

CHILDLESS

Episode 1

'House of Fun'

Written by

Lucille Howe

Represented by Deborah Shaw at Nylander*Shaw
Email: lucillehowe1@gmail.com
Tel: 07534 899704

Close up on LIV (Late 40s, kidult, people pleaser, childless) as she falls back into what is revealed as a small crowd at a back-of-a-pub gig. She begins to crowd surf. As she is passed backwards, the crowd begins to thin and she is unceremoniously dropped in front of an unimpressed UNA (40s Helicopter Mother, passive-aggressive but interested and interesting) and JAKE (40s, film editor, aspirational, athletic).

Una and Jake motion to leave. Liv - having the time of her life - is reluctant, but follows.

LIV

But they're gonna do an encore.
They haven't even played their best one!

Everyone starts cheering. The band thank the audience. The crowd begin stomping and chanting for an encore.

Liv looks longingly at the front then starts gamely clapping.

LIV (CONT'D)

Woo!

Jake puts on his coat. Una checks her phone.

UNA

It's double time for the sitter after twelve.

LIV

But it's only ten! They haven't even played their best one!

UNA

We should go. Beat the crowds.

LIV

Yeah, you're probably right. We could get trampled in this...small ...'vestibule'.

The audience cheer and the band re-enter.

LIV (CONT'D)

They're playing it now!

Liv races back into the gig. Impatient, Una and Jake leave.

Liv tags onto a group of hip kids who cringe at her enthusiasm and start covertly filming her dance moves on their smartphones.

Liv sees that she's being filmed and reluctantly decides to leave, looking repeatedly and longingly at the stage until she finally exits.

LIV (CONT'D)
Oh, fuck it.

2

INT. MERCHANDISE STALL - NIGHT

2

A bored, edgy and unfriendly STALL-HOLDER mans her small collection of band merchandise.

LIV
How much are the sweatshirts?

STALL-HOLDER
Fifty quid. Sixty for the hoodies.

LIV
Can I have a feel?

Liv inspects the inside.

LIV (CONT'D)
Oh it's fleece.

Liv reads the washing instructions on the label.

LIV (CONT'D)
Wash at 30 degrees. I'll take it.

Liv pays and turns to leave, then rethinks.

LIV (CONT'D)
Do you have any tea towels?

STALL-HOLDER
No.

Pause.

STALL-HOLDER (CONT'D)
Not our demographic.

LIV
Cool.

3a INT. HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

3a

Liv is greeted in the hallway by a huge dog. This is BUCKLEY. She picks up a pile of post and shuffles through it until she finds an envelope that piques her interest and opens it.

A letter from a fertility clinic informs her that the eggs she has frozen are due to be terminated on December 8 and she will need to be present to sign the accompanying paperwork.

She folds the letter and puts it in her pocket.

3b INT. HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

3b

Her boyfriend DAVE (40s, hipster, political, cultured, kind) is tinkering with an expensive-looking coffee machine. When he hears Liv approaching, he grabs a nearby package and hides it out of sight. It's a recent delivery and the contents appear to be trainers. Liv enters.

DAVE

Hey. You're back early.

LIV

Devil Baby ruined it.

DAVE

Oh, speaking of which, your sister called. She's got some business idea she wants to talk to your about.

LIV

Not again.

Liv motions to the coffee machine.

LIV (CONT'D)

You figured this out yet?

DAVE

Close. Come here.

Dave gives Liv a kiss and a squeeze.

DAVE (CONT'D)

New top?

LIV

Merch.

Dave starts undressing Liv.

DAVE
It's really soft.

LIV
Right?

Liv pushes the letter deeper into her pocket. The pair of them start undressing each other and fall over the top of the sofa.

DAVE
Out you go Buckley!

Buckley exits, unseen by the pair, with a brand new trainer in her mouth. Steam erupts from the coffee machine.

5 INT. CAFE - DAY

5

A typically chaotic high street cafe that's become creche-like by day. Liv arrives to meet her sister EMILY (30s, energetic, cool, direct), her toddler RUBY and her baby FLO.

EMILY
Oh, thank God.

LIV
Hello you.

EMILY
Sorry.

Emily hands Ruby to Liv.

LIV
What for?

EMILY
The lice.

Overhearing this, people sitting on adjacent tables edge away.

LIV
Oh.

EMILY
They've recently developed a strategy. Nothing can kill them.

EMILY (CONT'D)
So...I need your help.

LIV

Yes. I got your message.

EMILY

I've had an idea for a new business.

LIV

Go on.

EMILY

'Borrow my Baby'.

LIV

No.

EMILY

Does it already exist?

LIV

No it doesn't.

EMILY

Perfect.

LIV

How exactly do you see it working?

EMILY

Well busy Millennials, broody non-binaries, or anyone curious really, can fill out a form...you have to be rated of course...

LIV

Borrow my Doggy, for the childless?

EMILY

Exactly! And then you pay to have Ruby for a few hours. I can theme her for, like, public holidays...Easter with bonnet, Gay Pride...and you can try out parenting, or bump into your ex and be all like, look what I've got, or just get some good Instagram pictures, and, most importantly...I get a break.

LIV

They've got robot babies for that.

EMILY

What?

LIV

For try before you buy. They cry
when they need changing or feeding.
They're just like real babies.

EMILY

Fuck.

Pause.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I was onto something then.

LIV

Yes you were.

6. INT. HOME - DAY

6.

Liv and Dave are preparing lunch.

LIV

Do you feel like something's
missing?

DAVE

Oh, chilli!

LIV

I feel like maybe we should be
...giving back to the community.
Leaving a legacy, or something.

DAVE

Well, yeah. I think that's
important. Like what?

LIV

Maybe I should buy a bench for the
park.

DAVE

Shit, I thought you meant having a
kid!

LIV

God no, just garden furniture.
Obviously we don't want kids, but
don't you think we should be
leaving behind more than just a
giant carbon footprint?

DAVE

I'm doing some tagging this weekend.

LIV

Please...PLEASE...don't graffiti the new Picturehouse.

DAVE

Why? It's everything I hate about this area.

LIV

Because I need to photograph it for the newsletter. They're starting mother and doggy screenings.

DAVE

What about the estate agents?

LIV

Yes, that's fine.

DAVE

And that's like a statement too. About the homogenisation of our high street.

LIV

Exactly. But what about our legacy? Our 'baby'-slash-definitely not a baby?

DAVE

I dunno. I need to think about that.

LIV

Oh, it's probably just the perimenopause.

DAVE

Right. Is that something I should know about?

LIV

Aww that's sweet, yes, I'll do a presentation on it tonight.

In a reversal of roles, Emily is walking Buckley and Liv is pushing Flo in a pram with Ruby in tow.

EMILY

Dave know about babies-on-ice?

LIV

I told him when we first met. He's probably forgotten.

EMILY

God, if Simon thought I had a secret stash he'd be right on it, petri-dishing a small army. You gonna remind him?

LIV

Maybe. Maybe not. I only did it 'cause you'd just had Ruby and Dad was so happy and I was single and full of fibroids. I just don't want him calling me the Terminator.

EMILY

Oh, come on, he's on the same page.

PETER (50s, conventionally attractive, conservative, considered) is being pulled along by his Pointer. Emily takes notice.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Incoming, three o'clock.

PETER

Tupac! Tupac!

LIV

Is he saying what I think...

PETER

Sit! Stay!

Leads become entangled. Liv and Emily turn it into a maypole dance. The dogs look at them like they're stupid.

LIV

I don't think Tupac likes folk dance.

Ruby strokes the dog.

PETER

(to Liv)

Your daughter's very good with animals.

LIV
Oh she's not...

EMILY
She's not good with animals. She
hit a cat.

PETER
Cats are rubbish.

Emily laughs a bit too enthusiastically.

EMILY
Meow! Shut up!

PETER
My twins...I thought they might
feel better after their Mum died if
I bought them a pet.

LIV
Did it work?

PETER
For a while. Fortnite came out the
same year, so that sort of took
over. I thought they might enjoy
training the young pup but, well,
he's four now and he's...

Tupac spies a squirrel and with a tug, they're off.

PETER (CONT'D)
Pleasure meeting you.

EMILY
Bye Tupac. Love your work.

LIV
Why did you say she was mine? Sorry
Ruby.

EMILY
He was a fox and I fancied a flirt.
Now give her to me.

LIV
Nope. You had your chance.

EMILY
Give. You need to pick up the poo.

Emily and Liv walk off, the pair of them fighting to take
turns pushing the buggy.

8. INT. HOME - EVENING

8.

The doorbell rings. Outside, two gay men arrange themselves. They are PAUL (40s, camp, ambitious, media) and GUY (40s, portly, English country-casual, affluent).

PAUL
Whassup bitch?

LIV
Giving zero fucks that's what.

Air kisses for and from everyone. The boys enter with a small dog inside a bag.

LIV (CONT'D)
Awww, you brought Dolly? Buckley this is Dolly. Dolly, Buckley. Now, go start a band!

GUY
She's been suffering from major separation anxiety.

LIV
Well, you're daddies now.

PAUL
I know, she looks just like Guy.

Paul fawns over the espresso machine.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Oh, we have this too.

DAVE
It doesn't work.

PAUL
You have to connect this to this, and do not use the filters that come with it, you need these Italian ones. I'll DM you the brand.

The machine lunges into action and creates an espresso perfectly.

DAVE
We wanted to stop using plastic takeaway cups. You know...save the planet, one latte at a time.

GUY
Well, Paul just kept some plastic
out of the oceans...by putting it
up his nose.

LIV
More surgery?

PAUL
It wasn't straight! Alexa, play
Cher!

GUY
Darling, nothing about you is
straight.

8a INT. HOME - NIGHT

8a

PAUL
Guy and I have got something to ask
you.

LIV
Godmother? Yes! Little snuffle
bunny.

She cuddles Dolly.

LIV (CONT'D)
Daddy and Daddy have to watch out
for marbles on their staircase
don't they? In case they have a
nasty accident and you have to come
live with me.

PAUL
No, that's not it.

GUY
(to Paul)
Let me.

Liv and Dave exchange serious looks.

GUY (CONT'D)
Having little Dolly in our lives
has made us think about, uhm, what
it would mean to us to have a
family of our own.

LIV
That's selfish. And amazing. You'll
be amazing...

GUY
The only thing is, we don't qualify
for adoption. Because of Paul's
criminal record.

Liv and Dave are shocked.

PAUL
I was going to pay for them.

GUY
And we'd like the donor to be
someone we love and trust. With
genes that we know.

PAUL
We don't want an ugly baby.

Guy and Paul lock eyes on Liv.

LIV
Me?

DAVE
I don't know, is that a good idea?

LIV
That's really nice.

DAVE
There's your age, your health and
you're never ever wanting kids...

LIV
Yes, that's true. Not that it would
be mine.

PAUL
And you've still got your golden
eggs in the freezer?

LIV
Well, yes.

DAVE
What's he on about?

PAUL
Soz.

LIV

Remember about...well, exactly ten years ago...before I met you, I decided to freeze some eggs? I told you about them, when we first met.

DAVE

OK. I don't remember, but go on.

LIV

Then I met you and, being happily 'childfree', we've obviously not needed them. So, they've been in storage. In fact, they're almost out of date.

Liv finds the letter and it's passed around.

DAVE

Anyone want a whisky?

Dave gets up to pour himself a large drink.

GUY

Look, we understand it's a big ask, and possibly not even viable. But we'd pay you for your contribution.

DAVE

What? No.

PAUL

No. We can't actually pay you. That would be a crime.

Paul grabs the Alexa and hides it in the freezer to make sure the conversation isn't being surveilled.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We'd pay off some of your mortgage, or set you up with an account at Liberty's. We'd find a way to pay you. Just, sneakily.

LIV

I couldn't take your money.

PAUL

Oh, it's not even an argument.

LIV

But I'm a pensioner. You could give some student TK Maxx vouchers to do it.

DAVE
It's a lot to get our heads around.

GUY
Just promise us you'll give it some thought? That's all. No pressure.

LIV
Love you.

GUY
We love you too.

DAVE
(to Liv)
I love you the most.

9 INT. HOME - DAY

9

Dave is getting ready to leave for work and surreptitiously buffing a bite mark out of some new trainers with a cloth. Liv is on her laptop scrolling through endless back-to-school photos on Facebook.

LIV
Do you know what I'd love to see?

DAVE
Hmmm?

LIV
Just someone posting a picture of their child going back to school today...in their new school uniform, I don't know, outside their house? In front of their front door? Just an idea...

Dave is not listening.

DAVE
Yeah? You should do that, babe.

Liv eye-rolls, shuts the laptop lid, grabs her coat and keys, and they leave together with Dave helping carry her photography equipment.

10. EXT. SCHOOL CAR PARK - DAY

10.

Liv pulls up next to her assistant, JACK (20s, functioning stoner, tech-savvy, easy-going) and together they begin taking out the photography equipment. Liv grabs the chocolate bar in his hand and bites off a huge piece.

JACK
Hey! That's breakfast.

LIV
Sorry, I need sugar.

LIV (CONT'D)
You ever been in a confined space
with 30 kids on their first day
back at school?

JACK
Yeah.

LIV
When?

JACK
My first day back at school.

LIV
Alright, now imagine yourself
older, tired, unsociable and...are
you stoned?

Jack shrugs.

LIV (CONT'D)
Well, save me some next time.

11. INT. SCHOOL HALL - DAY

Chaos. A group of Year Three students are jostling into line ahead of some stands set up for a school photo. School staff are attempting some order. It's like trying to herd snakes.

TEACHER
If everyone could arrange
themselves in height order,
starting with the tallest at the
back...

Liv mumbles under her breath.

LIV
...tiny cute ones at the front.

Jack and Liv get busy setting up the camera equipment. A SMALL CHILD approaches Liv.

SMALL CHILD
Miss. I done toilet.

LIV
Pee or poo?

The TEACHER joins them.

LIV (CONT'D)
I think she needs the potty.

The Teacher looks confused (the girl is way beyond potty age) and escorts her away.

LIV (CONT'D)
OK, girls and boys. I mean...those of you that *identify* as she and he...and they...I know this is big day for you entering year...

Liv mumbles.

LIV (CONT'D)
...key form three...this is a small step for your little legs but a giant leap for...

LIV (CONT'D)
So. I want you to make the same happy faces for me that you did for Mummy and Daddy this morning.

Liv prepares herself at the camera.

JACK
You should do Ted talks.

LIV
Fuck off.

Liv incorrectly addresses the sour-faced woman, front and centre, who appears to be the HEAD MISTRESS.

LIV (CONT'D)
Sir, if you could sit up for me.

The children giggle. Liv is encouraged and starts taking photos.

LIV (CONT'D)
Beautiful.

A bad-tempered boy is flicking the ears of the child in front.

LIV (CONT'D)

Excuse me!

The child continues his bullying and Liv has a quiet word with him.

LIV (CONT'D)

Oi! Future baldy! Hands in your lap.

Liv returns to the camera and continues snapping.

LIV (CONT'D)

Lovely jubbly.

Liv notices a girl who looks rather sad, and approaches her.

LIV (CONT'D)

What's up, poppet? Now, I know I'm not supposed to have favorites, but you're totally my favorite.

The child next to her begins to cry. The tears spread like wildfire.

LIV (CONT'D)

No, no! Happy faces.

HEAD MISTRESS

Settle down children. There are no favourites here. You're all equal in the eyes of the Lord.

The tears increase. In desperation, Liv turns to Jack.

LIV

Floss!

JACK

What?

LIV

Floss for God's sake.

Jack draws on all his powers of concentration to coordinate his limbs in the dance move known as 'The Floss'.

LIV (CONT'D)

Everyone look at Jack!

Liv joins in, while trying to capture their now engaged faces on camera.

JACK

I think you've come up on that
Snickers bar.

LIV

Baby shark, nah nah nah nah nah
nah. Baby shark nah nah. Hammer
Head shark nah nah nah nah nah.

She sings menacingly and not upbeat at all. When it escalates to, 'let's go hunt', the children are terrified into silence. A lone child screams and runs off.

The Head Mistress approaches.

HEAD MISTRESS

Excuse me, but have you been DBS
checked?

LIV

Oh yes, double vaxxed and booster.

HEAD MISTRESS

Do you even have children of your
own?

LIV

What's that got to do with
anything?

HEAD MISTRESS

Empathy. Patience. Experience.

Liv starts to well up.

LIV

Sorry...

Liv looks at her name tag.

LIV (CONT'D)

Mrs Grainger.

HEAD MISTRESS

Sister Grainger.

Liv is visibly upset.

LIV

Sorry Sister Grainger. It was, er,
a particularly large group.

(MORE)

LIV (CONT'D)
Anyway, I think we got it. I'll
send over the selects by Wednesday.

Liv and Jack pack up the gear.

JACK
You still OK to drop me at the
station?

LIV
I can take you home.

JACK
Yeah? Cheers. Mind if I go roll one
for the journey?

LIV
Go for it.

The 'favourite' child is by the exit struggling to put on her
coat.

LIV (CONT'D)
May I?

The child nods. Liv looks over to the Teacher for her
approval. She nods too. Liv does up her coat.

6. EXT. PARK - DAY

6.

Tupac barks at Emily and Liv and then runs off to join a
waving Peter.

LIV
So, the egg donation...it's a bad
idea? Except for the offshore money
laundering?

EMILY
Basically.

LIV
I could build a dog shelter,
travel, document a cause...global
warming! A legacy. I could put Ruby
through college.

EMILY
Don't bother. She's not that
bright.

LIV
I feel like Tupac was trying to
tell me something.

EMILY
(as a dog bark)
Dog shelter. Choose dog shelter.

LIV
I've got no pension, no marriage to
get half of everything if I ever
split up with Dave. Nothing to show
for anything really.

EMILY
You've got me.

LIV
You've got enough to deal with.

EMILY
Oh, these kids are old enough to
look after themselves.

EMILY (CONT'D)
What does Dave think?

LIV
He's gone.

EMILY
He's what?

LIV
Buckley. Where's Buckley?

Liv sees him race toward the road.

LIV (CONT'D)
Oh shit.

Emily and Liv set off in hot pursuit at breakneck speed with
push-chair, bags etc.

LIV (CONT'D)
(while running)
Dave thinks I'll get emotionally
attached to it. That I'm too old
but too nice to say no. That I
should have told him about the eggs
when I started getting fibroids.

Liv and Emily stop to catch their breath before running
again.

LIV (CONT'D)
He says we never really talked
properly about having a baby
ourselves, or if he wanted one.

Liv and Emily reach Buckley at the edge of the main road,
just in the nick of time. They are both out of breath and Flo
is crying.

EMILY
And does he?

Liv looks despondent.

LIV
I think so.

EMILY
I'm sorry babe.

10 EXT. NIGHT - URBAN STREET

10

Three hooded figures carrying rucksacks walk down an urban
side street with an affected gangsta swagger. A dog barks and
a curtain twitches. The hoods are thrown back to reveal Dave,
Jake and Jake's teenage son, RIVER.

DAVE
Nice to see you River.

RIVER
You too Mr Youssef.

Dave and Jake greet each other with a choreographed series of
hand slaps and fist pumps. Dave moves to do the same with
River but River keeps hold of his hand and shakes it
formally.

DAVE
Maybe we should...

The threesome pull up their hoods again.

RIVER
I like your shoes Mr Youssef.

DAVE
Oh, thank you. They're limited
edition 200's. Dead stock. Sold out
in three minutes.

JAKE
Mate, they're massive.

DAVE
Yeah, cheers.

JAKE
No, they're too big for you.

DAVE
Look, all the regular sizes sold out in seconds. These were £200 quid off Ebay, box fresh. They just need an inner sole.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Anyway, I've got the new stencils.

JAKE
Nice.

DAVE
And some fluros for River.

RIVER
Thank you Mr Youssef.

Dave, Jake and River set to work graffitiiing an estate agents. Jake's tag is 'RadDad' and River is carefully spray-painting a rainbow. Dave is till working out his tag. Behind them we see a small light come on in the window of the curtain twitcher.

DAVE
That's very good River.

JAKE
Everything cool with you and Liv?

DAVE
Well, she's in high demand at the moment. Paul and Guy want to buy her DNA with luxury favours.

JAKE
Yeah, Una told me. How do you feel about all that? You ever want kids?

Dave looks longingly at River, careful and considered in his paint application.

DAVE
I dunno. I didn't think it was an option. I didn't not want them. But, I suppose I didn't want them enough to do anything about it.

River proudly shows his Dad.

JAKE

Liv isn't the kind of person that
can be bought.

DAVE

I know. Anyway, we did kind of have
that chat. We had it on birthdays,
at weddings, each time we were
stupid-drunk, and we agreed:
Childfree and Christmas in Tulum.
But we never...and this...

Dave motions to his art.

DAVE (CONT'D)

...is all I've done with all that
fucking freedom.

Suddenly, the sound of police sirens. The curtain twitcher
flings open her front door and starts yelling abuse at them.
Lights come on up and down the street.

JAKE

Run, River! Run home!

River grabs his bag and, before fleeing the scene, writes
'Bel-end', with one 'L', across the estate agent's branded
car then gives the curtain twitcher the finger. Jake and Dave
are stunned. Now delayed, they gather up their belongings and
turn to run.

Jake, being athletic, is soon out of sight. In the scramble,
however, Dave loses one of his oversized trainers. Escape or
retrieve the lost trainer?

11 INT. CAR - DAY

11

Liv at the wheel. Dave in the passenger seat. The car pulls
up outside the secondary school where Dave is a teacher.

LIV

Two and a half thousand pounds.

DAVE

I'm sorry.

LIV

Two and a -

DAVE
I couldn't leave the trainer
behind! It was like *Sophie's*
Choice!

Liv holds a pile of paperwork topped with a court summons.

LIV
The 8th, Dave. That's the same day
I have to go and sign...

Liv vaguely motions to the letter from the fertility clinic.

Jake and River are at the gates. River waves enthusiastically
at Dave.

LIV (CONT'D)
Can't you just blame River? He did
the car didn't he? That's extra.

Jake spots Liv and is off like a shot.

LIV (CONT'D)
(at Jake)
Rad fucking Dad? Sad Dad!

LIV (CONT'D)
(to Dave)
Lucky for him he didn't get caught
and you're mug enough to take the
blame.

DAVE
I'll find the money. I'll do some
painting and decorating at the
weekends. I'm really sorry.

Dolly has found her way onto Liv's lap.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Oh hello.

DAVE (CONT'D)
She here to spy on your womb?

LIV
Yes that's right Dave. Wombwatch.
Chris Packham's actually in the
back. It's not my womb they want,
is it? Lucky you don't teach
Biology.

Dave exits the car.

LIV (CONT'D)

Dave?

LIV (CONT'D)

What do you want for dinner?

DAVE

(pointedly and defeatedly)

I don't know Liv. Whatever you want.

Dave walks forlornly up to and beyond the gates with River joining him. Liv watches them go.

12

INT. PARK - DAY

12

PETER

You've not got trouble with you today?

LIV

Who? My sister?

PETER

No! Buckley.

LIV

Oh no, he's with his dog walker. I just needed some space.

Peter struggles to pause the play mode on his iPhone.

PETER

It's a massacre.

LIV

What?

PETER

This podcast. It's one of those true crime series...about a school shooter.

LIV

Ooo, I love those. Not the shootings, obviously. Podcasts. They're just intrinsically 'good' aren't they? Plus, headphones on for hours, so no one can talk to you. Not that it's working out for you.

It starts to rain. Peter opens his huge golf umbrella and offers it to her.

PETER

Really, I'm glad of the company.
Here.

Liv joins him under the umbrella.

PETER (CONT'D)

Funny thing - I've spent the morning in a mint green Fiat 500 with 'bell-end' written on it.

LIV

Oh! Yeah?

Liv twigs what he might be referring to.

PETER

Yes. Spray-painted down the side of the estate agent's car. I don't think the couple with the Georgian townhouse were impressed. Only one 'L' in bell-end though, so the idiot didn't get much of an education.

LIV

You're moving?

PETER

Staying local hopefully. But the boys need more space, and Tupac definitely needs his own...wing.

PETER (CONT'D)

Look I've just started, if you want to...

Peter offers her an earpiece.

LIV

Oh. Yes. Thank you. You're not a serial killer are you?

PETER

Nope. Tupac, however...

Tupac cocks his ears.

13

INT. GP SURGERY - DAY

13

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER consults with Liv.

GP

The ultrasound has shown that the fibroid is still five to six centimetres so let me know if you start to experience any pain or significant blood loss. Meanwhile, I'm going to prescribe you some liquid iron tablets.

GP (CONT'D)

Now, I understand your mother passed away?

LIV

Yes. It was a 'tumour in her lady cave', as Dad put it. Weird saying. It was a long time ago now.

GP

I'd like to contact him as her next of kin in order to access her health records.

LIV

Should I be worried?

GP

Absolutely not. I'd just like to have a bit of background.

The GP sets up the corner curtain and bed for a smear test.

GP (CONT'D)

So if you could pop yourself on here.

Liv undresses and lies on the examination bed. Above her hangs a colourful children's mobile.

GP (CONT'D)

This might be a little cold.

The GP proceeds to take the smear test. Lubricating, inserting the clamp etc. This is Liv's Big Speech and the irony of the setting should not escape us.

The kids' mobile starts to sway.

LIV

I never avoided having kids I just never got round to it...I went to art college...awww...

Liv smiles through the discomfort.

LIV (CONT'D)

...and then I took photos on cruises to save for a crappy little flat in Streatham. And then I travelled some more...you remember The Beach?

GP

If you could put your hands under your bottom to tilt your pelvis a little for me?

LIV

Well I went to that beach, before the tsunami, it's gone now...and then there was...

The instrument is inserted.

LIV (CONT'D)

...iiiiinternet dating and I didn't meet Dave until I was 38. Now I have a fur baby, and a photography business and I'm really happy.

GP

All done.

GP (CONT'D)

Look you're preaching to the converted. I never had children, I'm learning flamenco and I read the Wolf Hall trilogy in a week ...in the Bahamas.

GP (CONT'D)

Talk to your Father. We'll join the dots.

Liv scrolls to her sister's contact and calls.

LIV
(on phone)
Hey, it's me. I need to get hold of
Dad. Call me back.

14 INT. SCHOOL ROOM - EVENING

14

Dave is seated at his desk, hosting evening detention. River sits opposite him. Peter's TWINS sit at the back. The clock ticks loudly. Dave is doodling some graf' designs on a pad. River is diligently doing his maths homework on his laptop. The twins whisper and motion to River.

DAVE
You know you didn't have to tell
your Mum what we did.

RIVER
I know.

DAVE
What did she say?

RIVER
She said you and Dad are worse than
children. She said she wished she
married a man on TV who's a plastic
surgeon. She's got a name for you.

The students mess around.

DAVE
Shut it.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Go on.

River shakes his head.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Mate...

River sighs.

RIVER
Wanksy.

DAVE
I see what she did there.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I was trying to make a political statement about capitalism, cancel culture and the abolition of the grass roots enterprise.

DAVE (CONT'D)

That, and I've really got my c's down lately.

Dave motions to a doodle of a 'c' on his pad. The students wrangle with a mobile phone.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I said, pack it in.

RIVER

Dad didn't rate the rainbow idea.

DAVE

Pff. You kidding? The LGBTQ community has turf wars over that tag with the NHS. It's brutal. Nah, you were expressing some serious brand politics.

RIVER

Hmmm. I wish you were my Dad.

DAVE

Well, that's, er, very nice of you. But your Dad's a good guy. He, er, runs really fast. Really...leggy.

RIVER

Yeah.

DAVE

But thanks.

Dave returns to his doodling and incorporates a rainbow.

River gets hit on the head by a ball of paper. At the same time he gets an alert on his phone. It's a photo of the estate agent's vandalised car and a 'Clapping Hands' emoticon. The twins at the back smile approvingly and River represses a smile himself.

15

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

15

Liv pulls into a supermarket car park. All the regular spaces are full. She crawls up to the 'Mother and Child' bays and celebrates as she sees a space.

Having parked in one of them, she disappears to the boot of the car and reappears with a Moses basket for the back seat. She adds a dog blanket then empties the rubbish from the bottom of her tote bag onto the back seat for authenticity.

16

INT. CAFE - DAY

16

Liv and Emily are at their usual table with a squirming Ruby, and Flo in a pram. Their conversation is constantly challenged by the two children.

EMILY

So, the meatball's still lurking?

LIV

Huh?

EMILY

The fibroid. I reckon two births flushed the shit out of all the evil that lurked in here or I'd have them too.

A WAITRESS arrives to take their order.

WAITRESS,

Good morning. Can I get you anything to drink?

EMILY

(to waitress)

Do you do Irish coffee?

WAITRESS,

I'm sorry, no.

EMILY

I'll have an oat latte, two sugars.

LIV

Decaf soy latte. No sugar.

Waitress leaves.

EMILY

By the way, I bought the domain name: borrow my baby.

LIV

Seriously?

EMILY

I saw a Netflix documentary on Japanese men who practically live on a shelf in a box...and people are so lonely...

LIV

You don't get much chat from a child.

EMILY

Incorrect.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(to Ruby)

Do you like Mummy's new hair.

RUBY

Go potty.

EMILY

See! Proper bants.

The waitress arrives with their order.

LIV

So, I think I've tracked him down to an Instagram handle; @hippygolucky. Last post was a month ago and he was on safari. Here, with a warthog. Guess which one he is.

LIV (CONT'D)

And before that at a casino in Vegas.

EMILY

You know what that is? Our inheritance.

ROGER (70s, bronzed, good head of hair, dresses like an aging musician)'s feed shows a series of lavish exploits.

EMILY (CONT'D)

That's Ruby's orthodontics.

A photo of Roger in front of the Hollywood sign.

LIV

A new camera lens.

Posing in front of a Ferrari.

EMILY

A car that doesn't stall at traffic lights.

Face down in a parachute jump.

LIV

Botox.

Eating oysters.

EMILY

Vaginoplasty.

LIV

Urgh. Let's try him on Insta then.

Liv, Emily and Ruby arrange themselves in frame on Liv's smartphone, ready to FaceTime. It momentarily connects with a view of Roger's leg from a smart device, face up on the ground.

LIV (CONT'D)

What was that?

EMILY

Try again.

The phone rings with an unrecognised number. The girls arrange themselves again and answer.

On the screen appears HELEN (late 30s, arty, dressed in Scandi labels, strong make-up, upbeat).

HELEN

Sorry, wrong number.

LIV

No, wait! Helen? It's me! Liv. Liv Wallis?

Liv covers the receiver.

LIV (CONT'D)

It's my agent.

Liv switches to audio and finds a corner, pulling up a hood and wrapping a scarf around her to try and create a soundproof environment.

RUBY

What Auntie Liv doing?

EMILY
She's making a camp.

Liv finishes her call and gathers up her belongings abruptly.

LIV
I've gotta go. Work opportunity.
Come round tomorrow and we'll try
Dad again. Love you Boo. Bye potty
hair.

17 EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

17

A Yummy Mummy is nosily peeking at the back seat of Liv's car. She busies herself with her keys on seeing Liv approach.

LIV
You pray all summer for the day
they go back to school and then you
miss them like crazy, right?

18 INT. HOME - NIGHT

18

Liv is in the kitchen, wearing a sombrero.

LIV (CONT'D)
Alexa! Play Gipsy Kings!

A muffled sound of guitars. Liv opens the freezer to find Alexa.

Liv makes the now icicle-covered Alexa the centre piece of a table, set with an selection of Mexican dishes. Dave enters. She hands him his own sombrero, together with a fake moustache.

DAVE
What's all this?

LIV
I got a job today.

Liv hands Dave a margarita.

DAVE
Oh yeah?

LIV

Yes. It's still 'family photography' but the family are posh, and Scottish, so they're going to fly me to Edinburgh and put me up in a fancy hotel and pay me enough that we might actually be able to go to Tulum this year.

DAVE

Well, good for you. You deserve it. Pack your new hoodie, it'll be Baltic.

LIV

(pause)

I'm a terrible girlfriend.

DAVE

Yeah, you're the worst.

LIV

Look, I'm not going to sell my incredible DNA. It's not...it's just not for us...is it? But we do need to buy a park bench, or I don't know, something.

Beat.

DAVE

We'll figure it out.

Beat.

LIV

Yeah.

Awkward silence. A sudden knock on the door. Neither are expecting anyone. Another knock. Louder this time.

LIV (CONT'D)

I'm coming, I'm coming!

Liv throws open the door to reveal a flushed and agitated Emily.

LIV (CONT'D)

Em! You OK?

EMILY

Something's happened to Dad.

Ends.