

BENNY FIX

Pilot for TV drama series

EXT. BENNY'S BOAT, STOWBAY - DAY

Late summer, present day. A modest, weathered cabin-cruiser, the 'Louise', is idle mid-bay.

BENNY PORTER (35) checks the faltering bilge pump. He's agile, easy on the eye.

He picks up his phone and resumes a video call with sassy PASCALLE (25) in an art gallery. Casual activity behind her. She gestures to hush.

PASCALLE  
(video-link)  
Benny?

BENNY  
Sorry, sorry, the bilge pump's  
playing up.

PASCALLE  
Just a few more days. I'm doing  
well.

BENNY  
Fine. As long as you're selling.

He glances at a luxury motor-yacht cruising by.

EXT. ANTON'S YACHT

Sun deck. Guests relax. Sharply handsome ANTON THANOS (30) is the social focus of attention.

Sleek GISELLE THANOS (30) approaches and strokes Anton's arm.

GISELLE  
Where's Mikey?

ANTON  
(posh)  
Not with you?

Lounge deck. Little MIKEY (5) rips off a life-jacket, revealing a blue-white stripes football shirt, with 'KOKI 9' on the back.

A ball bounces away.

Bouncing down into the stowed power-dinghy. Mikey scrambles down steps after it.

SEAGULLS SQUAWK, swooping low. Mikey is briefly alarmed.

He spins round and around, laughing at the seagulls.

He loses his balance on the shallow sea deck.

He falls SCREAMING into the water.

Guests react.

A deckhand throws a life-ring out, but Mikey is too far back, struggling in the yacht's wake.

Skipper STEFFA (35) cuts the engines and rushes aft. She's tanned, super-fit, in white uniform jacket and shorts.

EXT. BENNY'S BOAT

Bobbing in the yacht's wake.

Benny reacts to Mikey's SCREAMS.

EXT. ANTON'S YACHT & DINGHY

Steffa launches the power dinghy. Anton scrambles in.

ANTON  
Mikey, we're coming!

Giselle is too late as the dinghy speeds away.

GISELLE  
Mikey! Mikey! Oh my God! Please no!

EXT. BENNY'S BOAT & ANTON'S DINGHY

Benny steers toward Mikey.

He hurls a life-ring but it's out of Mikey's reach.

He throws a rugby ball. Closer.

He tears off his shirt and dives in.

He reaches and supports flailing Mikey in the water.

Dinghy approaches. Steffa takes control of hauling Mikey out.

STEFFA  
(NZ accent)  
Keep him level!

She performs expert resuscitation on Mikey's little form. He's breathing.

Anton presses hands to his face, trembling in utter relief.

Benny's boat. The rugby ball is tossed up onto the deck. Benny clammers onboard, heaving the life-ring.

He calls across.

BENNY

He's OK?!

ANTON

He's OK! Thank you my friend, from  
my heart.

Benny signals acknowledgement.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Please, you must be my guest.  
Anton, The Fortuna. Pier five.

Distracted, Benny searches for something. He checks his  
sodden pockets, his shirt.

His phone is behind a toolbox. He moves the toolbox.

The phone splashes into the bilge-water.

Benny grabs the phone. It lights up with a home-screen photo  
of a brightly smiling woman and girl.

He quickly dries it with his shirt. He flops down, relieved,  
exhausted.

He cradles the phone, gazing at the screen.

EXT. BENNY'S MERC, CAR PARK, MARINA - NIGHT

A classic Mercedes coupe. Benny opens the boot. A stash of  
'Tonioni bespoke' dry-cleaning is revealed. He unzips a suit  
cover. He selects a jacket/slacks combination. He selects a  
shirt and shoes.

A few promo cards lie scattered - for 'Alice Gallery' and for  
'Classic Cars e-Born'.

EXT. ANTON'S YACHT, MARINA

The yacht is moored among other luxury yachts. Security  
guards chatter on the pier.

I/E. LOUNGE DECK

The guests have gone. Anton is on a call, with a glass of  
champagne. Tense.

ANTON

(on phone)

Now let's not... we both should  
have... Darling please, just be  
thankful he's OK...

Benny sips champagne, intrigued by Anton's discomfort.

A young Asian steward deftly refills glasses.

Skipper Steffa declines a top-up.

STEFFA

Thanks Edmond, that'll be all.

She fiddles with a folder. Benny discretely admires her. She guardedly knows it.

ANTON

(on phone)

Give him a hug from me...

(a glance at Benny)

Yes, of course I will... back  
soon... soon... Bye.

He downs the champagne and gestures for more. He turns, smiling.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Mikey's running around again.

STEF

Oh, that's wonderful.

BENNY

Marvelous.

ANTON

Like he's a seagull. The little  
scamp.

He lifts his glass in a toast.

ANTON (CONT'D)

To life.

His smile fades.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Benny, I can't say enough just  
how... Without you and Steffa...

An involuntary shudder.

BENNY

Best not dwell on it.

Steffa offers her folder for Anton to check.

STEFFA

Boss, I have to organize for  
tomorrow.

Anton waves away the folder, while admiring her.

ANTON  
Relax. More champagne.

STEFFA  
You'd better not drive.

She starts away, glancing back at Benny.

Benny and Anton share tacit admiration of her departing form.  
Disappointed at her leaving.

BENNY  
Impressive.

ANTON  
She's a proper amazon. Olympics  
medal for sailing.

BENNY  
Wow.

ANTON  
Lives on board. Runs our charters.  
I'll show you around.  
(calls out)  
Edmond, brandy.

BENNY  
But you're expected home.

ANTON  
And you must dine with us. Giselle  
insists.

BENNY  
Another time maybe. You'll just  
want to be together tonight.

Anton looks doubtful. His PHONE RINGS. He reacts jittery.  
Then, checking the phone, with relief.

ANTON  
(on phone)  
Not tonight, Seb. Duty calls at  
home, had a bit of a scare... Well  
I'm sure you guys can party without  
me...  
(calls)  
Edmond? Damn it.

INT. BRIDGE

Navigation screens light up. Benny is politely impressed.

Anton refills brandy glasses. He eases up into the skipper's  
swivel leather chair.

ANTON  
I'll have it installed for you.

BENNY  
In my old tub?

ANTON  
Then the very least I can do is  
offer you club membership. VIP.

I/E. LOUNGE DECK

Benny dutifully views footballers on a giant TV screen -  
celebrating a goal, clutching a silver trophy with blue and  
white ribbons, doing selfies for fans, signing shirts.

TV V.O.  
An exciting new season is upon us.  
We're in the big league now...

TV FOOTBALLERS  
And we're here to stay... here to  
stay... here to stay...

Anton turns to Benny for comment.

BENNY  
I have to say, that was just lazy  
indulgence. A bunch of super-egos,  
playing to camera.

ANTON  
(stung)  
But its promotion to the Premier  
League. What do you expect?

BENNY  
Some proper content. More humility  
in victory, more compassion. More  
about the backroom staff and the  
fans.

Anton sighs frustration.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
And you'll need regular updates for  
specific targets, to keep them  
onside. Sponsors, investors, your  
local council. I'll put someone on  
it if you like.

Anton shrugs vague consent.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Believe me, you'll appreciate the  
difference.

ANTON

You're some kind of expert I suppose.

BENNY

I was in p.r.

Anton reacts with a flicker of suspicion.

He shows off his mini-gym and sauna.

He sees Mikey's little football shirt, drying on a chair. He's briefly overwhelmed.

ANTON

Damn football.

Benny picks up the shirt, silently coaxing.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Oh I shouldn't complain, of course. But if you knew just what I have to deal with.

They move toward the stern.

Anton sways, the worse for drink.

ANTON (CONT'D)

All the pressures and agents' demands, and the season hasn't even begun.

On impulse he clutches Benny's arm.

ANTON (CONT'D)

And there's the 'old lion'.

BENNY

Your father? Tycho?

Anton is again suspicious.

ANTON

You know him?

BENNY

I know of him. Hotels empire.

ANTON

He's put me in charge of the club. Supposed to prove myself.

He sees the dinghy. He shudders, averting his gaze out across the bay. But no comfort in that view either.

He takes Mikey's shirt from Benny.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
He dotes on Mikey.

BENNY  
Only natural.

ANTON  
Sees him as a chip off the old  
block. So if he should hear of  
what... Oh God, he'll be  
unbearable.

He distractedly folds the shirt, tighter and tighter.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
Our guests, I did ask for their  
discretion...

BENNY  
Who were they?

ANTON  
Not another scandal.

BENNY  
(firm)  
The guests. On board, today.

ANTON  
The guests? Hotel execs from  
Lisbon. And a couple of Giselle's  
showbiz friends.  
(stark)  
I must stop the gossip.

Benny picks up Mikey's little life-jacket.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
Promise me, Benny. You will be  
discrete.

BENNY  
More than that. I can help.

Anton stares at him. An accusing stare. Drink fuelled  
paranoia.

ANTON  
So, p.r. All your questions.

He confronts, jabbing a finger.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
I might suppose you're a scandal-  
monger. A hot story to promote.

Benny remains calm.

BENNY

Anton, you have me wrong.

ANTON

Well, you got lucky. And a  
photographer snooping, no doubt.

Benny mock gestures around.

BENNY

(flat)

Of course.

Anton pushes at him. Benny evades.

Anton collapses into a chair.

ANTON

Watch out for parasites. The old  
lion is right about that.

Benny tosses the life-jacket onto his lap.

BENNY

Thanks for the hospitality.

He starts away.

Anton stares after him.

ANTON

Benny, please, forgive me.  
Completely out of order. Heat of  
the moment.

He scrambles to his feet.

Benny pauses. Turning, he's caught in a man-hug embrace.

ANTON (CONT'D)

My son is alive thanks to you.

Steffa approaches, alerted.

BENNY

Thanks to us.

He eases Anton away.

BENNY (CONT'D)

You need to make a call.

BENNY (CONT'D)

(to Steffa)

Black coffee and food. Anything.

A LITTLE LATER

Anton finishes a sandwich. Steffa pours more black coffee. Benny eyeballs him.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
So. Make the call.

ANTON

Now?

BENNY

Now. Set up a social visit, then casually admit what happened.

ANTON

(sour)

That's p.r.?

BENNY

You want him to hear secondhand?  
Mention about little Mikey, so mischievous.

(mimics posh Anton)  
'Takes after you, father'.

A wry smile from Anton.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Take the hit and move forward. No shirking. He should at least respect you for that.

ANTON

Debatable.

BENNY

Tell him Mikey must have torn off the life-jacket to show off his football shirt. So proud.

ANTON

Hmmmm.

BENNY

Chased a ball into the dinghy, the seagulls made him dizzy. A little scare in the water, but he's fine.

Anton pulls a face.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
I'll prompt you.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Be pro-active. Tell him safety barriers will be fitted.

Anton considers.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
And you must visit, soon as.

ANTON  
You'll come with me? Moral support?

BENNY  
(shrugs)  
I'm due back in London, but...

ANTON  
Excellent.

BENNY  
If you make the call.

ANTON  
Yes, yes.

BENNY  
(exasperated)  
Now. Then I can go check my bilge.

EXT. BENNY'S BOAT, MARINA - DAY

Seagulls hover.

The 'Louise' is flanked by up-market motor-yachts. Benny is in bathrobe and flip-flops, heading for the quayside.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, MARINA CENTRE

Benny showers.

He opens a locker, but is drawn to a discarded newspaper, with photo of a flamboyant, orange-hair footballer - "Koki Key To New Season Hopes".

EXT. BENNY'S MERC, ENTRANCE GATES, STOWBAY FC

A mega display image of footballers in blue-white shirts. Dominated by Koki.

Benny drives up in his Merc, taking a random lanyard pass from a tangle of them. He briefly flashes it to security, as though a mere formality.

The guard casually waves him through.

EXT. STADIUM FORECOURT

Fans admire a bronze statue of an imposing footballer with slick hair and baggy shorts, with bronze boots hung around his neck.

Brash, brawny WAYNE (35) is the fans' guide. He wears a 'supporters club' gilet.

WAYNE  
(squeaky)  
The legend. Three hundred and sixty two goals.

Benny walks by, breezily commenting.

BENNY  
Big new season. High hopes?

WAYNE  
Yeah, for survival.

BENNY  
All about the money I suppose.

WAYNE  
We need a bigger squad.

SUPPORTER  
We should give more chances to our local lads.

2ND SUPPORTER  
The Academy.

3RD SUPPORTER  
Shame about Ollie Hollis.

SUPPORTERS  
(chants)  
Ollie Ollie Ollie 'Ollie!

3RD SUPPORTER  
Shame.

BENNY  
Ollie?

WAYNE  
Don't you know nothing? Got injured. Then lost to gambling. Tragic.

EXT. PITCH & GROUNDSMAN'S SHED

Benny emerges from between stands, passing a shed.

Lanky groundsman SHAWN (60) maneuvers a pitch sprinkler. A terrier dog dashes in and out of the spray.

SHAWN  
What's up, mate?

BENNY

Oh, I'm early for a meeting.

Shawn gestures above, to the main stand.

SHAWN

All about Koki I bet.

Benny shrugs.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Koki this, Koki that. And more dosh  
to keep him. But no budget for us.

(in vague hope)

Don't suppose you can chase up my  
trainee application?

The terrier springs toward Benny.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Dizzy, down, down!...

(to Benny)

Fancy a proper coffee?

They approach the shed. Sturdy EMMA (30) prepares coffee.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Need more staff. Tell him, Em.

Seeing Benny, Emma instinctively flirts a little.

HELICOPTER ROAR distracts. It lands on the pitch.

EXT. BOARDROOM WINDOW, MAIN STAND

Indistinct faces peer down at the helicopter.

EXT. HELICOPTER ON PITCH

Chubby 'GOBBO' (35) clammers out as the rotors slow. He  
prevents a 'G' logo cap from flying off his head.

He ignores Shawn's 'double teapot' glare.

He bustles on, adjusting his suit and tie, fending off Dizzy.

He scrambles to avoid the spray from a sprinkler.

Shawn laughs.

Gobbo responds with a finger 'salute'.

He makes a phone call.

Intrigued, Benny follows him.

INT. STADIUM LOBBY

Gobbo passes display cases of football memorabilia.

Nuggety factotum SIDDH (70) polishes the silver trophy with ribbons attached.

GOBBO

(on phone, Scouse)  
Yeah, do it now... Now!...

Saucy receptionist CANDACE (20) pauses in her phone chatter.

CANDACE

Can I help...?

Gobbo blows a kiss and bustles on.

Recognizing, Candace rolls her eyes. She makes a fast call.

Benny follows Gobbo, gesturing 'with him', and with a disarming smile to Candace.

He follows Gobbo into a lift.

GOBBO

(on phone)  
You're breakin' up...

INT. LIFT

Benny nods a greeting. Gobbo ignores him.

GOBBO

(on phone)  
Shut up and text...

INT. EXECUTIVE FLOOR

They emerge at a grandstand view of the stadium.

INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE

Gobbo bustles in, followed by Benny. He offers a cursory glance around.

GOBBO

Ladies...

Secretaries are on alert. They eye Gobbo with wary familiarity. But they fancy Benny.

Gobbo approaches the boardroom.

Compact, sharp-suited JUSTIN (30) emerges, with a box lid of mini-me footballer caricatures in blue-white kit.

He holds up a warning hand to Gobbo.

JUSTIN  
They're busy.

GOBBO  
Me too.

Pushing by he knocks the box lid. The caricatures spill.

He strides on into the boardroom.

GOBBO (CONT'D)  
Gents...

He SLAMS THE DOOR shut.

Justin glares after him.

JUSTIN  
Bastard.

Secretaries giggle.

MUFFLED SHOUTING in the boardroom.

A secretary starts to pick up the caricatures. Benny helps, while Justin stands rigid in wounded pride.

He eyes Benny.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Who do you want to see?

BENNY  
Anton, a lunch appointment.

Justin promptly offers his hand.

JUSTIN  
(a little vain)  
Justin, general manager.

Benny gestures to the boardroom.

BENNY  
So who?

JUSTIN  
That idiot? Gobbo. Players' agent.

He displays the orange-hair caricature of Koki.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Has Koki on his books. Two idiots.

ZEGER ZOF (40) storms out of the boardroom and away. He's a crew-cut hulk in blue tracksuit, initialed ZZ.

Gobbo follows him out, almost bouncing with ferocity, leaving a parting shot inside.

GOBBO

That's where we stand on Koki.  
You've got my number.

He chases after Zeger.

GOBBO (CONT'D)

Zeger, Zeger...

Fascinated, Benny hot-foots after them.

Anton emerges from the boardroom, furious, trying to compose himself.

INT. CORRIDORS

Gobbo chases.

GOBBO

Zeger, listen. Don't mess with the politics.

Zeger pauses to confront. Benny pauses too.

ZEGER

(Dutch accent)  
Politics? Bollocks. Greed.

GOBBO

It's all about negotiation. You know the game.

Zeger continues on, swatting Gobbo away.

ZEGER

Get lost. You put crazy words in Koki. Gonna ruin him.

Gobbo chases him down stairs to another corridor.

GOBBO

Koki's a star on the rise, big time. You've been blessed.

Zeger ignores.

GOBBO (CONT'D)

If you can't deal with me, you can't deal with Koki. Tell you that for nothing.

Zeger turns on Gobbo, threatening a fist.

Benny steels himself. He calls out.

BENNY  
Gentlemen, gentlemen, please...

The antagonists turn in surprise.

Benny approaches with a princely, benevolent air.

GOBBO  
You again.

BENNY  
I couldn't help overhearing.

GOBBO  
Snooping. Clear off.

BENNY  
Please. Let's be constructive.  
There's new interest in the club.

Gobbo is instantly intrigued.

GOBBO  
What kind of interest?

BENNY  
Let's find a quiet spot.

He moves on. Zeger and Gobbo follow, disarmed by Benny's calm authority.

Benny peers into an open 'Supporters Club' office. He politely gestures to enter.

Gobbo and Zeger resist.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
(to Gobbo)  
You must be the agent.

GOBBO  
Clever lad.

ZEGER  
The great Gobbo.

GOBBO  
(preens)  
A dozen players on my books. Eight  
in the Premier League.

BENNY  
Excellent.

He turns to Zeger, but Gobbo speaks for him.

GOBBO  
Zeger Zof, Dutch international.  
Class.

Zeger is unmoved by Gobbo's flattery.

GOBBO (CONT'D)  
Now he's a decent coach, but he's  
nobbled on budget.

ZEGER  
The season not start yet, but this  
jerk, he try to mess with Koki.

GOBBO  
Just business, and you know it.

Benny gestures inside again.

BENNY  
I can guess the situation but,  
indulge me...

INT. LIFT, CORRIDOR

Wayne emerges from the lift, with a carton of milk. Starting down the corridor he hears VOICES.

INT. SUPPORTERS' CLUB OFFICE

A filing cabinet, fridge and kettle. The walls are covered with football posters and pin-ups. A red postie bag is on the table.

Gobbo and Zeger are warily seated. Benny is by the open door, strategically blocking the exit.

GOBBO  
(to Zeger)  
You should be spending, big time,  
if you want to stay up.

ZEGER  
That for sure, but you hold us to  
ransom. You want all the money for  
Koki...  
(to Benny)  
And get-out clause in the contract.

GOBBO  
To kick in half way through the  
season, the winter window.  
(MORE)

GOBBO (CONT'D)

That's only if you're stuck near  
the relegation zone. Bottom four.  
Can't say fairer.

INT. CORRIDOR

Wayne pauses by the Supporters Club door. He's astonished by what he overhears.

WAYNE

'Kin'ell.

INT. SUPPORTERS' CLUB OFFICE

Zeger shakes his head.

ZEGER

The great Gobbo. Nothing but a  
greedy rat.

Benny intervenes.

BENNY

And threatening to make Koki the  
deserting rat, it seems.

Gobbo jumps to his feet.

GOBBO

Koki's worth double the deal. He's  
had offers. Massive. Needs a  
quality team to bring out the best  
in him.

BENNY

Or bad results and his price drops.

GOBBO

Bright lad. You got it.

He reaches for a packet of biscuits in the postie bag. Zeger moves the bag away. Gobbo glares.

GOBBO (CONT'D)

I'm fighting for you, big fella. To  
keep Koki and more money for the  
squad.

ZEGER

You just bullshitter. You gonna  
threaten the dirty tricks.

Benny reacts, pantomiming enlightenment.

GOBBO

It's just money. The friggin'  
league's loaded. Tycho's loaded.

Wayne bursts in, with a challenging glare all round.

WAYNE

Dirty tricks?

He recognizes Zeger.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Jeez, Zeger the Wizard. Good luck  
mate. We're looking good? No injury  
scares?

ZEGER

(beams)

We good. You good fans. You make  
the big noises.

Wayne gives a double thumbs up. He thumps a poster of Koki.  
He glares at Benny and Gobbo.

WAYNE

Koki's our boy. Helped get us up.

GOBBO

Hop it, pal. With respect.

Wayne wavers, fearing he's out of his depth.

WAYNE

Well er, carry on like. I'll get a  
coffee at the shop.

He backs out. Benny intrigues.

BENNY

Wait. You run the supporters' club?

WAYNE

(pumped up again)

Chairman.

BENNY

Excellent. Then you might have a  
minute.

He gestures to sit with them.

GOBBO

(to Wayne)

No way. Clear off. This is private  
business.

WAYNE

Koki's our business.

ZEGER

That's right.

He pulls out a chair for Wayne.

Benny eyes Gobbo, enjoying his discomfort.

BENNY

You were saying?

GOBBO

Up yours, pal. Hasta la vista.

He kicks his chair over. He makes a scowling exit.

INT. CORRIDOR

Justin snoops.

Gobbo pushes him aside.

GOBBO

Get lost.

INT. SUPPORTERS' CLUB OFFICE

Benny and Zeger share glances.

Wayne is confused.

WAYNE

Was that a result?

BENNY

A skirmish. He'll be back.

He gets a text message. 'Change of plan. Scallywags at 8?'

EXT. BENNY'S BOAT, MARINA

Benny approaches. He stares at his boat in dismay.

Powerful unit CHESTER (40) sunbathes in boxer shorts. With paperback novel and beer bottle beside him. A suit lies folded.

A manila envelope is perched on a business backpack.

Benny backs away.

EXT. ENTRANCE GATES TO PINCHAM HALL

'Pincham Hall' is carved in a stone gate-post. The imposing iron gates are rusty, chain-locked.

Benny gets out of his Merc. He peers through the gates at the abandoned grounds.

He makes a call. He sounds upbeat, but looks concerned.

BENNY  
(on phone)  
Alice, have you settled in?...  
How's Daisy?... Tomorrow's still  
on?... The gallery's OK, don't  
worry...

A pheasant wanders towards the gate.

Benny scares it back to safety.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
At two...  
(pained)  
Yes, I'll be on time.

EXT. TOWN MARKET

Benny buys a modest bunch of flowers. He pauses to observe a 'Fresh Garden Produce' stall.

The country-gent stall-holder serves a customer with an affable air.

He smiles in response to a joke from a fellow trader. He settles down with a newspaper crossword.

Benny turns away and sees a natty chap admiring his Merc.

BENNY  
Electric.

He points to a window decal - 'Classic Cars e-Born'.

NATTY CHAP  
Bit of a compromise?

Benny smiles and gestures to get inside for a ride.

BENNY  
Be my guest.

His PHONE RINGS. He steps away.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
(on phone)  
Hey Elliot, you're a football nut.  
I might have a nice gig for you,  
regular too...

## I/E. GORSE COTTAGE

Another 'Fresh Garden Produce' sign. The garden is dominated by a large greenhouse and cloches.

Home-office. Impeccable HARRIET PORTER (60) has a queen-bee aloofness about her, even alone.

She prepares Women's Institute mailers with brisk efficiency.

She talks to herself.

HARRIET

That's the reminders done.

She arches her back and runs her hands down her body. A moment of sensuous indulgence.

BENNY (O.S.)

Mother?

Kitchen. Harriet finds Benny waiting with the flowers.

HARRIET

Benny, how nice.

She allows a brief kiss on her cheek.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

You could have warned me.

BENNY

Sorry, sorry.

HARRIET

No matter.

A LITTLE LATER

Patio. Tea and cakes.

BENNY

I saw him at the market.

HARRIET

He's desperate to make a proper go of it.

BENNY

Tell him to put his crossword away. Look busy and leave spaces to show he's in demand. Busy-ness brings business. Basic.

HARRIET

He won't listen.

Benny sighs.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Anyway, the money for the boat,  
from your 'actor friend'. That's  
certainly helped.

BENNY

I'll get it fixed and sell on.

HARRIET

He suspects it's you, of course. So  
stubborn.

Benny shrugs in put-upon frustration.

A trusty old Land-Rover pulls up, with trailer of unsold  
produce.

Benny tenses.

The driver is the stall-holder, CLIVE PORTER (60). He gets  
out, a little stiffly, staring at Benny's Merc.

Benny lifts a hand in token welcome.

Clive ignores him. He jerks a thumb at the Merc.

CLIVE

(to Harriet)

Expect he'll be leaving soon.

HARRIET

Tea, dear?

CLIVE

Later. Things to do.

A LITTLE LATER

Kitchen. Benny is ready to leave.

HARRIET

I have to rehearse for The  
Captivating Stranger. A challenging  
role. Such a commitment.

BENNY

I'm sure you'll find time.

Harriet draws his attention to a framed 'Stowbay Players'  
theatre poster on the wall.

HARRIET

I always liked Alice's designs.  
Maybe she can do our new one, now  
she's...

Trying to prompt. Benny is silent.

HARRIET (CONT'D)  
And losing the gallery. In her  
name, what a shame.

BENNY  
We still have it.

HARRIET  
You, giving up your career to run a  
gallery.

BENNY  
(flat)  
I have other projects.

HARRIET  
So that's it. Just too busy, as  
ever. Too distracted. Poor Alice,  
poor Daisy.

BENNY  
Yes Mother.

HARRIET  
You never could relax. Always up to  
something. It was always 'whatever  
next?' with you.

BENNY  
Yes Mother.

He starts out.

HARRIET  
I do care.

I/E. GARDEN HIDE-AWAY SHED

Old rugby photos on a wall. Clive checks an online trading  
site on a laptop. Concerned, frustrated.

MERC DOOR CLOSES. Clive reacts. A sigh of relief.

I/E. BENNY'S BOAT, MARINA

Benny cautiously approaches. No sign of Chester.

On-board, he stares at a discarded beer bottle and sandwich  
wrapper. He checks the cabin door. It's locked.

A VOICE BOOMS.

CHESTER  
Benjamin Porter, I presume.

He strides down the pier, now dressed, with backpack on a broad shoulder, cooling his face with a bottle of beer.

CHESTER (CONT'D)  
Chester Sullivan. Grieves  
Adjustments.

He finishes the beer and tosses the bottle to Benny.

CHESTER (CONT'D)  
Old Barn bitter. Not bad.  
Permission to board?

No response. He boards.

CHESTER (CONT'D)  
Just a little matter of mortgage  
arrears, Benjamin. Gallery and  
flat.

BENNY  
But I have an understanding with  
the agents.

CHESTER  
Well you'd better understand a  
court order.

He methodically opens his backpack and presents the manila envelope. Benny reluctantly accepts.

CHESTER (CONT'D)  
We can dispense with it for now, if  
you're willing to make a  
contribution...

BENNY  
Trust me, I have serious deals in  
play.

CHESTER  
We only trust the money.

He jerks a thumb back at the quay.

CHESTER (CONT'D)  
Nice motor by the way.

Benny can't hide his exasperation.

CHESTER (CONT'D)  
You shouldn't have done a runner.

BENNY  
Hardly that. I have a summer show  
at the gallery. A young artists'  
group, so I'd rather be out of the  
way. I can work from here.

CHESTER  
Whatever. You'll pay something now?

He whips out a card reader. Benny frowns at the hustle.

BENNY  
Let me check.

He starts toward the cabin.

Inside, he makes a call.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
(on phone)  
Captain's Choice?

A LITTLE LATER

Deck. Benny shows iPad photos to Chester of a chateaux development.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
A conference resort project.  
Twenty percent investment.  
Excellent prospects.

CHESTER  
So sell your share.

BENNY  
And lose out?

He shows art prints.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
I can cover the shortfall with  
these. But it'll take time to  
negotiate the best prices.  
(eyes Chester)  
Maybe you'd like to invest in art.

Chester enjoys Benny's chutzpah, briefly.

CHESTER  
It's your tangibles if you're  
struggling. Your boat, your motor.

A Captain's Choice waitress wiggles along the pier, carrying fish and chips take-aways and Old Barn beers on a tray.

Benny signals and pays cash.

BENNY  
Marvelous, thanks.

A lingering smile from the waitress as she starts away.

Chester eyes her, and the feast.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Enjoy.

Chester eyes Benny, silently acknowledging an 'operator'.

He seizes a bottle-opener. Beer froths.

Benny hastily moves his iPad away.

INT. 'SCALLYWAGS' BAR - NIGHT

LOUD CHATTER and B/G MUSIC. Decor features photos and cartoons of famous rogues and rascals.

A soul band prepares to perform.

Benny is at the bar, glancing around.

BENNY  
(to barman)  
Just a student hangout back in the day.

Anton and Zeger arrive. Zeger winces at the vibrant atmosphere. Party animal Anton hails Benny.

ANTON  
Brilliant, you sly devil.

Benny feigns puzzlement.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
Gobbo. I hear you shafted him.

BENNY  
Needed shafting.

ZEGER  
That son of a bitch.

ANTON  
(to barman)  
Champers.

ZEGER  
Got him good, for sure.

ANTON  
But Gobbo. How?

BENNY  
The bigger the front the more to hide. And we had a little help.

A glance to Zeger.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
From the Supporters Club.

ZEGER  
For sure.

Barman pours champagne. Zeger covers his glass.

Rangy RUPERT (30) and chubby SEB (30) converge. Smug playboys.

RUPERT  
Hey, Anton....

SEB  
She's let you out?

ANTON  
You wasters...

They're distracted by LIVE MUSIC.

Zeger frowns.

Anton and friends whistle and whoop, moving closer to the soul band.

Anton flirts with a waitress.

Benny and Zeger strain to be heard.

ZEGER  
You gonna work for the club?

BENNY  
Oh, I'm just happy to help.

ZEGER  
You deal with the politics, I deal with the football.

BENNY  
You deal good with the football.  
Thirty eight internationals for Holland. Many trophies.

Zeger acknowledges Benny's 'homework'.

ZEGER  
I been lucky, and still lucky.

He proudly shows photos on his phone.

BENNY  
Very nice.

ZEGER

Now we expect a third. And you?  
Family man?

BENNY

A have a daughter, Daisy.

He shows his phone.

ZEGER

Very nice.

EXUBERANT APPLAUSE for the band. Rowdy customers push by.

Zeger looks trapped, out of place.

ZEGER (CONT'D)

Too much.

BENNY

Go home. I'll say you had an  
emergency.

Zeger brightens.

ZEGER

OK. You good man.

He lifts his empty glass.

ZEGER (CONT'D)

I don't drink...

(a nod toward Anton)

He should know that.

He starts out.

Benny is obliged to stay. Jostled as he gazes at his phone.

I/E. 'YVONNE' FASHIONS SHOP - DAY

A 'Summer Sale' sign in a window display of country fashions.

Benny approaches with a cardboard box and large bunch of flowers.

Shop BELL RINGS as Benny enters.

Vivacious, voluptuous YVONNE JEEVERS (40) glances away from attending to elderly customers.

YVONNE

Can I...?

Mutual attraction.

BENNY  
Benny... Alice's er...

Yvonne checks her gaze.

YVONNE  
Oh, Benny, yes... they're not back  
yet from shopping.

She beckons.

YVONNE (CONT'D)  
Please, come into my parlour.

Back office. Benny follows her in. Stairs are glimpsed, and a courtyard through french windows.

Yvonne offers wine.

BENNY  
Tempting, but I'm Daisy's chauffeur  
for the day.

He takes a lava lamp out from the box.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
For her. It got left behind.

YVONNE  
I'm sure she misses you.

BENNY  
I miss them both.

YVONNE  
Alice is a Godsend. She's  
organising my websites too.

BENNY  
She ran our gallery in London.  
Inspired it.

EXT. 'SOPHIE FASHIONS' SHOP

Lissome ALICE (35) and DAISY (10) take shopping from a compact SUV. They're recognisable from Benny's phone image.

Alice tenses, Daisy brightens, on seeing Benny's Merc.

INT. 'SOPHIE FASHIONS' SHOP

Shop bell RINGS.

Daisy hurries in.

DAISY

Dad?

Back office. Reacting, Yvonne smiles blithely at Benny.

YVONNE

I'll leave you to it. Bye.

Shop. Yvonne emerges. Daisy bounces into her.

YVONNE (CONT'D)

Oops. Hi Daisy.

DAISY

Hi.

Daisy hurries on as Alice enters.

YVONNE

(to Alice)

He's here. He's nice.

Back office. Daisy hesitates, then rushes into Benny's arms.

DAISY

Dad.

BENNY

Sweetie.

He kisses and swings her round.

She lands as Alice enters.

ALICE

Benny.

Benny glances at his watch, and at Alice.

BENNY

So who's late?

A tolerant smile from Alice. Daisy smirks.

BENNY (CONT'D)

(arch)

Sorry, sorry.

Alice bustles Daisy away.

ALICE

Pop up and get your things.

DAISY

Dad, come and see the flat.

Benny is diplomatic.

BENNY  
Another time maybe.

Disappointed, Daisy starts upstairs alone.

ALICE  
(murmurs)  
Thanks.

She allows Benny a kiss on her cheek.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
How's London?

BENNY  
Just about coping without me, I  
suppose.

Their eyes lock in mutual concern.

A customer calls.

CUSTOMER (O.S.)  
Miss? Hello?

Alice reluctantly responds.

Shop. She attends to the customers. One holds up a blouse.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)  
It's not really my colour.

SECOND CUSTOMER  
Oh it is.

CUSTOMER  
(to Alice)  
What do you think?

I/E. BENNY'S MERC ALONG STREETS

Daisy is dressed for sports. She checks her bag. She glances at Benny.

BENNY  
Takes time to resolve.

Daisy ties her trainers. She finds a Stowbay Marina Guide. She tidies it away in a door pocket.

DAISY  
But you're still friends?

BENNY  
Of course.

DAISY  
Not just cos of me?

BENNY  
Sweetheart, we've been friends  
since teens.

He gestures ahead.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
Game on.

Daisy's eyes light up.

EXT. PARK

Girls' softball cricket. High spirits. Daisy is an eager fielder.

Parents help set up a BBQ.

Alice's SUV draws up, at a distance, unnoticed.

She sees Benny pacing, absorbed in a phone call.

BENNY  
(on phone, patient)  
Norris, Norris... yes, I get your drift... well I'll be back tomorrow, with a possible deal to stabilize things...

West Indian JUANITA (10) bowls. The batter hits the ball high and far.

PLAYERS (O.S.)  
Catch!

Daisy runs and catches. She celebrates and spins round, seeking to enjoy the moment with Benny.

The sudden excitement draws him, in time to share her elation.

Juanita rushes to embrace Daisy. They laugh and tumble.

They bump heads.

Alice starts toward them concerned, but the girls giggle.

Juanita's father ROY (35) strides over. He's tall, lean, calmly regal, taking off a BBQ comic apron.

Benny follows him.

JUANITA  
We're OK, Dad.

ROY  
Best we do a check. What's your name?

JUANITA  
Daisy.

More giggles, met by Roy's stern gaze.

He turns to Daisy.

ROY  
How many fingers...  
(supposing)  
Daisy?

He displays three fingers.

DAISY  
Three.

Roy waves a finger in random circles, checking the girls' eye co-ordination.

He gestures OK and to get back to the game.

ROY  
Good catch, well bowled.

Alice smiles with relief, still unnoticed.

BENNY  
(to Roy)  
You're a doctor?

ROY  
(grins)  
Hardly. Just basic checks.

Alice retreats to her SUV. A little tearful. Still unseen.

INT. ALICE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Dusk. Compact living-room with kitchenette.

A TV is on mute. The lava lamp glows in the window.

Alice adjusts an Yvonne Fashions layout on a computer screen.

Daisy's little bedroom. She practices scales on an acoustic guitar. Some of the frets buzz. Frustration.

Alice turns and stretches as Daisy approaches. They hug.

I/E. BENNY'S MERC, COAST ROAD - DAY

He drives, speeding, glancing at his sat nav.

Momentary alarm.

He slows to cruising speed.

EXT. TYCHO'S VILLA

Security guard at gates checks and lets Benny through.

Anton's Range Rover is parked, with view of the villa beyond.

He gets out to liaise with Benny.

Mikey, in his Koki football shirt, wriggles free from Giselle. He runs away, around the villa, kicking a ball.

Giselle eyes Benny and is attracted.

GISELLE

Benny? At last.

She gestures after Mikey.

GISELLE (CONT'D)

I can't thank you enough.

BENNY

What anyone would have done.

Giselle embraces him with socialite poise.

GISELLE

Thank you, thank you.

Her embrace tightens, discomfiting Benny, ending with her defiant glance at Anton.

Anton follows Mikey, trying to take Giselle's hand. She deftly resists.

BENNY

Now let's focus. You're here to celebrate family. If Tycho mentions Mikey's mishap, just remember what you said on the phone.

ANTON

(arch)

He takes after you, father. Full of adventure.

GISELLE

Huh. Tycho. Full of himself.

EXT. VILLA TERRACE & POOL

The garden slopes away to a jetty at the edge of the bay.

A classic schooner yacht is moored.

Mikey's ball bounces past mini goal posts, towards a swimming pool.

Mikey races to stop the ball, but it falls into the pool.

MIKEY

My ball, my ball!

He teeters on the edge and backs away, fearful.

HECTOR

Hey Mikey.

Body-built, smiley Greek aide HECTOR (50), retrieves the ball with a pool skimmer.

On the terrace, DES MANDERS (70) discards a newspaper. He's in powerful good nick, in shirt and swim-shorts, with a rugged 'game face'.

DES

C'mon Mikey.

Hector and Des pass the ball, teasing, tempting Mikey to tackle.

But Mikey is still distracted by the pool.

DES (CONT'D)

What's up, lad?

MAUDE STYRIOS (55), in straw hat, breaks away from conversation with a gardener. She's spry, composed. She carries fresh-picked flowers in a trug.

She offers a smiling welcome to Anton, Giselle and Benny.

She chills slightly on embracing Giselle.

MAUDE

Giselle, my dear.

GISELLE

Maude, how nice to see you again.

Anton gives Maude a warm hug.

He lifts Mikey for a kiss from her.

MAUDE

Ah, darling little Mikey.

Anton and Giselle share anxious glances, and relief.

Maude gives the trug of flowers to Mikey.

MAUDE (CONT'D)  
Be a dear and give to Hilda.

She gestures toward emerging, comely Asian maid HILDA (30).

A seagull hovers close by.

Mikey drops the trug. He races around, imitating a seagull.

Roar of LAUGHTER from a villa balcony. Imperious, robust TYCHO STYRIOS (70) observes in silk robe.

TYCHO  
(Greek accent)  
Hey Mikey. I come down.

An apprehensive glance from Anton to Benny.

MAUDE  
Tycho, we have a guest. Look  
respectable.  
(aside to Hilda)  
We'll have tea now.

She gestures for all to relax on the terrace.

Anton makes introductions.

ANTON  
My good friend Benjamin... my dear  
mother Maude.

BENNY  
Benny. Delighted.

Maude is lightly charmed.

Des approaches.

ANTON  
And Des is, what can I say, the  
club legend.

BENNY  
Three hundred and sixty two goals.  
Remarkable. Honoured to meet you.

Des has a shrugging modesty, well used to compliments.

DES  
I had the knack I suppose. And no  
bad injuries.

Maude lightly scrutinizes Benny.

MAUDE

Now then Anton, what about this  
young man?

ANTON

A fellow mariner.

BENNY

Oh, just a weekender.

ANTON

And helping me at the club.

MAUDE

(a glance at the villa)  
Well try and avoid shop talk.

Anton 'zips' his mouth.

Benny admires the bay view.

BENNY

Marvelous.

MAUDE

Tycho's family were fishermen. He's  
always lived by the sea.

ANTON

(to Benny)  
Don't get him started on his life  
story.

MAUDE

It is rather special.

BENNY

And you must have been a vital  
influence.

Maude is dismissive, but further charmed.

MAUDE

Oh, I just happened along.

Tycho joins them, swaggering in open robe, revealing swimming  
shorts.

TYCHO

Greetings.

He only has eyes for Mikey.

TYCHO (CONT'D)

Mikey, Mikey, my little hero.

Anton and Giselle share anxious glances.

Mikey rushes forward and into Tycho's lifting arms.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
My young lion.

He hugs and kisses Mikey. Pretends he's a heavy load, letting him down.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
He's coming on good.

Anton and Giselle share relief.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
What shirt you have?

He gestures for Mikey to turn around.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
Number nine, Koki.

MIKEY  
Koki Koki.

ANTON  
(on impulse)  
Number one problem.

Tycho frowns. Maude sighs. Anton pulls a face.

Tycho appraises Benny.

TYCHO  
So, who?

ANTON  
My good friend Benjamin.

Tycho is distracted by Mikey's antics.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
A sailing friend.

TYCHO  
Sailing. Huh. You like Anton's ugly  
monster? Or you prefer?

He gestures out to his classic yacht.

BENNY  
You're putting me on the spot,  
but...

He gestures admiration of the yacht.

Tycho laughs.

TYCHO  
Relax, have swim, enjoy.

He drops his robe.

MAUDE  
No Tycho, we're about to have tea.

Tycho dives into the pool.

Mikey instinctively steps away.

Tycho floats on his back.

TYCHO  
Come on Mikey. Take off your shoes.

Mikey reluctantly obeys.

Tycho stands in the pool.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
And your shirt, come on.

He beckons, arms wide.

Anton and Giselle dare not intervene.

Mikey edges closer, closer. Tremulous.

Tycho glares at Anton.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
What is this? You say he fall off  
the boat, but no big deal.

ANTON  
Chasing seagulls, full of  
adventure.

GISELLE  
Like you, Tycho.

TYCHO  
Huh.

Anton turns to Benny for support.

BENNY  
No real danger.

TYCHO  
I heard about it some more. You  
fished him out?

Benny awkwardly shrugs.

BENNY  
With Anton and the skipper.

TYCHO  
We're in your debt my friend, big  
time, and I don't forget.

He eyes Anton and Giselle.

He checks his watch. He unfastens and gestures for Mikey to take it.

He grabs Mikey and tries to pull him in.

ANTON  
No, no!

GISELLE  
Leave him alone!

Mikey breaks away.

DES  
Go easy on the little fellow.

TYCHO  
Come on Mikey. You chicken?

MIKEY  
(yells)  
No chicken.

Tycho flails in the water. Sudden panic. Mikey is shocked.

Tycho is play-acting. He laughs.

Mikey laughs too. He rushes to the little diving board.

MIKEY (CONT'D)  
No chicken.

He jumps up and down on the board. He springs off, over Tycho, and into the water.

Tycho beams. Mikey clumsily swims close.

TYCHO  
My little hero.

He grabs Mikey and ducks him under, holding him down.

Anton and Giselle look on in horror.

Des starts up.

DES  
Hey, hey!

ANTON  
Stop that!

Tycho lifts and embraces spluttering Mikey.

TYCHO  
Nothing to scare. Just water. We  
all come from the water.

A LITTLE LATER

EXT. VILLA WATERFRONT

Benny and Anton stroll toward the wooden pier, kicking  
Mikey's ball.

ANTON  
It's hard to have any kind of  
conversation.

BENNY  
That breeds suspicion.

ANTON  
But he expects unquestioning  
loyalty. Impossible.

He kicks the ball hard. It bounces off the pier onto the  
yacht.

They start back.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
Nikolas found a way to escape.

BENNY  
Your brother?

ANTON  
Doing hotel deals in the Far East.  
Loyal to the business but out of  
reach. Lucky for him.

BENNY  
Now you're stuck with running the  
club.

ANTON  
And the 'old lion' interfering.

BENNY  
Walk away?

ANTON  
I wish. But he'd brand me a  
quitter.

BENNY  
He's king of the hill. You have to  
accommodate.

ANTON  
With your help.

Benny is silent.

EXT. VILLA TERRACE & POOL

Tycho tries to teach Mikey a folk song, towelling him dry.

Hilda clears away the tea.

She bustles past Tycho. He admires, shaping to flick her bottom with the towel.

He shares naughty boy grins with Hector.

MAUDE  
(calls out)  
Now, Tycho, you must rest.

Tycho waves in heeding irritation.

Hector prepares to massage him.

Maude is with Giselle, separated by an empty chair.

Giselle reaches for Mikey as he scampers by.

GISELLE  
Tycho was way too rough.

MAUDE  
There was no real danger.

She eases out of her chair.

MAUDE (CONT'D)  
You are staying for supper?

GISELLE  
(flat)  
Of course.

Maude eyes her.

MAUDE  
Anton needs a settled home life,  
more than ever.

GISELLE  
Then he should make an effort. He  
can't expect me to give up  
everything.

MAUDE

He's having to adjust at the club,  
under the spotlight...

GISELLE

Where is Nikolas? He should be  
helping.

MAUDE

He's far too busy.

GISELLE

Odd that I've never met him. Too  
busy even to fly in for our  
wedding.

MAUDE

That extravaganza?

She starts away.

A LITTLE LATER

Giselle is on a call, casually swinging her hips.

GISELLE

(phone)

Listen, we had two number-ones.  
Let's do it.

INT. LOUNGE

Fading light. Spacious. A grand piano with family portraits in digital photo frames. Paintings of idyllic Greek harbour views.

Mikey sleeps on a sofa. Giselle is glimpsed beyond, through terrace windows, still on her call.

Tycho proudly shows off a curious coffee-table to Benny.  
The glass top rests on a battered leather suitcase.

TYCHO

I got off the ship with nothing,  
just a suitcase of my mother's  
lace to sell.

Benny nods appreciation. Anton, Des and Hector have heard it all before.

TYCHO (CONT'D)

I worked all hours and bought an  
ice-cream van. More money in fish  
and chips. Then I bought a boarding  
house. Too many actors in it, but  
it was bricks and mortar. Always I  
plan ahead.

He shows a row of tattered notebooks in a display case of curios.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
My books. Everything inside. All I needed. No wise guys to rip me off.

Maude passes by, putting on a cardigan.

MAUDE  
Then I interfered.

TYCHO  
Maude worked in a bank. Taught me how best to leverage my money. Tried to teach me how to relax.

He blows a kiss to Maude.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
I started late but... what is life without family?

He eyes Anton, with gesture across to Mikey.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
(hisses)  
Mikey needs a brother, a sister. You forget what to do huh? You playin' away? You both playin' away?

Benny sees the hurt on Anton's face.

Des chuckles and slaps Tycho's back.

DES  
Go easy.

A LITTLE LATER

INT. TV LOUNGE

Framed football mementos - photos, signed shirts. a giant TV screen shows Johan Cruyff playing for Ajax.

Tycho and Des view, in football heaven.

Benny and Anton keep silent company. Benny glances at his watch.

A sequence of passes on TV.

DES  
Brilliant.

TYCHO  
Stroking the ball. Pure teamwork.

DES  
Pure football.

TYCHO  
Too much knockabout now.

DES  
Too much money. Too much ego.

TYCHO  
The managers, the players, they  
come they go, no time to  
experiment.

DES  
No time to bond a proper team.

TYCHO  
(aside to Des)  
That boy, Ollie?

Des sadly shakes his head. He turns to Benny.

DES  
Academy. A natural playmaker.  
Brilliant, but lost to gambling.

BENNY  
I heard.

TYCHO  
What a waste.

He fixes his gaze on Anton.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
So what is this with Koki?

Anton is on his guard.

ANTON  
Oh, just star player tensions.  
Nothing to worry about.

TYCHO  
Like what?

Anton eyes Benny.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
(forceful)  
Like what?

ANTON  
(shrugs)  
Gobbo wants a get-out clause.

TYCHO  
But you have the deal.

ANTON  
He threatens the unpredictables.

TYCHO  
Unpredictables?

Des is animated.

DES  
The usual bollocks. Fake  
injuries, dressing-room flare-  
ups.

TYCHO  
No way.

He confronts Anton, jabbing a finger.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
You must put a stop. Nip in the  
bud. Bad for team morale, and for  
the fans if rumour gets out.  
Poison.

ANTON  
That's Zeger's headache.

TYCHO  
Passing the buck huh?

ANTON  
Well I'm just filling in. You  
expect me to work miracles?

TYCHO  
You can't stand the heat? So soon?

Anton is exasperated. He eyes Benny again.

Tycho eyes him too.

BENNY  
Player power. The modern game.

ANTON  
Zeger and Gobbo had a shouting  
match. All about Koki. Benny  
stepped in, and sent Gobbo on his  
way.

He's desperate for Benny to engage.

BENNY

A storm that I just happened on.  
Only natural to try and calm the  
situation. Clarify best  
interests.

Tycho savours the phrase.

TYCHO

Clarify best interests. Sounds  
like bullshit, but go on.

BENNY

Gobbo will hit back of course,  
that's his job.

DES

Football agent? Call it a job?

TYCHO

Parasites.

He eyes Benny more closely.

TYCHO (CONT'D)

So, what is your interest?

Anton chips in.

ANTON

I met him at the marina. We...

Tycho sharply signals for Benny to answer.

BENNY

Anton suggested helping at the  
club. I'm rather too busy but I  
had a look around.

TYCHO

You're some kind of expert?

BENNY

I was at Jessop and Keen,  
consulting.

TYCHO

Huh. What kind of consulting?

BENNY

Mostly corporate, advising on  
problems and opportunities.

TYCHO

A spin man. An operator. One step  
up from Gobbo.

ANTON  
That's not fair.

Tycho glowers.

BENNY  
Tycho is right to be cautious.

TYCHO  
Consulting. Why you leave? What  
you do now?

BENNY  
Oh, I have other interests, and I  
needed more family time.

Tycho's eyes light up.

TYCHO  
Family. That's the biggest deal.  
Through the good times, the not  
so good times. All these years  
with Maude.

DES  
And counting, pal. You got lucky  
with her.

Tycho presses a hand to his heart, but with a frowning  
glance after Maude.

TYCHO  
I only wish we could have raised  
a bigger family.

He turns back to Benny.

TYCHO (CONT'D)  
Maybe you OK for a bullshit PR  
guy. Maybe you help Anton. Some  
wise counsel.

BENNY  
If available.

He defers to Anton.

ANTON  
To be sure.

Tycho steps closer to Benny.

TYCHO  
You think I should check you out?

BENNY  
If my CV...

Tycho waves away the suggestion. He stares intently, appraising.

He offers his hand. Benny warily accepts.

Tycho twists Benny's hand, forcing him to the ground. Though Benny is part-diplomatic in his surrender.

Tycho laughs. Des laughs. Anton is dutifully amused.

Tycho slaps Benny's back.

TYCHO

You make us your priority. You do good and we pay good. Top dollar. And I say this...

He eyes Anton too.

TYCHO (CONT'D)

Football is entertainment. I want the crowds to enjoy the beautiful game. Give it our best shot, hey Des? But if all the talk is the money game, how much we pay for, how much we sell for... if all the talk is idiot stars and bastard agents...

His gaze returns to Benny.

TYCHO (CONT'D)

You put a stop.

BENNY

Well I'm certainly flattered, and honoured to be in the presence of not one legend, but...

His gaze moves to Des, and back to Tycho.

TYCHO

I said no bullshit.

Laughter.

Tycho turns on Anton. A piercing stare.

TYCHO (CONT'D)

So, you've been reckless with Mikey. Letting him fall off that ugly thing you call a yacht.

ANTON

But I explained...

BENNY

We've avoided the media.

Tycho turns to him.

TYCHO

I'm grateful. But my boy has been  
mixing with the wrong crowd.  
Neglecting his responsibilities.  
Dickin' around, caught up in those  
scandals. Shaming the family name,  
shaming my reputation.

ANTON

Well you're no saint.

Tycho turns and slaps his face, hard.

TYCHO

At least my private life stays  
private.

Des steps forward.

DES

Hey, let's all calm down.

Tycho continues to eye Anton.

TYCHO

You have to play smart.

A glance at Benny for support.

BENNY

(shrugs at Anton)  
Discretion or disgrace.

TYCHO

(beams)  
Discretion or disgrace... I like  
this guy.

He motions to Benny to step away with him.

TYCHO (CONT'D)

We must talk.

But Benny pulls out his car key-fob.

BENNY

I've intruded enough on your  
hospitality...

ANTON

But you must stay for supper.

BENNY

I'm due back in London tomorrow.  
Much to do.

Tycho beckons again.

TYCHO  
But first we talk.

BENNY  
Another time, perhaps.

Tycho looks affronted as Benny turns away.

Des is impressed by Benny's polite resistance.

EXT. VILLA

Anton sees Benny to his Merc.

ANTON  
Now you know why I need you.  
He's impossible.

BENNY  
But he's the boss. I can't work for  
a house divided.

Anton is panicky.

ANTON  
You promised.

BENNY  
I expressed an interest.

ANTON  
I'll put you on a retainer. All the  
perks. You name it.

Benny starts to drive off.

BENNY  
I wish you luck, and I'm happy to  
advise informally.

Anton despairs.

I/E. BENNY'S MERC THROUGH STREETS

Benny drives past Stowbay FC stadium. The Koki photo  
display shines bright.

He drives on. Pensive. He slows by Yvonne Fashions shop. He  
peers up at a warm window glow in the flat above.

I/E. ALICE'S FLAT, YVONNE FASHIONS

Changing colours of the lava lamp.

Alice lies sleepless...

FLASHBACK

EXT. ALICE GALLERY, LONDON - DAY

Alice hurries reluctant Daisy out. They load bags into her double parked SUV.

Alice pushes keys into the letterbox.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. BENNY'S BOAT, MARINA - NIGHT

Aft deck. Rain SPATTERS on the toolbox.

Benny checks the bilge with phone torchlight.

Rain SPATTERS on the cabin windows.

Benny is glimpsed inside, flopping down exhausted.

FADE OUT.