

ESCORTED

Episode One

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FADE IN:

EXT. SCOOPY DOOBY SHOE SHOP. SKIPTON. WINTER. - AFTERNOON

MAX TAYLOR, a respectable and quiet man in his mid-50s, diligently sweeps the front of his beloved shoe shop, his breath visible in the chilly air. The cobbled main street is busy as Passersby hurry past, their faces obscured by scarves and hats.

MAX leans wearily on his brush, casting a despairing glance at the clearance shoe store across the street, adorned with giant '50% OFF' banners, numerous customers entering and leaving.

Suddenly, a flicker of movement catches his eye.

MANDY, a flirtatious and divorced woman in her late 40s, emerges from her nail salon, vigorously flapping a bright pink towel. MAX waves to her, and she responds with a flirty, confident smile. Despite the distance, they engage in a loud conversation, exchanging words from opposite sides of the street.

MANDY

You're the only man in town who makes sweeping look sexy!

MAX looks embarrassed.

MAX

Give over!

MANDY

I knew I should have married you when I had the chance!

MAX

You never had the chance, remember?

MANDY laughs raucously and blows him an exaggerated kiss.

MANDY

You closing up?

MAX gives a rude gesture in the direction of the clearance shop.

MAX

No point staying open, is there?

MANDY

Chin up, You're out tonight!

MAX attempts a cheerful smile.

MAX
Yeah, I suppose so.

MANDY
Have a good'un and don't forget to
give me all the juicy details
tomorrow!

She blows him another kiss and bounces energetically back into the salon. MAX enters the shop. He turns off the lights, locks up and trudges down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAYLORS HOUSE. SKIPTON - MOMENTS LATER

MAX slowly walks up the quiet cul-de-sac, passing by the modern semi-detached houses lining the street. He arrives at a gravelled drive, where a gleaming BMW is parked outside the front door. Pausing momentarily, he inspects the car proudly, then removes a small mark from the bonnet. Fumbling for his keys, he enters the house.

CUT TO:

INT. TAYLORS HOUSE. KITCHEN. - LATER

MAX sits slouched in silence while HANNAH, a warm and thoughtful woman in her early 50s, busily clears the remnants of dinner.

HANNAH
How was today?

MAX
A pair of Nike trainers and some
Ted Baker high heels...Not worth
opening again.

HANNAH
High Heels! Was she local?

MAX
It was a he.

HANNAH is surprised and confused.

HANNAH
Oh...A present?

MAX

No. For him. It was a bit awkward at first but he just needed a bit of reassurance.

HANNAH smiles at him with admiration.

HANNAH

You're so good with people.
(reassuring)
Things will look up, love. It's January, worst time of the year.

MAX gives her a faint smile, unable to hide his concern.

MAX

Think the bank might have other ideas.

HANNAH

Forget about that for tonight. Brenda says Chub is looking forward to seeing you.

MAX cheers up. The thought of escaping reality for a short time is appealing.

MAX

Yeah, me too.

CUT TO:

INT. TAYLORS HOUSE. LOUNGE - LATER

MAX stands in front of the mirror meticulously adjusting the lapels of his smart blazer and brushing down his chinos. HANNAH enters and appraises him affectionately.

HANNAH

Wow, you look smart!

MAX

Thought I'd make an effort.

HANNAH

Good for you!

MAX heads for the front door, followed by HANNAH. She gives him a gentle kiss on the cheek.

HANNAH

Have a lovely time.
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)
 (gentle but forceful)
 Go steady with the pennies, won't
 you.

MAX nods, a silent promise. He walks down the drive as HANNAH lingers in the doorway, watching him, her supportive expression gradually replaced by worry.

CUT TO:

INT. THE KINGS ARMS PUB. SKIPTON - LATER

MAX sits alone at the bar, the dim lights casting shadows over the tired interior and its surroundings. In the corner, a group of MEN play a game of darts, their laughter alternating between raucous outbursts and hushed giggles. Nearby, a YOUNG COUPLE sit, exchanging affectionate whispers

MAX'S phone vibrates. He reads a text message.

CHUB (TEXT)
*Sorry mate, crisis at work. Need to
 take a rain check, Chub.*

Dejected, he replies.

MAX (TEXT)
No problem mate, hope all okay.

MAX throws his phone onto the bar in frustration. He scans the pub and catches a glimpse of a MAN emerging from the toilets, a spitting image of himself. Intrigued, he watches the MAN put his coat on and leave. MAX turns back to the bar, scrolling through his phone.

In walks a poised and elegant WOMAN in her 50's. She casts a nervous glance around the room and spots MAX. Gradually, she walks over to him, prompting MAX to look up, startled by her appearance.

WOMAN
 Nathan?

MAX
 Sorry?

WOMAN
 Nathan Detroit?

MAX
 From Guys and Dolls?

WOMAN
 (confident, excited)
 Yes! Found you without embarrassing
 myself...Sorry I'm late.

She offers to shake his hand. MAX hesitates, puzzled, before shaking it out of instinct.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 I'm Christine, but my friends call
 me Chrissie.

MAX
 I think there's a misunderstanding.
 I'm not Nathan?

CHRISSIE
 I know it's not your real name!
 (relaxing)
 Shall I sit down? We've time for a
 drink before we go.

MAX
 Go where?

CHRISSIE
 The charity ball. I don't think I
 said when I booked you.

MAX
 Booked?

CHRISSIE
 Online?

She continues, undeterred by Max's apparent confusion.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)
 Do you want paying now?

MAX
 Paying?!

CHRISSIE
 I know this bit can be a bit
 awkward.

CHRISSIE removes a thick envelope out of her bag, places it on the bar.

CHRISSIE (CONT'D)
 Here you go. Five hundred as
 agreed.

MAX stares between the envelope and CHRISSIE, baffled.

MAX
You've really got the wrong person.

CHRISSIE
You're Nathan?

MAX
I'm not.

CHRISSIE
I know you're not, but you are, if
you know what I mean!

MAX
My names Max. I own a little shoe
shop.

CHRISSIE'S confidence evaporates, her mistake suddenly
obvious.

CHRISSIE
Oh god...
(flustered)
But you're dressed...And you look
just like him.

MAX
That makes sense.

CHRISSIE
What does?

MAX
A bloke just left who looked a bit
like me.

CHRISSIE
I was late...Your picture's a bit
fuzzy on the website so...

MAX
His.

CHRISSIE
Yes...His...

An uncomfortable silence follows. MAX gently breaks the
tension, sensing her awkwardness.

MAX
Can I get you a drink?

CHRISSIE
 (hesitant)
 Um, okay. Gin and tonic please.

MAX orders a drink. CHRISSIE fidgets, self-conscious. She takes a long sip, uneasy in his company.

 MAX
 What am I supposed to be doing?

 CHRISSIE
 Doesn't matter now.

 MAX
 You've just given me five hundred
 quid?

 CHRISSIE
 I haven't though have I?

She pauses, uncertain if she wants to elaborate. But she does.

 CHRISSIE
 It's for four hours.

 MAX
 Four hours of what?

 CHRISSIE
 Being my companion for the evening.

MAX is stunned. A sense of disbelief at her admission.

 MAX
 And that's it. Nothing else?

CHRISSIE'S anger erupts as she stands up to leave, her voice rising with indignation.

 CHRISSIE
 (fiery)
 Oh, I see! You think it's for a
 shag! You're disgusting.

The pub falls silent as the MEN pause their game of darts, their amusement evident as they glance over. MAX is embarrassed and gestures for CHRISSIE to lower her voice.

 MAX
 Where are you going?

 CHRISSIE
 Home!

She reaches for the envelope, but MAX stops her, grabbing her hand. They look at each other in shock, both thinking, 'What are you doing?'

MAX
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to suggest...

CHRISSIE
Well, you did.

MAX
I can't believe it, that's all.

CHRISSIE
What?

MAX
That you've booked an escort?

CHRISSIE
Why? It works for me.

MAX
I didn't mean...Just thought it was young men, not old fogeys like me.

CHRISSIE laughs out loud. The group of MEN stop their darts game again and look over, enjoying the 'show'.

CHRISSIE
THAT would be for a shag!
(She stops laughing,
serious)
You're respectable company.

MAX
You mean men like me.

CHRISSIE nods, recognising her mistake. MAX stares at the envelope, imagining himself in the role.

MAX
I'm married.

CHRISSIE
That's okay, you're not an escort.

MAX touches the envelope as if it's going to explode.

MAX
(dejected)
That's a weeks takings for me.

CHRISSIE
I'm not going to apologise for
having money!

MAX gestures an apology.

 MAX
No, of course not...

MAX studies her discreetly, his gaze shifting between her and the envelope as CHRISSIE sits, baffled by his behaviour. He takes a deep breath, his voice trembling with nerves, not believing what he's about to say.

 MAX (CONT'D)
I-I-I'll do it...

CHRISSIE is shocked but thrilled inside.

 CHRISSIE
Wow...

She puts a finger to her lips, offering a calm reaction to his sudden, rash decision.

She reaches for the envelope and tucks it into his blazer pocket, then calmly takes his hand and leads him towards the exit. MAX follows in a daze, his irrational decision already making him feel anxious.

As they depart, a confident YOUNG MAN (25) steps away from the darts group, his eyes following them with a wry, knowing smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL. SKIPTON - MOMENTS LATER

MAX and CHRISSIE stroll up to the entrance of a hotel, their arms locked together. MAX suddenly stops, his nerves evident as he stares at the entrance. CHRISSIE senses it.

 CHRISSIE
You okay?

 MAX
What if I know someone?

 CHRISSIE
Here?! Not a chance! They're just
clients from around the UK.

 MAX
Clients?

CHRISSIE
I'm a lawyer.

MAX instantly feels inferior to her eminent occupation.

 MAX
I feel like Lady Chatterley's
lover...

 CHRISSIE
Don't be daft. You own a shoe shop!

She suddenly remembers what he's said, acts appalled.

 CHRISSIE (CONT'D)
Lady Chatterley?! You're on about
shagging again!

MAX is mortified and attempts to apologise.

 MAX
N-N-No, I didn't mean...

CHRISSIE interrupts, laughing.

 CHRISSIE
I'm pulling your leg!
 (sudden, important)
Don't forget, your name's Nathan.

MAX nods in agreement as CHRISSIE grabs his hand tightly.

 CHRISSIE (CONT'D)
Come on, lets go in.

As they enter the hotel MAX tries to calm his nerves,
singing a song from Guys and Dolls.

 MAX
 (singing to himself)
"Luck be a lady tonight, luck be a
lady tonight..."

CHRISSIE laughs at the linked reference, beginning to feel
comfortable, enjoying his company.

Inside the hotel, MAX and CHRISSIE enter the large ballroom
adorned with beautifully arranged tables, balloons, and
sparkling lights. CHRISSIE exchanges greetings with several
familiar faces as they make their way to the bar. MAX nods
nervously in unison with each encounter.

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