

ACT ONE

Scene One

The first act opens with two thirty seven year old English tourists travelling in a rented car along the Spanish coast road the A7, having almost completed a journey of over 100 km's from their hotel in Torremolinos to their destination of Gibraltar for an enjoyable day trip.

The opening scene would show the interior of a moving car, with a folded beach towel on the backseat together with a large holdall, a copy of a newspaper and a paperback novel or two carelessly thrown next to it. (On stage two chairs would suffice as the front seats and two chairs with a throwover could provide the rear seats) Kerry has her handbag nestled at her feet, while Andy grips the steering wheel with dogged determination.

Andy is a normal looking guy, unremarkable in appearance and physique. His wife is a typical Essex girl, all blonde hair, pink lip gloss and wearing a pair of very sensible killer heels.

(The car radio is playing the following news report from an English language ex-pat local station.)

ANNOUNCER: A spokesman for the Instituto de Empresa in Madrid has confirmed that the number of immigrants living in Spain today has now reached almost ten percent of the current population. The shadow Minister of Immigration has declared that perhaps as many as one million of these migrants are living here illegally. He further went on to state that this massive influx could have a potentially unsettling effect on the stability of the Iberian way of life if allowed to continue, especially with regard to the present economic climate. The government in Madrid has promised to respond to these serious concerns by bringing the matter before the EU commission at the next economic summit in two months time, perhaps with a view to imposing tighter controls on all of Spain's natural borders. In the Helmand province of Afghanistan a roadside mortar bomb has killed three British soldiers, they are named as twenty three year old Lance Corporal David Jones of the first Battalion Welsh Guards and Private*(fades)*

KERRY: Put some music on Andy, all this talk of war and illegal immigrants makes me depressed. We came on holiday to get away from all that kind of stuff.

ANDY: *(Fiddles with the tuner and manages to find a Spanish radio station playing some Latin American beat)*

KERRY: *(Reaches for the volume control and turns the sound up) Wow party time, let's samba. (Moves her arms about in time to the beat of the music)*

ANDY: Don't you think we both did enough of that last night?

KERRY: Lightweight.

ANDY: I'm not a lightweight, I just pace myself that's all. One of us had to drive today if you remember.

KERRY: Don't know why you worry, this isn't Basildon high street on a Friday night. What possible reason could the old Bill have for pulling us over?

ANDY: Guardia Civil.

KERRY: Sorry?

ANDY: *(Repeats himself clearly)* Guardia Civil. *(Lets the information sink in)* That's what the Spanish police are called, not the old Bill.

KERRY: How interesting. *(Looks directly at him with her head on one side)* But there you go again, full of useless knowledge aren't you Andy, a real Ask Jeeves. Perhaps you should change your name by deed poll, then I could boast of having married Jeeves Jackson the walking encyclopaedia, ask him any question you like, then pull his plonker and watch him speak.

ANDY: Very amusing darling, now could you just pass me my sunglasses I think they're in the glove box.

KERRY: Your problem is you read too many books. If you took part in the real world a little bit more instead of living in a dream world all the time you might get on better with people.

ANDY: *(Taking the glasses off her and putting them on)* It's called escapism. Anyhow don't you think I see enough of *(The next words spoken with over-emphasis to make his point)* the real world five days a week. *(Slight pause)* And if you mean would I ever get on better with people like the Corbett's, well the answer is an emphatic never.

KERRY: Did I say the Corbett's?

ANDY: You didn't have to because I know the strategy of your inferences by now. That family were loud, offensive and couldn't string a sentence together without using the F-word.

KERRY: You swear.

ANDY: I do, but usually under my breath and not as a constant adjective when indulging in everyday conversation or if addressing waiters, bar staff or other members of the general public. Mind you come to think of it my old English lecturer at Uni was always reminding his students that a colourful adjective was meant to enhance a noun. He should have met Danny boy.

KERRY: The food in that restaurant was shit.

ANDY: The food in that restaurant was cold.

KERRY: Well it tasted shit.

ANDY: That's because your new found friends from Bolton had never tried Spanish *gazpacho* soup before. To them it was like asking an Inuit Indian to eat one of your mums Yorkshire puddings.

KERRY: What's wrong with my mums Yorkshire pudding?

ANDY: Nothing particularly, but as a replacement for seal blubber and caribou steaks it wouldn't go down too well north of the Arctic Circle.

KERRY: (*Shaking her head*) There you go again, what the hell has all this got to do with the Corbett's?

ANDY: A lot actually.

KERRY: (*Smiling*) You're just pissed off because Danny's a great dancer, while you cling to the edge of the dance floor like a typical wallflower.

ANDY: Oh I won't deny he's got all the right moves, the original Northern soul man. I mean who did he think he was trying to be last night, James bloody Brown?

KERRY: You're jealous.

ANDY: I don't think so, because you see I've always tried to avoid going through life making a complete tit of myself. But if I'm been perfectly honest Kerry they weren't really *my* sort of people.

(Awkward silence while KERRY looks out of the side window)

KERRY: Oh and just who are *you're* sort of people Mister Perfect?

ANDY: Not the Corbett's of Bolton.

KERRY: (*Turns from looking out of the side window*) Where Becky Miller's friends your type of people?

ANDY: (*Exasperatingly*) Oh Kerry please, I thought we'd come on holiday to get away from all that. You promised me before we left home that you'd not mention her name once while we were on holiday.

KERRY: I can't remember any such promise.

ANDY: You do remember, because jokingly I said to you at the time that it might be an idea to get a solicitor to draw up a contract to that effect.

KERRY: *(Looks at her husband contemptuously)* It's not funny Andy. But that's you all over isn't it. Spend six months shagging some tart from work and then pretend it never happened.

ANDY: *(He reaches for the volume control on the radio and turns the music up and then begins singing to himself to let KERRY know the subject is closed)*
La-de-da-de-da

KERRY: *(Reaches over to the back seat and produces a map from the holdall and begins to open it up in front of her)* Anyway where is Gibraltar on this map, I can't see it.

ANDY: It's probably marked on there as El Penon de Gibraltar, that's what they call it in Spain. *(Quickly pointing)* There, just below La Linea.

KERRY: Why not just call it Gibraltar.

ANDY: Because although it's part of the Spanish mainland it's been owned by Britain since 1713 when the Treaty of Utrecht awarded us permanent sovereignty over it. Of course they want it back now. In fact they've been pushing the European Union for years to bring it back under their rule.

KERRY: Who have?

ANDY: *(Sarcastically)* The fucking Koreans, who do you think?

KERRY: There you go swearing again. No better than the Corbett's. *(Points an accusing finger at ANDY)* People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones should they Andy Pandy.

ANDY: Well, you do ask some daft questions sometimes.

KERRY: Oh I've been asking myself a lot of questions in recent week's boyo, and for some reason your name always manages to crop up in the answers.

ANDY: You don't say.

(Silence)

KERRY: She fancied you.

ANDY: Who did?

KERRY: Sharon Corbett. I could tell the way she kept looking at you over her marguerites whenever you held forth on one of your opinions about something. She hung on your every word as if you were Basildon's answer to Melvyn Bragg.

ANDY: I didn't notice.

KERRY: Well of course you didn't because she wasn't your type. Men tend to look right through women they're not physically attracted to. Now if she had looked like one of The Pussycat Dolls it would have been all "I'll call over the waiter and complain about this terrible food," or "How interesting, do tell me all about your Easter break in Bridlington it sounds fascinating darling."

ANDY: The woman looked like Ricky Gervais in drag.

KERRY: My point exactly.

ANDY: And she had two large tattoos on her ample biceps if I remember correctly. Not really into that kind of thing I'm afraid.

KERRY: Becky Miller had a tattoo.

ANDY: Oh God not this subject again.

KERRY: When I had my little chat with her in that wine bar after work I could see a tiny blue unicorn on her left ankle.

ANDY: You call what took place in that wine bar a little chat? That little chat as you call it nearly got you slapped with a charge for common assault.

KERRY: She deserved it the cheeky bitch. Sympathising with me and saying that she realised it must be difficult for me not been able to conceive. Told me that all men want to leave something of themselves behind for posterity, that it made them feel as if they'd achieved something in life. *(Looks out of the side window)* Fucking sauce.

ANDY: Now who's swearing?

KERRY: She deserved everything she got, the skinny little tart.

ANDY: *(Breaks off their conversation to concentrate on the road ahead)* Now that was close we nearly missed the turnoff, I thought you were supposed to be navigating today.

KERRY: Don't try and change the subject Andy.

ANDY: I'm not trying to change the subject babe I just don't want us to end up in Cadiz that's all.

KERRY: And don't babe me either.

ANDY: *(Peering ahead through the windscreen)* Here we go this is the right direction by the look of it, yes Gibraltar straight ahead. *(Turns to KERRY)* Can you do me a favour and get the passports out.

KERRY: Why?

ANDY: *(Pulling a frown of annoyance)* Well because we need them to get into Gibraltar of course.

KERRY: *(Reaches into the handbag lying at her feet)* Here's yours.

ANDY: *(Taking it from her)* Thanks. And yours as well please.

KERRY: *(Shrugs her shoulders)* I didn't bring it.

ANDY: What do you mean you didn't bring it?

KERRY: I left it back at the hotel.

ANDY: Why the hell did you do that?

KERRY: Well you've got yours, and all the traveller's cheques are in your name, so what's the point?

ANDY: Bloody hell. *(Holds his passport up to the drivers side window with just a hint of a guilty look on his face as they are waved through passport control by a Royal Gibraltar Police Constable)*

KERRY: Told you.

ANDY: Told me what.

KERRY: That I didn't need my passport.

ANDY: *(Shakes his head bemusedly)* Oh well ours is not to question why. I suppose with us all now been EU citizens passing through border control today is just a formality.

KERRY: Andy, stop fretting all the time. My God you're becoming a real old woman.

ANDY: Am I? Well I'm not going to worry about anything else today, just take life as it comes. *(Looks about him as he drives the car)* Yes, I think we're both going to enjoy Gibraltar, I can feel it in my *aqua vitae*.

ACT ONE

Scene Two

The scene is supposed to be the car park at the top of The Rock of Gibraltar. Kerry can be seen feeding a group of apes from a half consumed bag of crisps, while Andy is sitting on a wall just behind her.

ANDY: I don't know if that's such a good idea to keep feeding those monkeys. *(Flips through a small guide book)* It says here that they are Barbary apes originally from North Africa, and are the only apes native to Europe. But, and it gives a specific warning, they are liable to bite if approached and therefore caution should be taken.

KERRY: *(Continuing to feed the animals with a silly encouraging grin on her face)* Oh but they're so cute Andy. Look at the little one clinging onto its mother.

ANDY: Well I don't trust them for one thing, and I don't want them climbing on the car either. Remember what happened at that safari park last year.

KERRY: Stop complaining, you wanted rid of that old banger anyway.

ANDY: I actually would have rather traded it in with an aerial and two side mirrors still attached. By the time I came to sell it my pride and joy looked as if it had been taken through a Finnish car rally.

KERRY: *(Shouts out unexpectedly)* Ah, the little shit. *(Quickly pulls back her hand)*

ANDY: What happened?

KERRY: That one over there. *(Pointing and looking annoyed)* Can you see the one with the pink arse? It just snatched the packet right out of my fingers.

ANDY: Well I did warn you. Why don't you just leave them alone? Anyhow they probably get fed twice a day by some park warden or one of the keepers of the rock. Let's face it they don't look particularly emaciated from where I'm sitting.

(KERRY walks over and sits next to ANDY on the wall. She closes her eyes and leans back to soak up the sun)

KERRY: Nothing much here is there? Gibraltar I mean. Pretty quiet sort of place really, not at all what I imagined.

ANDY: Oh in what way?

KERRY: Well I thought Gibraltar was supposed to be a tax haven, you know full of millionaires and their huge motor boats moored up against some exotic marina.

ANDY: You're thinking of Monaco.

KERRY: Am I?

ANDY: Monaco's in the south of France darling and this is the south of Spain, in case you've forgotten already.

KERRY: Ha-bloody-ha, darling. *(Looks around her aimlessly)* Not much doing though is there?

ANDY: You mean there's a distinct lack of huge shopping malls and over priced designer clothes shops. No lurid and tacky themed bars offering endless chances to indulge in spontaneous outbursts on their karaoke machine during happy hour.

KERRY: Listen, there's nothing wrong with a bit of retail therapy to help a girl get through the day, or a drink or two to help you on your way. *(Turns to look at ANDY)* Talking of shopping, why is it that whenever we go on holiday you always take someone back a tea towel as a present?

ANDY: Because they're practical.

KERRY: Practical?

ANDY: *(Turns to her)* Well think about it for a moment. Tea towels are easy to pack into a suitcase, they're a pictorial souvenir of the place you've visited, and if the eventual recipient doesn't like it they can always use it for the

purpose it was intended, and no ones any the worse off. The donor doesn't feel he's wasted his money and the recipient has a useful kitchen accessory for the use thereof.

KERRY: *(Shaking her head in disbelief)* You're unbelievable.

ANDY: For example, who is going to say "I'll do the washing up and you can dry because I find that image of Saint Peters church in Rome slightly offensive."
(Slight pause) Unless of course we have a devout Muslim in the family of whom I know nothing about.

KERRY: Wasn't you brother Colin's ex-wife a Muslim?

ANDY: *(Seriously)* She was a druid, not a follower of the Islamic faith.

KERRY: Oh yeah of course. And if I remember correctly your mum got all upset because she couldn't buy a big fancy outfit for their wedding.

ANDY: *(Laughs at the memory)* Yeah she'd have looked pretty silly turning up at that stone temple on the Brecon Beacons looking like one of the Ascot fraternity.

KERRY: Did you know that your mum must have two dozen of your damned tea towels stowed away in one of her kitchen drawers? Saw them all laying one on top of the other when we stayed over last Christmas, couldn't get the bloody thing shut properly because of them all.

ANDY: My point exactly, one day they'll come in very useful.

KERRY: Well I prefer to buy people presents that are a little more personal than a cheap piece of linen.

ANDY: More personal or simply more expensive.

KERRY: Both. My God if I came back with one of your crappy tea-towels for my sister Jackie she'd sling it back in my face.

ANDY: Say no more. This is the very same sibling that thinks the credit crunch is just someone running over her vast collection of visa cards in a Chelsea tractor.

KERRY: I can't talk sensibly to you. *(Shakes her head again)* You're always putting people down or bad mouthing them behind their back. Of course I don't need to remind you that her Kevin built our extension almost single handed.

ANDY: I know he did, the poor bastard. He's spent nearly every weekend over the last six months on a job that should have taken six weeks from start to finish, and all to get away from Cruella de Vill and her brood of rabid puppies we have to call nephews. Your brother in law was over our place so often I felt like issuing him with a green card for permanent residency.

KERRY: That's bollocks.

ANDY: That's the truth sweetheart, wake up and smell the roses. Kevin's glad to spend as little time as possible in their family residence. He's found a tripartite excuse of absence; the Black Swan public house, the Emirates football stadium and our slowly developing extension.

KERRY: (*Shrugs as if to change the subject and points in front of her*) What's over there in that direction, that piece of land you can just make out right across the sea?

ANDY: (*Putting one hand up to his forehead to shield his eyes from the sun*) North Africa of course. Apparently in Greek mythology Hercules picked up a large rock and placed it right here in the very spot we now call Gibraltar. Then he was supposed to have looked around him and choosing another rock flung that one right across the expanse of water before us, which just happened to fall somewhere in Morocco. Where we are sitting now used to be called one of The Pillars of Hercules, the geographical limit of ancient civilisation before the time of Christ. Once you sailed past this point it would have been every man for himself because it used to be thought that the Atlantic Ocean was the edge of the world. Only the very brave and reckless ventured beyond the familiar confines of the Mediterranean Sea back in those days.

KERRY: (*Seriously*) What about Colombo?

ANDY: He was an American detective who wore a white raincoat and smoked a cigar. What about him?

KERRY: Don't take the piss Andy you know very well who I mean.

ANDY: If you mean Christopher Columbus, well he sailed from Huelva, a port further up the coast near the Portuguese border, so he didn't actually pass through this gap between Europe and Africa. Nevertheless he and his crew would have been pretty frightened of what lay beyond sight of land because back then they were negotiating unknown territory, and for all anyone knew they could have sailed right off the edge of the world, never to be seen again. (*Looks at KERRY*) You know I've always compared their discovery of America to the Apollo astronauts successfully landing on the moon.

KERRY: (*Dreamily*) I always fancied that Tom Hanks. I mean I know he wasn't ultra fit like Brad Pitt or Tom Cruise, but there was something safe about him. In fact he always used to remind me of yourself, until you went off the rails.

ANDY: What do you mean, off the rails? (*Shakes his head incredulously*) I've never gone off the rails. You make it sound like I'm a crack addict who sleeps rough in shop doorways and begs for loose change.

KERRY: You know what I mean.

ANDY: (*Folding his arms*) I'm not going to listen. Can't we just string a few hours together without bringing up that particular subject again?

KERRY: I'll try if you promise to buy me a drink in one of those exciting bars back in town.

ANDY: (*Getting off the wall*) Okay it's a deal, cheap at half the price. Where's it to be, the seaman's mission hall or the Old Anchor public house. Hey, maybe we could have a game of darts or find an old sea dog with a wooden leg who can dance better than Danny Corbett if they've got a jukebox on the premises.

KERRY: (*A pained expression on her face*) Whatever, just as long as we can sit down because my feet are killing me in these shoes.

ANDY: (*Looks at her feet*) One day you'll actually surprise us all and come out wearing a pair of sensible trainers.

KERRY: For your information Jimmy Choo doesn't make trainers.

ANDY: But if they did they'd probably be pink.

KERRY: (*Spoken as in the Carlsberg advert*) And if they did they'd probably be the best trainers in the world.