

ARIA Auditions Pieces

Charlie / Monique

Page 1 (beginning of play) to

Page 3 just before Daniel enters.

Judy / Monique

Page 14 from “Hello Judy” to

Page 17 just before Daniel enters.

Daniel / Judy

Page 18 from “Like we do?” to

Page 19 Judy exits

Daniel / Monique

Page 19 from “Judy’s exit to

Page 20 top line Monique “Good. You deserve

Monique / Chrissy – Chrissy / Liam

Page 22 from “I’m still waiting” to

Page 24 Chrissy exits

Midge / Charlie

Page 41 from bottom of page “So. Do we have a window booking at the Quay?” to

Page 43 bottom.

CHARACTERS

MONIQUE, *late 60s*

CHARLIE, *39*

MIDGE, *27*

LIAM, *42*

CHRISSY, *40*

DANIEL, *42*

JUDY, *41*

MONIQUE, in her late sixties, looks around her elegant and spacious living room. On the table in a silverware ice bucket are bottles of French champagne waiting to be opened and plates of canapés waiting to be eaten. She checks that everything is in place and circles around the room looking at the huge framed photos of her three sons, Charlie, Liam and Daniel, all taken by a professional portrait photographer. Smaller photos are family shots of her sons with their wives, Charlie with his ex-wife Penny and their two children, and Liam with Chrissy and their four children, and Daniel with Judy and their one child. MONIQUE is still an elegant and arresting woman with a commanding almost imperial presence and is dressed in an expensive and tasteful outfit. This is obviously a big occasion for her. The doorbell rings and she darts expectantly just offstage to the front door of her apartment and lets in her youngest son, CHARLIE. CHARLIE is 39, tall, handsome and athletic. He's extroverted and easy-going and everyone likes him. He's certainly the apple of MONIQUE's eye. She ushers him eagerly inside and hugs him.

MONIQUE: Charlie, so wonderful to see you. Mothers don't have favourite sons of course, but if they did I'd have to admit you were mine.

She hugs and kisses him.

Don't ever tell your brothers I said that.

CHARLIE: They knew. Liam spent most of his early years trying to murder me.

MONIQUE: I still have nightmares about the time he held your head underwater in the bath.

CHARLIE: I still have panic attacks when I snorkel.

MONIQUE: He was such an aggressive little brute from the get-go. If the milk wasn't flowing fast enough he'd punch me in the nose. And Daniel ...

CHARLIE: Daniel's a good guy.

MONIQUE: Lovely boy ...

She sighs.

But spark, he lacked spark. You always had spark.

CHARLIE: Okay, Liam ... I still have trouble with Liam, but Daniel—

MONIQUE: They're both fine now, it's just they weren't up to much when they were little. Where's Midge?

CHARLIE: Sulking in the car.

MONIQUE: What about this time?

CHARLIE: She asked me how she looked and I said 'great' and she yelled that I was lying and her dress was horrible and she started belting me with her handbag.

MONIQUE: I tried to warn you.

CHARLIE: I know she's high maintenance, but at her best—

MONIQUE *snorts dismissively*.

MONIQUE: She has a 'best'?

CHARLIE: She's great ... fun.

MONIQUE *nods*.

MONIQUE: I see her having 'fun' on Facebook. Endless selfies of brain-dead, shrieking young tarts, drinking cocktails stuffed full of green foliage.

CHARLIE *nods*.

CHARLIE: Her friends are pretty shallow.

MONIQUE: If you want depth, don't marry a beautician.

CHARLIE: She's surprisingly smart.

MONIQUE: Charlie! If the purpose of life is to wade into the great ocean of human wisdom, Midge and her friends have barely got their toes wet.

CHARLIE: Mum, give her a chance.

MONIQUE: You've always been so streetwise? How could you decide to marry someone you'd barely met?

CHARLIE: The minute we laid eyes on each other there was electricity like you wouldn't believe.

MONIQUE: It might be 'Hallelujah Chorus' between the sheets but my God what a price you're going to pay.

CHARLIE: She's made me feel alive again.

MONIQUE: Darling, it's called lust. I've experienced it myself from time to time, and you act on it, fine, but the last thing you do is marry what causes it.

CHARLIE: Mum, give her a chance.

MONIQUE: Have you straightened it out with Penny about access to your girls?

CHARLIE: She's still playing hardball.

MONIQUE: The one time she let you have them, your lovely Midge sent them home with half-up, half-down e-girl bright-purple hairstyles.

CHARLIE: Which they loved.

MONIQUE: They're six and eight!

CHARLIE: Okay. I'm working on it.

MONIQUE: Please get it resolved. I want to see my grandchildren.

CHARLIE: It'll work out. She just needs more time.

MIDGE, 27, *sweeps in looking surly. She's very attractive and knows it and is dressed in a short skirt. MONIQUE puts on a forced smile.*

MONIQUE: Midge.

They air kiss awkwardly.

That's a very ... colourful dress.

MIDGE: It's totally mank!

MONIQUE: Mank?

MIDGE: Disgusting, vile.

MONIQUE: You chose it.

MIDGE: I asked Charlie to check it out and he lied.

CHARLIE: I didn't. I like it!

MIDGE: Then what bloody use are you!

She moves straight across to the champagne that's already open and helps herself defiantly to a full glass and chomps on a canapé and stares back balefully at the two of them. MONIQUE turns to CHARLIE.

MONIQUE: Will you make sure the champagne keeps flowing, darling?

CHARLIE: It will. Excuse me for a moment.

MONIQUE moves across to MIDGE as CHARLIE absents himself in the direction of the bathroom.

MONIQUE: Midge, I know that things didn't get off to a great start between us.

MIDGE: And that's my fault?

They go outside. Almost immediately MONIQUE comes in heading for the champagne. CHARLIE momentarily comes back inside to warn his mother against excessive drinking but thinks better of it. What will be will be. He shakes his head and goes out again just as JUDY enters with a glint in her eye. It is obvious she's followed MONIQUE in. MONIQUE turns and anticipates what's to come and composes herself.

MONIQUE: Hello, Judy. Quite lovely out there in the garden, isn't it?

JUDY: Yes it is. Monique, this is a special day for you and I wasn't going to do anything to make it any less special, but after what happened last week I feel I have to say something.

MONIQUE: [*calm, innocent*] What happened last week?

JUDY: It's good that you have lunches with Daniel, but—

MONIQUE: He's my son.

JUDY: But I don't appreciate it when you use those lunches to undermine me.

MONIQUE: I'm not sure I understand what you're talking about?

JUDY: How we educate our daughter is a matter for us.

MONIQUE: Of course.

JUDY: You apparently told Daniel it was disgraceful that we're taking Lisa out of her private school and sending her to a state school.

MONIQUE: I did express surprise. She's at the best school in Sydney. Is it financial?

JUDY: No, it's not financial. We don't like her group of friends or how she's behaving.

MONIQUE: Her friends come from some of the best homes in Sydney.

JUDY: They're awful little snobs with awful values.

MONIQUE: Awful values?

JUDY: My daughter impersonated a perfectly decent girl online and made her appear to be a promiscuous slut.

MONIQUE: I'm sure she didn't.

JUDY: Oh yes she did. And the girl was then viciously and anonymously slut-shamed online, and my daughter and her friends all thought it was hilarious.

MONIQUE: I'm sure Lisa would never do anything like that.

JUDY: She confessed. But only when the proof was overwhelming.

MONIQUE: Young girls always have lapses.

JUDY: That's not just a lapse, Monique. It's totally unacceptable.

MONIQUE: But to blame the school?

JUDY: I do. I'm taking her out of there and I didn't appreciate you telling Daniel I was sabotaging my daughter's future.

MONIQUE: But for heaven's sake. Sending her to Concord High? Concord?

JUDY: Concord High's academic results are actually better than the school we pay thirty-eight thousand dollars a year to turn our daughter into a heartless little sociopath.

MONIQUE: Judy, I know you came from a struggling family and went to state school yourself and did very very well, which is a credit to you—

JUDY: Not in your eyes.

MONIQUE: What are you talking about?

JUDY: When I first started dating Daniel you took him aside and said it might help my career if I had some elocution lessons.

MONIQUE: I was trying to help.

JUDY: Despite my grating vowels, I have survived quite well.

MONIQUE: You've done amazingly well but I wish you'd get that chip off your shoulder—

JUDY: Chip?

MONIQUE: That perverse superiority of someone from the wrong side of the tracks who happens to make it. Yes, I told Daniel that I thought you were doing Lisa a great disservice by taking her out of that fine school—

JUDY: Fine school?

MONIQUE: Okay, she's possibly mixing with the wrong group of girls but—

JUDY: All those girls are the same. They're taught to judge people by the size of their waterside mansions, their designer clothes, their expensive cars or huge boats.

MONIQUE: That's nonsense. They're children of parents who live well but also appreciate opera, ballet, theatre, the fine arts. Parents with power and influence. Taking Lisa out of that school will be depriving her of connections that will be invaluable right through her life. Do you really think it's going to help her to mix with the children of plumbers and car salesmen and suburban accountants.

JUDY: Monique, you are such an appalling snob.

JUDY turns to walk away in disgust. MONIQUE is furious.

MONIQUE: Whether you realise it or not, there is a social hierarchy, and if you're part of its top echelons it gives access to a life of elegance and ease and the satisfaction of knowing that you count. And you're ripping your daughter away from the possibility of ever enjoying all that. And why? Because you've never gotten over your hatred of the people who are fortunate enough to live that life. Your envy has turned us into the enemy. Don't deny you daughter her birthright.

JUDY: If Lisa goes to a state school her career will be crippled through lack of the right contacts, and her cultural horizons will be limited to karaoke nights and drag-car races? Is that what I'm hearing?

JUDY turns to walk away then turns and launches a verbal attack again.

The real reason you hate the thought of your granddaughter going to a state school is that you don't want to suffer the stigma when your friends find out. Well tough luck, Monique. You're going to have to live with that humiliating disgrace.

JUDY turns to leave. DANIEL comes inside looking for her. He sizes up the situation and sees that his mother's eyes are flashing fire.

DANIEL: What's going on?

MONIQUE: Your wife is just so rude. So graceless and rude.

She leaves. DANIEL turns to JUDY, exasperated.

DANIEL: Do you have to pick a fight with her every time we come here?

JUDY: I won't have her interfering with how we bring up our daughter.

DANIEL: We? Since when did I have a say in it?

JUDY: You seem to side with her at every bloody turn.

DANIEL: Just be a little bit sensitive, can't you?

JUDY: Sensitive? When is she ever sensitive?

DANIEL: It's her old school. I've never seen her happier than when Lisa was admitted there.

JUDY: Probably only because of the large contributions she kept making to the school's building fund.

DANIEL: Come on!

JUDY: Well it certainly wasn't our daughter's academic record.

DANIEL: You've always had it in for that school.

JUDY: The building fund? What more was there to build? They have a concert hall, two assembly halls, three basketball courts, an Olympic swimming pool, three sports ovals, five grass tennis courts, a squash court, a state-of-the-art science centre and a wellness centre—what's next? A velodrome and helipad?

DANIEL: She didn't donate to the building fund. It was the musical instrument acquisition fund.

JUDY: Half the violin section are no doubt playing Stradivarius already.

DANIEL: Judy—

JUDY: The old girls of that school only ever associate with other old girls for the rest of their lives. I want our daughter to associate with a wider spectrum of humanity than that.

* DANIEL: Like we do? Name one friend of ours that doesn't live in a multimillion-dollar house?

JUDY: Yes, but our friends are left of centre.

DANIEL: A few of them vote Labor which is now somewhere to the right of where the Liberal Party used to be under John Howard.

JUDY: That's not true.

DANIEL: When I told your dear friends Marcia and Neville that I'd been voting Greens for the last thirty years, he exploded and asked if I wanted the country to return to the Stone Age.

JUDY: Well, yes, Neville ...

She shakes her head. Neville is a pain.

But the fact remains that Lisa's school is totally out of touch with contemporary reality. Their houses are Blaxland, Wentworth, Lawson and Bell. Apart from them all being male in a girls' school, they were the explorers who found a path through the Blue Mountains and thereby ensured the destruction of First Nations culture.

DANIEL: Must you be so bloody woke! Okay, it's a school stacked with little snobs but try and be a little sensitive to how important it's been to Mum's life. She was head prefect.

JUDY: God help those poor little girls whose hats weren't straight. They're probably still under psychiatric care.

DANIEL: Stop it! She's not that bad!

JUDY: Oh yes she is.

DANIEL: Look, I do agree that Concord High is probably a good option for our daughter given what's happened but let's just do it without throwing it in Mum's face.

JUDY: So now you've changed your tune. Concord High is okay now. Not what you said when you came home from lunch with her.

DANIEL: Okay, I can see both sides! She would make social connections that would help her in life if she stays where she is.

JUDY: What are you, Daniel? A Greens-voting social snob!

DANIEL: And what are you? A cruise missile aimed at anyone who hasn't survived the school of hard knocks!

JUDY: If I'm so horrible, divorce me!

DANIEL: It's not something I'm contemplating.

JUDY: Well, I am!

DANIEL: Divorce? Are you serious?

JUDY: If you just stood up to her occasionally.

DANIEL: It's not me you're divorcing, it's my mother?

JUDY: It's a pretty good reason. *

She goes out to the garden. DANIEL stands there. MONIQUE, who has obviously observed Judy leave, enters.

MONIQUE: Did you put your foot down? *

DANIEL: Mum—

MONIQUE: Taking her out of the best school in Australia and dumping her in an under-resourced state school is insane.

DANIEL: What Lisa did wasn't nice.

MONIQUE: All girls can get a little nasty at that age. She'll be fine.

DANIEL: Mum, what Lisa did was pretty horrible. And it's not just that.

MONIQUE: What else is it?

DANIEL: I was walking down the street with her the other day and some girls passed us dressed differently to her, and with total contempt in her voice she said 'Westies'!

MONIQUE: Oh for God's sake. There are class divisions in any society. Always will be. If you were in India, would you rather be born a Brahmin or an untouchable?

DANIEL: This is Australia!

MONIQUE: And you still think you live in a classless society? Get real. If you're happy that you're ensuring your daughter's cultural horizons are limited to *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, then fine.

DANIEL: That's exactly what her friends watch now.

MONIQUE: Take your wife's side as usual. Would you dare do otherwise?

DANIEL: Mum, she has a point, you have a point.

MONIQUE: But hers are the only points you listen to.

DANIEL: Look, to be totally honest, I do think it's a pity she'll be leaving a school with a teaching staff and facilities as good as she has now, but if I make a huge issue out of this ...

MONIQUE: What? What will happen?

DANIEL: She's threatened ...

MONIQUE: Divorce?

DANIEL: Yes.

DANIEL
MONIQUE

MONIQUE: Good. You deserve someone who doesn't go through life with a chip on her shoulder. Honestly, haven't you had just about enough?

DANIEL: Sometimes I do get depressed. Judy's pigheadedness can get me down.

MONIQUE: She's a unmitigated bully. You'd be better off without her. You're sure to find someone else who's much better for you.

DANIEL: Just like that?

MONIQUE: Of course you will.

DANIEL: I get tongue-tied whenever an attractive woman comes within ten metres of me. And I'm not exactly a wonderful catch. Financially.

MONIQUE: Whose fault is that? You should've taken a few more years and qualified as an architect. Not stayed a—what is it you are?

DANIEL: An architectural draftsman.

MONIQUE: If you separate from Judy I'll fund you to do architecture.

DANIEL *stares at her*.

I mean it. I want you to enjoy some happiness in life which you'll never do with her.

DANIEL: You're bribing me to end my marriage?

MONIQUE: Not a bribe, an incentive.

[*Off his reaction*] You've just admitted you've thought seriously about it yourself.

DANIEL: I don't want to do architecture.

MONIQUE: You're happy to stay what you are?

DANIEL: No. But if I did anything it'd be structural engineering.

MONIQUE: [*horrified*] Engineering? Where's the artistry in that?

DANIEL: Engineers design most of our big buildings in any case.

Architects just do a bit of tarding up. And maths was by far my best subject at school.

MONIQUE: Okay, if you must, I'll fund that.

DANIEL: Serious?

MONIQUE: Of course.

DANIEL: But only if I divorce Judy?

MONIQUE: Do you want to stay married to her? Honestly?

DANIEL *sighs*.

DANIEL: Big step.

MONIQUE: Is there still electricity? In the bedroom?

DANIEL: That fades in any marriage.

MONIQUE: If it's faded totally, the marriage is over.

DANIEL: It hasn't faded ... totally.

MONIQUE: That's not sounding like a hot cot to me.

DANIEL: She's a partner in a top law firm. She works very hard.

MONIQUE: Not tonight, Josephine? That's what I'm hearing?

DANIEL: It's not that bad.

MONIQUE: The spark has gone. That's what I'm hearing in your voice. The spark has gone.

DANIEL: [*irritated*] It's not the only important thing in a marriage. After Dad died, you didn't feel life was over.

MONIQUE: It wasn't. Believe me.

DANIEL: What? You ... ?

MONIQUE: What did you expect me to do? Join a religious order?

DANIEL: I never saw you with anyone else. None of us did.

MONIQUE *continues to look evasive*.

The only other guy we ever saw at the house was Uncle Alan—

He stares at her.

You had an affair with your sister's husband?

MONIQUE: She's never found out.

DANIEL: It's still going on?

MONIQUE: Oh for God's sake. She doesn't know a thing!

DANIEL: This has been happening for all these years?

MONIQUE: If she doesn't give him enough of what he needs it's her damn fault.

DANIEL: All those times he comes to fix things?

MONIQUE: He does fix things.

DANIEL: A little more than the light bulbs it seems.

MONIQUE: I'm normal with normal needs. Why the shock?

DANIEL: He isn't exactly your type, is he?

MONIQUE: What's my type?

DANIEL: I doubt he's ever seen an opera or listened to Mahler. Look, don't get me wrong. But ... a panel beater?

MONIQUE: A very successful panel beater. He employs thirty men. And only does upmarket European models.

DANIEL: He had a very earthy turn of phrase and I doubt he'd been to many operas.

MONIQUE: The more opera a man listens to, the worse he is in bed. Your Uncle Alan at least knows which end is up.

DANIEL: [*sudden thought*] He was around a lot even *before* Dad died.

MONIQUE: So?

DANIEL: You always rabbitied on about how Dad was the love of your life and no-one could ever replace him.

MONIQUE: He was a darling. But your Uncle Alan was much better in bed, which was a bloody relief.

DANIEL *watches as his mother goes to fill her glass.*

DANIEL: Mum! No more champagne.

MONIQUE: Oh, tosh to you! And I meant what I said. Ditch that witch of a wife of yours and I'll finance whatever degree you want to get. It's time you had a better deal in life.

DANIEL *looks thoughtful and moves out into the garden.* CHRISSY *comes in to get a champagne refill.* MONIQUE *eyes her narrowly.*

MONIQUE: I'm still waiting. ✱

CHRISSY: For what, Monique?

MONIQUE: For that invitation.

[*Off* CHRISSY's blank reaction] You were going to invite me to see your remodelled kitchen.

CHRISSY: Oh ... really?

MONIQUE: And it would be nice to reacquaint myself with my four grandchildren.

CHRISSY: I'm sorry, but I absolutely can't remember asking you.

MONIQUE: Really.

She takes out her iPhone and scrolls down.

Here's the text message.

CHRISSY: [*reading*] Oh yes. That's right. Sorry. I'll work out a date and call you.

MONIQUE: Perhaps we could work out a date now?

CHRISSY: I haven't got my diary. I'm sorry, but the family and Liam's career make my life very frenetic.

MONIQUE: [*pointing to her screen*] This was the third time you've promised to invite me, by the way.

CHRISSY: Monique, life is more hectic than you can imagine. Sally gets hit by every bug that goes around. I've had to race her to emergency twice in the last month and I've been diagnosed with osteoarthritis in the right elbow and it's possible I'll need a knee replacement—

MONIQUE: If you don't ever really intend to invite me, just say so.

CHRISSY: Monique, that's not what I—

MONIQUE: Then I could learn to live with the occasional shots of my grandchildren Liam sends on his phone.

CHRISSY: Of course we'll have you over.

MONIQUE: That would really, really be nice.

MONIQUE *goes out into the garden, leaving CHRISSY visibly distressed.* LIAM *enters and frowns.*

LIAM: What's wrong?

CHRISSY: Your mother's been at me again.

LIAM: About what?

CHRISSY: Why I don't invite her over.

LIAM: Why don't you?

CHRISSY: [*bursting out*] When would I ever have time! If it's not the kids, it's you suddenly telling me you're arriving with four of your political mates for dinner.

LIAM: Occasionally.

CHRISSY: More than occasionally.

LIAM: If we go to a restaurant, everyone overhears.

CHRISSY: Overhears what? You plotting the downfall of the guy you're supposed to be all totally and solidly loyal to.

LIAM: He's not up to the job.

CHRISSY: Then why not say so. Every time you're ever asked if there's a leadership battle going on you say everyone in the party is a hundred percent behind him.

LIAM: We don't want to warn him about when the move is coming.

CHRISSY: He knows it's coming?

LIAM: Of course.

[*Gleam in his eye*] But he doesn't know when.

CHRISSY: Neither do you and your mates.

LIAM: Certain things have got to fall into place.

CHRISSY: Like getting the numbers, which it's obvious you haven't got.

LIAM: How do you know that?

CHRISSY: I'm not deaf.

LIAM: It's taking a while for the party to realise what an electoral disaster the fuckwit is going to prove.

CHRISSY: From what I heard the last time they came, your numbers man seems to think you're still twenty votes short.

LIAM: Eighteen. Eighteen short.

CHRISSY: So how many more of these plotters soirées do I have to endure?

LIAM: You're sitting down with some of the sharpest minds in the state.

CHRISSY: Then God help us.

LIAM: Honey, is there anything you're happy about in life? Anything? Being married to you is like being married to an encyclopedia of medical and mental disorders.

CHRISSY: Mental?

LIAM: The migraines, the anxiety attacks, the sleepless nights, the depressive episodes—

CHRISSY: Between you, four uncontrollable kids you hardly see and your bloody mother, it's a wonder I'm not in a bloody asylum!

She goes outside. DANIEL enters.



DANIEL: There you are.

LIAM: What's up?

DANIEL: Mum's drinking too much.

LIAM: What's new.

DANIEL: Picking fights with our wives.

LIAM: What do you want me to do about it?

DANIEL: Don't let her drink any more before her speech because that's when she really unloads.

LIAM: Why don't we all just go home.

DANIEL: This is her big moment of the year. Bail out of this and it would kill her.

LIAM: Not likely. She's as tough as old boots.

DANIEL: Underneath that imperious surface she's very vulnerable.

LIAM: No way.

DANIEL: And if we get through the speech there's still the aria.

LIAM: Bejesus yes. Isn't it time to tell her to stop?

DANIEL: That really would kill her. The delusion she was on her way to being the next Maria Callas has kept her life afloat.

LIAM: And sunk ours. Do you think she really believes it?

DANIEL: Dead set.

LIAM: She was good enough to get into the Conservatorium.

DANIEL: No.

LIAM: No?

DANIEL: Judy researched it. She failed her audition three years in a row.

LIAM: Oh shit!

DANIEL: Judy finally got fed up with her pretensions and searched out one of the retired teachers. She had talent but not enough. They only take the best of the best.

LIAM: Oh my God. Judy's not going to spring that one, is she?

DANIEL: No, she just needed to know for her own satisfaction.

LIAM: Jesus. The old fake.

Beat.

I just don't get people who delude themselves.

DANIEL: Really?

LIAM: [*glaring at him*] I am going to be Premier of this state, Daniel. And sooner than you think.

DANIEL: Okay. Fine.

LIAM: We do focus groups, and I come out as decisive, forceful, capable.

DANIEL: Okay.

LIAM: At least I have ambition. Where exactly is your life going, Daniel? Charlie, to his credit, has done better than I ever would have expected but where is your life going?

DANIEL: Where is it supposed to be going?

LIAM: What do you earn? Seventy K a year?

DANIEL: A bit more.

LIAM: Now I might be a sexist prick but I couldn't stand to be married to a woman who earns what five, six times what I do?

DANIEL: Lay off.

LIAM: You could have done two more years and become an architect.

JUDY, DANIEL *and* CHRISSY *leave for the garden.* MIDGE *holds baleful eye contact with* CHARLIE.

MIDGE: At least someone in this family appreciates me.

There's a silence.

So. Do we have a window booking at Quay?

CHARLIE: No.

MIDGE: A good table at Ursula's?

CHARLIE: No.

MIDGE: Booked out?

CHARLIE: Don't know. I didn't call.

MIDGE: So where are we eating?

CHARLIE: A nice little pizza joint in Darlington.

MIDGE: A pizza joint? You 're fucking joking.

CHARLIE: There's a Hungry Jack's next door if you prefer that.

MIDGE: I'm not amused, Charlie. I'm really not amused.

CHARLIE: If you want something better, perhaps you better call your friend Nick. I'm sure he could get you a front table at Aria.

MIDGE: You're not funny, Charlie.

CHARLIE: I wasn't trying to be funny.

MIDGE: If this is the kind of shit you're going to pull, our marriage isn't going to last long.

CHARLIE: That might be a very good thing.

MIDGE: You want our marriage to end?

CHARLIE: I'm too old for you, spend too much time with my mates, I hate the films and music you like, and you hate mine. And we can't talk about books because you don't read any. We even speak different languages. The only place it works between us is in the bedroom and I'll be sorry to lose that, but that will fade over time and then what are we left with?

MIDGE: Let's call it off? Just like that? With you showing no more emotion than a lobotomised frog?

CHARLIE: We made a mistake and you know it. Why not accept that and not go through prolonged agony?

MIDGE: I can't believe I'm hearing this.

[*Genuinely shocked*] I happen to love you.

CHARLIE: And I'm still besotted with you.

MIDGE: Then what's the problem?

CHARLIE: I've just mentioned about half a dozen but add to that the fact that no hotel room or resort is ever good enough for you, that no restaurant meal is up to expectations, that you're rude to waiters and shop assistants, that whatever happens to you is never your fault, that no matter how much attention you get it's never enough and that whatever's the latest fashion you have to have it.

MIDGE: I won't take second best. Ever.

CHARLIE: Why should you? The way you look has got you everything you wanted up to now and will for quite some time so why settle for anything less?

MIDGE: And in contrast to horrible little me, you're perfect.

CHARLIE: Far from it. I'm selfish, wilful, determined to do what I want to do—yeah all of that, but I don't demand the world fall at my feet, and I'm sick of watching little Miss Princess Pricetag expecting it to happen. I've reached my limit.

MIDGE: [*surprised*] Okay. If it's bugging you that much I can become more nush.

CHARLIE: Which in English means?

MIDGE: Sweetie-pie humble. I can change.

CHARLIE: You're not going to change, Midge. You're going to want the best of the best for as long as you can get it.

MIDGE: Look, if some bangable tart is flaunting a window seat and I haven't got one, I can't suddenly not hate it. She's not as hot as I am, so why the fuck is she there! It burns me from inside. But if it bugs you, I'll work at it. I'll change.

CHARLIE: Honey, you're not going to change. People never do. And same for me.

MIDGE: Okay, I'm a demanding bitch but I'm the demanding bitch that fell in love with you and I still am. You really want us to be over?

CHARLIE: If we do stay together, I warn you that if you try stuff on and I'll call you out. No more Mr Doormat.

MIDGE: You were never Mr Doormat.

CHARLIE: I had a sign on my forehead that said 'spineless'. But no more. No more no-limit Amex card so you can flash it at every piece of consumer trash that catches your fancy. You want to buy, you earn.

MIDGE: I can't ever earn what you do?

CHARLIE: You could! You're always talking about starting up your own chain of salons.

MIDGE: I need capital.

CHARLIE: I'll fund your first salon, then you're on your own.

MIDGE: You really think—

CHARLIE: You'll be great. Look, it's not just the money. I don't go to the office every day thinking about how much money I could earn.