

**EXT. STREET OUTSIDE JOJO'S HOUSE, 1987. EVENING.**

15-YEAR-OLD LOUIS is standing at the street corner, practising cool poses and trying and failing miserably to yo-yo. A PENSIONER walks by, frowning. Louis straightens himself and pretends he was doing nothing.

PENSIONER

Tsk! Haven't kids today got anything better to do than hang around street corners?

LOUIS

I am not "hanging around". I'm waiting for someone to repair the phone box so I can vandalise it again.

The pensioner snorts and walks on, and is nearly run over by HEALTH on his bike. It is a shopper, with a basket on the front, and he is wearing a duffel coat and full safety kit.

HEATH

Louis! there you are!

LOUIS

Heath! Oh, sh...

Heath gets off his bike, carefully observing all correct procedures.

HEATH

When you didn't arrive at my house, I called your house, and your mum said you had left ages ago. She wanted to call the police, but I said it was statistically highly unlikely that you were dead as violent crime is extremely rare in this area.

LOUIS

Heath, I'm sorry, I completely -

HEATH

It's all right, we couldn't metal-detect anyway. Mum needed it to look for her gentle jewellery.

LOUIS

Are you sure she said *gentle* jewellery?

HEATH

Why are you standing outside Joanne Jones's house? I hope you are not going out with her, because she is not good enough for you.

LOUIS

Actually, you'd be surprised. Me and Jojo just had a really long chat, and you know, when she's not with her friends, she's lovely. In fact, she's coming back out after her tea.  
(conspiratorial) I reckon I'm *in*.

HEATH

Oh. What time did she go in?

LOUIS

About ... an hour and a half ago.

HEATH

Ninety minutes. That's at least 70

minutes longer than the average  
British tea.

LOUIS

We have a bond now, Heath. She'll be  
here.

HEATH

If you say so. Where's your coat?  
You're at risk of viral infection.

LOUIS

Joanne was cold, so I lent her it.  
It's called chivalry.

HEATH

Why don't you knock and ask for it  
back?

LOUIS

Cos I don't want her to think I'm a  
wimp.

HEATH

I'll get it. She *knows* I'm a wimp.

Heath sets off. Louis grabs him by the coat-tails.

LOUIS

No! Heath, I'll be fine.

Louis escorts Heath to a safe distance.

LOUIS (CONT)

Anyway, how was France?

HEATH

It was all right. Most days Mum and Gilbert left me in the games room while they went to a *special* beach, and I got the high score on Galaxians, although it had only been there a week. And one day I tried rabbit, but then I was sick and -

LOUIS

I was just being polite, Heath, I didn't *actually* want to know. The point is, did you get what I asked for?

HEATH

Oh! Yes.

Heath fumbles in his duffel coat pocket and hands over a small brown package.

LOUIS

Heath!

Louis grabs the package, stuffs it under his shirt, and drags Heath behind a nearby wall.

LOUIS (CONT)

You can't just hand it to me in broad daylight!

HEATH

I wrapped it in discreet packaging.

LOUIS

Heath, porn is the *only* thing people wrap in discreet packaging. You might

as well have given it to me in a giant pink cake in the shape of a giant naked French woman!

HEATH

Nana Martin gets grapes in brown paper bags.

LOUIS

Why would you be giving me grapes in the middle of the street?

HEATH

You might be ill.

Louis checks to make sure no one is coming, surreptitiously pulls out the package, and starts to unwrap it.

LOUIS (CONT)

It's very *small* porn, Heath.

Louis shakes the package. It rattles. He opens it, takes out a cassette, and holds it up.

LOUIS

Heath. It's an audio tape.

HEATH

Anything larger would have been exceedingly hard to smuggle in.

LOUIS

(waving tape in Heath's face) It's a *porn audio tape*. In a foreign language! When I asked you to get me some French porn, I meant something with *pictures*. Because the great

thing about pictures is, it doesn't matter what language they're in!

HEATH

But you're good at French.

LOUIS

Heath, I'm third in my set in the second year. So I'll be fine, as long as it's porn set in a grocer's shop or a train station! (pocketing the tape anyway) Fortunately for you, I probably won't need it, because if everything goes according to plan, Jojo will be helping me skip that phase of my development.

HEATH

May I watch?

LOUIS

Don't be a perv!

HEATH

Can I borrow the pornography then?

LOUIS

No! In fact, could you just go? Joanne might come out any time, and she'll never snog me if she sees me with you.

HEATH

O ... OK.

A glum-looking Heath picks up his bike and starts wheeling it away. Louis sighs.

LOUIS

Heath - sorry ... I didn't mean it. I'm just ... nervous about Jojo. You can stay.

Heath stops his bike and turns around, smiling.

LOUIS (CONT)

But you leave the *second* she comes out, all right?

HEATH

Agreed.

Heath leans his bike against the wall and returns. Louis and Heath stand together uneasily for a while.

HEATH

Would you like a ride on my bicycle?

LOUIS

I'd love to, Heath, really, if there was just a slightly smaller probability of being laughed into the path of an oncoming lorry.

Heath looks miserable again.

**INT. PUB 2007. NIGHT.**

The clock on the pub wall reads 8.54.

We pan down to 35-YEAR-OLD LOUIS, sitting in the same chair, who is looking up at the clock. he sighs and looks down at the phone in his hands. he slowly opens the flap and prepares to dial. As he is about to dial, it rings. Shocked, he throws it up in the air and juggles it for a bit, then catches it and answers.

LOUIS

(face falling) Oh, hi, Gret. How's the party? (wait) Cool. (wait) No, she ... I don't think she's coming. (wait) Well, yeah, thanks. But if i'm so eligible, how come no one's eliged me in two and a half years? (wait) Huh. No, not really in the mood for a party. I'll see you later.

Louis takes the phone from his ear and dials a new number. he waits for the voicemail message.

LOUIS

Hi. Anna. Louis here. Now, this is kind of an awkward message to leave, because it's two messages, really. The first one's like this: if you remembered about tonight, and you haven't turned up, without letting me know, I'd just like you to know that because of you, I've just had one of the worst nights of my life. Because of you, I'm going to feel shit for a week. Because of you, my self-esteem has taken a blow from which it may never fully recover. Because of you,

I trust women less, and it'll probably be months before I have the courage to ask someone else out on a date. Because of you, a little piece of my love for the human race has just died. So *fuck you*, I never want to see you or even hear your name again. (pause) Now, the second message: hey, if something happened and you genuinely couldn't make it tonight, I hope you're OK, and maybe we can meet up some other time?

Louis ends the call and closes his phone. He finishes his drink. Pan across to DVD SELLER, who is sitting next to him.

DVD SELLER

She definitely give you right number?

LOUIS

You know ... probably not. We arranged this by email. Still.

Louis stands up and puts his chair under the table.

LOUIS (CONT)

(extending hand) Thanks. it's been educational.

DVD SELLER

No, thank you!

DVD seller produces the wad of cash that Louis has given him and starts counting it.

As Louis passes the bar, he spots the BARMAID, and does a double-take. he pulls his lapels tighter and heads over.

LOUIS

Hi.

BARMAID

Hey, handsome man. She no come?

LOUIS

She very bitch lady.

The barmaid giggles coquettishly.

LOUIS

Look. I know this is a bit sudden,  
but ... I feel as if we made a real  
connection tonight. I was wondering  
if ... maybe ... I could take you to a  
play or something next week?

BARMAID

(frowning) Oh no. I no date loser!

Louis deflates.

LOUIS

Can't say I blame you.

Louis turns and walks towards the exit. As he passes the juke box, Foreigner's I Wanna Know What Love Is strikes up. Louis stops in his tracks, leans down and rips the juke box plug out of the wall. Everyone in the pub looks round as he saunters out.

**EXT. STREET OUTSIDE JOJO'S HOUSE, 1987. NIGHT.**

Louis and Heath are still waiting. the wind has got up and there are few house lights left on. Heath is yo-yoing expertly.

HEATH

The air temperature and wind  
direction suggest impending rain.  
Perhaps we should leave.

LOUIS

No. She said she would come, and I  
believe her.

Louis pointedly sits on the kerb.

HEATH

OK then.

Heath stands beside him. Rain begins to descend. Heath pulls out a small brolly and opens it above Louis.

GRAMS: I'll Stand By You, The Pretenders

**POSTSIG: INT. LOUIS 35'S BEDROOM, 2007 - NIGHT**

GRAMS: Sexcrime, Eurythmics

35-YEAR-OLD LOUIS is sitting up in bed. He presses play on the tape machine on his bedside table and lies down. We hear sexy French voices from the tape.

After a few seconds, Louis hurriedly sits up and presses stop. He turns, picks up a small dictionary from his pillow, and rapidly leafs to the right page. He runs his finger along a line, puts the dictionary back down, lies down again, and starts frantically touching himself under the covers.

A few seconds later he stops, sits up, and presses play again. More sexy French voices. A few seconds later, he hurriedly sits up and presses stop. He turns, picks up a small dictionary ...

ENDS