

BRAM'S EMPORIUM

PILOT

FADE IN:

EXT. MOORS - NEAR WHITBY - NIGHT

A bodiless force moves swiftly over the moorland. In the distance, Whitby Abbey stands out against the sea, beneath a full moon.

EXT. B-ROAD - OUTER WHITBY - NIGHT

A purple Nissan Micra snails along a narrow country road, moonlight bouncing off its bodywork. A Jean Michel Jarre record is audible from within.

The car moves past a signpost for Whitby. Moments later, the Micra pulls over and a body - adult male - is ejected from the passenger door. It convulses on the ground.

The car moves off.

CUT TO:

TITLES OVER BLACK

EXT. WHITBY - DAY

Late November. Waves lash at the beach. Black birds circle the Abbey.

EXT. PARADE OF SHOPS - WHITBY - DAY

A row of touristy tat shops. Only one remains open - "BRAM'S EMPORIUM - Purveyors of Curiosities" - though you wouldn't know it. The "OPEN" sign is miniscule and velvet drapes conceal the interior.

A yellow mobility scooter halts out front. On it sits IVAN (50), officious and bumbling, wearing a flat cap, a yellow waterproof gilet and a bum bag. He has a deformity: his arms are half the length of the male average.

Ivan climbs off, carrying a shopping bag, and secures his vehicle to a drainpipe. The door releases a hollow wail as he enters.

INT. SHOP - BRAM'S EMPORIUM - WHITBY - DAY

Dead silence.

Three red ten watt bulbs cast a gloomy glow on the shop. Ivan takes a small torch out of his gilet pocket, turns it on and begins moving through, whistling.

Curtained cabinets flank one wall, containing a variety of gothic curios. The other half of the shop proffers an array of familiar joke shop items. But the halloween masks are horribly real.

Ivan is approaching the counter when he hears a guttural Yorkshire growl:

CRISPIN

Turn that off.

The torch light travels slowly up. It hits the sallow face of Ivan's landlord CRISPIN CROCKETT (55), a Jeremy Kyle Rasputin in inch-thick specs.

IVAN

I don't want to break my neck in here.

CRISPIN

Shall I do the honours, then?

Ivan switches the torch off, plonks the plastic bag on the counter and shuffles through a black curtain behind Crispin.

Out of the bag Crispin lifts the items: four cans of spray paint and four packs of beef mince. He examines them. Sighs.

INT. KITCHEN - BRAM'S EMPORIUM - WHITBY - DAY

A pokey, grotty kitchen. The fruit bowl is concealed by furry mould. The fridge looks to have passed its Silver Jubilee.

Crispin comes through the curtain holding the mince. Ivan is grazing in a bag of Bombay mix.

CRISPIN

I asked for lamb mince. It's more biblical.

IVAN

More expensive in'tit?

Crispin sits, opens the mince, and pokes it with his finger.

IVAN

Eh, I found something for the shop.

From his bum bag, Ivan lifts out a six-inch-high plastic toilet. On the lid are the words "MYSTERY BOG" and there is a button with "PRESS HERE" printed on it.

IVAN

Cancer Research. Fifty pence. Daylight robbery!

Ivan cannot resist a demonstration, and excitedly presses the button himself. A skeletal hand reaches out from under the lid then retreats.

IVAN

Gotta love that.

CRISPIN

We don't sell this kind of bollocks in the emporium. Get back in your hovel.

IVAN

Oh, that reminds me. The draft in my room is becoming bloody ridiculous. The windows rattle all night. Anyway I was gonna ask...

A long creak. What appeared to be the fridge door opens up. Out of it walks MARILYN (19), Crispin's adopted daughter.

She is a ghostly Jean Harlow, with a Kendal Mint Cake complexion and scarlet lips, wearing a blue dress with a white puritan-style collar.

In her hand she holds a mug with "I ♥ DAD" on it. She pours in blackcurrant squash.

IVAN

Morning, Marilyn.

Crispin begins laying the mince out on the tabletop.

IVAN

As I was saying, my windows. Energy efficiency doesn't come into it. If it weren't for my hot water bottle I'd have frozen to death by now. Wouldn't be able to pay my rent then, would I? So I would appreciate it if you had a look at them.

CRISPIN

Did you finish the new batch, 23?

MARILYN

Yes, 77.

She pours boiled kettle water into her squash and starts drinking it. Crimson droplets slither down her chin.

Ivan gestures at the table.

IVAN

Is that hygienic?

CRISPIN

Is that what your poor mother said
when they handed you over?

Crispin chuckles and looks to Marilyn for a laugh. She just stares blankly back at him.

CRISPIN

Best get your brood priced up, 57.

Marilyn exits through the fridge door.

Ivan removes an old anti-bacterial cleaner from the cupboard, coats the meat and heads out of the room. Crispin starts massaging the mince with his fingers.

A buzzing alarm sounds. A red light flashes on the wall. Standing, Crispin wipes his hands on his trousers and heads back through the curtain.

INT. SHOP - BRAM'S EMPORIUM - WHITBY - DAY

A Whitby lad with a cap pushed low over his face stands in the middle of the shop holding his smart phone. We will come to know him as NED SPANNERTHORPE (23). Crispin waits, scratching the wood desk.

NED

Can I use your internet, mate?

Crispin indicates a painted sign reading "THIS IS A WIFI FREE ZONE."

NED

Free Wi-Fi? Top banana. Need to tweet
a photo of my stool for a Poundland
discount.

Crispin hits a button under his desk. Two pipes on either side of Ned release jets of stinky fumes.

Ned splutters. Crispin grabs a towel to cover his face.

CRISPIN

Leave now, limaceous underkind.

INT. MARILYN'S ROOM - BRAM'S EMPORIUM - WHITBY - CONTINUOUS

A dingy box room featuring peeling wallpaper, framed horror film stills and strange little knick-knacks.

On a side table, there appears to be a line of cocaine. The box next to it reveals it is really crushed Tic Tacs.

Marilyn sits on her bed, picking her gums with a toothpick. She is surrounded by fanged golliwogs wearing custom vampire capes. She has been making their price tags.

At the foot of her bed are two television screens: one showing Carpenter's 'The Thing', the other showing a CCTV feed from the shop. She watches Ned run out of the door away from the fumes, before going back to her work.

EXT. PARADE OF SHOPS - WHITBY - DAY

Ned bursts out of the Emporium, coughing hard. He kicks Ivan's mobility scooter and heads off.

An Austin Metro drives past him and parks up a little way down from Bram's. Out of the driver's seat climbs STUART (40), smart but weary, desperate for a fag. He clearly does not belong here.

He talks into a mobile phone with a Southern accent.

STUART

Diane, I'm telling you, just give her a lorazepam and a pink wafer. I'll sort it out when I get there.... Yes, April's left me. But you know, I am young, free and single, so. Swings and roundabouts.... Monkey bars? It's an expression... No I didn't stop at Trowell services. Goodbye, Diane. Yeah. Yep.

He hangs up.

Glancing up and down the deserted street, Stuart walks up to the railing overlooking the bay and hurriedly lights a Pall Mall. He puffs languidly and exhales.

LADY

D'you smoke, love?

Stuart nearly jumps. As if by magic, an small and rotund LADY (70) in a pink waterproof coat has appeared next to him.

STUART

Sorry. Do you want a cigarette?

LADY

I don't wanna trouble you, flower.

STUART

No, no it's fine. Don't mention it.

Stuart lights her a cigarette.

LADY

Ta, love.

The lady wobbles away fast. When Stuart looks back, she has gone.

Stuart continues smoking, and does not notice the purple NISSAN MICRA turn on to the high street.

The car zooms down the road. As it passes, its wing mirror collides with Stuart's. He turns at the bang.

STUART

Oi!

Stuart marches over to inspect the damage as the Micra disappears round the corner. He peers at the cracked glass. His splintered reflection stares back at him.

STUART

Wonderful.

INT. GRAEME'S CAR - WHITBY - DAY

Rubbery-faced, wearing a shirt printed with rabbits, GRAEME (47) drives through the town. He is blasting out Teach-In's Eurovision hit 'Ding-a-Dong', singing and bopping along with worrying abandon.

EXT. PARKIN REST HOME - WHITBY - DAY

Graeme pulls up outside a nursing home. The sign reads: "Parkin Rest Home - Caring for your loved ones". Someone has crossed out "for your loved ones" and added "BECAUSE YOU DON'T" in marker pen.

He climbs out, carrying a briefcase, mic and amp. On the car's bumper are the words "GRAEME PARSONS - LOCAL PERSONALITY and ILLUSIONIST to the GERIATRICALS of NORTH YORKSHIRE."

Graeme wiggles his way into the building.

The purple Micra is parked a few spaces down from his car.

INT. RELAXATION ROOM - PARKIN REST HOME - WHITBY - DAY

A dozen elderly inmates sit around on stained, threadbare armchairs.

A nurse - JOAN (44), skeletal with tattooed-on eyebrows - watches them from the doorway. She is Crispin's ex-wife.

Out of a tupperware she takes a large cream cake and starts eating it. One of the old women, BETTY (86), snaps out of her stupor.

BETTY

That looks nice, Joan.

JOAN

It is.

BETTY

Do you think I could have one?

JOAN

No.

Graeme appears next to Joan.

GRAEME

I'm so sorry, I was updating the Cumberbatch blog and Pam had an attack. I got here as soon as I could. What's the situation?

JOAN

Well, Brian's still dead, Graeme.

GRAEME

How did he go?

JOAN

Suicide. By not going to the toilet. Took him months. He was a stupid sod but you've got to applaud the tenacity. Found him myself, four a.m. this morning.

GRAEME

Crikey.

JOAN

I wanted to ring Yorkshire Post but Diane said they won't pay us or ow't.

GRAEME

You should try Take A Break.

JOAN

Yeah, 'appen I will. A big fan of your tricks, though, was Brian.

GRAEME

Right. Well I'll do my best to cheer them up.

JOAN

You're not Jesus, Graeme. Look at them. If a bomb went off in here they'd still call it euthanasia.

Joan hands Graeme an envelope.

JOAN

Here's your pony. Brian weren't a rich man.

Joan walks off. Graeme smiles round at his audience.

INT. FISH 'N' CHIPS RESTAURANT - WHITBY - DAY

A greasy joint with plastic table units. Spitting fat and torrential rain hitting the windows provide an unsettling ambience.

The only customers in are Ned's sister FAY (18) and his girlfriend JOCASTA (18), sharing chips and examining the pictures in a gossip magazine.

FAY

Oh my god, look at her calves. They're like turkey drummers.

JOCASTA

I just want a Skeggy-ready bod. Ned says he won't be happy till he can eat off me like a big plate. You know, make a Ploughman's on me rib cage or sommat. Or a Rustler's.

They look up. Marilyn - in full chippy uniform complete with hat - stands by their table. She tears a page out of the magazine, stuffs it in her mouth and swallows.

Before the girls can react, the shop door bangs open. Stuart enters and shakes out his wind-warped umbrella.

He notices Marilyn gazing at him.

STUART

Wretched day. Do you do Pukka Pies?

She continues to eyeball him silently. Stuart is disturbed and entranced. Time seems to slow down as he lists pastries.

STUART

Cheese lattice? Chicken and mushroom slice? Steak bake? Lamb --

JOCASTA

There's a Gregg's up t'road.

STUART

Thank you.

Flustered, Stuart exits and dashes off.

INT. MORGUE - POLICE STATION - WHITBY - DAY

A narrow basement room, washed blue by strip lighting.

The corpse previously abandoned by the Nissan Micra lies face-up on a trolley, emaciated with eyes frozen wide. The skin is pale grey.

PC GERTIE SHOE (30), plump and clammy, stands by the wall. The faint hum of a Take That track can be heard through her ipod headphones.

GERTIE'S POV:

The corpse's thick blackish veins seem to throb under the lights.

The whites of its eyes are yellow.

There are deep cuts on the hands, and there is grisly fingernail damage.

Its feet are curled right over.

BACK TO SCENE:

Crunch. Gertie has a pack of Quavers out and is munching listlessly.