

1 INT. TIM'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING 1 *

We can't see where we are through the darkness. Suddenly, the gloom is broken by a slash of torch light.

CLOSE UP: A MAN'S HANDS in surgical gloves are delicately holding a pair of tweezers connected to a wire. He is trying to probe away at something buried in a small metal cavity. A digital clock is counting down seconds: 04:57, 04:56...etc.

CLOSE UP on the Man's eyes - focussed, exhilarated. He is wearing special protective glasses with micro torches attached to the arms. He wipes some sweat from his brow.

CLOSE UP: A pair of BLACK SHOES silently walk towards the Man, unseen.

Suddenly, a red alarm light flashes and a buzzer sounds off loudly.

The main lights burst on and the Man is temporarily blinded by the light.

A BOY is standing there: 9 years old, smartly turned out in his school uniform, with an unusually adult demeanour. This is MARCUS ELLIOTT. *

He looks at the Man sat at what we now see is the kitchen table. The Man is embarrassed to be caught playing a high stakes game of The Simpsons' "Operation" against the clock. This is TIM ELLIOTT, Marcus' father, mid 30's. *

TIM
(startled)
Marcus! *

MARCUS
Did I scare you? *

Marcus goes to fix himself a drink. On the counter is a small tray on which sits a glass bottle of best quality apple juice (labelled), a crystal tumbler and a little ice bucket. He pours himself a half measure of apple juice into a crystal tumbler, and drops in a couple of ice cubes with tongs. *

TIM
No. Of course not. How are you? How was school? *

Tim struggles to get the surgical gloves off and pack the game away.

MARCUS
Trepid.

TIM
Right.

(CONTINUED)

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MARCUS

(re: game)

Hope I'm not interrupting?

Marcus opens the fridge (to look for olives) but sees something inside that makes him furious. *

TIM

(laughing it off)

This? No, no. Must have been delivered by mistake actually.

MARCUS

(furious, presenting a packet of fish at Tim)

What is this? *

TIM

They're the Monkfish cheeks you asked for. *

MARCUS

Are they line caught?

TIM

It says, look, "sustainably sourced". *

MARCUS

Is that what I asked?

TIM

No, but that's pretty much.. *

MARCUS

(sitting, musing) *

You know why Judith left you?

TIM

Hey, now mummy loves you Marcus.

MARCUS

I know she loves me. We are simply trying to establish why she doesn't love you, Tim. *

TIM

Oh, okay.

MARCUS

Because you are weak. *

TIM

I see.

MARCUS

And you are boring.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Right.

MARCUS

And you are lazy.

TIM

(beat, to someone off-camera)

Is that true?

We now see that his ex-wife, JUDITH, is standing in the doorway. Late 30's, impassive face, coat on.

JUDITH

It's not that I didn't love you.

TIM

(to Marcus)

See!

JUDITH

I despised you.

TIM

Oh.

MARCUS

Your weakness drove her into the arms of another man, a man who could properly nourish her both intellectually as well as physically.

JUDITH

That's exactly right.

TIM

I really don't need to hear about Philip.

(beat, genial)

No offence Philip.

We now see that Judith's lover, PHILIP, is standing at the doorway. Late 40's. An odd looking guy.

PHILIP

I don't care. I ended up scoring the hottie!

TIM

Not in front of him. You're still his headmaster, for god's sake!

JUDITH

(to Marcus)

We'll see you next weekend.

MARCUS

But can't I just stay with you?

JUDITH

No! We're not doing this again, Marcus. Your father has legal custody of you now. You know that.

MARCUS

But I still don't understand how. I mean, look at him!

Tim is trying to pull a surgical glove off with his teeth.

TIM

(noticing the attention)

What?

The glove slaps him in the face.

JUDITH

It's just temporary. *

PHILIP

Just while mummy sorts out the legal stuff. *

JUDITH

(to Marcus) *

Yes? *

PHILIP

And her pill addiction. *

JUDITH

Philip!

MARCUS

(to Tim)

What's he talking about? *

Tim looks at Philip and Judith. This could be his moment to stick the knife in.

TIM

(beat)

I don't know. Nothing. It's Philip.

(directed at Philip)

He's a berk.

Judith breathes a sigh of relief; Philip smiles feebly.

JUDITH

Listen Marcus, when the court realises that your father is incapable of looking after you, they'll whisk you straight back to live with me.

*
*
*
*

MARCUS

But I want to live with you now.

Tim looks genuinely upset.

JUDITH

It'll go before you know it. In fact, do you hear that?

*
*

Everyone listens.

MARCUS

No.

JUDITH

(at Tim, with menace)
It's the sound of your father running out of time. Tick tick, tick tick, tick..!

*

(beat)

Philip, make a note of the washing up.

Philip whips out his iPhone and takes photos of the couple of dirty plates in the sink, before looking apologetically at Tim.

JUDITH (cont'd)

(to Marcus)

Now come on. Come and say goodbye.

Marcus comes in to hug Judith but she sticks out her hand to shake. Marcus shakes her hand, disappointed.

Meanwhile, Philip is hugging Tim enthusiastically, his cheek pressed against Tim's chest.

*
*

PHILIP

You take care.

TIM

Don't. Get off me.

Philip pinches Tim's cheeks.

PHILIP

I could just eat you up.

(beat, to Judith)

Come on Goose. I'm feeling the need for speed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (5)

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PHILIP (cont'd)
(beat, to Tim)
Call me.

TIM
No.

Philip and Judith leave.

TIM (cont'd)
(to Marcus)
Phew! Now that the oldies are out
of our hair, how about you and me
nip out..
(Marcus turns and walks
out)
..for pizza.
(aloud to Marcus)
Good. Alone time. Good idea.

Tim slumps down onto a chair, deep in thought about his predicament.

TIM (cont'd)
(muttering to himself)
...like I'm the bad parent. Time is
ticking! Oooh, I'm
really..(scared).

The digital clock hits zero and emits a *SHRILL ALARM* that causes Tim to scream and fall off his chair.

CUT TO: