

PITY PARADE

Chloe Ireland

EXT. HARFORD. HARFORD PRIDE. 1995

Harford, a sleepy town in the North of England, still recovering from the recession.

Old football flags and cloth printed with political slogans drape from the windows of higgledy terraced housing. "Let children be children" and "Sodomy is a sin" are written on bright posters.

Far off chanting heralds the arrival of the parade. A colorful group of smiling and shouting people.

The event is recorded on VHS.

CHANTING CROWD

Out of the kitchens, into the  
streets!  
Out of the offices, into the  
streets!  
Out of the closets, into the  
streets!  
All unite! Fight for our rights!

MILLIE (18), a leather clad butch woman, brandishes her protest sign like it's a weapon. She's joined by KIM (18), Millie's girlfriend, a woman totally in her element, rainbow stripes painted on her cheeks like war paint.

She sticks a middle finger up at protesting town folk.

ED (20), a bookish man in hilariously conservative clothing compared to his peers hides behind them amongst the throng.

AMBER (56), a born leader, fronts the procession with a wide grin. She's a tall trans woman wearing the pride flag around her neck like a cape.

MILLIE V.O

In the beginning, we were  
unstoppable. The world hated us, it  
threw everything at us but we  
didn't care. We had each other and  
that was enough.

MONTAGE. VHS FOOTAGE

1. Millie shouts at a protesting church group. Kim tries to hold her back.
2. Ed struggles to tie a drag queen into a corset. He eventually gives up, blushing and the drag queen laughs.

3. The LGBT+ group making banners in the upstairs room of Amber's Antiques protesting section 28. They dangle a big makeshift flag outside the window.

4. The group having a drag night and smoking a spliff between them. There's a tinsel curtain taped to the ceiling. Kim comes out in drag makeup and a bin-bag dress. Millie bursts out laughing. Ed shyly reveals himself in a toned down drag look, a simple dress and blond wig. Millie comes out in a Freddie Mercury inspired drag king look.

MILLIE V.O (CONT'D)

We had community, a purpose. We had fun!

The camera turns to see SPENCER (50), laughing then pulling a concentrating face as he tries to turn the camera off.

INT. KIM AND MILLIE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. 2013

Millie is filming Kim, now in her late 30's in 2013. She's sat at a living room table making signs for the marriage equality march.

MILLIE

Hey Beautiful, watcha doing?

Kim chuckles and shows her sign to the camera, presenting it like an antique show host presenting an artifact. It's a bad drawing of Bert and Ernie from Sesame Street with "We all want to be at this wedding" written above it.

KIM

Together since 1969. Can you imagine being together that long?

(beat)

Why are you filming this? I look like shit.

MILLIE

Honey, you never look like shit to me.

Kim blushes waving her off.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I don't know, it feels like a big deal. Like it's a moment I'm going to want to remember.

(nervous)

Would you get married? If we win?

Kim stays quiet for a moment then smiles at the camera.

KIM

Depends

(beat)

Is that a proposal?

There's a pause as Kim waits for her answer.

MILLIE V.O

Then it all went to shi-

INT. GARLANDS DRAG BAR. TOILETS. NIGHT. 5 YEARS LATER

Millie (42), flushes the toilet and wipes her mouth. Behind her head there's a halo of scribbled slurs, crude stickers and phone numbers decorating the cubicle door.

She unfurls her hand to reveal a little silver wedding band. Taking a deep breath she ceremoniously holds it over the toilet bowl. She's just about to drop it when the door bursts open.

ED

Millie?

Millie jumps, accidentally dropping the ring into the toilet. She dives after it on impulse.

INT. GARLANDS DRAG BAR. NIGHT

Ed and Millie are sat opposite each other in a sad looking gay bar. An old Irish pub embellished with a few pride flags.

The place is dead apart from a few elderly patrons watching a drag queen sway in the background. Behind the bar a man in tight leather cleans glasses.

Ed laughs manically. He's dressed in an old fashioned tweed waistcoat and circular glasses.

ED

No... absolutely not, no, nada!

MILLIE

One night! Please!

Millie has rolled up the sleeve which is damp from it's dip in the toilet. On the bar she's assembling a nice collection of empty glasses.

Ed scoffs.

ED

"One night" piss off! One night becomes two then it's a week and before you know it I'm waking up to you making pancakes in my dressing gown!

MILLIE

You'd let some hot stranger stay in your bed but your best friend can't sleep on your couch in her hour of need? Wow.

Ed throws her a look.

ED

You're not a hot man, you're a sad woman. Having a sad woman lurking in the house makes it very difficult to bring back hot men.

MILLIE

And you're just swimming in hot men right now.

Millie takes a large gulp of beer.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

(interrupting)

-Why is it so different?

Ed rolls his eyes. He's heard this all before.

ED

What is?

MILLIE

Going from being a "couple" to being a "Married couple". Before this whole equality thing, yeah, our relationships could be... whatever, nobody really wanted to know! But we're normal now and everyone's like "Oooo when are you going to get married" and "Oooo when are you going to have kids!"

Silence. Just when Ed thinks it's safe to intervene Millie sparks up again.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

It pisses me off!

(Raising her voice)

(MORE)

MILLIE (CONT'D)

You know, marriage was just a thing  
that some bloke invented so he  
could own a woman. Why did we want  
it?!

Ed gives a shy glance to the drag queens and other patrons  
staring at them.

ED

Mills...

Millie looks up at the pride flags hung behind the bar.

MILLIE

Who's idea was it to put so many  
bright colours next to each other?  
I swear one day I'm going to look  
at a pride flag and have a stroke.  
Can we go? This place is giving me  
a headache.

Ed gently rubs her back.

ED

Yeah, let's get you home...

He stands, reaching over to help Millie.

MILLIE

Your home?

Ed grimaces.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Please!

(beat)

It's too quiet.

Ed looks into Millie's eyes and crumbles.

INT. ED'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

Ed helps Millie through the front door and sits her down on  
the couch.

ED

I'll find some sheets.

Ed goes upstairs leaving Millie sat on the couch.

The decor in Ed's house is very old fashioned with lots of  
pictures of Ed as a boy with his parents. The coffee table is  
covered in unfinished marking and school supplies.

On the mantle there's a picture of his father looking very frail in a wheelchair, Ed in his 30's is stood beside him. The empty wheel chair in question is folded up in the corner.

Next to it is a picture of Ed, Millie and Kim in their early 20's holding a "Gay Marriage Is A Human Right" banner. Millie picks it up and stares at Kim's beaming smile.

INT. ED'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

ED  
It's a picnic blanket but it'll  
have to do...

The living room is empty.

ED (CONT'D)  
Millie?

INT. ED'S HOUSE. KITCHEN

Ed cracks open the kitchen door. The cabinets are all an ugly yellow colour with black and white tile floors.

He stops in his tracks when he sees Millie crouching on the floor, her head in the oven.

Ed takes in the sight in-front of him shocked.

A chuckle escapes him.

He tries to school his face but it's no good, he erupts into belly laughter.

Ed walks up to the oven and turns the dial to off.

ED  
Honey, that's the proving oven  
setting. You're just going to give  
your cheeks a lovely rise.

Millie gingerly pulls her head out and sits on the floor.

MILLIE  
Who the fuck has a fancy ass  
proving oven setting?

Ed sits down next to her and cleans his glasses. Millie looks on the verge of tears.

ED  
Sorry.

Ed pulls Millie into a hug as she half sobs half laughs into his chest.

MILLIE  
We're getting divorced.

Ed lets it hang.

ED  
You've been separated for a year...  
it's hardly a shock.

Millie swallows, avoiding Ed's gaze.

MILLIE  
Yeah but now it's kind of... real.

He turns back to Millie. Millie shrugs, tearing up again.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
I don't know what I'm supposed to  
do now.

Ed puts his arm on her knee.

ED  
You get a hot chocolate and you sit  
on my couch watching soaps until  
you fall asleep, like you always  
do.

Millie smiles slightly.

ED (CONT'D)  
Where are we at?

MILLIE  
I don't know

ED  
Code word?

Millie thinks about it.

MILLIE  
Cheddar

Ed nods. No other words are needed.

INT. ED'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. LATER

Millie snores on the couch. Ed watches her for a moment.

## MONTAGE

Ed goes around the house, frantically bagging up anything she could use to hurt herself, starting with the obvious then escalating to the ridiculous as anxiety takes over.

- knives
- A blender
- Unplug the oven and all other electrical appliances
- Forks
- House plants
- Spoons
- A tennis ball

He stuffs it all in his wardrobe and sighs in relief when he's done.

## END OF MONTAGE

The landline goes off. Ed jumps and runs over to it, shushing it and keeping an eye on Millie snoring in the corner.

## INT. KIM'S FLAT. NIGHT

Kim sits on her bed in an old bread and breakfast. She's dressed in a white shirt and trousers, a black blazer thrown across the bed. In-front of her she has a stack of papers she's trying to re-arrange. Her phone is wedged between her ear and her shoulder.

KIM

Ed?

CUT TO:

## INT. ED'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM

ED

Hello?

KIM

It's Kim. Is Millie with you?

ED  
It's late.

CUT TO:

KIM  
She is isn't she?

CUT TO:

Ed looks back at where Millie is sleeping on the couch.

CUT TO:

KIM (CONT'D)  
She won't respond to my calls.

ED  
She's having a bad day.

Kim smiles to herself.

KIM  
When is she not having a bad day?

CUT TO:

ED  
What do you want? I can pass on a message?

KIM  
I'm in town for the week. I need her to sign the paperwork.

ED  
She needs more time

KIM  
How much more time? I can't keep putting my whole life on hold so she can get hers together!

Ed doesn't respond.

KIM (CONT'D)  
Amber had a fall.

Ed takes a deep breath and swallows.

ED  
What? I mean, is she alright?

KIM

I popped round yesterday for a visit and found her on the floor. She said she was fine but I think she'd been there a while.

(beat)

What is she now eighty three? Eighty five? I'd go round more but I'm not exactly local. It's not like she has grandkids either. She needs someone looking out for her.

ED

I do try. She's stubborn.

KIM

I think we need to start being stubborn about it too.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S FLAT. MORNING.

Amber (83), a frail image of the woman she once was, puts two stained rainbow mugs down on the table.

She's dressed androgynously in a cardigan and grey trousers. A coloured head scarf is wrapped around her head with leopard-print glasses resting on top.

Even with a bad hip and dodgy knees she's feigning good posture.

She boils the kettle and pours two cups of tea.

She shuffles into the open plan living area with the mugs and stares at an old photograph on the fireplace; Amber in her 50's hugging an attractive man of similar age on the beach. A camcorder sits next to it.

AMBER

(casually)

Good morning sweetheart.

She places the second mug in-front of the picture, steaming up the frame.

She sits down in-front of her old TV and flicks through the channels. There's nothing.

MONTAGE

1. Amber dusting the living room.

2. Hovering
3. Finishing her mug of tea
4. Wiping the kitchen surfaces
5. Bleaching the toilet
6. Mopping the kitchen floor

Afterwards she sits back down on the sofa and tries the TV again. She flicks through five channels before giving up.

AMBER (CONT'D)

One of those days...

Suddenly, the doorbell rings.

INT. AMBER'S FLAT. HALLWAY

Amber opens the door and is surprised to see Ed holding bags of shopping.

AMBER

Ed!

Ed gives her an awkward hug, unable to lift his arms up properly with all the bags.

Amber gestures him in.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Tea?

ED

Would love one thanks!

INT. AMBER'S FLAT. KITCHEN

They move through to the kitchen, Ed starts putting the shopping away.

ED

It's clean in here!

AMBER

I told you Spence was the messy one.

Ed smiles sadly, noticing the mug on the fireplace.

ED  
How are you?

Amber concentrates on making the tea.

AMBER  
Fine, fine. Plodding along!

ED  
Have you been out?

Ed passes her a new bottle of milk. Amber doesn't look at him.

AMBER  
I've got the shop, I've got the group. I get out plenty.

Amber passes Ed his cup of tea. Ed takes a sip.

ED  
How's business?

Amber chuckles.

AMBER  
Piss poor.  
(beat)  
Times are tight, people don't have the pocket to spend on old shit.

Amber notices Ed looking at her weirdly.

AMBER (CONT'D)  
Ed?

ED  
Your buttons are all skew-whiff.

Amber looks down at herself. One of her cardigan buttons is done up too high. She chooses to ignore it.

AMBER  
This? No this is a choice, all the kids are wearing it like this these days.

ED  
All the kids are wearing knitted cardigans?

He takes a breath, gearing up for the conversation.

ED (CONT'D)

Kim phoned the other day, said you  
had a fall.

Amber waves it off.

AMBER

More of a trip.

Ed doesn't look amused.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it. I'm fine!

Ed takes another sip of tea. Amber starts wiping the kitchen  
counter even though there's nothing to clean.

ED

Millie's back in town. You know Kim  
and Millie are getting divorced?

AMBER

Took them long enough!

Amber turns to face him.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Get out of there while you can!  
Divorce is ugly, take it from me, I  
wouldn't want to see you trapped in  
the middle... again.

ED

You were married?

AMBER

Yes, to a student nurse in Oxford.  
She was gorgeous. We were the very  
image of heteronormative bliss.

Amber crosses her arms as if she's cold.

ED

I thought I might bring Mills to  
the group. Maybe we could take a  
few sessions, lend a hand. I think  
it would be really helpful... for  
*Millie*.

Amber raises an eyebrow.

AMBER

Subtle.

(beat)

(MORE)

AMBER (CONT'D)

Well if you think it would help  
*Millie*, I'm not opposed to it.

Ed nods a little too enthusiastically.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. MORNING

Ed creeps into the house then jumps when he sees *Millie*, her hair wild, dragging herself around the kitchen wrapped in a blanket, nursing a hangover.

ED

Morning sunshine

*Millie* flips him off in response and turns on the kettle.

She opens the cutlery draw, it's empty.

ED (CONT'D)

How would you feel if I booked you  
in for a session with Dr Andrews  
today?

MILLIE

Dr who now?

ED

My therapist.

MILLIE

No

ED

No?

MILLIE

I don't need it.

Ed takes a seat and looks behind him, pretending to listen.

ED

Proving oven says otherwise

*Millie* opens the dish washer.

MILLIE

Why are there no spoons?!

Ed starts to get annoyed.

ED  
You said Cheddar I panicked!

MILLIE  
What the fuck am I going to do with  
a spoon Ed?  
(beat)  
I'm fine, it was just a blip in the  
matrix... Brie

ED  
Brie?

MILLIE  
It means back off.

ED  
You can't make up codes, if you  
have to explain it, it completely  
undermines the system!

Millie gives up looking for a spoon. She takes a large gulp  
of coffee and shrugs. They stare at each other.

MILLIE  
No!

INT. DR ANDREWS THERAPY ROOM

Millie sits uncomfortably inside a clean white room playing  
with the leaves of an overgrown spider plant. Across from her  
sits a clean-shaven man with slicked back hair.

MILLIE  
I actually don't need therapy

Dr Andrews doesn't respond.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
You see I've done this whole thing  
before. Every therapist I've ever  
had has betrayed me.

DR ANDREWS  
In what way?

MILLIE  
Three sessions in and they think  
they know me and they ask  
irrelevant questions because  
they're nosy and I swear down some  
of them have tried to sabotage me  
before.

DR ANDREWS

Oh dear

MILLIE

Yeah

There's an awkward silence as Millie starts picking at the plant.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I think what I actually need is a dog.

Dr Andrews raises an eyebrow.

DR ANDREWS

Ok, explain that to me

MILLIE

Not like a rubbish, yappy little dog that you'd put in a handbag but, like, a proper dog. A massive, bloodhound or a fat golden retriever or something that would just supply me with unconditional love and would never, ever leave me.

Dr Andrews stares at her. He clicks her pen and starts scribbling notes, Millie tries to peak at them.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to get a dog.

DR ANDREWS

Millie, I think one of the worst things you can do right now is get a dog.

Millie stands up and walks towards the door.

MILLIE

I'm getting a dog.

Dr Andrews shouts after her as she leaves.

DR ANDREWS

Please don't get a dog!

INT. ED'S HOUSE. KITCHEN

Ed stares down at the golden retriever sat expectantly on his kitchen floor.

ED  
Bit of an unorthodox  
prescription...

MILLIE  
He's a support dog... for  
support... his name is Doug

Ed raises an eyebrow at her before going to the oven and bringing out a tray of rainbow cookies. He puts it next to the two other trays already cooling. Millie grabs one and instantly drops it.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
HOT, HOT!

Doug starts eating the cookie off the ground.

ED  
Ugh, I dread to think how that's  
going to come out the other end.  
(beat)  
You're looking after it you know!  
Seriously, you're going to feed it,  
walk it, clean the shit. I'm not  
even going to look at it Millie!

Millie rolls her eyes.

Ed starts pressing the cookies to check that they're done. He avoids eye contact.

ED (CONT'D)  
You coming to the club? Amber  
misses you.

Millie bends down to pet Doug.

MILLIE  
Nah, she always preferred Kim over  
me.

Ed starts distributing his cookies into tupperware.

ED  
Mother duck loves all of her  
children equally, even the ones who  
are a pain in the ass. You get your  
stubbornness from her you know.

Millie takes another cookie.

ED (CONT'D)

She's not looking so good these days. I think you should see her.

EXT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. DAY

Amber's Antiques is an old fashioned antique shop with green vintage signage and gold lettering. There's a few pride flags hanging out of the window of the room above.

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. DAY

Inside the store is an unorganized brick-a-brac of old and sinister objects. Decades of newspapers, chipped crockery and old furniture line the walls letting very little light in. The room is lit from antique standing lamps.

The cash register sits on a glass counter with military medals underneath. Ed and Millie sit on red stools that look like they came from a 50's American diner. Amber comes in from the back door carrying two mugs of tea.

Millie is fiddling with a ring she found on the desk.

AMBER

Please, do use whatever you can find as a fidget toy, they're only diamonds.

Millie puts the ring on her finger and very quickly discovers she can't get it off. She hides her hand under the counter.

Doug stares daggers at a ginger cat perched on-top of a bookshelf.

Amber softens when she sits down.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about you and Kim.

MILLIE

Yeah, me too.

AMBER

You lasted way longer than I thought you would to be honest. You two always did seem like a bit of a mismatch, Kim was so vibrant and you were so... is introverted the word? No that would imply you were quiet about it.

MILLIE

Thanks?

Millie goes to pick up her tea with the hand with the ring on then stops herself. She awkwardly pulls the handle round and picks it up with her left. Amber watches her strangely.

AMBER

It'll be nice to have some help  
with the young-uns for once.

Millie shakes her head.

MILLIE

I'm not speaking to kids.

AMBER

Why not?

MILLIE

"Here's a 40 something divorcee  
living on her best friend's  
couch... it gets better!"

Millie does jazz hands.

AMBER

It's honest! I think they'd respect  
that.

Amber takes a sip of her tea.

Just as they're finishing their conversation, the door to the antique shop opens and in comes a stout man in smart clothes that are too big for him. He jumps as his eye catches a scary looking doll in the corner.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

The man jumps again to see Amber, Millie and Ed at the counter. He walks up to Amber and holds out a hand.

RICHARD

Amber Jones, can I have a chat?

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. DAY

The four of them are sat around the table, RICHARD now has a cup of tea.

RICHARD

You know what it's like! Council trying to cut expenses any way they can. It's a bloody joke.

The three of them grunt in agreement.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Anyway after we heard about your health, sorry by the way...

Millie turns to make eye contact with Amber who quickly waves it away.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Well, we were wondering if perhaps the town could... not, have pride this year?

ED

What!?

Richard seems very uncomfortable. He flings his hands into the air in defense.

RICHARD

It's not prejudice! Trust me I'm as sympathetic as anyone, my niece is a lesbian, but is it really necessary in this day and age? The police haven't had a reported homophobic attack in Harford in over 20 years!

ED

It's not just about homophobia...

RICHARD

I'm aware of that. But the fact is it's an expense the council can no longer afford! Half of the people that show up aren't even from the village! Every year our streets are swarmed with drunk and disorderly youths who leave a trail of rainbow carnage in their wake! Do you know how expensive it is to clean that up?

Ed looks to Amber and Millie for confirmation.

Amber puts down her mug of tea and avoids eye contact.

AMBER

You're right, I'm not the spring chicken I once was and perhaps the necessity of pride here has run it's course.

ED

Amber?

AMBER

Kim offered to help with the club.

Millie perks up.

MILLIE

She did?

AMBER

-but she's busy! She can't organise a parade it's too much.

ED

Maybe I could help?

AMBER

With what time? Are you going to phone drag queens while teaching quadratic equations?

Ed shakes his head.

ED

I'll make it work.

Amber makes pointed eye contact at Millie.

AMBER

I might consider it if... Millie  
What's your availability like?

Millie shrugs.

MILLIE

I agree with him.

She gestures to Richard.

ED

Millie!

MILLIE

It's loud and it's stupid and it's messy. Totally unnecessary waste of time and resources.

Ed purses his lips.

Amber turns back towards Richard.

A group of young people, MICHAEL, TOBY, RIYA, TOM and JASMINE stand in the doorway of Amber's shop.

AMBER  
(to richard)  
We'll be in touch.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. DAY

Through the upstairs window above the antiques store we can see the group sitting in a circle in a brightly decorated room.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. LGBT+ CLUB ROOM

Michael, a leather clad, non-binary punk rocker is pacing the room. The others are sat in a circle around them. Amber stands stoic in the middle with her arms crossed.

MICHAEL  
Bullshit!  
(beat)  
They're trying to silence us. They  
can't take pride!

A few of the other members cheer in agreement.

AMBER  
They're not taking anything!  
(beat)  
They just asked us, politely, to  
consider not doing it for one year.

JASMINE  
Tell them no!

The group start speaking all at once.

Amber puts her hands up to settle them.

AMBER  
No parade doesn't mean no pride! We  
can have our own celebrations here  
in the club... for us!

Michael ignores her.

MICHAEL

I'll do it! I'll organise all of it.

JASMINE

Yeah we'll get a group together we can all help out!

AMBER

You'll co-ordinate a whole parade with no experience, no contacts and no budget? Mike, you'll be going to university soon you need to focus on your studies.

MICHAEL

We can do it! Just because we're young doesn't mean we can't handle it.

Millie can't stay silent any longer.

MILLIE

Oh, leave her alone!

Everyone turns to look at her including Ed who's shaking his head at her.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Amber started the Harford pride parade when you were all in pampers stacking your rainbow blocks.

Michael gets ready to retort.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I mean, are any of you actually proper gays anyway?

The room is silent. Michael grits his teeth. Amber looks uncomfortable.

MICHAEL

I'm non-binary. About 20% gay, 3% asexual, 10% demi-

MILLIE

-Why are you chucking percentages at me?

(beat)

(MORE)

MILLIE (CONT'D)

And why are you dressed like Sid  
Vicious? When were you born like  
199-

MICHAEL

(interrupting)

2004

MILLIE

Really? Fuck me!

(beat)

Pride is just an excuse for the  
corner shop down the road to put a  
flag in the window and sell a few  
extra packs of skittles.

MICHAEL

No, pride is about solidarity! It's  
about showing the world that  
together-

MILLIE

No, percentage Mike, no! Pride is  
about you lot making up issues to  
fight for because you've realised  
your lives are actually really dull  
and the fact that you're queer is  
the only great thing about you!

Michael and the rest of the group are speechless.

KIM O.S

Millie?

They turn to the door where Kim is stood with a folder in her  
arms.

MILLIE

Kim...

Millie's face drops.

MICHAEL

(to Amber)

Who's she!?

Amber sighs.

AMBER

You two better go in the back room.

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. BACK ROOM

Behind the main room there is a small, store closet space with cabinets overflowing with pictures and records.

KIM  
What are you doing here?

MILLIE  
Helping Amber, you?

KIM  
Well this is awkward... Have you signed the paperwork?

MILLIE  
Don't pressure me!

Kim chuckles.

KIM  
It's been a year!  
(beat)  
Be an adult Mills.

MILLIE  
Fuck off.

They stand there in silence for a second. Kim takes a deep breath.

KIM  
Let's not do this here. Come back to mine we'll talk it out I'll make food! We can be civil.

MILLIE  
It won't stay civil though will it? You don't do civil when it doesn't go your way...

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. LGBT+ CLUB ROOM

Amber and Ed sit next to each other. Ed nervously making his way through his rainbow cookies while the other members talk amongst themselves. Michael keeps side-eying Ed.

ED  
This is a mess. You do know I'm never going to be able to get her back here again.

Amber chuckles.

AMBER

And the session was going so well  
until that point...

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. BACK ROOM

KIM

You don't listen! It's so much work  
having a simple conversation with  
you...

MILLIE

Maybe you should stop trying!

KIM

I'm trying to stop trying, if you  
sign the paperwork that's it, it's  
done I won't bother you anymore.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. LGBT+ CLUB ROOM

AMBER

First, it was your dad and now it's  
her... and me. When are you  
planning to spend some time on  
yourself. Get a date!

Ed shakes his head.

ED

I can't just abandon her.

AMBER

I think, you're scared.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. BACK ROOM

KIM

You can't keep prolonging this...  
you can't keep punishing yourself.  
You're punishing me!

Millie covers her face.

KIM (CONT'D)  
Don't you want this to all be over  
so we can just move on with our  
lives?

Millie shakes her head starting to tear up.

MILLIE  
I love you

KIM  
Millie, you cheated on me!

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. LGBT+ CLUB ROOM

ED  
Scared? Pfft scared of what?

AMBER  
Being alone again, relationships.

ED  
Tinder

Amber lifts an eyebrow.

ED (CONT'D)  
It's a scary place Amber

CUT TO:

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. BACK ROOM

Kim takes a deep breath and seems to calm down a bit.

KIM  
You always do this you know. You  
sabotage yourself then play it off.  
Have a little pride Millie.

Millie shakes her head.

MILLIE  
I'm here for Amber, not for this.

Kim rubs her brow.

KIM

Ok, ok. How are we going to do this then? I take them every other weekend?

Millie makes a show of looking unsure.

MILLIE

Mmmm I don't know. You see I'm helping them prepare for pride.

Kim bursts out laughing.

KIM

You're helping them prepare for pride? After that little stunt you just pulled?

MILLIE

I was just showing them, what kind of resistance to expect.

KIM

Sure, sure. Fine, ok I'll take the main session and you can take a little pride focus group after five.

Millie nods and turns to leave.

KIM (CONT'D)

Millie!

She turns.

KIM (CONT'D)

Sign the damn divorce papers.

Millie pulls a middle finger at her.

INT. AMBER'S ANTIQUES. LGBT+ CLUB ROOM

Ed and Amber turn their heads when they hear the door slamming open.

Millie comes in and grabs Doug, not saying a word before leaving the room. Ed tries to shout after her but gives up.

INT. GARLANDS DRAG BAR. EVENING

Millie sits at the bar three pints down, staring at the crumpled photo of her and Kim that she took from Ed's.

The bar is much busier tonight.

Doug wines next to her and she strokes his ears.

MILLIE

You're not going to abandon me are  
you boy? No.

Suddenly, three glamorous drag queens make their way on stage. They stand in-front of three microphones. Millie turns to watch.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

(to the bartender)

If they're acapella I'm leaving

A blast of rock guitar heralds the arrival of a tall figure wearing black high heels, they're silhouetted against the spotlight. They have quaffed hair slicked back teddy-boy style.

A rock song with heavy bass starts to play and the spotlight turns on to illuminate TOMMY KNOX THOMPSON a drag king with drawn on stubble and bright red lipstick. He grabs the microphone and starts his lip-syncing routine.

Millie is transfixed. When the chorus kicks in Tommy struts along the tables and dances amongst the audience, flirting with an older woman in the corner who fans herself after he winks at her. The drag queens sway behind him singing background.

CUT TO:

INT. GARLANDS DRAG BAR. NIGHT

The bar has emptied and Millie now has a nice collection of glasses building up on the bar.

ELINOR (35), the performer behind Tommy Knox Thompson comes out of a room in the back, makeup cleared off and now dressed in overalls. She looks a lot shorter than she did on stage.

She spots Millie and Doug who jumps up off the floor when he sees her approach.

Elinor bends down to stroke him. She looks up to look at the owner.

ELINOR

You know, dogs aren't really  
allowed in the bar.

MILLIE  
He's a service dog.

Doug is chasing his tail.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
In training

Elinor spots the empty glasses on the bar.

ELINOR  
Celebrating or mourning?

Millie winces.

MILLIE  
I don't know, both? Neither?

She looks Elinor up and down, she's quite attractive.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
Can I get you one?

Elinor chuckles, taking a seat next to her she reaches into her dungaree pocket and takes out a blue sobriety chip.

Millie looks at it, not fully registering.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
I don't think they take that here

ELINOR  
I'm five years clean.

Millie looks around her in disbelief.

MILLIE  
You work in a bar! Isn't the  
temptation like...

She does a strange gesture like she's reaching out to grab something aloof in-front of her.

ELINOR  
The curse of drag. If I can't do  
drag I drink, if I do drag I'm  
surrounded by drink.  
(beat)  
Tommy's a Shirley temple guy  
anyway, always the designated  
driver.

She wrinkles her nose at Millie, then notices the photograph in Millie's hand.

ELINOR (CONT'D)

Ahhhh

Millie cringes.

ELINOR (CONT'D)

You've got a crush! Oh honey I've been there.

MILLIE

She's not...

ELINOR

She's straight isn't she?

Millie doesn't have the mental capacity to respond.

ELINOR (CONT'D)

Well there's no use drowning your sorrows! You never know until you ask! What does she like?

Millie seems genuinely stumped.

MILLIE

Dogs

ELINOR

Think you've got that covered, anything else?

Millie thinks really hard.

MILLIE

She cares about things a lot... causes, you know, the environment, civil rights. Always protesting about something.

Elinor smiles.

ELINOR

Do you care about anything?

Her words echo around in Millie's head.

Millie doesn't reply, she just stares at Kim on the photograph.

Elinor slams a flyer down on the bar in-front of her, snapping Millie out of it.

ELINOR (CONT'D)

Next week is a queers without beers  
night, can I persuade you to join?  
Maybe bring your date.

She winks at Millie before leaving the bar. Millie stares  
after her.

She looks at the ring wedged onto her finger and then into  
the big black eyes of Doug.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S FLAT. EARLY MORNING.

The fire alarm is blaring.

Ed rushes down the stairs with wide eyes, shirt pulled over  
his mouth and wafting smoke out of the air.

ED

Millie! MILLIE!

INT. ED'S FLAT. KITCHEN.

He runs into the Kitchen. Millie stands up from behind the  
oven with a tray of burnt rainbow cookies.

ED

What the hell are you doing!

Millie gives him an apologetic look.

MILLIE

I don't know to be honest I haven't  
baked in years.

Ed stands next to her as they both stare at the burnt fruits  
of her labour.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I wanted to make them for the club  
as an apology.

ED

They'll think you're trying to kill  
them off!

Millie goes back to her ingredients laid out messily on the  
other counter and starts making another batch.

ED (CONT'D)

Hey, hey...

Millie groans.

MILLIE

Do you think they'll do what I say?  
Because if they're going to  
backchat all the time I don't think  
I can make this pride thing work.

Ed looks skeptical.

ED

You've changed your tune...

Millie is rapidly mixing butter and sugar in a bowl, Ed grabs her hand.

Millie signs.

MILLIE

I do... care about stuff.

Ed smiles and hugs her from behind, talking into her shoulder.

ED

I know, I've never thought not  
caring was your problem and I'm  
relieved to see you better but, you  
know the club isn't on again until  
next week?

Millie looks at the trays of burnt cookies and the mix in the bowl.

MILLIE

Shit!

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM

Millie and Ed sit on the couch eating the burnt cookies as trash reality TV plays in the background. Something happens and Millie bursts out laughing.

Ed smiles and looks at her but looks back before she spots him.

END

