

SIT DOWN, SIT DOWN

by

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For Yorkie & Peaches.

FADE IN:

EXT. URBAN FIELD, DIMMING LIGHT.

Two horses and a pony graze in a gated field. It's late in the evening, a storm is brewing. Gusts of wind move what's left of the grass. In the distance is a flickering TESCO sign. Elderly MARGOT shuffles into frame, bread bag in hand, and taps the metal gate. She whistles; they come loping towards her.

MARGOT

Here, here. Hello, fella, hello.

The horses gather around her. She holds her hand out flat, feeds them potato peels.

MARGOT

How are we? How are we, petal?
Gone skinny, you poor things. They
not feeding you?

She cups one of the horses jaw in her palm and pets his face roughly, picks dirt from the corner of its eye.

MARGOT

I'll be having words with Ms.
Molloy, the aul' cow. Yes, I
will. And we'll have you fat by
spring.

Behind her, in the near distance, we see MICHAEL (70's) and LISA (MID-40's) unpacking the boot of a car, carrying children's toys into the apartment block. Michael disappears under the arch of the gate and Lisa closes the boot of the car. She steps forward, slightly more into focus, and wraps her cardigan around herself. Her hair blows in the wind. Swaying Christmas lights adorn the building behind her, scattered.

LISA

Mam.

Margot ignores her, continues speaking hushed words to the horse.

LISA

Mam! Come in, will you? It's
baltic.

Still, Margot stays put. She leans forward to kiss the horse on the nose. Ambulance sirens sound in the distance.

MARGOT
Merry Christmas, pet.

EXT. TESCO CAR PARK, EVENING.

Opening shot of the car, empty aside from the shopping bags that fill the back. Muffled voices can be heard from outside. The driver's door opens and Michael gets in. He checks the time on his watch and glances outside. Margot is out of frame.

MARGOT
-What can you do, Maureen? There's no helping it. Sure, it's only a few months 'till the weather picks up again. In the new year it'll be sorted. I know. I know. Listen, love, I've to make it home to the kids, but I'll give them a call. Alright, alright. See you, now.

Draped in a coat and scarf, MARGOT gets in after him. She holds her hands up to her face and breaths air into them. Michael starts the car and, in silence, they pull out onto the street. As the windows fog up, Frank Sinatra's "You Make Me Feel So Young" can be heard playing lowly over the sound of the heaters. Michael drums his fingers on the wheel to the beat, and Margot sits beside him, fussing over her hair in the window above the dashboard.

MARGOT
She made a mess of it, Michael.

MICHAEL
She didn't. You look smashing.

MARGOT
She rushed it, she did. It's nothin' like what I asked for.

MICHAEL
Thats how it always looks, love. I promise you.

They slow down at a red light. Michaels eyes track the movement of a figure crossing the road. His face lights up.

MICHAEL
Charlie Quinn.

MARGOT
You're a funny man.

MICHAEL

I swear to God, Margot. Look at the walk on him! He still has it.

Margot, who'd been distracted in the mirror, picks up on Michael's tone and closes it.

MARGOT

Oh, God. The mad fucker.

A beat of silence passes. Michael smiles.

MICHAEL

D'you wanna say hello?

MARGOT

No.

MICHAEL

Why not?

MARGOT

Have you lost your head?

Michael reaches for the lever to lower the window, starts turning it.

MICHAEL

Ah, we have to. Your old flame, love. Where are your manners? It'd only be polite.

MARGOT

Mick. Mick! Stop, will you! Put the window up!

MARGOT reaches across and smacks his arm. MICHAEL, laughing, flinches but keeps rolling it down. He leans out the window and whistles.

MICHAEL

How are ye, Charlie!

Infamous CHARLIE, out of frame, stops dead in the centre of the zebra crossing, casting a shadow in between MARGOT and MICHAEL. Margot, caught, drops her hand from her husband's arm and forces a pained smile.

CHARLIE

Oh, Jesus. Margot Murphy. Do my eyes deceive me?

MARGOT

Unfortunately not.

CHARLIE

A Christmas Miracle.

MICHAEL dissolves into laughter.

MARGOT sits, politely fuming.

FRANK SINATRA
(from the speaker)
—you make me feel so *young*!

EXT. OUTSIDE APARTMENT, SAME DAY, LIGHT SLIGHTLY DIMMER.

The sound of a car door slamming opens the scene. Micheal gets out after Margot, still smiling. They argue over the roof of the car.

MICHAEL
I was only messing with you, love!
I didn't want to be rude! You've
no reason to be so harsh on the
fella— he's no Michael Molony, I
know, but he's just a bit slow, is
all. And his mother only went the
month before last, Ms. Power was
telling me—

MARGOT
It doesn't matter, Mick, I told
you not to! Embarrassing me in
front of the whole of Finglas—

MICHAEL
The whole of Finglas? Baby, we
were already in Glasnevin!

MARGOT
— And Eunice was stood there! You
know that's where she sells her
flowers! That aul' bitch always
has something to say, and you,
running your mouth, with your
pleasantries— *how are you,*
Charlie?

Having spilled from the door of the apartment, the cars in the background and the small patch of grass as they argued, MICHAEL and MARGOT's extensive family now dot the scene behind them; 8 grown adults, some teenagers, several children, all well dressed for the occasion. Some laugh, some roll their eyes, but the overwhelming feeling is of humour, fondness. This happens often.

Michael sighs, and glances to address them. Margot does the same. Unaware, they mirror each other.

MICHAEL
Giving me a dog's life, on
Christmas Day!

MARGOT
Making a show of me, on Christmas
day!

There's a brief pause. Both Grandparents stand,
exasperated. From the crowd, a little girl is prodded
forward.

GRANDCHILD
I like your haircut, Nanny.

The tension dissolves. MARGOT, hesitantly smiling again.

MARGOT
Thank you, doll.

MICHAEL
(eager to please)
See?

MARGOT
Shut up, you.

She marches forward; the crowd parts for her, and the
family turns to follow MARGOT into the doorway.

The camera stays in the car park with MICHAEL. We see the
window of a first floor apartment light up. Music floods
through the apartment door as the last of the children
trail in after their parents, and Margot can be heard
telling them to sit down. He watches them go with an air
of tenderness, then dips his hand into his pocket. In the
dimming December light, his phone screen glows; MATER
HOSPITAL, 2 MISSED CALLS.

We see him hesitate, then put the phone away. For a
moment he stands in silence and watches the family
through the window, then clears his throat, adjusts his
suit jacket, and heads in. Under his breath, he sings
along to the apartment's music.

INT. HOSPITAL, DAY.

Michael sits in the Hospital hallway. His hair is combed
to perfection, and his leather shoes shine at his feet.
He sits with his elbows resting on his knees, holding a
YORKIE chocolate bar. The doctor's muffled voice passes
through the gap under the door. Michael pretends to study
the Yorkie's wrapping. He bounces his leg. Anxious.

The door opens, and out steps Margot, dressed in full pink.

MARGOT

I will, I will. And you send my best wishes to that daughter of yours, yes. Alright, now. Thank you, Doctor, thank you.

She closes the door and heaves a sigh, then comes to sit beside Michael. Lethargic, she leans back in the chair and studies the ceiling.

MARGOT

Well.

Michael glances at her. They share a long look. She gives him a tight-lipped smile. He looks away, drags his hand across his eyes. He sits for a moment and then, almost frantically, he rips the chocolate bar open. He breaks a square off and presses it into Margot's hand, then puts one into his mouth and chews roughly.

A moment passes. Margot holds the chocolate in her hand, unsure how to console her husband. Silence stretches.

MARGOT

Mick—

Cutting her off, Michael wraps his arm around her neck and presses a hard kiss to the side of her head. He holds her like that. She goes quiet.

They stay intertwined. The DOCTOR calls the next patient.

FADE: MARGOT,
SEATED, SAME
POSITION, DIFFERENT
SETTING.

EXT. PLAYGROUND, CLEAR MORNING.

Margot sits at a bench alone. The sound of children playing can be heard. She fidgets with the bracelet on her wrist, twisting it, pulling it.

LISA comes into frame and takes a seat beside her.

LISA

We're going away in the summer,
Mam. June. To Lanzarote. Got a
lovely deal on the flights.

She glances at her mother, smiling, but Margot is quiet. Lisa's face falters slightly. She tries again.

LISA

I think you should come with us.
What do you think? The sun would

do us some good. And we'll get you
some of those dresses in Dunnes,
beforehand.

MARGOT

Mmm.

LISA

Yeah? Will you?

Again, no response. Lisa reaches across and covers her
mother's hand with her own. Margot flinches and looks up.
Lisa frowns, but manages to maintain her smile.

LISA.

Mam.

MARGOT

What?

LISA

Spain. Will you come with us?

MARGOT

Spain?

LISA

Yeah. In the summer. Once the kids
are off.

MARGOT

The kids.

Lisa's DAUGHTER (2 years old) stumbles into frame. She
comes to Margot's side and instantly tugs at the
bracelet. Margot looks down, and her face twists from its
previous lax expression into recognition. She runs her
hand over the child's head.

LISA

I think it'll be good for us. I'll
book the tickets when we get home.

MARGOT

Of course, love. Sure, why not.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE, MORNING.

MARGOT sits centre frame, working away at a cold slice of
toast. MICHAEL stands behind her, leaning against the
kitchen counter. His washed dishes sit drying beside him;
he's long-since finished. The sound of the morning news
fills the room, reporting a heat wave. Warm morning light
throws shapes across MARGOT's blank face. MICHAEL watches
her stir a spoonful of jam into her tea. He says nothing.

INT. TESCO, DAY.

Opening shot of a clearing in TESCO; various aisles, shelves of crisps, etc. Margot stands in the foreground, squinting at rows of honey and syrup. In the background, MICHAEL stands alongside two security guards. His body-language is apologetic; the security guards nod in understanding. They watch Margot as she slips a jar of Marmalade into her pocket.

Michael presses a twenty euro note into the hand of one of the security guards, then walks forward.

MICHAEL

Margot, sweetheart. Let's head home.

He puts his hand on her arm, but she tears away; muscle-memory. Michael holds his hands out, trying to lull her.

MICHAEL

C'mon, love. It's alright.

Incredibly hesitant but gradually convinced, Margot begrudgingly turns and walks with him, muttering all the way. As they pass the staff, Michael slips the jar back into a young girl's hands.

MICHAEL

Thanks, folks. Goodnight, now.

INT. APARTMENT, EVENING.

LISA stands at the window of the apartment, staring out. Behind her, the floor is littered with wrapping paper and toys. Children run circles around the couch, and the TV plays a rerun of *Only Fools and Horses*; Christmas, again.

Her sister, CHRISTINE (MID-30's) steps into frame.

CHRISTINE

He still there?

LISA

Mhm.

CHRISTINE

God.

Christine squeezes Lisa's shoulder sympathetically and passes a cup of tea into her hand.

Lisa steps away from the window and turns towards MARGOT, who sits in her chair, fidgeting with the zipper of her cardigan. She kisses her mother on the forehead, kneels beside her, holds the mug to her lips and encourages her to drink. Margot pushes it away.

The camera moves past them, through the window where Lisa previously stood. Coming down to ground level, we see MICHAEL, stood at the gate of the horse field, a bag of peelings in hand. He taps the metal and whistles.

Speckled throughout the field and showing no sign of moving, the horses stare back.

EXT. NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE, MORNING.

Opening shot of the front of a house; similar sense of place but completely different season, clearly close-by the apartment, months later. A family can be heard fussing inside. The door opens and out bursts three children and a mother, well-dressed. A cigarette hangs from the mother's mouth.

MAUREEN

Jamie! Jamie, come here to me.

She grabs her son by the shoulders and fixes the collar of his shirt. Her other children chase each other in circles.

JAMIE

Ms. Murphy.

MAUREEN

Yes, love, I told you— Ms. Murphy.

JAMIE

Ms. Murphy from Tesco?

MAUREEN

From—? Oh. Yes, from Tesco. But that's not how we knew her. She was a good woman.

JAMIE

Was she?

MAUREEN

Yes. One of the best. And we're late to say goodbye, so get out that gate.

The camera pulls out as the family leaves, and turns to show the car-packed street as they rush towards the Church at the end of the road. They pass the field of horses, and Jamie falters.

JAMIE

Jesus, Ma, the size of the horses!
Who's feeding them?

MAUREEN

Language!

The camera slips ahead, through the many parked cars, through the gates of the Church and towards the door, where the entirety of the Carroll family stand, lining either side. The inside of the church is clearly packed. Jamie and his family slide in through the door, muttering condolences as they pass.

A silence falls. There's a distinct sense of unease, a lack of direction. Even the eldest siblings can only shuffle and cough. Tear-stained cheeks and tired eyes galore. Lisa anxiously checks her phone.

Suddenly, MICHAEL steps in through the church gates. In his hand are three empty bread bags. He stares at his family, confused, but then it clicks; there's no Margot to lead them in the door.

He swallows vividly, stuffs the bread bags into a small bin, clears his throat and fixes his collar.

MICHAEL

Well. Come on, then.

Together, the family pour into the Church, Michael leading the way. The camera pulls out, but we watch from outside as they fill the front pews.

The wind blows. The preacher, dwarfed by distance, steps up onto the alter, and begins the ceremony.

Pulling out even further onto the footpath outside, the camera shows the road as a taxi pulls up. An unknown woman (a family friend, neighbour, etc) gets out and thanks the driver, rushes in the door.

The taxi driver waves her off. He waits for her to walk through the doors, then rolls his window and lights a cigarette. The sun coats the car golden. He reaches forward and turns up the radio, and as the camera lifts towards a birds-eye view, we hear the opening tune of Frank Sinatra's "My Way".

The music stays with us as the camera lifts into the sky; over the Church, car-lined street, the horse's field, the apartment, the Tesco, into the suburbs and beyond.

FIN

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