

# **“IMAGINE”**

**By**

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**Summary:** She assumes that he is her best friend Christina's boyfriend. She has always been jealous of Christina because she believes that Christina has had more luck in her life than she has. They have just been out for a meal during which Christina has officially introduced her boyfriend to her, but during the meal she felt ill and he has accompanied her home. Her house is a big mess because she is in the process of moving.

She is an alternative therapy enthusiast and loves anything oriental. He has a law degree but he is too scared to practise law and is working in the same travel agents as Christina.

In the end, we discover that both of them are lying about something.

**Translated by Vanessa Hill**

**Characters:**

MAN

WOMAN

(A spacious, practically empty room, the only things to sit on are a few big cushions scattered on the floor and a bed made up of a mattress on the floor, covered by a couple of sheets. Next to the bed, there is a music system set up on a free-standing shelf unit.

Hanging on the back wall is an enormous fan otherwise known as a pay pay. Next to a load of boxes is a leather bag.

A woman is sitting on one of the big cushions and she appears to be ill. She is wearing a “hippy” type dress, probably the best one she has. A man is standing in front of her, offering her a glass of water. He is wearing a suit and tie with a raincoat over the top.

WOMAN: (accepting the glass) Thanks. (She drinks thirstily.) I'm sure I will be O.K. maybe it was the sauce. I did tell Christina, I told her that I have just finished a seaweed diet. I have been one month eating nothing but seaweed. Do you know how hard that is? I know that it is very healthy and it eliminates all the toxins in your body but you feel so hungry all the time! But then, no one has ever said that maintaining a healthy body is easy or pain-free. Anyway, Christina couldn't think of anywhere else to go but a Mexican restaurant! I used to love all types of Mexican food. Did she ever tell you that we always went there, well not always, only when we finished our exams, or when we started going out with a new boyfriend.

MAN: No.

WOMAN: How strange! Do you know how many times she made me go there for that reason? Ten, or maybe more. In the end, the situation became a serious threat to my economy. She was charming, and she still is. She has something special that drives men mad. Me, on the other hand.....

MAN: What?

WOMAN: What about what?

MAN: You, on the other hand, what?

WOMAN: Me?

MAN: Yes.

(Brief pause.)

WOMAN: And she couldn't think of anywhere else to take me, after a month on a seaweed diet, other than a Mexican restaurant. Do you know why? She knows that I wouldn't be able to resist and she took me there for precisely that reason. I'm sure I'm right, and my diet has definitely gone down the drain. But do you know something, I don't feel bad about it, in fact, I am happy. I feel a strange sensation here, (She puts a hand on her chest and leans slightly towards him) and here, (She puts her other hand over her stomach) but it's not the dizziness, that is beginning to go. If I feel sick, I will tell you, don't worry, although I don't think that.... (Very brief pause.) Can you pass me the water again please?

(He passes her the glass again and she takes another long swig.)

WOMAN: It's more like a spiritual sensation, as if I was doing something forbidden, some kind of mischief behind my parents' back. Do you know what I mean?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: Really? Well, I am glad because I don't think I have explained myself very well.

MAN: You have explained yourself really well.

WOMAN: Like a tingle... here.

(She puts her hand over her stomach again.)

MAN: (He puts his hand on his belly button.) Here?

WOMAN: No, a bit further down.

MAN: (He lowers his hand.) Here?

WOMAN: Yes, more or less. Did you know that in this area, there is a very important "Chakra?" It's the Chakra of emotion and I am sure that is what I can feel. Tonight I have connected with an intimate part of my body that I wasn't aware of until now and that's really cool! It has been a long time since anyone has made me feel like this, not even my yoga teacher. It's strange that it has been an enchilada that has woken up my ... what's it called?...

There is a word, invented by a Greek philosopher, that defines this.... the part of you that enjoys things without thinking of the consequences...

MAN: Epicurus.

WOMAN: What?

MAN: I believe, that the part of you that you have woken up is called the Epicurus.

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: The part where you enjoy sensual pleasures.

(Pause.)

WOMAN: Epicurus, yes, that is the word. She told you, didn't she?

MAN: Who?

WOMAN: Christina. I remember once, in class, they asked us a question, I can't remember the exact question, but the answer was that word. Epicurus. She always put her hand up in class. She knew the answers to everything. In the end, the teachers looked directly at her because they knew she would say the correct answer, but that day I put my hand up before her and the teacher looked very surprised because, until then, I had never raised my hand. When the teacher said that the answer was correct I quickly turned to look at Christina... it was instinctive, as if I had a spring in my neck. I looked at her in a strange way, I don't know how to define it, I just know I looked at her strangely because of her surprised and annoyed expression. Epicurus, that was the word. I had forgotten it.

(She burps and she covers her mouth, very embarrassed.)

WOMAN: I'm sorry! It must have been the water, I am sorry, really sorry, seriously, I don't want you to think that I....

MAN: Don't worry about it.

WOMAN: I shouldn't have drunk so quickly. Afterwards I burp and.... shit!

MAN: Don't worry! It doesn't matter.

WOMAN: Bloody hell, now you are going to think I am a right pig! What I have just done is... well... really disgusting. You don't have to tell me, I am well

aware of it, it is not the first time that it has happened to me. It must be "the karma" that I have accumulated from past lives. Once, I prepared a romantic meal here... well, not exactly here, in the other flat, where I lived before. My ex was Hungarian and he had come here to improve his English. He was a gynaecologist. He was a really out-going guy but, at the same time, very well mannered and I... well, you can imagine how it ended. He was called Atila. I spent a large amount of my savings on that meal even though I was not very well off at the time... The truth is, I am never very well off, but now, I wouldn't even consider spending my savings on a romantic meal for anyone, and least of all for someone called Atila, like that beast that destroyed the Roman Empire. They say that where ever his dog went the grass died and never grew again.

MAN: His horse.

WOMAN: What?

MAN: It was his horse, not his dog. Where ever his horse went the grass didn't grow again.

WOMAN: Really? (Brief pause.) Fuck, now you are going to think that I am uneducated.

MAN: Uneducated?

WOMAN: Not only a pig but also uneducated and ignorant. I bet Christina wouldn't have made such a mistake. She would have known about the horse, she knows everything, and she would never have fallen in love with a guy called Atila. I am sure you make a great couple.

MAN: Listen...

WOMAN: If you leave now, I will understand, really. You must think, "what type of women is this? She has just burped in my face."

MAN: Listen to me a minute...

WOMAN: "and on top of that, she is an illiterate that doesn't know that Atila rode a horse not a dog."

MAN: Let me speak...

WOMAN: I am sure you are wondering how Christina can be friends with me and...

MAN: Shut up!

(Silence.)

MAN: It could happen to anybody, if you drink two glasses of water as quickly as that, it is normal that... Don't think about it anymore, ok?

(Pause.)

WOMAN: So... are you going?

MAN: Going?

WOMAN: Are you staying... a little longer?

(Brief pause.)

MAN: I don't know. How are you feeling?

WOMAN: Better, but I am still a bit dizzy. I'm still a bit scared to stand up.

MAN: In that case, I will stay a bit longer. (He takes of his raincoat and puts it on the bed.) Have you got any coke?

WOMAN: Coke?

MAN: Yes. Have you got any?

WOMAN: Wow! I would never have imagined.... I mean, I am surprised that Christina..... Does she know that you like it?

MAN: Of course.

WOMAN: What does she think about it?

MAN: What does she think?

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: Well... I don't know. I suppose she thinks its O.K. so long as I don't overdo it. Everything is O.K. in moderation.

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: Well, have you got any or not?

WOMAN: I am really sorry but I haven't. I don't take cocaine, I prefer marihuana but I had a moving house party in the old flat and my friends cleared me out.

MAN: What?

WOMAN: Yes, we smoked and... (She stops in mid sentence. Brief pause.)

You... you weren't talking about drugs were you?

MAN: No.

(Pause.)

WOMAN: God, I am stupid!!! You must think I am a right idiot. Now, you must think that I am not just an ignorant pig but also a bloody idiot! I bet when you tell Christina she will die laughing. I bet I have a nightmare tonight. She will appear, laughing her head off while I drown in a swamp full of cocaine and Coca-Cola. I know all about that type of nightmare because I always suffer from them if I am nervous, worried or upset about something, like now. Before I go to bed tonight I am going to have to listen to my relaxation CD, the one that plays the sound of waves and running water. It makes me relax.

MAN: You shouldn't worry so much about what Christina thinks.

WOMAN: What?

MAN: Everyone lives how they want to... or how they can. It's not good for you to live depending on everyone else's opinions. Everybody is different and some things can't be changed. I think that people aren't the way they are because of the experiences that they have lived but because of the way they have reacted to those experiences. Nobody gives a damn whether you smoke pot or not or if you can't tell the difference between a cup of tea and an infusion of marijuana.

(Pause.)

WOMAN: Have you got a spiritual guide?

MAN: A spiritual guide?

WOMAN: I knew it! What you have just said is so.... deep. My spiritual teacher only shows me strange positions to meditate in. The truth is that yoga is beginning to do my head in, I felt better when I was doing tai-chi. Do you know something? I have felt more inner peace listening to you, than in all the time that I have been going to yoga. It makes you think, doesn't it?

MAN: Do you think so?

WOMAN: Have you got a spiritual guide or not? If you have, I would like to share him or her. I like you... (She corrects herself quickly)... I mean that I like the way you think. You have a lot of self-confidence. If we had the same spiritual guide, we could connect on another level.

MAN: I haven't got a spiritual guide.

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: No.

WOMAN: And you don't see anyone that's... I don't know... similar?

MAN: Well... (he thinks.) I have a friend who studied Theology for three terms, I don't know if that counts.

WOMAN: So... You arrived at those conclusions by yourself?

MAN: It really isn't that difficult.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

MAN: Well, have you got coke or anything similar?

WOMAN: (She gets up.) I don't know, I will go and have a look in the kitchen.

(He made her sit down again.)

MAN: Don't get up! You are still a bit dizzy and you could fall over. I'll go.

(He picks up the empty glass and exits on the left.)

(While he is leaving she looks in the box that is on top of the table. Pause. She looks over to the left for a few seconds. Finally, she quickly and quietly gets up and starts looking in various boxes, trying not to make any noise. Eventually she finds a magazine in one of the boxes and opens it, looking for something in particular. She finds what she is looking for and starts reading in a low voice.)

WOMAN: "A bad week for relationships due to possible complications from which you will not emerge unharmed. Despite this however, there is the possibility that during the next few days you will meet someone who will help

you and with whom you will start a new chapter in your life. However, dear Pisces, I recommend that you don't leave the house unless it is strictly necessary". (She gestures nervously.) A new chapter. I am going to start a new chapter!

MAN: (He shouts from the kitchen.) You only have Tea.

(She quickly goes back to where she was sitting before and sits down with the magazine in her hand.)

MAN: (He enters the stage with a glass of water in his hand.) We can't make tea because the gas bottle is empty.

WOMAN: I know. I was going to replace it tomorrow. All of this is temporary, the kitchen is half empty because everything is in the other flat and I haven't found anyone who can help me to move it all. (Brief pause.) I will have to bring it all bit by bit. By the way, I love cooking. Do you like cooking?

(He looks at her with a blank expression on his face, he really doesn't know what to say.)

WOMAN: Everyone has to cook as a pure necessity but I love cooking really tasty food, making exquisite and attractive dishes. When I eat them, I love savouring every mouthful as if it were my last. So tell me, do you like cooking?

(She waits for his answer. He still doesn't know what to say.)

MAN: I ... Well...

WOMAN: (She interrupts him.) I adore cooking. It's a way of showing others my best side. I don't try what I cook, well only a little to make sure it tastes nice. Then I sit down with my macrobiotic diet of seaweed and raw vegetable and watch my guests' faces. I prepare them a smoked fish salad with fresh bread, stuffed aubergines, diced vegetables in curry sauce, smoked cod in rum, sautéed beef liver with onions and peppers..... and if they are people that I know very well and I don't feel like spending hours in the kitchen, I prepare a

shepherd's pie and just chill out. (They look at each other and there is a brief pause.) You see... I love cooking. What is your favourite dish?

MAN: Fried egg and chips.

WOMAN: Fried egg and chips?

MAN: Yes, it's my favourite.

WOMAN: Well... That is easy to make. (She tries to appear friendly.) If you want, I could make it for you one day.

(He doesn't respond.)

WOMAN: Although... maybe it's not such a good idea.

MAN: (He offers her a glass of water.) Here you are, I have brought you another glass of water.

WOMAN: (Answers coldly.) Thank you.

MAN: Why don't you take an aspirin? It might help you to feel better. Have you got any?

WOMAN: (She tries to stand up.) I might have some in my bag..

MAN: (He stops her from standing up.) Don't get up. You might still be a bit dizzy and....

WOMAN: (Continues to be cold towards him.)... and I could fall down.

MAN: I'll have a look. (He walks towards her bag and starts to open it, then he stops.) You don't mind, do you?

WOMAN: No, go ahead.

(He takes a tube of aspirin from her bag and walks towards her.)

MAN: It's strange.

WOMAN: What's strange?

MAN: Every time I put my hand in a woman's bag I feel like I am committing a crime.

WOMAN: Have you put your hand into many women's bags?

MAN: Well.... a lot no, only a few, that's why.....

WOMAN: I suppose you have put your hand in Christina's

MAN: And what if I have?

WOMAN: No, no, nothing. I suppose it's natural, you have been going out with each other for a year now, haven't you? It must be serious, until now Christina has never had a relationship that has lasted so long. It's normal that she lets you go into her bag, I would let you too. Besides, I have only known you for a few hours and I have let you look in my bag. After all, we women don't have anything exciting in our bags, only lipstick, mascara, mirrors, tissues and tampax. What's to hide? It's nothing out of this world, is it?

MAN: It's getting late.

WOMAN: Yes, it's probably time you left. Thanks for bringing me home.

MAN: Your welcome.

(He gets his raincoat and is heading towards the door when he realizes that he has the aspirin in his hand. He stops, thinks for a second and goes back towards her.)

MAN: Before I go, take the aspirin.

(They look at each other and finally she takes the tube and looks at it. She then empties the whole tube into the palm of her hand and looks at each tablet meticulously.)

WOMAN: Shit, I have run out.

MAN: What are you on about? What are all those tablets in your hand then?

(Pause. She looks at him.)

MAN: What's the matter? They aren't aspirin, are they?

WOMAN: No.

MAN: In that case, what are they? *Speed?*

WOMAN: And what if they are?

MAN: No, no problem. Each to their own. I'm not getting involved, you do what you like, but you should be careful mixing tablets like that. One day, someone is going to take one thinking it's aspirin and you could get into serious problems.

WOMAN: They are not *speed*.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: Who do you think you are? It is none of your business what I do or don't bloody do! You find out by chance, and I mean by chance, because in normal circumstances I wouldn't even have considered telling you that sometimes I smoke the odd joint and you start thinking that I am not only an ignorant pig but also a druggie.

MAN: I didn't say that.

WOMAN: Well that's the impression you give.

MAN: Well if they are not speed, what are they?

WOMAN: What?

MAN: The tablets. What are they?

WOMAN: None of your business!

MAN: I need to know. When Christina started to feel ill, in the restaurant, she looked in your bag and took one of the tablets in that tube thinking that they were aspirin. You were in the toilet at the time, but Christina said that you wouldn't mind.

WOMAN: Is that what she said?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: Well what a bloody cheek! Although it doesn't surprise me really. When we were at school if she ever felt ill she would help herself to my aspirin without asking. I didn't mind, I used to do the same with her lip balm. I used to get really sore lips, I still do actually. Look! (She gets up very close to him and shows him her lips.) But, at the time, we were really close, and now...

MAN: (He interrupts her.) Are you going to tell me what the hell they are?

WOMAN: The.... tablets?

MAN: Yes, the tablets, what else would I be talking about?

(There is a brief pause.)

WOMAN: Laxatives.

MAN: Laxatives?

WOMAN: Recently I am very constipated, according to my herbalist, it is due to stress.

(Pause. He finally starts to laugh.)

MAN: Now I understand.

WOMAN: Sorry?

MAN: (Laughing.) I understand why she was in such a hurry to go home!

(He leaves the raincoat on the bed and sits on the cushion next to her.)

WOMAN: How was I to know that she would help herself to my tablets like she did at school? 12 years have passed since then, we are not as close.

MAN: (Laughing.) "Take me home now please." "But why?" "I don't feel well that's all. Don't make me talk, I can't talk at the moment".

(He loosens his tie.)

WOMAN: If I had known what was going to happen, I would have taken my bag to the bathroom.

MAN: She tries to be so posh that she didn't want to admit that she was shitting herself.

WOMAN: Last time I saw her she asked before she went in my bag. That was the time she told me about you.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: What did she tell you about me?

WOMAN: The truth, what else would she tell me? She said that you are a couple.

MAN: The truth?

WOMAN: Yes.... ah now I get it, you want me to tell you exactly what she said about you, don't you?

MAN: No, that's not necessary.

WOMAN: Don't pretend! All men want to hear what their partners say about them when they are chatting to their friends.

MAN: And you don't?

WOMAN: I have no idea. I haven't had the chance to find out.

(Uncomfortable pause.)

WOMAN: What do you want me to say? You work with her in the travel agency, you have a degree in law, you are looking for a flat together...

MAN: We are doing what?

WOMAN: And at any moment you are going to be living together.... or you will get married which is what Christina would prefer.

MAN: Sorry, we will be doing what?

WOMAN: To sum it all up, you are the perfect man. Happy?

MAN: Should I be?

WOMAN: I would be.

MAN: She only said it to impress you.

WOMAN: What do you mean?

(He begins to pace around nervously.)

MAN: Look, I am far from being the perfect man. I have my faults, in fact, I have many, many faults. The truth is that I am a walking disaster, O.K. maybe not that bad. I am just a normal bloke.... and it's possible that I am not even that because.... because.... Do you know something? It's true that I have a law degree but I have never worked as a lawyer. I grabbed the first job that I found, which happened to be at the travel agency. It's not a bad job, I can't complain, but it isn't what I imagined I would be doing. The problem is that things never turn out as we imagine they are going to. Also I allow myself to be influenced by other people, my parents, my friends, my workmates yes, also my workmates. It's sad but I just can't help it. Sometimes I do things for other people even when I know I shouldn't just because I can't say no. To give you an idea: At home, at times, I walk around with no shoes on so that I don't wake up the cat. So I really don't

understand how Christina could have painted me as the perfect man. As for living together, we still have a lot to talk about before that happens.

WOMAN: I think I have just put my foot in it again. I shouldn't have told you what she said.

MAN: No, quite the opposite. I am really happy that you told me.

WOMAN: Sorry!

MAN: Don't feel guilty, you have given me the opportunity to explain to you what an idiot I really am. I do have good points too, you know. I know how to stand up and face the music when I have to. I know how to get out of the messes that I get myself into. So, I am going to explain, you have a right to ....

(She stops him from pacing around and tries to calm him down.)

WOMAN: Calm down!

MAN: I find to so.... hard.

(She makes him sit down next to her on the cushion.)

WOMAN: You shouldn't get so angry, with Christina, just because she spoke to me about you. She did it because she loves you. She is not a bad person.

(Brief pause. He looks apologetic. They realise that they are sitting very close together.)

WOMAN: (She stands up nervously.) Do you feel like a whisky?

MAN: Wow, You feel better all of a sudden.

WOMAN: What makes you say that?

MAN: Well, you just stood up without getting dizzy.

WOMAN: Yes, well..... do you want a whisky?

MAN: Have you got any?

WOMAN: Of course, what do you take me for? (She starts to look in the boxes.) I suppose Christina has told you that with what I earn I barely scrap through the month and that's why I had to leave the other flat. She will also

have told you that I work doing manicures and pedicures in various hairdressers on an hourly basis. I don't make much but I can afford a bottle of whisky.

MAN: I had realised but not because Christina had told me.....

WOMAN: I bet she used the same condescending tone that she uses when she speaks about all our university class mates. (She takes a bottle of whisky out of a box.) I bet that at the end of the conversation she did this. (She adopts an arrogant, stuck-up pose.) and then she said, " Well....in the end, we all get what we deserve in this life."

MAN: (He stands up.) Good God! What is the matter with you? Do you think we spend all day, every day, talking about you? Christina hasn't mentioned any of that.

(Pause.)

WOMAN: Sorry. For a moment I forgot that you are a couple.

(He doesn't respond.)

WOMAN: From what I can see, it seems that you are serious about each other.

(He still doesn't respond.)

WOMAN: If you want to go now I quite understand.

MAN: Are you going to pour that whisky, or what?

(There is a brief pause while they look at each other. She walks towards the exit on the left hand side and then stops.)

WOMAN: I haven't got any ice. The freezer is in the other flat.

MAN: I don't mind.

(She exits the stage on the left hand side. He sits down on the same cushion that he was on before. He picks up the magazine that she

had been reading and after turning a few pages starts to read out loud but in a quiet voice.)

MAN: (Reading quietly to himself.) “ It will be a bad week for relationships because there could be some complications that will have negative implications for you. But despite this, there is a possibility that you will meet someone who will help you and with whom you will start a new stage in your life. However dear Capricorn, we recommend that you don't go out unless it is strictly necessary”. You didn't have to tell me that. (He puts the magazine down.) Shit!

WOMAN: (She shouts from the kitchen.) I won't take long; I am just looking for some clean glasses.

MAN: Don't worry. There's no rush. (He starts to fidget nervously. He looks towards her cushion and then looks towards the exit on the left. He gets up and stares at the cushion. He doubts for a second and finally starts to talk to the cushion, as if someone was sitting on it.) “A few minutes ago, I tried to tell you that I'm not.... That I.... Look I am really not.... Shit! (Pause. He paces up and down.) She asked me to. Do you understand? As a favour. I work with her in the agency and you know how difficult she can be when she wants something. In the end I agreed to pretend that I am her.....Bloody hell! How was I supposed to know that you are so.... wonderful? She painted a totally different picture of you, as if you were a bit stupid and instead of that you are... She promised me that it would only be for a couple of hours. I hope you understand. It was only supposed to be during the meal. (He studies the cushion. Brief pause.) Fucking hell!.

(He picks up his raincoat and heads towards the exit on the right of the stage just as she appears on the left.)

WOMAN: Are you going?

MAN: (He stops.) What?

WOMAN: Do you want to leave?

(He doesn't respond.)

WOMAN: If you want to go, then go. I'm not going to stop you. It is getting late and you only came here to make sure I got home safely.

MAN: No, it's just that I can't remember if I locked the car and I was just going to have a quick look.

WOMAN: Well go then. What are you waiting for?

(Brief pause while they look at each other.)

MAN: Forget it. Where's that whisky?

(He puts his coat down and accepts the whisky. They both sit down leaving an empty cushion between them. They drink in an uncomfortable silence.)

WOMAN: Why don't you leave the agency?

MAN: What?

WOMAN: If you don't like the job, why don't you leave it?

MAN: It's not that easy?

WOMAN: Because of Christina?

MAN: Because of Christina?

WOMAN: So that you can be together all day?

MAN: No, it's not that.

WOMAN: In that case, why?

MAN: Because at the end of the month they always pay me. I can't give you another reason than that.

WOMAN: But you don't like the job.

MAN: You don't like doing pedicures and manicures but you still do it.

WOMAN: What I earn is enough for me to get by on and I don't need or desire anything else. I'm not ambitious.

MAN: O.K. O.K.

WOMAN: I give more importance to my health, mental state and inner peace. Anyway, who said I don't like my job? I happen to like it, not like you. I also

happen to be very good at my job. Do you want me to show you? (She gets her bag and starts to look for something inside it.)

MAN: Eh... No, listen, that's not necessary. I believe you. I only said that because I thought that you....

WOMAN: (She pulls a pair of scissors and a nail file out of her bag.) Give me your hand.

MAN: What are you going to do?

WOMAN: Give me your hand I said!

MAN: Which one?

WOMAN: It doesn't matter. (She takes the hand that isn't holding the whisky glass.) Do your hands always sweat like this?

MAN: No, only when I am nervous.

(She starts to file his nails.)

MAN: Hey! You are right, you are a real professional. Can I have my hand back please?

WOMAN: Just calm down! I'm just going to file your nails. They are a right mess! What do you cut them with? An axe?

MAN: (He tries to pull his hand away.) No, with a tin opener! Hey! Do me a favour and give me back my... (He shouts out in pain.)

WOMAN: I told you to be still. Now look what happened!.

MAN: Now I am bleeding!

WOMAN: Don't be so silly! You have got lovely strong hands.

MAN: For the good it does me!

WOMAN: What did you say?

MAN: Nothing, I was talking to myself.

(She picks up his hand again and the scissors.)

MAN: What are you going to do with them?

WOMAN: Cut off the dead skin round your nails.

MAN: (He pulls his hand away again.) However dead it is, it is still my skin and it's staying where it is.

WOMAN: As you like. I will just file the nails then.

(He doubts and then finally offers her his hand. She continues to file his nails. Pause. He watches her.)

MAN: Maybe you are right. Maybe I should leave the agency and do something that I really like, but it's not as easy as it seems. There are not many jobs available. Many of my friends from university are working delivering pizzas and there is one who is working as a "strip-tease" at hen nights. Some of them have managed to get jobs as lawyers but mostly because they were lucky and had friends or family who managed to get them a place in a company or family business. What I want to do is open my own office. I would need to find an office with a computer and printer, a desk and some chairs, oh and a lot of books about law, that always impresses the clients. The problem is the clients, because who is going to take the risk with a lawyer who has no experience?

WOMAN: (She stops filing his nails)- That's you finished. What do you think?

MAN: Wow, they don't seem like my nails.

WOMAN: I told you I am good at my job.

(She throws the nails file down on the bed and they gaze at each other.)

WOMAN: Would you seriously think about opening your own office?

MAN: Yes! Well.... I think so. I love the idea but the reality is very complicated because of the clients.

WOMAN: What about if I found you a client?

MAN: A client?

WOMAN: Yes. She is my yoga teacher. She has a problem with a client that only comes every now and again. One of those women with a rich husband who spends her day watching television and have coffee mornings with her friends. Anyway, because she has nothing to fill her time she comes to yoga. It seems that, as our teacher always says we should practise at home, she was trying to do the lotus position at home and she sprained her back. Well,

instead of just going to the doctor and having a few days rest she has reported our teacher for damages. She claims that the teacher didn't tell her that she should warm up before she starts doing yoga, and that she had shown her incorrectly how to get into the lotus position. Would you be interested in the case?

(Pause.)

MAN: Well... I don't know...

WOMAN: Are you interested or not?

MAN: It's just that... it's not that simple...

WOMAN: You said that you wanted to leave the agency. Well. this is your opportunity.

(Pause. He takes a large swig of whisky.)

MAN: The case is really clear-cut. They will say that the client is right and the yoga teacher will have to cough up the money.

WOMAN: But why? It is impossible to sprain your back just by getting into the lotus position. She probably did it while doing something else like playing golf or stroking her dog, but doing yoga... impossible! Look. I'll show you. (She takes off her shoes and sits on the bed, she gets into position and closes her eyes.) You do it and you will see for yourself.

MAN: Now?

WOMAN: Yes!

MAN: I haven't warmed up.

WOMAN: You don't need to warm up. Come on, what are you waiting for?

(He obeys and sits on the bed.)

WOMAN: (She speaks without opening her eyes.) Take off your shoes.

(He obeys, gets into position and closes his eyes. Pause. He remains there with his eyes closed, sat very still.)

MAN: (He speaks without opening his eyes.) Now what?

WOMAN: Can you feel anything?

MAN: No, what should I feel?

WOMAN: It doesn't hurt your back?

MAN: Not really.....

WOMAN: You do know where your back is, don't you? Look for any sensation in your back. (Brief pause.) What? Can you feel it?

MAN: Well... Yes, I suppose so.

WOMAN: Now focus on your lower back. (Brief pause.) Are you focused?

MAN: What a minute.

WOMAN: (impatient.) Now?

MAN: O.K. O.K. I have got it.

WOMAN: Does it hurt?

MAN: No.

WOMAN: No? Really? Now I will count slowly until ten. If it hurts, tell me.

(She counts while he begins to rub his knee. She continues counting and then opens her eyes and gets up.)

WOMAN: Well? Can you feel anything?

MAN: Not in my lower back.

WOMAN: You see? She has invented it all! It would be an easy case to win. Any trauma specialist could declare in front of the judge that...

(She realises that he is still in the lotus position.)

WOMAN: What's the matter?

MAN: I can't move, I am stuck and my knee hurts a lot. You are going to have to help me.

(She helps him to get out of the lotus position while he complains about his knee.)

WOMAN: I don't understand. I really isn't normal that it is hurting you so much.

MAN: I broke some ligaments a while ago and now I can't make certain movements.

WOMAN: Why didn't you tell me?

MAN: I don't know. I thought I would be able to do this without any problems.

WOMAN: Let's see if you can get up without it hurting you.

(He tried to get up but when he puts some weight on his bad leg it hurt and he shouts out in pain.)

WOMAN: I think it might be better if you lay down.

MAN: Bloody fucking Yoga!

WOMAN: Relax, you are really stressed and that is not going to help at all. I know, I have got a cream that might help. It is made from nettles. I'm going to go and get it.

MAN: (He sits up on the bed.) Nettles? Don't even think about it! Thanks but no. I would prefer to get up and slowly walk around until it feel better. (He starts walking.)

WOMAN: Are you sure you don't want the cream?

MAN: Yes, I'm sure. I don't trust nettles.

WOMAN: But they have many healing qualities.

MAN: I said no!

WOMAN: O.K. O.K. Whatever you want. (Pause. She observes him as he walks around.) Will it bother you if I put on some music?

(She walks towards the stereo without waiting for a reply. He follows her and she starts to look at the CD's and records without realising that he is behind her.)

MAN: You haven't got many, have you?

WOMAN: (She jumps.) I know. Before, when I was sharing a flat with a group of people, I had more but as the people left so did my CD's. In the end, I had to hide the ones I had left, in my room.

MAN: Can I choose?

(There is a brief pause while she looks at him.)

WOMAN: O.K.

(He leans forward, with some difficulty and bends and stretches his knee a few times, then starts to look at the CD's. She goes back to sit on the cushion.)

WOMAN: There have been some really strange people in this flat: An Egyptian air stewardess, a ventrilo... an actor... In the end I was tired of seeing so many people come and go and decided not to share with anyone. What's the point? You have just got used to their strange ways and started to like them and they have to leave.

MAN: Have you got any jazz?

WOMAN: I had some blues, I like blues, but a law student took them all.

MAN: Any Elvis?

WOMAN: Those were stolen by a tarot card reader. The bastard started his business in the house without asking me first and before I knew it there were people coming and going at all hours. Once, I caught one in the kitchen making herself a cup of tea as if it was her own house. In the end, I chucked him out.

MAN: (He finds a CD.) I like this one.

(He puts it on and they hear the first cords of Imagine, by John Lennon. She stands up nervously.)

WOMAN: No, please. This one no.

(He removes the CD.)

MAN: What's the matter? Don't you like it?

WOMAN: No, it's not that, it's just that I don't want to listen to it at the moment.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

MAN: Have I done something wrong?

(She doesn't respond.)

MAN: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you in any way.

WOMAN: Don't worry. It's not important.

MAN: I thought that you would like to hear it, If I had known that you didn't like it...

WOMAN: It's not that. I do like it.

MAN: In that case, I don't understand.

WOMAN: It's just that that CD was ... a present...a special present.

MAN: O.K. Now I understand. I suppose you don't want just anyone to touch it.

WOMAN: That's right.

MAN: Only you... and him... or her... or whoever it was.

WOMAN: He can't put it on because he is in Nicaragua. (Pause.) He was only supposed to go for a few months. He wanted to see it all with his own eyes and in the end, he liked it so much that he stayed there. I think he met someone out there. He didn't say anything in his letter but I know him very well, I mean, I knew him very well.

MAN: So it was him that gave you the present?

WOMAN: What?

MAN: He gave you the CD?

WOMAN: Yes. And the fan as well.

(Both of them looked at the giant fan hanging on the wall.)

WOMAN: I asked him to bring me one back when he returned. In the end, he sent it by post.

MAN: (lying.)- It's... beautiful.

WOMAN: It's horrible.

(Pause.)

WOMAN: When The Beatles separated, John Lennon was 30. He wrote Imagine when he was 31. Can you feel the peace that is transmitted in this song? Have you ever really listened to the words? "You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope one day you'll join us and the world will be as one". John Lennon managed to transmit something with his song. He also demonstrated that he was consistent in his beliefs. (Pause. She looked at the fan.) My ex also demonstrated that he is consistent in his beliefs when he went to Nicaragua. In contrast, here am I about to celebrate my 30th birthday and I have done nothing worthwhile with my life. If some crazy idiot shot me, like they shot John Lennon, what would be left behind marking my passage in this world?

MAN: Listen. No one is going to shoot you O.K.? No one. So don't even think about that. We all have opportunities in life. I don't believe what some people say, that we only have one opportunity in life. I believe that we get many chances we just need to know when and how to take them. Maybe some of them pass us by but more always come along.

(Long pause. They drink in silence.)

WOMAN: Put it on.

MAN: What?

WOMAN: Put Imagine on.

MAN: Are you sure?

WOMAN: Yes, hold on, I'll put it on.

MAN: No, no, let me.

(He puts the song on. Meanwhile, she sits on the corner of the bed; she looks deep in thought. He turns round. She looks at him and puts a hand on the bed, inviting him to sit down next to her.)

WOMAN. Come here.

(He obeys. They listen to Imagine for a while, in silence. Finally, before the end of the song, he decides to talk.)

MAN: I have something I have to tell you.

WOMAN: Me too.

MAN: Yes, but I...

WOMAN: Let me speak first please. What happened to Christina in the restaurant wasn't an accident.

MAN: What do you mean?

WOMAN: When we sat down at the table she asked me if I had any aspirins and as I thought that at some point she was going to take one I emptied the tube and replaced the aspirins with laxatives without you both realizing. (Very brief pause.) I thought, at first, that I was doing it to teach her a lesson because I am so fed up with her making out that she is so important and better than me. But now I realise that I didn't do it just for that reason. I also did it because of you.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

WOMAN: Aren't you going to say anything?

MAN: No.

(Very brief pause. He stops looking at her but she continues to gaze at him.)

WOMAN: So you have got nothing to say?

(He doesn't respond. There is an uncomfortable pause and she stops looking at him.)

WOMAN: What were you going to say to me before?

MAN: Nothing. It's not important now.

WOMAN: O.K. Well, if you want to leave, now is the moment.

(He doesn't move.)

WOMAN: Aren't you going?

(Brief pause. Suddenly he gets up and she follows but more slowly. He picks up his rain coat without looking at her. They remain still for a few seconds without looking at each other. Finally, he moves towards the exit on the right without realising that he hasn't got his shoes on.)

WOMAN: I'm sorry but I had to tell you.

(He stops and turns back and looks at her. Then he throws his rain coat back on the bed.)

MAN: Sit down please.

WOMAN: I didn't want you to...

MAN: Sit down, please!

(She sat down on the bed. He paces up and down for a few seconds and then looks at her.)

MAN: Before I start, I want you to know that I feel terrible about this whole situation. O.K.?

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: You would agree with me when I say that there are some people who are prepared to do anything to get what they want, right?

WOMAN: Listen, I don't want you to think that...

MAN: Do you agree with what I just said or not?

WOMAN: (She answers patiently.) Yes.

MAN: There are people who lie and make others lie just to see other people suffer.

WOMAN: Listen, I don't...

MAN: Let me finish! I could have just left without saying anything...

WOMAN: O.K.

MAN: However, I have got to tell you. I have got to tell you or I will feel really bad.

WOMAN: Maybe you should have just left without saying anything.

MAN: To start with, I shouldn't have come here to your house, it wasn't planned. At first, I was really nervous, but now I am really glad I came.

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: Yes. You have made me feel like a right idiot.

WOMAN: That wasn't my intention.

MAN: Don't worry, I am pleased that you made me feel like that because you have made me realise just what a fucking idiot I am. The biggest bloody idiot in the world. Don't worry, I already had my suspicions but today you have confirmed them. However, I think that I have realised in time to be able to do something about it. Maybe stupidity can be cured...

WOMAN: So you aren't angry with me about what I said?

MAN: Angry? Far from it! I promise you that when I see Christina I am going to tell her exactly what I think of her. I really don't know how I let myself get involved in all of this.

WOMAN: I don't understand. What are you talking about?

MAN: She asked me to do it and I didn't know how to say no. She described you as a right jerk. She had me thinking that you were neurasthenic, a neurotic woman who never stops talking, that's why I agreed to the whole thing in the end. It was only supposed to be a few hours.

WOMAN: I still don't understand.

MAN: However, now that I have got to know you, I realise that something about all of this doesn't add up: or Christina doesn't know you very well or she is a lying bitch and she has tricked me in order to achieve what she wants. I was stupid enough to fall for it all!

WOMAN: (She was amazed.) What are you trying to say? Get to the point please.

MAN: Christina isn't my girlfriend! We are not going out with each other. Sometimes we go and have breakfast together in the café in front of the office but nothing else. We never go out together after closing because she always manages to get the boss to let her leave early. I don't know how she

does it. She seems to be able to convince anyone to do anything. I'm sure she could even sell snow to Eskimos. I don't have such an easy time because, for some reason, the boss doesn't like me. Clients come into the office asking about trips to Tahiti, Samarkand, China or America and I don't know how the hell it happens but they end up booking a weekend in fucking Mallorca. I suppose they pick up of my lack of enthusiasm. With her, however, it's the other way round. A guy comes in wanting to book a plane ticket to Valencia and ends up buying a 15-day trip to Bali with plane tickets, hotel, day trips and car hire. I told you, she could sell snow to Eskimos. The proof is that she convinced me to pretend to be her boyfriend for the night.

(Pause. She is speechless.)

WOMAN: Sorry but can you repeat that last bit please?

MAN: Yes, what I am trying to tell you is that the whole thing has been a lie. Christina just wanted to impress you. There is nothing between the two of us.

(Long pause. She suddenly starts to laugh and laugh and laugh until her laughter turns to tears and she tries desperately to hide her face from him. He is unsure what to do but finally goes towards her to try to calm her down. He isn't brave enough to touch her.)

MAN: Please don't cry.

(She continues crying.)

MAN: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.....

(She slaps him round the face and walks away.)

WOMAN: What was the prize?

MAN: What do you mean?

WOMAN: You must have asked for something in return or did you just like the idea so much that you did it for nothing?

(He doesn't respond.)

WOMAN: Come on. Don't be shy, tell me.

MAN: She was going to give me some of her sales, so that it looked as if I had done them. Big sales for trips to America and Mexico not stupid weekends away to Mallorca.

(Pause.)

WOMAN: So I am only worth a few stupid plane tickets and hotel reservations....

(Silence.)

WOMAN: You could have asked for a few trips to Asia as well, don't you think I am worth that?

MAN: I.....

WOMAN: I can't believe you have both done this to me? What have I ever done to that bitch for her to want to treat me this way?

MAN: I am sorry...

WOMAN: Get out!

MAN: Look I...

WOMAN: Didn't you hear me? Get out!

(She turns her back to him. He picks up his coat and then realises that he hasn't got his shoes on. He puts them on and goes towards the exit on the right. He stops.)

MAN: No. I am not going.

WOMAN: What do you mean? This is my house and I want you to go.

MAN: I am not going and leaving you with this opinion of me. Maybe I should have just left as soon as we arrived at your house. I shouldn't have come in. I should have just left you here and speed away as fast as I could and forgotten about the whole thing. But I didn't and now I am trying to explain to you what happened tonight.

WOMAN: Fantastic, how nice of you, what a perfect gentleman. Now you have told me you can leave.

MAN: I wanted you to understand what type of person Christina really is. I don't like the way she laughs about you. Ever since I walked in here tonight you have been talking about her and it's obvious that you think a lot of her and you think she is God's gift to men or something like that.

WOMAN: You don't know anything about me so don't pretend that you know how I feel!

MAN: You think that she is perfect and you are crap at everything and she loves that. Can't you see that? Didn't you realise tonight, during the meal, she only talks about herself. She is a stupid cow! At work no one wants anything to do with her. She walks around the place as if she is the Queen of Sheba, and as a result she has no friends. You are the only person that wants anything to do with her and she will do anything to keep you interested. I just wanted you to know what kind of person your friend really is.

WOMAN: And you? What kind of person are you?

(He doesn't respond.)

WOMAN: You can't answer that, can you? Do you want me to tell you? You're a coward with no personality. Christine might be a bitch but you didn't have the balls to refuse to take part in this whole fucking mess, the same as you don't have to balls to stick the travel catalogues up your boss's arse and leave the office and start doing what you really want to do with your life. I'm sure you have never had the balls to face your life full on and take the necessary decisions. So don't try to give me advise, look at yourself in the mirror first.

(Pause. He sits on the bed feeling miserable.)

MAN: I think I am going to be sick.

WOMAN: What?

MAN: (He loosens his tie.) I feel really bad. Have you got a bucket?

WOMAN: Hey, don't even think about being sick here.

MAN: (He tried to get up with difficulty.) If you want I will go and puke up in the street but I can't promise you that I will get to the door before....

WOMAN: (She stops him from getting up.) No! Just sit here for a bit, you may feel better.

.  
(She thinks for a moments and then walks towards the fan on the wall and takes it down. She then fans him with it.)

MAN: It's because I feel anxious. Ever since I was a child I have been the same, when I am nervous I feel sick. Once, during school dinners, a girl who I liked came and sat next to me. It was the first time I had been so close to her and I felt so nervous that I was sick all over her. The other kids saw and smelt my sick and started to vomit as well. It was really disgusting!

WOMAN: Do you feel better?

MAN: Yes. I'll go now.

(She leaves the fan on the bed and he stands up.)

WOMAN: (She makes him sit down.) Wait a minute. If you vomit in the stairway the caretaker will never forgive me. Would you like a glass of water?

MAN: I would prefer a whisky if you don't mind.

WOMAN: A whisky? Are you sure?

MAN: Yes, it will give me a kick-start and I will be able to leave earlier.

WOMAN: O.K. if that's what you want.

(She pours out a whisky and gives him the glass.)

MAN: Thanks.

WOMAN: That's O.K. Now drink up.

(He takes a large sip and she watches him. She then looks at the bottle and serves herself a glass. There is a brief pause while she sips the whisky.)

WOMAN: I over stepped the mark a bit saying what I did.

MAN: No, you were right. I am a coward. I wasn't even brave enough to tell you the truth when we first got here. It has taken me all night to find the courage.

WOMAN: Well, you told me in the end, didn't you.

MAN: Yes, but it was too late.

WOMAN: Why did you tell me? You didn't have to.

MAN: Yes, I did. You seem like a wonderful person to me and I don't think you deserve to be treated like this... I think that Christina... well, me and Christina... Look, I am not a bad person, even though it looks like that at the moment.

(Pause.)

WOMAN: I still don't understand why Christina feels the need to lie to me.

MAN: It's obvious. Christina is one of those people who likes to pretend that she is something that she isn't and that she has more than she really does. Don't ask me why.

WOMAN: Imagine how many lies she must have told me over the years.

MAN: In my experience she tells one after another. Once there were some clients that insinuated, in the middle of the Gulf War, that if there wasn't a war on they would go to Israel. She told them that the war had ended a few hours ago, they believed her and she booked them a ten-day trip to Israel.

WOMAN: Well, at least I managed to give her a dodgy stomach.

MAN: That's true.

WOMAN: Will you tell her?

MAN: What?

WOMAN: That you have told me the truth.

MAN: Yes, but before that I am going to tell her exactly what I think of her.

WOMAN: And your part of the deal? You know, the trips to America and Mexico?

MAN: To hell with them.

WOMAN: In that case, you can tell her what I think of her too.

MAN: Are you going to continue seeing her?

WOMAN: That's between me and her.

MAN: Of course...

(Pause.)

WOMAN: What was the word you used? Neura...."Neurasthenic"?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: What does it mean?

MAN: I don't really know but it has something to do with being nervous and  
anxious.

WOMAN: And am I?

MAN: What?

WOMAN: Neurasthenic.

MAN: No.

WOMAN: And if I had been? Would you have told me that all this was a lie?

(He doesn't respond.)

WOMAN: You wouldn't have told me, would you?

MAN: But you aren't so it doesn't matter.

WOMAN: Right.

(Brief pause.)

MAN: I feel better now. Do you want me to go?

(Pause.)

WOMAN: (She looks at his glass.) Have you finished? I'll give you a drop more,  
it seems to be doing you good.

(She filled his glass and hers and sat down on the bed without realising that she was going to sit on the fan.)

MAN: Be careful!

WOMAN: What's the matter?

MAN: The fan. If you break it, your friend in Nicaragua will be angry.

WOMAN: I don't think he would care! Anyway, it's not made in Nicaragua. It was made in Taiwan.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: The guy thinks I am so stupid that I wouldn't notice. I found a load of fans exactly the same in a sale in Marks and Spencer with the label "Made in Taiwan". Later, when I got home I had a look at mine and I could see the mark that the ticket had left on the back left hand corner. He hadn't even made an effort to get rid of the mark.

MAN: Why did you hang it back up?

(She didn't respond. She got up and poured herself another whisky.)

WOMAN: Would you like some more whisky?

MAN: O.K. but only a little.

(She filled his glass and the drank in silence.)

MAN: This week we are chartering a flight full of Engineers to Managua. If you want I can get you a seat on the plane free of charge and you can go over there, find your guy, thump him one and come back... or stay, as you prefer.

WOMAN: Why would I want to stay?

MAN: I don't know.

WOMAN: What's the matter? Do you think I still like him?

MAN: That's none of my business.

WOMAN: Of course it's none of your business.

MAN: I just don't understand how you can still care about a guy who can send you a fan from Marks and Spencer and pretend it's from Nicaragua.

WOMAN: So you wouldn't stand for it?

MAN: What?

WOMAN: You wouldn't stand for it?

MAN: Me? No way! Do you want me to get you the ticket or not?

WOMAN: There is nothing in Nicaragua that interests me.

MAN: Good.

(Brief pause. They drink in silence.)

MAN: This whisky is making me feel bad.

WOMAN: Why?

MAN: It's causing me to have palpitations.

WOMAN: Really? Lay down on the bed a minute.

MAN: What?

WOMAN: Lay down, I said!

(He obeys.)

WOMAN: You are too anxious. I'm going to put on CD that will help you relax. You will notice all your muscles relaxing and your bio energetic current will return to normal. (She looks for the CD.) Oh by the way, what are you going to do about your new client?

MAN: What are you talking about?

WOMAN: My yoga teacher. You wanted a client so that you could open your own office and I have given you one. So what are you going to do now?

MAN: And an office? What about an office?

WOMAN: Do you have to see the negative side of everything?

MAN: No, but an office is important.

WOMAN: Of course, but you could rent a room. If you want I could rent you my living room and if that's not good enough we can find another solution.

MAN: Are you serious?

WOMAN: Yes. Are you interested?

MAN: It's not that easy...

WOMAN: Are you interested or not?

MAN: O.K. Yes

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: Yes. Really.

(Brief pause. They look at each other and smile.)

WOMAN: I'm going to put on the CD, O.K?

(She puts on the music and you can hear the sound of waves. She sits next to him.)

MAN: I can hear waves...

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: That's it? Haven't you got something with a bit more rhythm?

WOMAN: Shut up and listen. Close your eyes. Now let the sound of the waves fill you up. Just let the sound relax you and go with the flow.

(They listen to the waves in silence.)

WOMAN: Tell me what you can see.

MAN: I can't see anything. I have got my eyes closed.

WOMAN: Listen to the waves. Imagine them sliding gently up the beach. Imagine the white froth on top of the transparent water, the mark they leave on the sand as they gently move back down the beach...

MAN: It's not sand

WOMAN: No?

MAN: No... it's a rocky beach...

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: They are rocks with a blue tinge. A brilliant blue that turns green when the water covers them.

WOMAN: Carry on.

MAN: The froth... is pink. There is no wind just a slight breeze. But why is the froth pink? Oh, of course... Because of the sun... The sun is coming out. I am on top of one of the rocks looking out to sea. I have got my feet dangling

in the water and I can feel them nice and fresh. They feel as if thousands of rose petals are stoking my feet.

WOMAN: The rock that you are sitting on gets bigger.... The sun starts to warm you and you close your eyes and you notice the sun's rays on your body.

The sea touches the sky and reaches up and up. The colour becomes more and more intense as it looks for the sun.

(They look at each other and they kiss. Over the sound of the waves we hear the song *Imagine*.)

**The stage slowly becomes dark.**