUBLE
What?

IAN
Jumping into that bloody great water tank.

He nods. Long silence.

STUNT DOUBLE
It is me.

IAN
Yeah. Yeah, I know, I..... Yeah.

IAN looks around. This is interminable. Silence. Then...

IAN (CONT'D)
Do you know the five lives of the actor?

The STUNT DOUBLE looks at him.

STUNT DOUBLE
Is it a joke?

IAN
It's... Yeah. Kind of.

The STUNT DOUBLE nods slightly. Okay. IAN counts on his fingers.

IAN (CONT'D)
Who's Ian Charleson?... Get me Ian Charleson... Get me an Ian Charleson type... Get me a young Ian Charleson... Whatever happened to Ian Charleson?

No reaction. Then...

STUNT DOUBLE
Which one are you?

A beat, then -

IAN
Whatever happened to Ian Charleson.

The STUNT DOUBLE nods. Suddenly a bell rings and there's activity - Someone on cans approaches them, ushering the STUNT DOUBLE up. IAN looks relieved...

CUT TO:

39D **INT. MAKE-UP TRUCK. LATE AFTERNOON.** 39D

IAN is sitting in the make-up chair. An M.U.A, JILL chats to the M.U.A beside her while removing IAN'S make-up.

JILL
...He says, 'I don't think you should get a second hand buggy' I said 'Why not?' He said ' It moulds itself to the baby's shape so you're basically setting him up for a lifetime of back pain...
(Sudden stop)
Oh...

She comes down into view. Meets IAN'S eye in the mirror.

JILL (CONT'D)
Do you want me to get you some antiseptic for that?

IAN
What?

JILL
(Off-hand)
That. Look. Little purple spot.

IAN pales. She clocks his reaction, smiles. She dabs his neck again.

JILL (CONT'D)
Don't worry, it's only tiny.

The M.U.A turns and goes to the counter behind her. IAN knows at once what she's found. He leans a little into the mirror and examines it slightly. He sits back as she returns and resumes her task. We stay on IAN'S face.

JILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So, I drive all the way there - to Stevenage - which is quite a trek from where I am... And I've got this address on a piece of paper...

We stay on IAN'S face as he processes what he's seen. The first signs of Kaposi's Sarcoma...

CUT TO:

39 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 39

IAN is sitting on the sofa. A forgotten cigarette burning in the ashtray beside him. He is very still and very silent. Finally, he leaps up and, almost furiously, grabs his coat to leave...

CUT TO:

40 **EXT. CRUISING GROUND. WOODLAND. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. NIGHT.** 40

IAN is walking through the woodland. We see figures moving through the undergrowth - MEN going through the silent ritual of the cruising ground.

As IAN walks through, a few MEN attempt eye contact.

He keeps walking. In the dim light we can just about see men in groups of two or more, making out. IAN spots what he's looking for, and walks on.

CUT TO:

41 **EXT. CRUISING GROUND. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. NIGHT.** 41

A small group of YOUNG MEN is handing out leaflets. One YOUNG MAN has a SILENCE = DEATH T-shirt on. Two SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE are there two, still handing out their condoms. IAN reaches them, stops.

CUT TO:

42 **EXT. CRUISING GROUND. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. NIGHT.** 42

IAN is sitting with them. He is showing his neck to the SILENCE=DEATH T-shirted young man, whose name is TOM. Sitting on his other side is one of the Sisters, whom we will later know as SISTER FRIGIDITY OF THE NOCTURNAL EMISSION. SISTER BELLADONNA IN GLORIE DE MARENGO is making giving out tea from a thermos.

TOM
(Looking at IAN'S neck)
How long have you had it?

IAN
Just today.

TOM
And this this your only one?
You've checked.

IAN
Yeah.

SISTER FRIGIDITY
What's your Doctor like?

IAN
Pretty hopeless. Aren't they all?

SISTER FRIGIDITY
No. Not all.

IAN
Someone told me... A friend of mine
told me... This is the end.

SISTER BELLADONNA
Not necessarily.

TOM
It's not always that fast. You
should... Hang on a minute, I'll
get Andy...

He disappears. IAN looks to the SISTERS.

IAN
Do you two perform miracles at all?

SISTER BELLADONNA
I just swing the smoky handbag. But
Sister Fridge is highly favoured.

IAN
Sister Fridge?

SISTER FRIGIDITY
Sister Frigidity of the Nocturnal
Emission.

IAN smiles a little at this.

IAN
And what's your particular talent,
sister?

SISTER FRIGIDITY
I'm a hand holder.

IAN takes this in. He puts out his hand. SISTER FRIDGE takes it.

TOM comes back with another slightly sicker looking young man who must be ANDY. ANDY lifts his T-shirt and shows IAN his side, marked quite prominently with KS. IAN stands.

TOM
Two years. (To ANDY) That's right isn't it?

ANDY
Two years in September.

IAN
Wow. That's good, that's... Good. Thank you.

TOM nods. ANDY nods. IAN seems relieved. He steps forward and hugs ANDY. A moment. IAN turns -

IAN (CONT'D)
Thank you. All of you.

SISTER BELLADONNA offers him a thermos cup.

SISTER BELLADONNA
Have a cup of Char, dear. Rest your lallies.

IAN smiles. Thank you. He takes the cup, sits beside them. Silence...

CUT TO:

43 **OMITTED** 43

44 **OMITTED** 44

45 **OMITTED** 45

46 **OMITTED** 46

47 **OMITTED** 47

48 **OMITTED** 48

49 **EXT. IAN'S TERRACE. MORNING.** 49

IAN'S garden - less beautifully tended, neglected even. The rain hammering down, destroying the last of the summer's blooms.

CUT TO:

50 **INT. BEDROOM. IAN'S FLAT. LATE AFTERNOON.** 50

IAN is lying on his bed, sweating, shivering, curling up occasionally in pain.

CUT TO:

51 **INT. HALLWAY. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 51

Flat in total darkness. A persistent ringing on the bell. Long wait. Finally IAN appears silhouetted in the hall. Another ring and then the letterbox opens.

PATSY (O.S.)
(Through letterbox)
Ian, darling, we know you're home. Please let us in!

IAN hesitates.

PATSY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(Through letterbox)
If you think I'm the sort of person who'd never kick down a door, you haven't been paying attention.

IAN goers forward, opens the door then steps quickly back into the dark hall. PATSY and SEAN are there.

IAN
(Sharply)
Whatever you do, don't turn on that top light!

PATSY
Jesus, you gays and your lighting...

They come into the hall.

SEAN
Ian, why didn't you answer the phone?

IAN backs away. He walks into the living room, also in darkness. PATSY and SEAN exchange a glance. They come to the doorway of the living room

IAN
(Quietly)
I don't want anyone to see me.

A little silence.

SEAN
(Gently)
Shall I make us all a cup of tea?

PATSY
Good idea... Make mine with Vodka and some ice, darling.

SEAN goes. PATSY steps into the room.

PATSY (CONT'D)
I'm going to put a light on now darling. Just a little side lamp. Just so I don't go arse over tit on the sheepskin...

She leans over and switches on a side lamp. IAN flinches. PATSY sees now - as do we - his face is marked with KS. A moment. He looks at her vulnerable, scared.

IAN
How bad is it?

PATSY
Darling -

IAN
It's my face, P. My face.

She covers her true feelings. Walks towards him.

PATSY
You're beautiful, darling. You're beautiful.

She takes him in her arms.

CUT TO:

52 **INT. LIVING ROOM. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 52

SEAN, IAN and PATSY sitting. SEAN has tea, PATSY has a Vodka on the rocks.

SEAN
We need to find you a new doctor.

IAN
What's the point? They can't do anything -

SEAN
That isn't true -

IAN
I'm getting these stomach cramps all the time now. Diarrhea, headaches...

PATSY
People come back from this. Georgie's been sick -

IAN
Has he?

SEAN
(Firmly)
Bronchitis. But he's much better now.

He and PATSY exchange a glance.

PATSY
Would it cheer you up to hear a bit of gossip, darling?

SEAN
I don't think -

IAN
Please. Tell me.

PATSY
Daniel Day Lewis has walked out of Hamlet.

IAN
I know.

PATSY
Half way through the ghost scene - Thought he was talking to his dead father.

SEAN
He's exhausted -

PATSY
Dresser pulling his boots off - handing them to the understudy -

SEAN gives PATSY. a warning look. She looks back defiant.

PATSY (CONT'D)
And here's something that might cheer you up.

SEAN
Pats -

PATSY
Apparently Richard -

SEAN
Richard doesn't know how sick you are -

PATSY
Has someone in mind to replace him.

IAN
Who?

SEAN
I think we'll talk about this tomorrow.

PATSY
I think we'll talk about it now.

IAN
Who? Who does he have in mind?

PATSY looks at SEAN. SEAN looks daggers at her.

PATSY
You.

IAN stares in disbelief. SEAN is not happy.

CUT TO:

53 **EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. DAY.** 53

IAN arrives at the entrance to the heath and sees RICHARD EYRE across the road with his dog. RICHARD waves. IAN makes sure his sunglasses are secure and then breathes out.

CUT TO:

54 **EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH. DAY.** 54

RICHARD and IAN walking.

RICHARD
I feel guilty. This play, it's... fathers, mothers, sons, grief, suicide, sex, love, revenge... I, at least, had the distraction of running the building. Dan left because there was nothing else he could do. It certainly wasn't cowardice.

IAN
God, I know. I know that.

RICHARD
At the moment it's on tour with an excellent understudy, but of course we're programmed to go back into the National... *

RICHARD stops. *

RICHARD (CONT'D)
And of course, you already know the * Olivier - You know its demands, * So... * (He smiles) * No better man. *

IAN
I... Yeah. *

IAN looks away. A charged Silence. He sighs. *

IAN (CONT'D) *
Richard *

He looks back, pained. A decision. *

IAN (CONT'D)
Look... I don't want to lie to you.

Beat. *

IAN (CONT'D)
Actually, I do. I do want to lie. I want to lie to everyone. Including myself. But the truth is... I have HIV. Or to be entirely factual, I now have AIDS.

A little silence. Some CHILDREN run past.

RICHARD
I'm... I don't know what to say. I'm so sorry.

IAN
I'm telling you, because... Because you deserve to know...

RICHARD
Ian -

IAN
This - here - on my face, this'll clear up. It's... I think when there's an infection at this stage, it can get a little out of hand, but there are drugs...

RICHARD
I had no idea. Why didn't you say? I would never have asked you up here.

IAN
I know. I know you wouldn't. That's why I had to do it this way. And I'm sorry... But I promise - If you let me do this - I will not let you down.

RICHARD
Ian -

IAN
I swear.

RICHARD
I'm just... I'm taking it all in.

IAN allows RICHARD a moment. Not much of one though -

IAN
We'll need a story.

RICHARD
A story?

IAN
For everyone else. This is our secret, Richard. I don’t want anyone else to know. That’s very important.

RICHARD
Ian, I have a responsibility here -

IAN
To the company -

RICHARD
To you. Yes, to the company, but - to you. I can't let you risk your health - I'm sorry.

IAN
You're not letting me do anything. I choose to do it. I want to do it.

Silence. They stare at each other. RICHARD shakes his head. *

RICHARD
Should I be engaging my heart here? Or my brain?

IAN
Your heart.

He puts his hand on RICHARD'S gives it a little squeeze.

IAN (CONT'D)
Your brain's never been that impressive, love - let's face it.

RICHARD starts to laugh.

CUT TO:

55 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 55

A Doctor in a white coat, marches through the corridors. She is MARGARET JOHNSON. Brisk, business like, patrician. She also looks a little tired.

We follow her progress until she reaches IAN sitting in a plastic bucket chair. He's wearing his sunglasses, his knee agitatedly twitching up and down. She stops.

MARGARET
Sorry to keep you. We're a pretty new set up here - few staff and fewer resources. Just a lot of 'good will' and the odd jumble sale. Makes for rather a Heath Robinson unit. I'm Margaret Johnson.

IAN
Ian Charleson.

She gestures for him to come. IAN follows, unsure what he's let himself in for...

CUT TO:

56 **INT. CORRIDOR. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 56

IAN and MARGARET walking.

MARGARET
(Gestures around)
This used to be the Doctor's bar.

IAN
What?

MARGARET
A hostelry. For the surgeons. Made me rather unpopular, taking it over. But I wasn't going to have my patients tucked away in a Nissen hut in the corner of the car-park.

They've reached a door. She opens it, gestures for him to go through.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Shall we - ?

IAN
Where is it now? The Doctor's bar?

MARGARET
In a Nissen hut in the corner of the car-park.

IAN goes through, amused.

CUT TO:

57 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 57

IAN is staring out of the window. Winter trees. MARGARET is examining his naked back - We see that the black marks have spread. She follows the line up to his shoulder. We hear his voice -

IAN (V.O.)
I need to get well. Fast. It's very important -

CUT TO:

58 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 58

IAN is dressing. MARGARET is sat at her desk.

MARGARET
You know when the first lesion appeared?

IAN
Just over two weeks ago.

MARGARET
You may not be aware that it's spread.

IAN
Will they go? On my face I mean - I don't care about the others -

MARGARET
You don't care - ?

IAN
I have to play Hamlet.

MARGARET
Well, I've heard some pretty extraordinary things in this room -

IAN
Can you make me well enough to do it?

MARGARET
Can I...?

IAN
Hold it back. Just for a while. Just for me to play this part.

MARGARET
I might - possibly - be able to bring this infection down -

IAN
Good -

MARGARET
Providing we can get you to respond to antibiotics -

IAN
That's all I need.

MARGARET
But the K.S is another matter all together.

IAN
I'm dying.

A little silence.

IAN (CONT'D)
That's a question.

MARGARET
Yes. possibly.

IAN
But I have to play Hamlet.

MARGARET
Why don't we concentrate on getting your strength up -

IAN
I don't have time.

MARGARET
I really think the first priority -

IAN
I have to do it now. I have to. Now is the opportunity. Now or...
(Beat)
I have to.

She sits back.

MARGARET
My job is to try and prolong life. You're in a pretty bad way - but I've seen worse. There is a chance I could increase the time you have. Possibly for a year. More, even.

IAN
But not if I play Hamlet.

MARGARET
If you exert yourself. If you place yourself under undue pressure...
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I may not be an expert, Mr Charleson - but no one, unless I'm very much mistaken, has ever walked out of Hamlet and said 'Gosh, that was a short evening of light entertainment'

He nods. Considers...

IAN
You've been doing this a long time.

MARGARET
Pretty much since the beginning.

IAN
And you've seen men like me before.

MARGARET
Hundreds.

IAN
And some of them get better. For a while, I mean.

MARGARET
Yes. Remission is possible. But I will need you to focus on recovery. Nutrition, rest, medication... And you will need to attend clinic every day. We open at eight.

IAN
And when do you close?

She looks at him.

MARGARET
Close?

IAN
When do you shut the doors?

MARGARET
This isn't the Hard Rock Cafe.

IAN
I have rehearsals.

MARGARET
Mr Charleson -

IAN
I'll come straight after. Call me Ian.

He goes to the door. Smiles. Leaves. MARGARET stares.

CUT TO:

59 **EXT. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 59

We see the outside of the building - a huge concrete, brutalist edifice on the banks of the Thames... It towers above us like a castle. Like Elsinore itself.

CUT TO:

60 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE STAGE DOOR. DAY.** 60

IAN is walking in. He takes a moment, then pushes through the glass doors to see LINDA, the stage door keeper. She looks up.

LINDA
Here she is - take-over Tina.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Good morning, Linda. I'm here for a costume fitting.

LINDA (CONT'D)
What's up with your face?

IAN
Was it this level of silky diplomacy that first landed you the job of stage door keeper at the National Theatre of Great Britain and Northern Ireland?

LINDA
I have other qualities.

IAN removes his sunglasses. LINDA looks sympathetic.

IAN
Sinus infection.

LINDA reaches below her to open the automatic door.

LINDA
'To breathe or not to breathe...'

IAN stops before going through.

IAN
Just before I go up... Can I ask you a favour?

CUT TO:

61 **INT. OLIVIER AUDITORIUM. DAY.** 61

IAN walks out onto the stage. LINDA following behind. She has a set of keys in her hand. IAN looks at the space and breathes out. A cleaner is vacuuming the auditorium.

LINDA
You've played this one before.

IAN
But not like this. Not in Hamlet.

It's a huge greek style auditorium with seating for over a thousand. Terrifying.

IAN (CONT'D)
Eleven hundred seats. Two thousand two-hundred eyeballs staring at you.

LINDA
That's assuming it's full.

He steps forward a little. Takes it in.

IAN
Four thousand one hundred and sixty-seven lines...

LINDA
How long are you gonna take?

IAN stares a little longer, deep in thought - then snaps out of it.

IAN
Sorry, I'm... I'm coming.

LINDA
I don't mean now. I mean the play. See if you can bring it in under three hours, can you? I don't like the night-bus and I've got an anxious cat.

She walks away. IAN smirks, looks back at the space.

CUT TO:

62 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE WARDROBE DEPARTMENT. OVAL. DAY.** 62

IAN - still in his shades - walks through the rows and rows of costumes - high up to the vaulted roof. Like a warehouse.

He's walking with RALPH his dresser.

RALPH
I thought we'd lost you to film.

IAN
Film is for directors, Ralph. And editors. I'm sick of being chopped up and presented to the audience. I want to be in front of them - body and soul.

RALPH
Okay... I'll remind you of that after your first school's matinee.

RALPH parts a curtain cubicle.

CUT TO:

63 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE WARDROBE DEPARTMENT. DAY.** 63

IAN is with the costume designer - YVONNE.

YVONNE
I'll miss him. I'm sorry. I mean, I know you'll be a wonderful Hamlet, but he was just so... All the wardrobe girls were in love with him. Still... Not everyone's cut out for theatre, are they?

RALPH returns holding a coat hanger with a costume on it.

YVONNE (CONT'D)
Are you keeping your sunglasses on?

IAN
I've got a headache.

YVONNE 'smiles' IAN tentatively removes the glasses. RALPH looks at him.

YVONNE
We had all your measurements from Guys and Dolls so it's been adjusted. It should fit you perfectly.

RALPH hands IAN the hanger. He starts to help IAN undress.

IAN
It's alright, thanks, Ralph. I'll do it.

RALPH nods. Leaves, pulling back the curtain.

CUT TO:

64 **INT. CHANGING BOOTH. NATIONAL THEATRE COSTUME DEPT. DAY.** 64

IAN is buttoning up the costume. He's looking - as best he can - in the mirror, at the spreading Kaposi's Sarcoma. It's definitely worse.

He turns and faces himself in the mirror - the Hamlet costume hanging off him. The dark glasses. He looks ridiculous.

YVONNE shouts '*Knock-knock*' and pulls back the curtain. She regards the baggy suit, dismayed.

YVONNE
Oh... Well. You've obviously lost weight.... Ralph will you pin it? We're going to have to take it in. Again.

She leaves. RALPH takes the pins and moves IAN around to face the mirror. He starts pinning - and when he speaks he does so very gently.

RALPH
Do you have a good doctor?

IAN catches his eye in the mirror.

RALPH (CONT'D)
They won't be able to tell. Just family.

RALPH pops a pin in his mouth as he works his way round the tunic.

IAN
I'm seeing someone Sean recommended. A woman.

RALPH
Margaret Johnson?

IAN
You know her?

RALPH
She’s very good. She can... People get years when they thought they only had months.

They look at each other through the mirror. A moment of solidarity. RALPH presses a finger to his lips.

RALPH (CONT’D)
Vow of silence, dear.

IAN
Do you think I’m mad doing this?

RALPH
I think you should go out and do whatever the fuck you want.

RALPH continues to pin.

CUT TO:

65 **INT. JACK BARCLAY'S CAR SHOWROOM. LONDON. DAY.** 65

IAN walking past the cars. Stroking the odd bonnet...The SHAHID, SHAHID is showing him around.

SHAHID
The Porsche, of course, is a popular choice -

IAN
Particularly if you’re a wanker.

SHAHID
And then, in the more traditional vein...

IAN suddenly brightens...

IAN
What’s that -?

SHAHID
What?

IAN
That.

We follow where he's pointing. A beautiful, vintage motorbike propped up against the office.

SHAHID
That shouldn't...
(Shouted to office)
What is this still doing in here?

IAN goes up to it and gives it a stroke.

IAN
Looks like it'd give you a good, clean death.

SHAHID
It's a Dirt Bike. One of the mechanics is... it shouldn't be in the showroom at all. I'm terribly sorry.

IAN is up close and we see the badge... A pair of wings and a dagger. And the name - HONDA ELSINORE. IAN laughs a little at the amazing coincidence.

IAN
(To himself)
Well, fuck me.

SHAHID
Curious name...

IAN
It's the castle.

SHAHID
Sorry - ?

IAN
Elsinore. It's the castle where Hamlet lives.

SHAHID
Well. It's absolutely not for sale. Besides. I feel we can do a little better, don't you?

He looks at IAN with a confident smile.

CUT TO:

66 **EXT. LONDON. DAY.** 66

IAN racing wildly through the streets of London. He screams out in joy and excitement.

CUT TO:

67 **EXT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 67

IAN screeches to a halt, alarming a small group of NURSES. He takes off his helmet, shakes his hair, and throws his head back to breathe in the air - deeply and joyfully...

CUT TO:

68 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. LONDON. DAY.** 68

IAN walking toward GEORGIE, sitting in the corridor. GEORGIE looks very sick, red around the eyes, pale and coughing. In the distance we can see PATIENTS in surgical gowns, moving about.

GEORGIE
You're looking better.

IAN
Am I?

GEORGIE
You absolute shit. Go and sit somewhere else.

IAN hits him, sits.

IAN
As long as we're still out patients, that's the thing.

GEORGIE
I used to look at middle aged Queens and think... 'Please never let me get that old.' Now it's -

IAN
'Please let me make it to Friday lunchtime.'

GEORGIE coughs some more...

IAN (CONT'D)
Do you like her?

GEORGIE
Who?

IAN
Doctor Mengele.

GEORGIE
If it's her versus AIDS, my money's on her.
(Indicates across the room)
Is that raven-haired youth giving you the old come hither, Mum?

He looks over, a YOUNG PATIENT in a robe (Who we will come to know as NICHOLAS) does seem to be staring.

IAN
Jesus, Mum.

He looks away. IAN shakes his head.

IAN (CONT'D)
They'll even cruise you on an AIDS ward...

GEORGIE laughs, the door opens... A NURSE appears -

NURSE
Ian - ?

IAN gets up. She hands him an envelope - his notes and file.

CUT TO:

69 **INT. MARGARET JOHNSON'S OFFICE. ROYAL FREE.** 69

IAN sits opposite MARGARET.

MARGARET
If you're going to play this part, there's to be no more talk of death.

IAN
That might be tricky.

MARGARET
Why?

IAN
It's one of the central themes of the play.

MARGARET
I don't need educating on the central themes of Hamlet, thank you. I'm talking about here. I want a positive mental attitude. A proper belief in recovery.

IAN
Does this mean you're going to help?

MARGARET
In as much as I can.

IAN
You don't seem very happy about it.

A beat. She looks at him. She's terse, angry, even.

MARGARET
The people who come here want to live, Ian. They want it so badly they will do anything to gain themselves a little time. You, on the other hand, don't seem to care about living. You only want to play this part. Very well. That's your prerogative. So - yes, I will help you - but, no, I am not very happy about it.

She holds out her hand to take his notes from him. She opens the envelope. Close on IAN'S face.

CUT TO:

70 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 70

IAN walks down the corridor. NICHOLAS who was staring is still doing so.

As IAN steps closer, NICHOLAS sings a snatch of the Vangelis theme from Chariots of Fire -

NICHOLAS
Dad-dah dah dah-daaah dah...

IAN slightly painfully smiles in acknowledgement.

IAN
Yep. That was me.

NICHOLAS smiles back. He's beautiful and painfully young. IAN stands for a second, slightly staggered at his youth and evident sickness. After a moment, NICHOLAS gives a little rueful shrug.

NICHOLAS
There's a lot of actors here... *
Dancers... Half the shows in the *
West End must be empty... *

IAN looks over at the DANCERS NICHOLAS has gestured to. *

IAN *
We're a work-shy bunch of bastards. *

NICHOLAS laughs. A moment. IAN smiles, moves away. *

NICHOLAS *
I guess I'll see you around. *

IAN stops, smiles. He doesn't particularly want to be * welcomed into this community, but feels slightly ashamed of * that. He leaves as quickly as he can without being unkind. *

CUT TO:

71A **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 71A *

IAN turns a corner. DEREK JARMAN is there. DEREK looks as * surprised as he does. A moment, as they wordlessly * acknowledge one another... DEREK registers what IAN'S * presence must mean. *

JARMAN *
I had no idea... *

IAN *
I didn't want to spread it around *
town - if you'll forgive the rather *
tasteless pun. *

A moment, JARMAN nods, absorbing the news. *

71 **EXT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 71

JARMAN and IAN sitting are standing outside where the HOSPITAL PORTERS are burning bed linen in protective suits.

JARMAN
You know what they're doing?

He gestures at the PORTERS. IAN looks.

JARMAN (CONT'D)
When one of us dies they burn the linen. Standard procedure. With everyone else it's just washed, but with us...

They watch the process for a moment.

IAN
I thought you were at Barts.

JARMAN
I am. I was visiting...
You know what I'm going to say, don't you?

IAN returns his look. He doesn't, no.

JARMAN (CONT'D)
You must go public.

IAN
Go - ?

JARMAN
You must tell everyone you have AIDS. I know, it’s hard, but - You have a responsibility -

IAN
To what?

JARMAN
The dead. The dying. I went public immediately -

IAN
That was your decision.

JARMAN
We cannot survive in a culture of lies -

IAN
Jesus, you have no problem making pronouncements, do you?

JARMAN
This is a war -

IAN
And it’s very clear who’s in charge.

Silence. JARMAN shakes his head.

JARMAN
All this goes back to the very beginning.

IAN
Does it indeed?

JARMAN
I won’t point out that I gave you your first film role -

IAN
Sounds like you just did

JARMAN
But we were friends, Ian - Friends.

IAN
Jesus. How many times do we have to go over this?

JARMAN
You were advised -

IAN
I was instructed -

JARMAN
- to remove all reference to me from your CV. You played one queer part - one honest part -

IAN
You think that’s all there is to me - ?

JARMAN
And then you were lured into Hollywood. Wipe the slate clean. No more sodomy -

IAN
Bullshit.

JARMAN
A clean limbed hetero-boy, erasing his past -

IAN
Fuck you.

IAN starts to walk, JARMAN follows.

JARMAN
Erasing his past - just in case there was the slightest wobble on the road to Hollywood - To the Royal Command performance. But Hollywood never came calling, did it? Because, face it, dear. You’re no Matt Dillon.

IAN
Well, you’re no Visconti, so we’re fucking even.

JARMAN
My films suffered.

IAN
(Angry, incredulous)
From me?

JARMAN
I was pigeon holed after that. I was thought of as a ‘Gay Director’ ‘A maker of Gay films.’

IAN
You don’t think showing an erect cock six times a frame might have had something to do with that?

Silence.

IAN (CONT’D)
Jesus Christ... It’s the background, isn’t it? Fuck me. I wish I had a little of your public school confidence...

JARMAN
My background has nothing to do with it.

IAN
No, well, that might be difficult to see when you’re right in the middle of it.

Silence. They’re both exhausted.

JARMAN
You could make a difference, Ian.

IAN
There’s more than one way to be queer - just like there’s more than way to be straight. But my job is to convince people I’m a ... fisherman, or a drag queen or the Prince of fucking Denmark. If people see me and not the character then I fail. I fail, Derek. And that may seem like cowardice or hiding away, or whatever the fuck you want to call it - But everything - *everything* about me - is disintegrating - and my talent is the only thing I have left... I am going to play this part - and I am going to be judged on my performance. Nothing else. I don’t want pity. I don’t want them to say ‘Oh, he has AIDS, but didn’t he do a great job?’ I won’t be a victim -

JARMAN
You are a victim. They make us victims.

IAN
Well, I'm going to act like I'm not.

He starts to walk away. He turns.

IAN (CONT'D)
Cos I'm a fucking actor.

They stare at one another before IAN turns and walks away.

72 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 72

IAN is rushing out of the house. He sees a flashing light on his answer-machine. He presses the button. It's PATSY'S voice.

PATSY'S VOICE (O.S.)
(On machine)
Ian, I know you have some peculiar 'Lone Wolf' obsession, but please return my calls - I want to help -

IAN switches off the machine and leaves, hurriedly...

CUT TO:

:

73 **EXT. SOUTHWARK STREET - DAY.** 73

IAN and RICHARD walking down the street

RICHARD
We've said sinus infection -

IAN
Good. Okay.

RICHARD
You already know many of them - Sylvia, Paul, Guy... Should be a bit less daunting with a few other newbies joining at the same time...

IAN is fiddling with his glasses.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
If you need a moment...

IAN
No, I'm... I'm fine.

RICHARD nods. They've reached the doors of the rehearsal building HAMLET rehearsals written on the plate.

RICHARD
Just another first day.

He opens the door and they walk in.

CUT TO:

74 **INT. REHEARSAL ROOM ONE. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 74

Actors milling about. Coffee, chat. Many of them notice IAN coming in and crowd round him. Pats on the arm and 'hello darling' as he walks through.

MICHAEL BRYANT is standing next to SYLVIA SYMS. IAN comes over. He and SYLVIA kiss.

SYLVIA
I'm a martyr to my sinuses, darling... Never had a rash though...

IAN
Typical isn't it? Won't last long, apparently.

SYLVIA
Oh, I scarcely even noticed it. Did you, Michael?

MICHAEL BRYANT
Barely registered. But then, facial disfigurement is nothing to me. I served in the Merchant Navy.

A flash of defensive self-consciousness from IAN -

IAN
It's not... I wouldn't exactly call it disfigurement -

MICHAEL BRYANT
No, I....

IAN
It’s only temporary.

MICHAEL BRYANT
Yes. Absolutely.

SYLVIA
Jolly bad luck, that’s all.

He goes away to greet someone else.

CUT TO:

75 **INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY.** 75

Everyone is standing in a circle. RICHARD is speaking.

RICHARD
There isn’t an actor alive - in any country in the world - who doesn’t have some understanding of this part. This play. It is, of course, an Everest - but it goes beyond physical endurance. It’s a tragedy, sure - A revenge play... But in it, Shakespeare gives us every aspect of the human condition... and in the character of Hamlet, presents us with a person, ill suited to his enormous task - who must nevertheless undertake it in a court based on lies and secrets and subterfuge... It’s about being alive and becoming dead...

CUT TO:

76 **INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY.** 76

The ACTORS are crowded around the model of the set. We see the castle, the turrets, a little cut out figure of HAMLET. We hear IAN’S voice over -

IAN (V.O.)
I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in...

CUT TO:

77 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 77

IAN is on a drip. He looks pretty exhausted. A NURSE (NURSE LEE)is next to him, she's holding a copy of the play. IAN is practising his lines with her... Beside him a Cassette Player is softly playing some Bach....

IAN
What should such fellows as I do,
crawling between earth and heaven?
We are... Don't tell me...
(Silence)
Okay, tell me -

NURSE LEE
Arrant -

IAN
Arrant knaves all; believe none of
us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.
Where's your father?

NURSE LEE
(As OPHELIA)
At home, my lord.

CUT TO:

78 **INT. CORRIDOR. ROYAL FREE. DAY.** 78

MARGARET is passing the cubicle and stops when she hears classical music playing, and then IAN and the NURSE'S conversation behind the curtain.

IAN (O.S.)
Let the doors be shut upon him,
that he may play the fool nowhere
but in's own house. Farewell.

NURSE LEE (O.S.)
O help him, you sweet heavens!

MARGARET pulls the curtain back to find IAN and the NURSE. The NURSE immediately busies herself.

MARGARET
What on earth is going on in here?

NURSE LEE
Sorry, Doctor, I was just -

MARGARET
‘Get thee to a nunnery...’

IAN
Very good Dr Johnson. Top of the class.

MARGARET
Well, get thee to station 13 please, nurse. Bloods and urine.

NURSE LEE
(Rushing out)
Yes, Dr Johnson.

She’s gone. MARGARET glances at the cassette player,

IAN
I prefer my terminal illnesses with a touch of JS Bach.

MARGARET
For once I approve.

IAN
You do?

MARGARET
Music is well known for it’s therapeutic effect on patients. In fact we keep a stock of cassettes in the common room.

IAN
You see? The healing power of art!

MARGARET
Yes, listening to it. Not performing it live at the Royal Albert Hall.

She picks up IAN’S notes.

IAN
If I get better, will you come and see my play?

MARGARET
My husband’s the theatre lover. I prefer the movies.

IAN
Make an exception.

MARGARET
You won't get better if you persist with -

IAN
Yes, but - if I do.

She examines IAN'S face. Shines a light into his eyes.

IAN (CONT'D)
I bet you by the end of rehearsals I'll be in the best shape of my life.

MARGARET
Any more blood?

IAN
No.

MARGARET
Even when you're coughing?

IAN
No. Come on. If I win you have to come and see the play. And if I lose...

MARGARET
What about urine?

IAN
I'm fine with this coffee, thanks.

MARGARET
Is there any cloudiness in your urine?

IAN
None. Clear as a bell.

She nods. IAN smiles at her.

IAN (CONT'D)
Come on, Doctor. I don't make bets unless I know I'm going to win.

MARGARET opens the curtains to leave.

MARGARET
Neither do I.

She goes. IAN drops the bonhomie. He closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

79 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 79

IAN faces himself in the mirror. He doesn't look great. He contemplates throwing up. There's a ring on the buzzer. He frowns, looks over his shoulder toward the front door...

CUT TO:

80 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 80

IAN opening the front door. It's PATSY laden with bags of shopping.

IAN
What the - ?

PATSY
Shut up. I'm making soup.

She barges past.

CUT TO:

81 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 81

PATSY is unpacking shopping bags in IAN'S kitchen.

IAN
I have to go to rehearsals.

PATSY
Just leave me a key. I'll clean as I go.

IAN
Patsy -

PATSY
Where would I find a Bay leaf?

IAN
I go straight from rehearsals to clinic. Then I come home and crash.

PATSY
And before you crash there's soup.

She carries on. Opening cupboards, etc. IAN glances at the front door.

IAN
I need to go. I can't... I'm going to be late.

PATSY suddenly and unexpectedly becomes very passionate and emotional...

PATSY
Your friends are doing this with you, Ian. Okay? This time you're not bottling it all up and keeping it to yourself. Christ Jesus - Do you think it's easy for everyone else to just carry on? We may not be sick, but we are living through this - Helpless, terrified... Everywhere I turn there are wonderful, beautiful young men getting sick and dying. My hairdresser died. He was a terrible hairdresser but he was funny and sweet and I loved him -

IAN
Your hair looks good.

PATSY
I went to someone else! I can't just stand around watching, Ian. I have to do something - however small, however meaningless. I have to do something - and today, this morning - the thing I have to do is to come into your kitchen and make a batch of Mulligatawny fucking Soup!

She starts taking out pans. Angrily. IAN watches, helpless for a moment.

IAN
Don't burn my Le Crueset.

CUT TO:

82 **INT. REHEARSAL ROOM. DAY.** 82

IAN is seated at the side of the room with his coffee in his hands, watching MICHAEL BRYANT playing POLONIUS..

MICHAEL BRYANT
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel -

IAN is thinking about this as he watches. IAN smiles, slightly. From across the room we can see that SYLVIA is watching him.

CUT TO:

83 **EXT. LONDON STREET. DAY.** 83

IAN is speeding along on the Elsinore. We still hear MICHAEL BRYANT'S voice...

MICHAEL BRYANT (V.O.)
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

IAN pulls the bike up outside the ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

CUT TO:

84 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 84

IAN walking down the corridor. NICHOLAS in a hospital gown, pulling a drip greets him.

NICHOLAS
Your friend's in.

IAN
Georgie?

NICHOLAS
Yeah, but...

NICHOLAS looks sympathetic. He gestures with a nod at the IN PATIENT ward.

CUT TO:

85 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 85

IAN walks in to see GEORGIE in bed. He has an oxygen mask on. IAN disguises his fear.

IAN
Well, this is attention seeking.

GEORGIE takes the mask off.

GEORGIE
Just a set back.

IAN
Of course, it is.

GEORGIE
She’s very confident I’ll shake it off.

IAN
You will if she says so. This virus is terrified of her.

He sits on the bed, holds GEORGIE’S hand... Silence. He’s breathing very hard.

GEORGIE
How’s Hamlet?

IAN
He’s a bastard. Never lets you off the hook for a minute.

GEORGIE
I’ve had exes like that.

Silence.

GEORGIE (CONT’D)
Did we love each other?

IAN
What?

GEORGIE
I loved you.

IAN
You loved everyone. Literally.

GEORGIE
Seriously, Ian. Was it real?

IAN
Gay men go to bed with each other. And then they become friends. It’s a kind of gift.

A little moment.

IAN (CONT'D)
Yes. It was real.

GEORGIE
What's going to happen?

GEORGIE shakes his head. Closes his eyes.

IAN
I'll tell you. We're going to go to a Greek Island... There'll be crystal blue water and those little white buildings, and the sun - *the sun* - over all our bodies. Light. Air. And we'll swim in the sea and get uproariously drunk at lunchtime...

GEORGIE
(Weakly)
Yes, please...

IAN
We're going to live. And work. And go out dancing every night. You get well, that's all.

IAN watches as he drifts to sleep. A long silence, then -

IAN (CONT'D)
Get well.

CUT TO:

86 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 86

IAN walks through the door, exhausted. Through the open door, SEAN and PATSY are setting up the table. IAN looks as though he'd rather be alone, but the others can't see his face. PATSY calls out -

PATSY
Darling? There's food!

ALICE comes into the hall. IAN immediately alters his expression, kisses her on the cheek. ALICE gestures behind for IAN to look as he removes his coat.

ALICE
(Whispered)
He's here.

IAN peers into the open door and sees ALICE'S new boyfriend. * He's very pretty. *

IAN
Never mind Nick Kamen, he looks like an Angel...

ALICE beams. *

ALICE
His name's Malcolm.

IAN
Well, we can't have everything.

She gives him a playful punch. They go in together, arms linked.

CUT TO:

87 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. LATER EVENING.** 87

IAN is lying on the sofa, SEAN is clearing up the dinner.

IAN
Georgie is sick.

SEAN stops. Looks over.

SEAN
He's strong. And not just physically. Georgie is... Georgie will be fine.

IAN
And now Alice has a boyfriend... Wee Alice... 'Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me...'

SEAN
What's that supposed to mean?

IAN
Things are happening. Nice things... And I won't live to see them.

SEAN
You don't know that. ANy more than I do.

SEAN returns to his task. A little silence.

IAN
I'm scared Sean... I'm scared I'll never have sex again. Never be naked with another man... I'm scared of all the things I'll never do.

SEAN
You can see me naked if it's that important to you.

IAN laughs a little, not looking up, not taking it seriously. *

IAN
You're very generous. *

SEAN stands for a second, then returns to the sink. *

CUT TO:

88 **CUT TO: INT. REHEARSAL ROOM. DAY.** 88

IAN rehearsing. He's sweating - and clearly very hot, but he's enjoying himself. He's holding the skull...

IAN
(As HAMLET)
I knew him, Horatio—a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?

CUT TO

89 **EXT. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 89

IAN is mounting the Elsinore. SYLVIA SYMS is leaving stage door.

SYLVIA
I don't like you getting on that thing.

IAN
'All that lives must die, Sylvia - passing through nature to eternity!'

SYLVIA
It's passing through the Hammersmith Flyover I'm worried about.

IAN
I promise to go carefully.

IAN is about to kick-start, but -

SYLVIA
When I was a child...

IAN may not have wanted a speech but he can't move now.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
They evacuated us to Kent. It was supposed to keep us away from the war but I was conscious that... in almost every house there was a young man missing. Just a photograph - you know?
(MORE)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
On the mantelpiece... Perhaps that's why I'm so wary. I've already lived in a world without young men.

Silence.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
It was a strange time.

IAN nods. He can't do this now.

IAN
But at least you had Vera Lynn.

SYLVIA can see she's not going to get what she's angling for.

SYLVIA
We did. We had Vera Lynn.

IAN waves as he rides away... Stay on SYLVIA'S face.

CUT TO:

90 **EXT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 90

IAN arrives. As he gets off the bike, SEAN appears at the front door.

SEAN
I've done something rash.

IAN takes off his helmet...

CUT TO:

91 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. EVENING.** 91

IAN is sitting in the bedroom with SEAN. SEAN is putting foundation on his face.

IAN
Jesus, Mum. Go easy on the maquillage.

SEAN
Just a little touch up.

IAN
Funny. That's what I'll be saying to him.

He goes into his bag and produces a bottle. He sprays it.

IAN (CONT'D)
Now what are you doing?

SEAN
Maximizing your allure.

IAN
I don't want to smell like my Auntie Barbara. Jesus -

The doorbell goes. They freeze.

IAN (CONT'D)
I can't. I've changed my mind.

SEAN
Do you want me to have him instead?

IAN
No. Bring Him in.

SEAN leaves. IAN arranges himself. He tries a few poses, then sits back in the same position on the bed. He appears very nervous. After a moment, SEAN comes in and gives him an excited little look. Thumbs up.

IAN (CONT'D)
(Whispered)
Fuck off.

SEAN goes. An ESCORT walks in. Very good looking. IAN looks very vulnerable. After a moment, the ESCORT smiles.

IAN (CONT'D)
Did he warn you?

ESCORT
About what?

IAN
My face.

ESCORT
I think it's a very nice face.

He sits next to IAN. IAN takes the ESCORT'S perfectly unblemished face into his hands.

IAN
There are lots of things we can't do.

ESCORT
Let’s focus on the things we can.

CUT TO:

92 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. EVENING.** 92

IAN and the ESCORT are making out - very sensual and sexy.

CUT TO:

93 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE STAGE DOOR. DAY.** 93

IAN arrives at stage door. LINDA reaches behind her.

LINDA
And so it begins.

IAN
Try not to make it sound like a prison sentence, Linda.

LINDA
Dressing room one. You’ve finally made it.

She produces what she was reaching for - a dressing room key.

LINDA (CONT’D)
I don’t know if it’s been cleared yet. Just sweep it all to one side. We’ll send up a roll of bin bags later.

IAN takes the key.

IAN
The glamour.

LINDA
You’re not in Hollywood now, chicken.

IAN starts through the doors into the building.

CUT TO:

94 **INT. DRESSING ROOM. NATIONAL THEATRE. LONDON. MORNING.** 94

IAN enters the dressing room that was occupied by his predecessor. There are dead flowers everywhere - cards too.

There's a telegram which IAN pulls off the mirror - 'It's a fucking mountain. Good luck. Alan Bates. X'

Most of the cards bear an image of Olivier playing Hamlet. One or two of them feature Shakespeare. There's also a plastic novelty skull on the dressing table.

IAN lifts it. On the back someone has scribbled on it in felt tip - 'This what you'll look by the end of it.'

IAN stands for a second, contemplating what he's about to do.

He drifts over to the window, with the skull still in his hands. Looks out. We see exactly what he described - a prison courtyard with windows looking in from all four sides.

CUT TO

95 **INT. OLIVIER STAGE. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 95

IAN on stage, in full costume, with lights, set etc - and doing the scene - seemingly for real... The ACTORS playing BERNARDO and MARCELLUS are there.

IAN
(As HAMLET)
O all you host of heaven! O Earth!
What else? And shall I couple hell?
O fie! Hold, hold, my heart, And
you, my sinews, grow not instant
old, But bear me stiffly up.
Remember thee? Ay, thou poor ghost,
whiles memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember
thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory -

A voice from the darkness shouts -

RICHARD (O.S.)
Okay thank you. Can we take the rest of that as read, Ian?

IAN
(Shielding his eyes)
With pleasure.

RICHARD
Let's go to the next scene. Quick as we can. You alright, Ian?

IAN
(Shielding his eyes)
Yep. Fine.

IAN walks off stage, and we see that this was a dress rehearsal. IAN clearly isn't fine, also. He's exhausted.

A little beat. IAN picks a towel off the prop table and wipes his brow.

He stands for a few moments, then a wave of something - nausea, exhaustion - overwhelms him. He rushes to make it into the stairwell.

96 **INT.NATIONAL THEATRE - STAIRWELL** 96

He has to lean against the wall.

He fights furiously, blowing out, trying to steady himself - but he can't. He slides down the wall, fighting for breath.

After a moment he steadies himself - looking around to check the attack wasn't witnessed. He's safe. He breathes deeply and summons the courage to walk on.

CUT TO:

97 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 97

IAN has walked in the door. He seems very tired - sick, even. He looks on the table. There is a prepared meal with a plate over it and a note from PATSY.

IAN lifts the plate and looks at the food, then replaces the plate. The phone rings. He thinks about ignoring it, then goes and gets it.

IAN
(Into phone)
Hello?

SEAN (O.S.)
(On phone)
Darling, you were so late tonight -

IAN
(Into phone)
We're tech-ing.

SEAN (O.S.)
(On phone)
Of course... Look shall I come over now? I don't mind...

IAN
(Into phone)
No, I'm going straight to bed. What is it, Sean?

Silence.

IAN (CONT'D)
(Into phone)
Sean - ?

SEAN (O.S.)
(On phone)
I don't want to say it like this...

IAN
(Into phone)
Say what? Just tell me.

SEAN (O.S.)
(On phone)
Georgie's dead.

Silence.

SEAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(On phone)
I'm sorry. He's dead. He died this afternoon.

IAN stands still. Very long silence.

CUT TO:

98 **INT. BEDROOM. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 98

IAN has woken in the night. He's suffering a very high fever and sweating. As he sits up he sees that the sheets are completely soaked.

CUT TO:

99 **INT. HALLWAY. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 99

IAN is crawling down the corridor. He's in immense pain. He keeps stopping and doubling up.

He looks up to see - GEORGIE standing at the end of the room in the dark, staring impassively.

SMASH CUT TO:

100 **INT. IAN'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.** 100

Suddenly he's in the bathroom. He leans over the bath. He can hear a voice - his own, maybe - doing Hamlet. He clings to the bath like a life raft.

IAN
Please... Please don't let me go mad... Please... Not my brain... Please...

He slides against the bath. Closes his eyes. We can hear music - the baby grand piano in the living room is being played. There's singing too. IAN flinches in fear...

CUT TO:

101 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 101

Suddenly we're in the living room in blazing sunshine. A very healthy looking young IAN is in the room playing the piano with his mother JEAN CHARLESON. She is warm, artistic, joyful. IAN'S Dad, JACK CHARLESON is watching. PATSY is here too and a young ALICE and GEORGIE. As IAN and JEAN play and sing, PATSY is dancing. JACK watches the scene, slightly on the outside, but smiling.

IAN AND JEAN
(Singing)
Bonnie Charlie's now awa'
Safely owre the friendly main;
Mony a heart will break in twa,
Should he ne'er come back again.
Will ye no come back again?
Will ye no come back again?

PATSY
Isn't he talented, darlings?

JEAN CHARLESON
Well, he didn't lick it off the stones, did you son?

IAN
I did not, mother darling. I did not.

CUT TO:

102 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 102

A little later, IAN is singing a solo now...

IAN
(Singing)
O my Love’s like a red, red rose,
That’s newly sprung in June;
O my Love’s like the melody
That’s sweetly play’d in tune.
As fair are thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I;
And I will love thee still, my Dear,
Till a’ the seas gang dry.

He stares at the floor. A little silence.

IAN (CONT’D)
And that’s your lot.

Warm applause from JEAN, ALICE and PATSY and GEORGIE. JACK is still guarded. He clocks the way GEORGIE is looking at him after the song. IAN gets up and goes into the kitchen.

CUT TO:

103 **INT. IAN’S FLAT. NIGHT.** 103

IAN is crawling toward the phone again. He sees JACK CHARLESON standing next to it, shrouded in the dark.

IAN
(Whispered)
Help me, please, Dad... Dad... Daddy, please...

JACK is expressionless. Another spasm of pain and IAN doubles up again. The wave passes but IAN doesn’t open his eyes. We hear the sounds of the summer party again...

CUT TO:

104 **INT. KITCHEN. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 104

IAN is washing up. PATSY, ALICE and JEAN can be seen messing around in the living room. JACK stands in the door for a moment.

JACK CHARLESON
He's a talented young chap.

IAN
Georgie?

JACK says nothing. Something hangs in the air. He breaks it.

JACK CHARLESON
Why don't you marry that girl?

IAN stops washing up for a second, then starts again.

JACK CHARLESON (CONT'D)
Seems like the sensible option to me. She clearly adores you, and it would give that child a respectable name.

IAN
I don't want to get married, Dad.

JACK CHARLESON
Pfft. You'll grow out of that nonsense.

IAN goes back to the sink. We hear (but he, of course, doesn't) his sick, struggling voice calling out -

IAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Mum...Dad! Please! Please!

CUT TO:

105 **IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 105

IAN is closer to the phone, now. He reaches for it.

CUT TO:

106 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 106

IAN is lying on a bed, hooked up to machines. NURSES move around the room. He doesn't open his eyes.

CUT TO:

107 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 107

RICHARD is in the director's office. He's putting his coat on to leave - the phone rings. He snatches it up.

RICHARD
(Into the phone)
Hello - Yes - ?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(On phone)
Hello, I'm calling about Ian Charleson....

RICHARD
Oh, I'm... Yes. I'm just on my way there now.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(On phone)
You are?

RICHARD
Yes. To the hospital. Is that - Are you one of the doctors?

A little silence.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(On phone)
Yes... Can you tell me - What's been going on in rehearsals?

RICHARD
I... Well, he's been fine - I mean, apart from the odd... I think he's been keeping a lot of it to himself.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(On phone)
So, you did know, then?

RICHARD
Of course, I knew.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(On phone)
And you can confirm it -

RICHARD
Confirm it?

WOMAN'S VOICE
(On phone)
T*hat he has AIDS?*

A moment. RICHARD pales, before slamming down the phone.

CUT TO:

108 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 108

RICHARD, SEAN and PATSY are outside. They talk in whispers.

RICHARD
I think I spoke to the press.

PATSY
What?

RICHARD
A woman. On the phone. She said she was a doctor.

PATSY
Jesus, Richard. It's a good job you're running the National Theatre, you wouldn't last five minutes in a real job.

RICHARD
Our publicity department is ringing every editor in Fleet Street. I think we can hold them off - Question is for how long...

MARGARET appears.

SEAN
How is he?

MARGARET
(To PATSY)
Are you Patsy? I'm afraid the others will have to wait.

SEAN and IAN move away. PATSY and MARGARET walk a few steps.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I can't start him on chemotherapy until he's clear of pneumonia. That may take some time since he has almost no resources with which to fight it -

PATSY
Can we see him?

MARGARET
Not yet.

PATSY
He was supposed to go on tonight. Obviously that's out of the question, but - He may be anxious about the rest of the run...

MARGARET
I hope this episode has brought him to his senses in that regard.

PATSY
I expect you're right. But if he asks... Will you please tell him that Richard says the job will stay open for him?

MARGARET looks unimpressed.

PATSY (CONT'D)
I think it'll help.

MARGARET
Help?

PATSY
With his peace of mind.

MARGARET
You don't think you've done enough damage with this ridiculous enterprise?

She walks away. PATSY takes a second then walks back to the others.

RICHARD
Well - ?

PATSY
She'd make a marvelous Lady Macbeth.

CUT TO:

109 **INT. ONCOLOGY DEPARTMENT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 109

Through the glass of the viewing window, we see IAN sitting, drip in arm.

CUT TO:

110 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 110

IAN is shuffling through the hospital pulling his IV drip alongside him.

CUT TO:

111 **INT. COMMON ROOM. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 111

IAN is sitting in the day room. He is very pale and very sick looking. NICHOLAS is in there with him, also very pale and thin - almost at death's door.

NICHOLAS
I was going to Drama School... *

IAN looks up. Smiles. *

IAN *
Yeah? *

NICHOLAS
That was all I ever wanted - to *
perform... Closest I'll get to the *
West End is hanging out with the *
dancers in the Day room. *

IAN
How old are you, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS
I'm twenty-one.

IAN
Never say that again. I *was* going *
to Drama School. *

Silence. IAN extends his hand. NICHOLAS takes it.

IAN (CONT'D)
You will perform. You will. *

They hold hands. Silence.

CUT TO:

112 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 112

IAN is standing in the shower with his back to us. We can see the lesions of Kaposi's sarcoma spreading up his back and shoulders and the backs of his legs. NURSE LEE with a mask and surgical gloves is about to apply a topical treatment - Alitretinoin. A gel.

NURSE LEE
Doesn't smell too nice.

IAN
Me or the gel?

NURSE LEE
Oh, you always smell lovely.

She takes some of it onto her hand. She looks hesitant, then starts to apply. IAN smarts at the pain.

We go close on his face. Very close. His eyes are closed, he looks shattered and defeated. She continues to apply. After a while... * *

NURSE LEE (CONT'D) *
No Shakespeare today? *

IAN shakes his head. *

IAN *
(Quietly) *
Not today. *

NURSE LEE finishes.

NURSE LEE
There we are. All over now. *

She stands. He turns to face her. She smiles. His face is a weary mask of indignity and pain and exhaustion. * *

*

IAN
I wish it was over. *

CUT TO:

113 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. NIGHT.** 113

IAN lying in bed, SEAN lying on top of the bed beside him, with an arm round him. IAN is very tired. They speak in low voices.

IAN
Are they here?

SEAN
(Looks at watch)
Any minute.

IAN nods. Good.

IAN
What do I say? I'm sorry I've lied to you all my life.... I'm sorry, I've...

SEAN
That wasn't your fault.

Silence.

IAN
It's so easy to say - 'Oh he was in the closet'
(Silence)
In the theatre nobody gives a fuck. But in movies....
(Silence)
I wanted to scale the heights. And if I'd been public...

SEAN
They wouldn't let you.

IAN
They wouldn't would they? ... Am I just convincing myself?

SEAN
They make us into liars, Ian. And then they make us ashamed of it.

IAN looks at him. Nods.

IAN
Didn't scale them, though, did I?

SEAN
Of course you did. Are you kidding?

IAN looks back at the ceiling.

IAN
I hope I've been kind to you.

SEAN
What are you talking about?

IAN
I know that... sometimes... you maybe felt more than you let on...

SEAN
You wish...

SEAN squeezes his hand.

SEAN (CONT'D)
I never feel more than I let on. I'm Welsh.

Silence.

SEAN (CONT'D)
And you were always very kind.

CUT TO:

114 **EXT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 114

We see SEAN bringing JACK and JEAN CHARLESON into the hospital. They look terrified and bewildered. We realise we are watching from IAN'S POV at a top window.

CUT TO:

115 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 115

SEAN leading them along the corridor. They reach IAN'S room. As they do so, JEAN almost collapses at the sight of him.

CUT TO:

116 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 116

IAN, JACK and JEAN sitting.

JACK CHARLESON
You always wanted to come to London. That was your plan. You wouldn't be moved.

JEAN CHARLESON
What has that to do with anything?

JACK CHARLESON
I'm just...

He trails off. She's right. Nothing.

IAN
I never wanted to lie to you. I don't want to lie to you any more. I'm just...

He starts to break.

IAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

JEAN stands.

JEAN CHARLESON
No.

IAN
I am. I'm sorry.

JEAN goes up beside him. Kneels at his chair and holds him as he weeps. He looks at JACK, his face strong but severely etched with the pain.

CUT TO:

117 **EXT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 117

JACK and JEAN are walking to the car with SEAN.

SEAN
He's very loved.

They stop.

SEAN (CONT'D)
He's always been... deeply loved.

Silence. Now JACK breaks. He falls onto SEAN'S shoulder and sobs.

CUT TO:

118 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 118

IAN is lying on the bed. His face etched with pain. We slowly...

FADE TO BLACK.

119 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 119

A series of vignettes of IAN'S recovery - Each one he looks a little better.

IAN on a drip, fairly unconscious.

IAN in the common room playing Kerplunk with NICHOLAS and a lot of skeletal YOUNG MEN.

IAN meditating, his face in a shaft of winter sunshine coming through the window.

IAN walking around the hospital grounds.

IAN on a drip again. He reaches for his copy of HAMLET beside him.

CUT TO:

120 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 120

JEAN CHARLESON beside IAN'S bed. She has the copy of the script. She's a good actress. There's clearly a strong, loving bond.

JEAN CHARLESON
(Reading GERTRUDE)
O Hamlet, speak no more: Thou
turn'st mine eyes into my very
soul; And there I see such black
and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

IAN
(As HAMLET)
Nay, but to live in the rank sweat
of an enseamed bed,
(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love over the nasty sty,-

JEAN puts down the book.

JEAN CHARLESON
Honestly. The things mothers have to put up with.

IAN
You murdered my father and shagged his brother.

JEAN CHARLESON
And you've never put a foot wrong, I suppose.

She puts the book down.

IAN
I hope Lizzie's still playing.

JEAN CHARLESON
Of course she is.

IAN
Tell her to bring her violin in here. Cheer the place up.

JEAN CHARLESON
I'll bring Ken too. Make a trio of it.

IAN
The Edinburgh Von Trapps.

She takes his hand.

JEAN CHARLESON
I used to sing to you when you were sick.

IAN
I remember. Communist songs.

She laughs a little.

JEAN CHARLESON
There'll always be music. Wherever the Charleson's gather.

He nods. She squeezes his hand. Silence.

CUT TO:

121 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 121

IAN perusing the many cassettes in the common room library, he stops at one - pulls it out, eyes wide...

CUT TO:

122 **INT. COMMON ROOM. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 122

IAN walks into the room where NICHOLAS and two other PATIENTS are sitting. He has his big cassette player with him. He looks better. They are all in hospital gowns.

IAN
Nicholas, my twinkle-toed darling... I have made a wonderful discovery.

NICHOLA
Is it a cure?

IAN
Better than that love. In the dark winter of 1979... Ethel Merman released a Disco Album...

CUT TO:

123 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL COMMON ROOM. DAY.** 123

IAN'S finger pressing play.

Pull out and we see them all rush into position. The music comes on - a thumping Disco beat. It's 'No Business Like Showbusiness' belted out in typical 'Merm style.'

They start to dance, a strictly taught routine which NICHOLAS has obviously been drilling... Once the vocal begins they lip synch along to it...

NICHOLAS, AIDS PATIENTS AND IAN
(Lip Synching)
There's no business like show Business
Like no business I know
Everything about it is appealing,
Everything that traffic will allow
Nowhere could you get that happy feeling
When you are stealing
That extra bow
(MORE)

NICHOLAS, AIDS PATIENTS AND IAN
There's no people like show people,
They smile when they are low
Even with a turkey that you know
will fold,
You may be stranded out in the cold
Still you wouldn't change it for a
sack of gold,
Let's go on with the show...

NICHOLAS
Don’t look now, but I think
Duncan’s starting to get the hang
of these hips.

IAN looks.

IAN
You are, Duncan! You are!

They carry on. Pull back to see MARGARET JOHNSON watching through the window. She’s amused.

CUT TO:

124 **INT. MARGARET JOHNSON’S OFFICE. ROYAL FREE.** 124

IAN is sitting opposite MARGARET’S table.

MARGARET
Your K.S Has retreated nicely.

IAN
People always told me that
chemotherapy was horrible..

MARGARET
It isn’t exactly pleasant.

IAN
Compared to AIDS it’s a walk in the
park. Cancer patients? Spoiled
bastards.

MARGARET smiles. Silence.

IAN (CONT’D)
I could get better. I mean - I
could even start to lead a fairly
normal life again. Go shopping.
Pick up a library book. Go out to
dinner.

MARGARET
Yes. And soon.

IAN
But I don't want that. When it comes to life - to living - it's quality I want. Not quantity.

MARGARET shakes her head.

MARGARET
Hamlet, again.

IAN
Not again. It's always been Hamlet...

He tries a different tack.

IAN (CONT'D)
We have a lot in common, you know? Do you know what we call people who aren't actors? Civilians.

MARGARET
Isn't that a little patronising?

IAN
Are you telling me you don't have a word for people who aren't doctors?

MARGARET
Of course we do. Patients.

IAN laughs. She smiles. She's softening. A beat.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I have never wanted to stand in the way of what you want. But my job - my responsibility - is the preservation of life.

IAN
And so is mine. But not just its preservation - its glory, its joy, its...

He reaches into his pocket and produces his battered copy of Hamlet. He hands it to her, open, across the desk. She takes it. She looks at the page. It is marked with scribbles and notes.

IAN (CONT'D)
It's supposed to be spoken.

MARGARET
What?

IAN
Read it out.

She returns to the page - reluctantly.

MARGARET
(Reading)
Not a whit, we defy augury...

IAN
He's talking about death -

She looks at him. IAN nods. Prompting her to go on -

IAN (CONT'D)
There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow...

MARGARET
There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now...

Silence. She stops, but doesn't look up. IAN takes over

IAN
If it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man, knows of aught he leaves, what is't to leave betimes... let be.

She looks at him. His eyes have tears in them.

IAN (CONT'D)
Let be.

Silence.

CUT TO:

125 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 125

IAN is at the payphone, excitedly chugging coins into the slot. He waits.

IAN
(Into the phone)
She's going to let me out. I can do it.

CUT TO:

126 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 126

RICHARD is on the other end of the phone.

RICHARD
Really? How are you feeling? Are you okay? Are you sure?

IAN (O.S.)
Yes, I'm much better...

CUT TO:

127 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 127

IAN again.

IAN
(Into the phone)
I have to come in for regular check-ups, but apart from that...

RICHARD (O.S.)
Ian, are you absolutely sure about this?

IAN
Yes, of course I'm sure. I'll go home first, sort a few things out... We're going to do this, Richard. We're going to do it.

CUT TO:

128 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 128

IAN is showing PATSY all the equipment he's brought back from the hospital.

IAN
These are the supplements. These are the pills for after each performance...

He stops for a second.

IAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to tell the company.

PATSY
Really?

IAN
I think it's time.

She nods. Okay. He goes back to the task.

IAN (CONT'D)
These are the ones for the morning and... Oh, I need to show you how to do this... *
*

PATSY
What is it?

IAN
Morphine. You'll know when to administer. End of the road, basically. You just fill the cup to the line - this is the does - it's very clear -

PATSY
I can't -

IAN
What?

PATSY
Administer morphine. I'm a Casting Director.

IAN
Yes, this'll be a first for you - lessening someone's pain.

She slaps him. He picks up a few more pills...

CUT TO:

129 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. LATER.** 129

IAN is alone. He's walking around with his copy of the play, mumbling the lines to himself. He walks across the flat and then stops by the telephone table. He stands still for a moment.

He reaches down and picks something up. It's the dried out sea-pink.

CUT TO:

130 **INT. PROSPECT COTTAGE. DUNGENESS. KENT. DAY.** 130

DEREK JARMAN is inside - there are paintings and beautifully arranged pieces of driftwood and stone everywhere. He hears a car pulling up - and smiles. He goes to the window. His expression changes, slightly. It's not who he expected.

CUT TO:

131 **EXT. PROSPECT COTTAGE. DUNGENESS. KENT. DAY.** 131

IAN pulls up at the bleak, incredible coastal landscape of Dungeness - the nuclear power station belching smoke far in the distance. It's strangely beautiful and other-worldly.

He gets out of the car and crunches across the shingle toward Prospect Cottage, the home of DEREK JARMAN.

The garden of Prospect Cottage is a miracle - all driftwood and sea-hardy planting. The cottage is clad in timber painted black, with canary yellow windows.

JARMAN is in the garden. He's wearing a boiler suit and a small Nepalese hat.

JARMAN
Well, you picked an interesting day to drop in.

IAN
Why?

JARMAN
They're making me a Saint.

CUT TO:

132 **EXT. PROSPECT COTTAGE. DUNGENESS. KENT. DAY.** 132

The SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE are gathered around a prop throne, upon which JARMAN is seated in a gold robe. IAN, KEITH, and a few others - including a leather queen and some lesbians - are watching.

SISTER BELLADONNA
I am Sister Belladonna in Glorie de Marengo...

MOTHER MANDRAGORA
I am Mother Mandragora, Salacious in Purple -

SISTER JACK
I am Sister Jack off all trade - Master of Nuns...

SISTER FRIGIDITY
And I am Sister Frigidity of the Nocturnal Emission. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a Queer order of Bona Nuns - call on ye to Auntie Nell thyselves and harken.

SISTER BELLADONNA
(Raising arms)
Bona to vada your dolly old eeks.
To vada your eeks - !

ALL
Bona!

SISTER BELLADONNA
Sister Fridge - ? Will you hold the bona capello above the sacred riah?

SISTER FRIGIDITY
I will most bona.

SISTER FRIGIDITY goes to JARMAN, holding a crown over his head.

SISTER FRIGIDITY (CONT'D)
Sisters and Omipalones. We are gathered here to honour Derek for promulgating universal joy -

SISTER BELLADONNA
We screech that he is dowry fantabulosa for his bona, bijou, celluloid masterpiece-ettes. But most of all -

IAN laughing along with everyone else. We stay on IAN'S face through the next bit

SISTER BELLADONNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
But most of all - because of his fearlessness. His pride in coming out and staying out. His courage to live.

IAN is listening.

SISTER FRIGIDITY (O.S.)
He fights for us. He is open about his HIV status - and he gives hope to sisters and omipalones both far and ajax!

SISTER BELLADONNA
The sisters have seen his fantabulosa trolling and they screech that it is bona.

Everyone - IAN included joins in.

ALL
It is Bona!

CUT TO:

133 **EXT. PROSPECT COTTAGE. DUNGENESS. KENT.** 133

Late afternoon. Everyone's gone. Beautiful late winter sunshine. JARMAN is dead-heading in the garden - still in his gold robe. IAN is watching.

IAN
How do you get an elephant off the stage?

JARMAN looks up.

IAN (CONT'D)
You can't. It's in his blood.

DEREK laughs.

JARMAN
So it's true. You are doing it.

IAN
I'd rather die of Hamlet than AIDS.

JARMAN nods.

JARMAN
I'm going blind.

Silence. IAN steps forward and takes JARMAN into his arms. JARMAN stands there and then yields to the hug. They stay like that for a very long time. Just the sound of seagulls. When they break they both have tears in their eyes.

JARMAN (CONT'D)
I haven't forgiven you. I can't.

IAN
I know -

JARMAN
If you went public -

IAN
They'll know. When I'm dead...
(Shrugs)
They'll know...

Silence.

JARMAN
Good luck.

IAN
Good luck, darling.

IAN turns to walk away. JARMAN watches him go.

CUT TO:

134 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 134

IAN walking into stage door. LINDA is there.

IAN has stopped. He smiles, nods. LINDA doesn't want any sentimentality.

LINDA
They've all been summoned so you'd better make an entrance.

He goes.

CUT TO:

135 **INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY.** 135

The COMPANY of HAMLET standing in a large circle, RICHARD, IAN, SYLVIA, MICHAEL BRYANT...

IAN
I'm sorry... The last thing I wanted to do was lie to you... You're my colleagues, and I didn't... Please believe me when I say that if I thought there was any other way...

Silence.

SYLVIA
Are you okay?

He nods.

IAN
I have AIDS.

There's a reaction to that but it's very small.

IAN (CONT'D)
I'm... still alive. Obviously. And I intend to play this part to the best of my ability. I just... I hope you can forgive me for the subterfuge.
(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)
And I hope that this announcement... God, I hope this more than anything... I hope that this announcement changes nothing.

RICHARD
There are one or two practical considerations. Erm... There is the possibility of press intrusion. Obviously, you don't need me to tell you how to respond to that.

ACTOR 1
Cut their balls off.

ACTRESS 1
Just leave it to Linda. She'll deal with them.

Laughter. A small amount of discussion. RICHARD claps his hands.

RICHARD
Alright... Ian is there anything else you want to say?

IAN shrugs.

IAN
I'm grateful. To all of you. Thank you.

RICHARD nods.

RICHARD
Okay, good. That's it. Drama over.

ACTORS start chatting. The DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER shouts over them.

D.S.M
If you need the toilet can you go now, please? We're doing a line run in five minutes - then it's a six fifty-five half for a Seven-thirty show, thank you.

An ACTOR goes up to IAN and hugs him.

ACTOR 1
Welcome back.

And another...

ACTRESS 1
Welcome back, love.

And another...

ACTOR 2
Do you realise you're the only person in the company who hasn't bought any biscuits?

IAN laughs, they hug. Another hug...

ACTOR 4
Honestly, the way you try to pull focus...

IAN is laughing, taking the hugs one after the other.

MICHAEL BRYANT
I don't know anything about what you've got. But you're the bravest young man I know.

SYLVIA is last.

SYLVIA
I'm driving you home from now on.

IAN
Sylvia -

SYLVIA
I mean it. If you get on that bike again, it'll be me that kills you - never mind AIDS.

They hug. Pull back to see everyone queueing in line to hug IAN...

CUT TO:

136 **INT. IAN'S DRESSING ROOM. NATIONAL THEATRE. EVENING.** 136

IAN is in costume, sitting at the mirror. He looks at his reflection.

We can hear the noise of the play through the tannoy. IAN applies a little more make-up to the dark patches under his eyes. He whispers to himself...

IAN
'What is a man If his chief good and market of his time Be but to sleep and feed?'

The tannoy bursts into life.

DSM (O.S.)
(On tannoy)
Mr Charleson, this is your call. Mr Charleson, your call, please. Thank you.

IAN breathes deeply and gets up. A knock on the door. We hear * RALPH'S voice - *

RALPH (O.S.) *
Shall we, Mr Charleson - ? *

IAN gets up to go.

CUT TO:

137 **INT. CORRIDOR. NATIONAL THEATRE. EVENING.** 137

IAN and RALPH walking down the corridor toward the stage. The noise of the play from the tannoy, still going.

RALPH
I've put your energy drinks by prompt corner. Your towel's there too. And your water. If you need anything else while you're on - painkillers, anything - just wave at me - I'll get it to you somehow.

IAN
Even if I'm onstage?

RALPH
Why not? I'll put on a wig and slip it you surreptitiously.

IAN
I came clean to the company.

RALPH
So I believe.

IAN
Went down quite well, I think.

RALPH
Oh, you're very popular. They've even given you a nickname.

They've reached the prompt corner doors. IAN waits to be told.

RALPH (CONT'D)
H.I.Vera.

IAN starts to laugh. RALPH opens the door. We can still hear IAN'S laughter as he walks into the blackness of backstage, and is swallowed up by the dark.

We hear a fanfare of trumpets.

The camera follows IAN until everything is dark.

CUT TO:

138 **INT. OLIVIER AUDITORIUM. EVENING.** 138

We see the audience, glasses twinkling as the lights come down and the play commences...

CUT TO:

139 **INT. SYLVIA'S CAR. NIGHT.** 139

SYLVIA is driving IAN home. IAN is slumped against the window asleep. SYLVIA pulls up and looks over at him.

CUT TO:

140 **INT. IAN'S BEDROOM. FLAT. DAY.** 140

IAN is sleeping on the bed. It's quiet. PATSY comes into the room and looks at him. IAN opens his eyes.

IAN
I don't want to let the company down.

PATSY
You've done three this week. Take tonight off, and you can go back in tomorrow fully refreshed.

IAN nods. PATSY goes over to a phone on the chest of drawers - obviously moved in so IAN can make calls - its cord leading out into the hall. She picks up the phone. Dials. Waits.

LINDA'S VOICE (O.S.)
National Theatre stage door.

PATSY
(Into the phone)
Linda, it's Pats. Not tonight, I'm afraid.

IAN
Tell them I'm sorry.

PATSY
(Into the phone)
He says he's very sorry.

CUT TO:

141 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. DAY.** 141

We see LINDA on the phone

LINDA
(Into phone)
Tell him I've had all sorts through that door - drunks, lunatics... I've had Peter O' Toole in a headlock... I had a fucking snake on the loose after Anthony and Cleopatra - I can cope with anything. But I can't have him dying on me.

CUT TO:

142 **INT. IAN'S BEDROOM. FLAT. DAY.** 142

Back to IAN and PATSY.

PATSY
(To IAN)
She says not to die.

IAN
Tell her to mind her own business.

PATSY is putting the phone down.

IAN (CONT'D)
Richard'll be pissed off.

PATSY
No, he won't.

IAN
He took a chance on me. He didn't have to.

IAN begins to cough. It becomes uncontrollable. PATSY fetches a bucket and helps him, rubbing his back, while he coughs into it. Gradually the attack subsides. PATSY puts down the bucket. IAN collapses back onto the bed, eyes closed.

PATSY suddenly becomes alert. She hears something in the garden. She gets up and goes from the room...

CUT TO:

143 **EXT. IAN'S TERRACE DAY.** 143

PATSY comes out, marching toward a TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER with a telephoto lens standing up a ladder across the street. *

PATSY
What the fuck - ?

She strides toward him. *

PATSY (CONT'D)
Do you think I don't know what you're up to? *

TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER
Please - I just... It's a nice story. Sympathetic.

PATSY
Get fucking out of here. *

TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER
Why don't you just talk to me? People are very concerned... Wait... *

The TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER has a brainwave. It's a possibility too good to miss - *

TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Are you the mother?

PATSY succumbs to an almost terrifying rage.

PATSY
Right! That's it! Now you're really fucking for it!

She takes the legs of the ladder and rattles them. The TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER screams in terror. *

TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER *
Whoa! Whoa! Stop! Stop! I'm going, alright? I'm leaving! Jesus Christ! *

PATSY stops shaking and walks back to IAN'S. The TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHER starts descending the ladder, hurriedly. PATSY throws one parting shot- *

PATSY *
And if you ever come back here I'll wear your bollocks as a brooch! *

She walks on, then turns - the rage not quite quelled... *

PATSY (CONT'D) *
(To his retreating back) *
To the BAFTAS! *

She goes into IAN'S building and slams the door shut. *

CUT TO:

144 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 144

MARGARET is leading a small group on an inspection of the unit - bigwigs, donors etc. They come into the 'green room'

MARGARET
The intention is to extend this unit. Sadly there appears to be no sign of a reduction in infections -

Two rather ELEGANT DONORS are talking quietly at the back of the group.

POTENTIAL DONOR
(Quietly to his friend)
Here comes the begging bowl.

POTENTIAL DONOR 2
(Quietly)
We had this at the royal Opera House last night.

MARGARET steps toward a table on the side. The DONORS are already looking at it. We see drawings, written notes, tapes, books...

MARGARET
Some of our patients leave little tokens when they go. Some are in remission, some...
(She shrugs)
I've witnessed the most extraordinary people coming through these doors. I've come to see that... medicine alone, care alone - is not necessarily enough. We must sustain life - Of course... But we must also prioritize living.

One of the DONORS has picked up a small paperback copy of HAMLET. It's IAN'S copy with his notes. MARGARET un-aggressively but firmly holds out her hand. The DONOR sheepishly returns it to her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
And yes. Here comes the begging bowl.

CUT TO:

145 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. DAY.** 145

IAN is in bed. Outside we can see PATSY, SEAN, ALICE and MALCOLM stringing Christmas lights on the garden foliage. HILTON enters with the newspaper. *

IAN
(Shouting out to them)
Not too blousy! Subtle.

SEAN
(Shouts back)
Jesus, come out and do it yourself if you're that bothered!

IAN
(To HILTON)
The straight people I could understand, but Sean should know better.

HILTON tosses the newspaper onto the bed. *

HILTON *
Here. This should make you less grumpy. *

IAN picks up the paper. *

CUT TO:

146 **INT. JACK AND JEAN CHARLESON'S HOME. EDINBURGH. DAY.** 146

JEAN is sitting, a newspaper in front of her. JACK comes into the room. She doesn't look up.

JACK
Jean -?

She looks at him, picks up the paper and reads...

JEAN CHARLESON
(Reading)
John Peter. Sunday Times. 'His delivery is steely but delicate. The words move with sinuous elegance and crackle with fire.. His Hamlet is virile and forceful...

She becomes overwhelmed with feeling...

JACK CHARLESON
Sweetheart -

She waves him away. She will read it.

JEAN CHARLESON
He oozes intelligence from every pore...

CUT TO:

147 **INT. ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL. DAY.** 147

MARGARET is reading the paper out loud.

MARGARET
(Reading)
The way Charleson can transform a production is a reminder that actors are alive and well, that directors can only draw a performance from those who have one in them.....And that in the last analysis the voice of drama speaks to us through actors.

We pull back to see that she has been reading the review to NICHOLAS and a room full of AIDS patients - young men looking thin, gaunt, tired - but proud.

NICHOLAS starts applauding - the others join in.

CUT TO:

148 **INT. IAN'S BEDROOM. FLAT. DAY.** 148

IAN is in bed and PATSY is lying on the bed beside him. She lowers the newspaper. IAN looks up, he's very weak. A little silence.

IAN
Virile and forceful.

PATSY puts the paper down. Silence. IAN flinches.

PATSY
You in pain? You want some Morphine.

He shakes his head.

IAN
I like to be able to think. You have some.

IAN flinches again. PATSY takes his hand.

IAN (CONT'D)
Can I tell you something?

PATSY
No. I want you to rest.

IAN
You have been....the best friend...

Silence. PATSY controls her emotions. IAN flinches - a horrible attack of pain.

PATSY
Stop bloody talking. Just...
Imagine you're somewhere else, darling...

IAN
(Very weak)
Yes...

PATSY
Imagine you're in the most wonderful place you know. Imagine it's peaceful, and beautiful. Are you there?

IAN nods.

PATSY (CONT'D)
Is it a garden?

IAN
Fuck no.

PATSY
Well wherever it is... Enjoy it. Feel it. Breathe it in...

She is suddenly overwhelmed with sadness and grief. She looks at IAN. His eyes are closed. She manages to suppress her sobs, and pull herself together. IAN squeezes her hand, instructing her to continue. She gathers herself and carries on as if nothing has happened...

PATSY (CONT'D)
You're there now, darling. Your friends are there. Everyone is there... And it's... It's absolutely wonderful...

CUT TO

149 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. CORRIDOR. EVENING** 149

IAN walking down to the stage in HAMLET costume. Other ACTORS are coming out of their dressing rooms too, walking toward the stage.

CUT TO:

150 **INT. OLIVIER AUDITORIUM. EVENING.** 150

MARGARET JOHNSON and her HUSBAND are taking their seats. The lights start to dim as the performance begins. MARGARET produces IAN'S copy of HAMLET and places it on her lap.

CUT TO:

151 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE OLIVIER WINGS. EVENING.** 151

IAN waiting with the company to go on.

CUT TO:

152 **INT. OLIVIER AUDITORIUM. EVENING.** 152

MARGARET opens the book as the play begins.

CUT TO:

153 **INT. OLIVIER STAGE. NATIONAL THEATRE. NIGHT.** 153

IAN is on stage as HAMLET.

IAN
(As HAMLET)
To be, or not to be, that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles And by opposing end them. To die — to sleep, No more...

CUT TO:

154 **INT. OLIVIER AUDITORIUM. EVENING.** 154

IAN is on stage delivering the soliloquy. We sweep through the audience seeing reactions.

IAN (O.S.)
And by a sleep to say we end The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep; to sleep, perchance to dream — ay, there's the rub: for in that sleep of death what dreams may come, when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, must give us pause —

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK -

IAN CHARLESON GAVE TWENTY-FOUR PERFORMANCES OF HAMLET AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE.

BACK TO THE PERFORMANCE -

IAN (CONT'D)
There's the respect that makes calamity of so long life. For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay, the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of th'unworthy takes, when he himself might his quietus make with a bare bodkin?

SCREEN GOES TO BLACK -

IN THE SAME YEAR, HIS FRIEND, IAN MCKELLEN WON AN EVENING STANDARD THEATRE AWARD FOR HIS PERFORMANCE AS IAGO IN OTHELLO.

We see real footage of this event. IAN MCKELLEN saying -

IAN MCKELLEN
Last night was my first free night and I managed to get a ticket to see Richard Eyre's production of hamlet at the National Theatre... In every blazing line... Showing sincerity and passion and intelligence - in soliloquy, in aside, and in rhetoric... Ian Charleson is a perfect Hamlet.

He's greeted with warm applause.

IAN MCKELLEN (CONT'D)
(Over applause)
And Ian Charleson is *my* best actor of 1989.

The last few words are drowned out by applause.

SCREEN GOES TO BLACK -

MCKELLEN TOOK THE AWARD TO IAN'S FLAT THAT NIGHT.

CUT TO:

155 **INT. IAN'S FLAT. NIGHT.** 155

We see the award next to all the medical equipment. Blurred in the background, IAN is getting his morphine administered by PATSY. We can see his friends and family are there - JEAN and JACK, LIZZIE (his sister), KEN (his brother)...

SCREEN GOES TO BLACK -

HE DIED JUST SEVEN WEEKS LATER.

CUT TO:

156 **INT. NATIONAL THEATRE. OLIVIER STAGE** 156

Back to IAN on stage.

IAN
Who would fardels bear, to grunt and sweat under a weary life, but that the dread of something after death, The undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns, puzzles the will, and makes us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all...

SCREEN GOES TO BLACK -

AFTER HIS DEATH, IAN'S FAMILY RELEASED THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS ILLNESS.

CUT TO:

157 **INT. OLIVIER STAGE. NATIONAL THEATRE. NIGHT.** 157

It's the final scene... HAMLET is stabbed in the duel and falls to the floor.

IAN
(As HAMLET)
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death, Is strict in his arrest), O, I could tell you— But let it be — Horatio, I am dead.
Thou livest;
(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)
report me and my cause aright To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO
Never believe it -

IAN
(As HAMLET)
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me! If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, Absent thee from felicity awhile And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain To tell my story —
the rest is silence.

HORATIO
Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince, And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

SCREEN GOES BLACK

CUT TO:

THE CLINIC IN WHICH HE WAS TREATED AT THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL IS NOW NAMED AFTER HIM.

158 **INT. IAN'S DRESSING ROOM. NATIONAL THEATRE. EVENING.** 158

IAN staggers into the dressing room. He looks terrible. He slumps at his mirror. He stares at his spent, exhausted reflection.

PATSY appears behind him to help him out of his jacket. IAN, too tired to do anything, supports himself against the dressing table. He's zoned out completely... PATSY takes him by the shoulders. *

PATSY *
Can you hear that, darling? *

IAN looks puzzled. Gradually he brings his attention back into the room - to the present. *

As he does so, he becomes aware of something - a noise. It's outside the window. He walks toward it, and as he goes it gets louder. *

IAN stops. He goes to the window and opens it.

Outside, in the courtyard, every other actor in the building is hammering on their windows. From the bottom of the atrium to the top - people in various costumes, banging on the window for him. *
*

He stands still for a moment, taking it in, then raises his arms. In a gesture of thanks.

FADE TO BLACK.

END.