

Fit for Nothing

by

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ACT I

SCENE 1

GHOST DANCE

MUSIC: "YOU'VE GOTTA GET UP AND
DANCE" BY SUPERCHARGE (1977)
STARTS. NO ONE LISTENS TO THIS
ANYMORE SO IT SHOULD BE CHEAP TO
LICENCE. SEE

[HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=JM_X
CJJOVMI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JM_XCJJOVMI)

THREE GHOSTS BOOGIE ON AND DO A
LITTLE LINE DANCE TO THE MUSIC.
MUSIC FADES AND STOPS AT 0:56.

THE GHOSTS ARE THREE ACTORS WITH
WHITE SHEETS OVER THEM. THE LESS
CONVINCING THE BETTER. ONE GHOST
MAY HAVE A SMALL BLACK MOUSTACHE
PAINTED ON THE FACE.

THE GHOSTS BOW AND WITHDRAW.

ACT I

SCENE 2

VICTOR HELOT

VICTOR ENTERS

VICTOR

It's time I got fit.

I'm going to find a gym, pay far too much money to join it, and then I'm going to start going to the gym.

If I don't pay, I won't go; so I'm just going to bite the bullet and fork out the money. Whatever they ask for, I'm going to pay.

Look at me. I'm somewhere between thirty-five and forty, depending on who's playing me, and I'm flabby. No matter who's playing me, I'm flabby. I'm out of shape.

"No wonder he can't find a girlfriend," you're thinking. "He's out of shape."

You're right. On both counts. I can't find a girlfriend and I'm also out of shape. And I'm not getting any younger. So it's time to get fit. Pump iron. Run on a treadmill. Take a spin class. Use those funny stair climber things. Show the ex what she's missing out on. (LIFTS HIS SHIRT TO EXPOSE HIS BELLY) Get some abs and then show her.

Look, I'm not a superficial man. You're probably thinking, "He's not going to stick at it! He's doing it for all the wrong reasons and he won't stick it out."

Well, you're wrong. I'm not a superficial man. I'm doing it for the right reasons. I want to be young forever and I want to be irresistible to women. Forever.

If that's the wrong reason, well, I'd like to hear the right reason.

VICTOR Boo hoo. Everyone feels sorry for the
Nazi. What can I do for you Marty? Why are
you here?

GHOST 1 The right reason.

VICTOR Not with you, old boy.

GHOST 1 The right reason. You said you wanted to
hear the right reason.

 PAUSE. GHOST 1 LOOKS EXPECTANTLY AT
 VICTOR; VICTOR JUST LOOKS BLANK.

 You said, "I want to be young forever and
I want to be irresistible to women. If
that's the wrong reason, well, I'd like to
hear the right reason."

 How are you doing this if you don't
remember the script?

VICTOR I just make it up. But okay, let's hear
the right reason. The *far* right reason, I
expect...

GHOST 1 The *right* reason has nothing to do with
women or trying to cling to your youthful
physique (LOOKING DOUBTFULLY AT VICTOR)
but with being true to yourself and your
destiny.

VICTOR My destiny? I'm a little light on for a
destiny, I'm afraid. I just want to tone
up, lose a bit of weight, meet a hot
woman...

GHOST 1 And that's the wrong reason. If you were
doing this because you were impelled by an
inner desire, by the unquenchable force of
an inner will, by a burning desire to
impose yourself and your physical
presence, to reach new heights of
corporeal excellence, then, and only then
would this be worthwhile.

 As it is, you are simply filling in time.
Vacantly.

 GHOST 1 EXITS

 Woooooo!

GHOST 2 Can't. I'm a ghost. We all have to dress like this now.

VICTOR Now?

GHOST 2 Yes. Now. 2214.

VICTOR I'm lost. Why do ghosts have to dress like this now?

GHOST 2 Islam.

VICTOR Islam? Islam has a dress code for ghosts?

GHOST 2 Yes. Islam. Islam has a dress code for everyone. It turned out they weren't hard-working, decent family types who were just trying to give their families a better life. It was all a gigantic conspiracy. They took over Australia. They took over the whole world.

VICTOR A conspiracy? Who was behind it? Al-Qaeda? The House of Saud? The Iranians?

GHOST 2 The Jews. Islam is a Jewish conspiracy. The International Jewish Textile Conspiracy. It's all revealed in 2174. Wealthy Jewish textile moguls used Islam to increase sales of their fabrics. They were behind it from the start. Now, we're all clothed like this. By order of the Grand Mufti of the Planet, Moshe Goldberg.

VICTOR I don't know what to say, Anne.

GHOST 2 Ask me a question.

VICTOR Show us your face.

GHOST 2 I'll thank you to respect my religious choices, infidel.

VICTOR Sorry. Okay, why do you make the films you do? And do you think they're any good?

GHOST 2 What's that supposed to mean?

VICTOR Well, you know, you're beautiful, a good actor, but are your films worthy? When you look back on your achievements, are you happy? Or do you wish you'd made... I don't know... better films?

GHOST 2 Put it this way, son. I look back on my achievements and I think, "Well, at least I did something." And, by the way, I got very fit. A minor, a very minor, achievement in my life, but still a big, fat failure in yours.

VICTOR No need to get personal. I wasn't trying to insult you. I just wanted to know was being famous and wealthy enough for you?

GHOST 2 And beautiful.

VICTOR And beautiful. Was being famous and wealthy and beautiful enough for you?

GHOST 2 And talented.

VICTOR All right, and talented. Was it enough?

GHOST 2 Well, it doesn't matter now, of course, but it mattered then.

VICTOR And why doesn't it matter now? And why did it then?

GHOST 2 Well, it mattered then because I wanted it to matter. And it doesn't matter now because I'm dead. And obviously, nothing matters to me now, but the important point, Victor, is that I *made* it matter; so it did. Woooooo!

GHOST 2 MAKES TO LEAVE.

VICTOR Anne, wait a minute!

GHOST 2 Yes?

VICTOR Why do you all go 'Woooooo!' when you come and go?

GHOST 2 Some things are unchangeable. Inconsequential, meaningless, but unalterable. We have to woooooo. There are things you have to do, too. You just don't know about them.

Woooooooooooooooooooo! (EXITS)

were twenty-six. That's pretty unusual.
What was the reason for that, Anne?

GHOST 3 The reason? The reason is that I was born
eight years before he was. Stupid
question. I'm hieing off.

GHOST 3 MAKES TO LEAVE STAGE

VICTOR No! Wait!

GHOST 3 TURNS BACK

GHOST 3 Only fooling! All that 'only one question'
malarkey... just to fool you. Make a cat
laugh to see how how the Shakespeare
scholars sweat when I tell them they've
got just one question!

VICTOR Why are you here? I'm no scholar. I'm just
working out whether or not to join a gym
and get fit.

GHOST 3 Destiny.

VICTOR Destiny again? What's destiny got to do
with it?

GHOST 3 Mind if I sit?

VICTOR Oh, sure. (LOOKING AROUND BARE STAGE). But
there's no chair.

GHOST 3 That's all right. Got my own.

GHOST 3 HAS A STOOL CONCEALED
BENEATH THE SHEET AND SITS ON IT

Destiny is the only thing. Look to
destiny.

VICTOR Look to destiny...

GHOST 3 What would I have been to you if I had
married one of my other suitors?

VICTOR You had others?

GHOST 3 Others! Beating them off with a stick, I
was! If I wasn't forced to wear this
damned sheet, you'd see something to put a
tent in your lycra! Of course I had other

suitors! I was still young. I was pretty. I had property. And... (CHUCKLES KNOWINGLY)

VICTOR And?

GHOST 3 And, I was a really good fuck, Victor. I loved it. Get me on my back and get ready for an afternoon's entertainment!

VICTOR Something I didn't need to know.

GHOST 3 Oh, lighten up. Still suffering from Victorian prudery all these centuries later. Let me tell you, boy, when the plague's in town, nobody's too worried about who doing what to whom. Or what.

VICTOR So, what was he like, Shakespeare?

GHOST 3 Oh, he was a good man for me. As a young man, he was serious. He knew what he wanted and he was going to get it. He needed a partner and so did I. We were made for each other.

VICTOR But he left you to go to London. He was away for years.

GHOST 3 He left me to go to London and he made a lot of money and he was back and forth all the time! He was a hard working man. That's why I picked him. I didn't need someone who was going to drink my property away and beat me when it was gone. I wanted a good man, a husband, and he was that. A good provider, my Will.

VICTOR And what of his other loves? The Young Man, the Dark Lady?

GHOST 3 Ask yourself, smartarse, who did he return to? Who did he live with? Who warmed his bed from eighteen to death?

VICTOR Did you know he was a great writer? Did you know we'd be reading him six hundred years after his death?

GHOST 3 Don't be stupid. He wrote to make money. To live. That's something else I taught him.

VICTOR To make money?

GHOST 3 No, fool. How to write verse.

VICTOR You taught him?

GHOST 3 The sweetest songs my garden birds can sing
I gave to him. My lips, my tongue, my breath,
were his to use to form those words which ring
the world around, which mock the thought of death.

That's pentameter, that is. Iamb a champ at it. I can knock it out by the yard. Easier than churning butter. Smoother, too. I taught him how to do it.

VICTOR How?

GHOST 3 Stop thinking, Will, I told him. Stop *trying* all the time. Let it flow. Those fuckers in the audience won't know any better anyway. Just write it down!

VICTOR Wow. Inspiring stuff, Anne.

GHOST 3 Get fucked. What've you done, that makes you so smug?

VICTOR Hey! I didn't claim that I'd done anything...

GHOST 3 "I didn't claim..." Pathetic. No, you don't claim anything. You don't do anything. Destiny, mate. Look to destiny. And you want to know something about your future?

VICTOR You can see the future?

GHOST 3 Yours, I can.

VICTOR Well?

GHOST 3 You'll never get fit. See you round, buttered-arse. And I do mean round.

GHOST 3 STANDS, IF POSSIBLE,
LEAVING THE STOOL BEHIND FOR THE

FOLLOWING SCENE. LOOKS INTENTLY AT
THE STOOL.

VICTOR What are you doing?

GHOST 3 I always make a point of examining my
 stool.

GHOST 3 EXITS CACKLING AT OWN JOKE

ACT I

SCENE 6

GHOST DANCE II

MUSIC FADES IN FROM 0:49

GHOSTS BOOGIE ON AND CONTINUE THEIR
DANCE.

MUSIC FADES AND STOPS AT 1:38.

GHOSTS BOW AND WITHDRAW

ACT II

SCENE 1

MIRA MISWEND

MIRA ENTERS AND VICTOR EXITS. THEY DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE EACH OTHER. MIRA SEATS HERSELF ON THE STOOL AND MIMES OFFICE TASKS: TYPING, TELEPHONING, FILING.

MIRA

This is killing me. No, I mean it literally. This is killing me. Slowly... but killing me.

Stuck in this pointless job, sitting, settling, spreading like a jelly at a summer picnic. Spilling over the sides. Sticky, gooey, slippery.

This is killing me.

Stupid, idiotic, pointless job. To get enough money to buy food, rent a flat, buy the train tickets, come to work to earn enough money to buy food, rent a flat, buy a train ticket, come to work.

This is killing me.

And look. I'm getting fat. I'm getting fat because I spend all day on my arse serving these fuckers who ponce around in a gym because they haven't got any real work to keep them occupied.

And who am I to judge them? It's not like I've got a real job either. We're all just poncing around or sitting on our arses. No one's doing any real work at all.

This is not what I trained for. It's not what I thought I'd end up doing. At night, I still practice. I still work on my music, but this soul destroying work. This spiritless place.

MIRA RETURNS TO HER TYPING. AS SHE MIMES, THE SOUND OF A KEYBOARD TAPPING IS HEARD, MIXED WITH SOFT ETHEREAL MUSIC OFF STAGE WHICH GRADUALLY GROWS IN VOLUME.

SPIRIT 1 Very amusing. Ask.

MIRA Ask what?

SPIRIT 1 Ask me your question. Not that one.

MIRA This is very confusing. My question?

SPIRIT 1 Your question. Ask.

MIRA What are you doing here?

SPIRIT 1 Not that question. Ask.

MIRA What am I doing here?

SPIRIT 1 That's it!

SPIRIT MUSIC STARTS AGAIN AND THE
SPIRIT BEGINS AN ELABORATE DANCE.

MIRA Stop! What are you doing?

SPIRIT 1 (DISCOURAGED) I thought it was obvious. I
was answering your question.

MIRA Words, please.

SPIRIT 1 Very well. What you are doing here is
celebrating.

MIRA Celebrating? I thought I was just
complaining about how this stupid,
pointless job was killing me!

SPIRIT 1 That is, indeed, what you were *saying*, but
what you were *doing* was celebrating. Every
little tap, tap, tap on your keyboard is
the sacred chime of a musical bell,
celebrating me, the spirit of the
keyboard. You are offering me your
obeisance and I thank you for it; I reward
you for it.

MIRA How are you rewarding me?

SPIRIT 1 Like this!

SPIRIT MUSIC STARTS AND THE SPIRIT
RECOMMENCES ITS ELABORATE DANCE.

MIRA Stop! And stop that awful bloody music!
Stop! I can't think straight.

SPIRIT 1 Well, I can stop allowing you to see me,
to hear the music, but it won't stop me
accepting your praise!

MIRA What are you talking about? Why should I
care whether you think I'm praising you or
not?

SPIRIT 1 Whether you care or not, is no concern of
mine. That's for you to torture yourself
with. All I'm explaining is that all work
is its celebration. You don't need to know
or understand it. That's up to you.

MIRA It's still bloody pointless.

SPIRIT 1 No, it isn't.

MIRA Why am I doing this? What difference does
it make to anyone? A monkey could do this
job. If it had a big enough arse to sit
on.

SPIRIT 1 They're actually not much good at sitting
still, monkeys. But perhaps a well-trained
golden retriever could do it.

MIRA Well, this has been very helpful, but I've
got lots of pointless work to do. Endless,
repetitive, pointless work. Pointlessly
round and round.

Spinning round and round and getting nowhere. All right. Currently, you're nowhere, apparently. So are we. And you'd like to get somewhere, would you?

MIRA I'm speaking figuratively.

SPIRIT 2 Clever thing. Figuratively, then. You'd like to be somewhere.

MIRA Figuratively, yes.

SPIRIT 2 Where? Figuratively.

MIRA I don't know! I just don't want to be stuck doing this when I could be doing something useful, something I want to do with my life.

SPIRIT 2 Ah! Now I see. Now, I can tell you what you should be doing.

MIRA You can?

SPIRIT 2 (IRRITATEDLY) No, of course I can't! Foolish girl. "I want to do something". Something isn't anything, it's nothing, it's just a word. Something is nothing until you make it something. No one says, "I want to do nothing with my life!", but that's what you're saying.

"I want to do something!" What's the 'something', woman?

MIRA I don't know! Perhaps something to do with music. I like playing music.

ACT II SCENE 4 SPIRIT OF THE MUSIC KEYBOARD

DISCORDANT MUSIC STARTS - SOME SORT OF AVANT GARDE JAZZ WITH SOMEONE FARTING INTO A TRUMPET OR SOMETHING. SPIRIT 3 DANCES ON IN AN ERRATIC, SPASMODIC, ARHYTHMIC DANCE.

SPIRIT 1 Great. She mentions music. (NODS TO SPIRIT 3) Miles.

SPIRIT 2 (ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING SPIRIT 3) Miles.

SPIRIT 3 Guys! Great to see you.

MIRA Miles? Who are you?

SPIRIT 3 I am the spirit of the keyboard.

MIRA I thought there was only one of those.

SPIRIT 1 The other sort of keyboard. Music keyboard.

MIRA (IMPRESSED) Oh! And why 'Miles'?

SPIRIT 2 That's how far away everyone else wants to be.

SPIRIT 3 He's joking! No, it's a homage.

MIRA Miles Davis?

SPIRIT 3 The man!

SPIRIT 2 So, you've come for a reason, Miles.

SPIRIT 3 Yes, the reason. She said, she'd like to be playing music.

MIRA Yes, instead of this pointless job, I'd like to be home working on my music.

SPIRIT 3 Which would be, like, so cool, except for one thing.

MIRA Which is?

SPIRIT 3 Which is you're lying.

SPIRIT 1 Don't bother. I've already told her she's a liar.

MIRA What do you mean, lying? And how do you know?

SPIRIT 3 Because, my dear, if you weren't lying, you'd be home right now, playing, writing, listening. And you're not. You're here.

MIRA I'm here, asshole, because I have to eat.

SPIRIT 3 That's true, but you're not eating. And you're not playing music. So what are you doing here?

MIRA I'm earning money!

SPIRIT 3 Yes, you are. But here's a tip. If you want to play music, play. You won't starve. Or you may starve a bit. But you won't die. Or you may die eventually, but you'll make music before you die.

 Keep working here, and you'll still die. But you won't be making any music, baby.

MIRA Listen! It's easy enough for you to say. It's easy for anyone to say. I still have to make enough money to live. I have to live somewhere. I have to pay to live somewhere. I have to eat. I have to pay to have something to eat.

 The only people who are free to make music all day are people who have been lucky enough to be discovered or who happen to write the sort of crap that gets played on the radio now.

 And that's not me. I'm not that good or that bad. But why should I have to be stuck here doing this? I don't want to be fabulously rich or even famous. I just want to do what I'm good at and be able to live in these squalid, ridiculous, spiritually impoverished times.

 ALL THE SPIRITS SCURRY OFF STAGE,
ALARMED.

ACT II

SCENE 5

SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

MUSIC OFF STAGE - HEAVIER, MORE
OMINOUS THAN PREVIOUS SPIRIT MUSIC.

SPIRIT 4 DANCES ONTO THE STAGE IN A
STATELY, HEAVY-FOOTED, PRECISE
DANCE.

MIRA Who are you? I take it by the way you've
scared off all the others that you're some
sort of big wheel in the spirit world.

SPIRIT 4 The biggest. I am Pish, the Spirit of the
Age.

MIRA What age?

SPIRIT 4 This age. Now.

MIRA This is the Age of Pish?

SPIRIT 4 No, although you may wish to call it that,
but technically, Pish is my name. The Age
doesn't have a name. It's not Golden or
Dark or Enlightened or anything; so it
doesn't have a name.

MIRA Not much of an Age, then?

SPIRIT 4 No, but it's mine. And, as it happens,
yours, too. And I'm the Spirit of it. With
my help, you could become one of the great
ones of this Age.

MIRA What's the point if it's such a lousy age
anyway?

SPIRIT 4 Oh, hark at her! "Such a lousy age..."!
What's it to you, lady? Do you think
you're going to get to live in another
age? Do you think you'll even get to see
another age?

MIRA No, probably not.

SPIRIT 4 No probably about it, honey. This is it
for you. Like or lump it.

MIRA All right! It's the only age I've got.
What are you doing here, anyway, Pish.

Haven't you got more important things to be doing?

SPIRIT 4 Of course. At least, many things... several things as important...

But I'm here to advise you. You said you wanted to know how to do what you're good at and be able to live in these times. Well, I can tell you.

MIRA Tell me what?

SPIRIT 4 How to do it. How to be one of the great ones of the age. How to be admired, respected, *paid* in this Age of Pish.

MIRA But I don't want to be "one of the great ones". I'm not. I know I'm not. I'm okay. My music is okay. It's not great, but it's better than most, and it's still worth something, even if it isn't great. I just wish I'd been born into an age when music was appreciated.

SPIRIT 4 And what good would that have done you? You would have been recognised as the mediocre talent you are. You should be grateful to be living in the Age of Pish. It's much easier to be one of the great ones in an ordinary age than in a great one. Anyone can do it.

MIRA Anyone?

SPIRIT 4 Anyone.

MIRA Anyone with a bit more than a mediocre talent.

SPIRIT 4 No. Anyone. [SLYLY] Anyone moved by the Spirit of the Age, that is.

MIRA And what does that involve?

SPIRIT 4 Generally, it involves sacrifice. Sacrifice and hard work. And dedication. And a piece of tail every now and then.

MIRA What?

SPIRIT 4 Come on. No games with me. You can't expect something for nothing. Not these days. And if the Spirit of the Office Chair thinks you've got a cute arse, that's good enough for me. He sees a lot, you know.

MIRA Fuck off, creep! I thought you were a spirit? How could you even... even do anything?

SPIRIT 4 Oh, I don't know. I thought I'd try it. It's a compliment, really. I know you're worried about it, but your arse isn't too big. It's nice. And I just thought, you know, we could...

MIRA Ergh. Forget it, Pish.

 So that's the spirit of the age. Everybody's out to get a bit, even if they're incapable. Thanks for your help and concern, but I've got work to do now.

SPIRIT 4 At least think about it.

MIRA You know what, Pish? I think I'll pass. I'll try waiting for a new age.

SPIRIT 4 You'll be waiting a while! Two hundred years from now, I'm still appearing as the Spirit of the Age!

MIRA Yeah, but so am I. Thanks, but no thanks.

SPIRIT 4 Frigid bitch. I blame Uzlamb for this.

MIRA What? What's "Uzlam"?

SPIRIT 4 Uzlamb. With a "b" on the end. You know, a hundred years after this was written, Australia was invaded and ceased to exist.

MIRA What?

SPIRIT 4 Yes, Tony Abbott was right and very, very wrong. While everyone was worried about boats from the west, the threat was all from the east. A radical form of Islam developed in New Zealand: Uzlamb. In many ways, a confusing religion. They invaded; Australia lost. They used to write the "U"

so it looked like an "N". Their marketing was very slick. Appealed to the young men.

MIRA Pish?

SPIRIT 4 Yes?

MIRA Fuck off.

MIRA AND SPIRIT 4 EXIT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

ACT II

SCENE 6

GHOST DANCE III

MUSIC FADES IN FROM 1:30

GHOSTS BOOGIE ON AND CONTINUE THEIR
DANCE

MUSIC FADES AND STOPS AT 2:25

GHOSTS BOW AND WITHDRAW

ACT III

SCENE 1

JOINING THE GYM

MIRA IS SEATED ON THE STOOL MIMING HER OFFICE ACTIVITIES FACING ONE SIDE OF THE STAGE. VICTOR ENTERS FROM THE SIDE MIRA IS FACING AND WALKS DIFFIDENTLY OVER TO HER. ALL THE OFFICE ACTIVITIES OF BOTH MIRA AND VICTOR ARE MIMED.

MIRA (GIVING GOOD RECEPTION) Good morning, sir. How can I help you?

VICTOR I've come to join the gym.

MIRA Excellent! Has anyone explained the packages available to you?

VICTOR No. This is my first time here. Or any gym, actually.

MIRA (FLIRTING PROFESSIONALLY) Hard to believe. You look in pretty good shape to me.

VICTOR Really? I thought I was getting flabby. Starting to look like the sedentary slob I am.

MIRA Well, we can all stand improvement, can't we? That's why we're here.

Now, at Fit For Living Life we offer a completely personalised service where the level of membership and access to services is completely customisable and packaged to meet your individual needs.

To start us off, all we need to do is get you to fill out this questionnaire, and that will give us an indication of the level of membership which will suit you best.

HANDS HIM A FORM

VICTOR Great. How much does it cost?

MIRA Fit For Living Life isn't like other gyms. Our packages are customised to suit the individual to ensure a maximal benefit-

outcome-to-investment ratio. It's all explained in the form.

VICTOR And what does that come to? Typically.

MIRA Are you a 'typical' gym member?

VICTOR If your typical gym members are sedentary slobs, I am.

MIRA Let's see...(SCROLLING THROUGH A SCREEN DISPLAY)... no, no 'Sedentary Slob' package, I'm afraid. How about you try filling in the questionnaire?

VICTOR MOVES AWAY TO A CORNER OF THE OFFICE AND BEGINS TO FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

VICTOR Why do you need to know my occupation?

MIRA Gives us an indication of how much physical activity you do in your working life. You can leave it blank if you like.

VICTOR You don't charge more if I say I'm a dentist?

MIRA Are you?

VICTOR No.

MIRA Just fill in the form.

VICTOR CONTINUES FILLING IN THE FORM.

VICTOR Medical history. I've never heard of some of these things!

MIRA That means you haven't got them, then.

VICTOR (FEELING HIS STOMACH GINGERLY)But I might have. What's a gastric ulcer feel like?

MIRA Like being stabbed in the stomach by an angry girlfriend.

VICTOR I haven't got a girlfriend.

MIRA Well, there's a surprise.

VICTOR Not really cut out for this job, are you?

MIRA No I don't work out. And I'm not sporty.
I'm just too poor to overeat.

VICTOR So you'd welcome an invitation to come out
to lunch some time?

MIRA Probably not that poor. Sorry.

VICTOR That's okay. Knock backs are not an
unknown in my life. I wouldn't have known
where to take you anyway.

MIRA Think you'll complete the questionnaire
for me?

VICTOR Doesn't seem much point, does it?

MIRA What about getting fit?

VICTOR Yeah. How many of the people who sign up
ever get fit, or change their lives?

MIRA About a third. A quarter? Or less... Say,
one in five.

VICTOR I'm not that remarkable.

MIRA Wow. Neither am I, but I hope I wouldn't
think one in five was too exclusive.

VICTOR Yeah, well, long experience. Thanks for
the advice. I'll think about it.

MIRA Okay. Let me know.

VICTOR See you.

MIRA Yep. See you round.

EXIT VICTOR. MIRA RETURNS TO HER
OFFICE FUNCTIONS.

ACT III

SCENE 3

NOT JOINING THE GYM

VICTOR ENTERS. STANDS BEFORE THE STOOL, WAITING. CHECKS HIS WATCH OCCASIONALLY. MIRA ENTERS.

MIRA

Sorry I'm late.

SETTLES HERSELF BEHIND HER DESK. SWITCHES ON HER COMPUTER. SHUFFLES SOME PAPERS.

Sorry. How can I help?

VICTOR

Hi. I was in this morning?

MIRA

Of course, hi! You've decided to join?

VICTOR

No, I've decided not to join. I wanted to talk to you.

MIRA

About what?

VICTOR

About life. About what we're doing. About what I'm doing. About going out for lunch.

MIRA

That's very sweet, really, but I've just been to lunch and I have to work for the rest of the day. That's the deal. Pretty standard.

GHOST 1

(OFF STAGE) Woooooo! Woooooo!

MIRA

What did you say?

VICTOR

Oh good. At least you can hear him, too.

GHOST 1 ENTERS

GHOST 1

Woooooo! Idiot!

MIRA

What? Who are you? And why are you wearing a sheet?

GHOST 1

Islam. We've been through all that.

MIRA

Uzlamb?

GHOST 1

No, that was only in Australia and only for a few decades. Eventually all the kiwis went home. They always do in the end. This play opens in London. Islam.

VICTOR He's a ghost.

MIRA And what's he doing here?

GHOST 1 I'm here to help this idiot. He thinks he wants to ask you out, but he has bigger fish to fry.

MIRA What's it to you if he asks me out?

GHOST 1 Nothing, nothing, nothing. But that's the point isn't it? Nothing. Waste of time. Fruitless activity for no purpose.

MIRA Thanks a lot, mate.

VICTOR What are the bigger fish?

MIRA What do mean? Suddenly I'm not good enough for you, Mr One-In-Five?

VICTOR No, no! Not at all! I just thought I should hear what he has to say about it. It's the first I've heard about bigger fish.

GHOST 1 We have spoken extensively about it, but you simply haven't understood.

VICTOR Well, tell me now.

GHOST 1 Tell me now, tell me now. Who am I to be ordered around by you? You didn't even ask me here. I came by myself.

MIRA He's touchy for a ghost, isn't he?

VICTOR He used to be a professor. He's okay once you get used to him.

GHOST 1 Big of you. You are not here to ask this woman out. Stop pussyfooting around! You want to fuck her. You want to impregnate her. You want her to carry your stock and enrich it with her - frankly - superior genes.

MIRA Whoa, cowboy! I don't even know his name!

VICTOR Victor.

MIRA Mira. Pleased to meet you, Victor, and thrilled to be asked to enrich your genetic stock.

GHOST 1 Get on with it, you two! Victor, you have a will. Start using it! Start exerting it! Without a will there is only Being. And Being is nothing. Demonstrably nothing. Look at me. Here I am, being. But a ghost, therefore, not being.

Dasein, schmasein. Being is nothing. Take her!

VICTOR There's a reason...

GHOST 1 (CUTS HIM OFF AND RANTS) Reason me no reason, you idiot! You fool! You think you can reason? With that thing you call a brain, you think you can reason? You haven't got the capacity to reason! That you try to reason is proof of that! Your attempts to reason are the deadliest enemies of reason! The best of the species can't reason consistently - and you think you'll be able to? Take her! Accept who and what you are. Take her! Action, not reason! Action!

GHOST 1 STORMS OFF STAGE. HURRIEDLY RETURNS TO MOAN.

Woooooo! Sorry. Forgot.

ACT III

SCENE 4

AGREEING TO FALL IN LOVE

VICTOR AND MIRA REMAIN ON STAGE

MIRA

Well. That was a bit awkward.

VICTOR

Yes, sorry about that.

MIRA

So who was your spooky friend in the sheet?

VICTOR

That's Heidegger. Martin Heidegger, the philosopher.

MIRA

Heidegger? Wasn't he a Nazi?

VICTOR

Yes, but only in an intellectual sense.

MIRA

An intellectual sense. He didn't kill Jews, he just thought about it?

VICTOR

No, well, perhaps, I don't know. He didn't believe in reason. At least, he believed in it, but he thought it was bad. And I think the lack of reason in National Socialism appealed to him.

I've been trying to read his work a bit since I met him. It's... it's not always terribly clear.

MIRA

And he's the guy you've been taking advice from?

VICTOR

Yes. No! I mean, I haven't had much choice. He just turns up. I don't 'take advice from him'. But I do listen to him. Not that I have a lot of choice...

MIRA

That's okay. Unwelcome visitors are something we all have to deal with.

VICTOR

Meaning me? I can go.

MIRA

Lighten up, Victor. And work a bit. Fight a bit. Don't expect things handed to you on a plate. You want to ask me out? Ask!

VICTOR

Without suggesting that you bear my children, would you like to go out with me some time?

MIRA Okay. I've sort of boxed myself into it,
 haven't I?

VICTOR Great. I'll call you here before you knock
 off tonight.

MIRA That would be nice. Talk later, Victor.

 EXIT VICTOR

ACT III

SCENE 5

LOVE IN THE AGE OF PISH

THE PORTENTOUS SPIRIT MUSIC SOUNDS.

MIRA

Again the music! I have to work!

SPIRIT 4 DANCES ON CAUTIOUSLY.

SPIRIT 4

Has that idiot gone?

MIRA

You know Victor?

SPIRIT 4

Not that idiot. The other one. Heidegger.
Has he gone?

MIRA

Yes, he's gone. Why? You don't like him?

SPIRIT 4

Don't like him? Who cares about him? Mere
ghost. He's nothing to me. I just prefer
not to associate with him. Old windbag.

MIRA

What have you got against him, Pish?

SPIRIT 4

It's more the other way around. He's not
too keen on me. Classic case of mistaking
cause and effect, but you can't tell him.
He won't listen to reason.

MIRA

Okay. What's he got against you?

SPIRIT 4

He blames me for the age. I keep telling
him, it's my age, but I'm not responsible
for it. I'm just the spirit of it. The age
is made by those living in it - they're
responsible for me, not the other way
around.

MIRA

What's he got against the age?

SPIRIT 4

You need to ask? The thousand year Reich
fell nine hundred and eighty seven years
short of target. He blames the age.

He had high hopes for the Reich, you know.
He knew it was run by idiots, but that's
why he thought it would succeed. He's been
disappointed ever since.

MIRA

Well, he's gone and I'm not interested.
What can I do for you before you leave?

SPIRIT 4

I was just going to offer you some help.

MIRA I'd hoped I'd made it clear that I want none of your help, Pish. And I'm certainly not interested in paying for it.

SPIRIT 4 You misunderstand me. My previous words may have been taken out of context. Leave aside your mistaken personal interpretation of my words and allow me to clarify my function.

MIRA Clarify away, Pish, but keep your hands to yourself, okay?

SPIRIT 4 The Spirit of the Age is the moving spirit of the times. It inseminates every action of the age. I'm here to ensure success in your coming action.

MIRA Oh, yes? And this insemination you're contemplating...

SPIRIT 4 Poor choice of words. I'm here to help. You want to fall in love. You want him to fall in love. I can do that. Spirit of the Age. All part of my brief.

MIRA What are you talking about? Love? Who mentioned love? One poor, sedentary slob has asked me out for a date, or lunch, or something. No one's thinking about love, Pish.

SPIRIT 4 Pish, indeed. Of course you're both thinking about love. What else is there to think about? Lunch? I know the age is obsessed with trivial things, but not even you people are that shallow.

MIRA Too fast. Way too fast, Pish. Love? I've got other things to think about, and Victor, too, probably.

SPIRIT 4 Ask him.

MIRA What?

SPIRIT 4 Ask him. Ask him if he'd like to fall in love. You can explain that I'll take care of it. Ask him when... (PISH WAITS EXPECTANTLY FOR A COUPLE OF SECONDS)

SOUND OF A TELEPHONE RINGING

... when he calls you.

MIRA MIMES ANSWERING THE PHONE

MIRA

Fit For Living Life, the gym that's different because you are. You're speaking to Mira, how can I help?

Oh, hi. How're you? Still willing to take a chance on lunch?

Okay. No, that's fine. That works for me. Dinner sounds good. I finish here at 5:30. I can meet you there around 7:00 for a drink.

Sure.

Okay.

PISH COUGHS SIGNIFICANTLY

Yep. Okay.

There's one other thing. I'll explain when we meet, but remember the little contretemps with Heidegger?

No, no, it's okay. I've sort of got one of my own.

No, a spirit.

A spirit. It's different, apparently. Touchy in a different way. He's Pish, the Spirit of the Age. Quite a big deal in the spirit world, if one believes him.

Yes. Anyway, I'll explain - as much as I can - later, but he's asked me to ask you a question.

How do you feel about falling in love?

SPIRIT 4

No. Do you want to fall in love?

MIRA

Sorry. No. Do you want to fall in love?

Yes.

Yes, that's what he asked. He can do it, apparently.

Who knows? He says he can.

Okay. (TURNING TO PISH) He says, "Okay".

SPIRIT 4 Okay? Just 'Okay'? This is the Age I'm given...

MIRA Okay. See you tonight.

SHE HANGS UP

Okay. We're on. Love it is. I have work to do now.

SPIRIT 4 I'm offering love! I'm offering to make you and Victor a pair, a name, one of the great loves of the Age!

MIRA And thanks. But I have to finish the customer retention reports for the month. It's considered important in your age.

EXIT SPIRIT 4 TO PORTENTOUS MUSIC.
MIRA MIMES WORKING FOR A FEW
MOMENTS THEN EXITS, TAKING THE
STOOL.

ACT III

SCENE 6

GHOST DANCE IV

MUSIC FADES IN FROM 2:10

GHOSTS BOOGIE ON AND CONTINUE THEIR
DANCE

MUSIC FADES AND STOPS AT 2:40

GHOSTS BOW AND WITHDRAW

GHOST 3 Yes, you slops-slut, there was another one. And I'm her.

VICTOR She was the wife of William Shakespeare.

MIRA Wasn't he someone else?

VICTOR No, he was real. As real as Les Murray.

MIRA Les Murray - he wrote some beautiful things.

VICTOR Yes, well, it's called the beautiful game.

GHOST 3 I'm here to advise you against this ridiculous plan of Pish's.

MIRA Why?

GHOST 3 For a starter, it's the brainworm of Pish. That should be enough for you. But if you want more, then I'll give it to you.

 Love is for gulls.

VICTOR Girls? Or the birds? Sea gulls?

GHOST 3 Gulls! You cloth-eared dolt!

VICTOR You're the one with a sheet over your head.

GHOST 3 Hey! Don't diss Auslan.

MIRA I thought it was Islam?

GHOST 3 No, Auslan, I think. Something about not communicating with the deaf after death or something. I don't know. I don't listen to them. Anyway, we've got to wear them.

MIRA You were telling us about love.

GHOST 3 Yes, it's for gulls, for fools, for idiots who haven't got sense enough to look around them.

VICTOR This is a surprising attitude from the wife of a man who wrote some of the most exquisite love poems in the world.

GHOST 3 To another.

ACT IV

SCENE 2

HE FALLS FOR HER

VICTOR AND MIRA REMAIN ON STAGE,
LOOKING AT EACH OTHER

MIRA Has that changed anything?

VICTOR That hasn't changed anything, but everything has changed.

MIRA What do you mean?

VICTOR It's happened.

MIRA What has?

VICTOR Your words, your voice. When you speak, I can feel your voice vibrating inside me. It lights my body like glow worms in a cave. I can feel a thousand points of light inside my body, glowing, warm, vibrating. Speak to me again!

MIRA What should I say?

VICTOR That!

MIRA No one's ever really commented on my voice before.

VICTOR Because they're all deaf. The sound of your voice is like drinking honey. Look! Look at my arm! My hairs are standing up trying to feel the air move with that voice. They want to touch it!

MIRA (STOKES HIS ARM) Silly. You're probably just cold.

VICTOR I'm burning. I can still feel your touch. Really. I can still feel your touch! It's as if you're still touching me. My skin is electrified. I can still feel you.

MIRA (LAUGHING) Pish doesn't muck around when he wants to create an effect, does he?

VICTOR (STUDYING HER FACE) You are so beautiful. I always knew you were beautiful. The first time I saw you, I saw you were beautiful, but now I can see the beauty itself. You are so beautiful, Mira. I keep

wanting to touch you. You are so beautiful. It's exhausting. I can hardly breathe. Every one of my sense is overloaded. My skin still feels your touch. My eyes don't know where to look; everything, everywhere on your body, you are so beautiful. I just want to cry.

MIRA Wow. It sounds wonderful.

VICTOR Not as wonderful as you sound. And I've just noticed the way your lips move when you form words, when you make that tiny pause before you speak. Your lips are beautiful. They invite kissing.

VICTOR MOVES TO KISS HER.

MIRA Whoa, Tiger! Slowly, slowly now.

VICTOR Sorry. And not sorry. Your lips are so beautiful they are singing for a kiss. I could just watch them: the way they separate when you are about to speak. It invites intrusion. They invite kissing.

MIRA What else do you feel?

VICTOR My whole perception is accelerated and random. I perceive everything about you at once, in a whirl, as if your whole life, purpose, being, body, everything was laid bare before me in a single instance, and then without me knowing how or why, I see a single element of perfection: your voice, your lips, and now your skin. (EXAMINING THE SKIN OF HER FOREARM) Your skin is flawless.

MIRA (WITHDRAWING HER ARM) My skin is not flawless. It's anything but flawless.

VICTOR (TAKING HER HAND AGAIN AND EXAMINING HER FOREARM) Your skin is flawless. Flawlessly beautiful. (SMELLS HER SKIN) And perfumed. Perfumed like the petals of a flower. Not overpowering, not the flower itself, but the remembrance of a scent. It's intoxicating, but fleetingly intoxicating. It disappears. It's like a perfect hit of alcohol that leaves you sober! I want to drink your skin.

MIRA If ever I need a stalker, Victor, you've got the gig!

VICTOR Oh, please! Please! Let me stalk you. Let me follow you. Let me watch that perfect body sway its way away from me and let me follow. Tell me to go away and then relent and let me run to catch you. Then send me away again. And relent. Spin me round and round and let me feel that rush of always turning back to you.

Look at me, Mira. Let me drink in your eyes.

ACT IV

SCENE 3

SHE FALLS FOR HIM

VICTOR AND MIRA STAND, LOOKING INTO EACH OTHERS' EYES.

MIRA Your eyes... Your eyes are beautiful.

VICTOR My eyes are busy.

MIRA Victor, your eyes are so deeply beautiful... I've never seen eyes like yours...

Oh, my God! It's happening...

I feel it, too...

VICTOR What do you feel?

MIRA I can feel your eyes inside my own. I can feel you exploring me. As you eyes explore me, I can feel it. I can feel the trail of your eyes over me! It feels wonderful, Victor.

VICTOR (TAKING HER HAND) I'm almost too happy to speak now.

MIRA I can feel you hand touching me inside my skin. Does that make any sense?

VICTOR No. Who cares?

MIRA I can feel your hand beneath my skin. It's like an extra pulse that's beating in response to my own. I can feel you inside me, Victor. I can feel your breath in my lungs, as if we were breathing with the same lungs, as if there were no separation between us.

I can feel you, Victor, as if you were seeping through my body, as if we were becoming mingled in the same body. How are you doing this?

VICTOR I don't know.

MIRA How can this be happening?

THE FOLLOWING ACTION SHOULD BE SLOW AND BALLETTIC. THEY STARE FIXEDLY AT

EACH OTHER. THEY JOIN BOTH HANDS,
BUT ARE STANDING A LITTLE APART.
THEY LEAN IN TOWARDS EACH OTHER AND
KISS, GENTLY, LIGHTLY. AS THEY
KISS, THEY MOVE IN TOWARDS EACH
OTHER AND THEIR ARMS MOVE TO
ENCLOSE EACH OTHER. THEY PRESS
THEIR BODIES TOGETHER, TURNING
SLOWLY TO ENTWINE THEMSELVES CLOSER
TOGETHER. THE KISS DEEPENS TO A
SLOW AND SHUDDERING END AND THEY
GAZE WORDLESSLY INTO EACH OTHERS'
EYES.

ACT IV

SCENE 4

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

VICTOR AND MIRA STAND, LOCKED IN EACH OTHERS' ARMS. SLOWLY, THEY BREAK APART.

VICTOR

Wow.

MIRA

Wow, indeed. Wow and double wow.

VICTOR

Did that just happen?

MIRA

It happened for me.

VICTOR

Me, too.

MIRA

Do you feel...

VICTOR

Yeah, I think so...

MIRA

Do you feel different again?

VICTOR

My head's still spinning.

MIRA

Changed again?

VICTOR

Not so...

MIRA

Connected...

VICTOR

Intense...

MIRA

But it was real, wasn't it?

VICTOR

Real for me, yes.

DISCORDANT JAZZ FADES IN. SPIRIT 3
JIVES ON.

SPIRIT 3

Yeah! Man, and now the come down. After a great gig, there's always the come down.

VICTOR

Who are you?

MIRA

Miles. He's the spirit of the keyboard. Musical keyboard. His name's a homage to Miles Davis.

VICTOR

Didn't he play the trumpet?

SPIRIT 3

Who cared what he played, man? He played!

MIRA

What are you doing here, Miles?

SPIRIT 3 I'm here to help you guys. You felt what it's like, now you've got to decide.

MIRA Decide what?

SPIRIT 3 You've got to decide if you're going to fall in love or not.

VICTOR Wasn't that it?

SPIRIT 3 That was a taste, man. A taste. That was, like, Track 1. There's a whole LP to come, man.

MIRA What? What's an elpie?

SPIRIT 3 Love. Perhaps. You've had a taste. Pish offered it to you, but you have to accept it if you want it.

VICTOR I want it. That was the most amazing experience of my life. I want that again. And again. And forever!

MIRA It was good. But what's the catch, Miles?

SPIRIT 3 Catch, what catch? There's no catch.

MIRA Except...

SPIRIT 3 Except that it isn't real. But I'm a spirit! Who cares about real? Ain't gonna trouble me, real or not.

VICTOR It felt real to me. It was real. It was a real feeling. I feel it now. It's real.

MIRA Really?

VICTOR Well... I feel something. Something like I felt. I think I could feel it again. I'd like to feel it again.

MIRA But what do you feel now?

VICTOR Now? Now is an echo of the feeling, I suppose. But I want to feel it again. I love you. Could love you. And you could love me. You did for a moment there.

MIRA For a moment, yes. But wasn't that just Pish?

VICTOR Who cares? It was great! We might be made for each other, mightn't we? This might be meant to be!

GHOST 2 (OFF STAGE) Woooooo! Woooooo!

GHOST 2 ENTERS

It isn't.

VICTOR What do you mean it isn't? How do you know?

GHOST 2 Because I already told you, you have to engineer your destiny. There isn't any other kind. You engineer it, or it doesn't exist.

MIRA Who's this?

VICTOR Anne Hathaway. The other one. The actor.

MIRA Really? Anne Hathaway? I love your films! I love you! You're my all time favourite actor!

VICTOR You love her? Five minutes ago, you loved me.

MIRA Different love. But point taken. Sorry. What do you mean, Anne? About destiny, what did you tell Victor before?

GHOST 2 Destiny is an expression of will. It isn't something that happens to you. I made the films I made because I worked to make those films. It's not enough to be hard-working and talented.

VICTOR And beautiful.

GHOST 2 And beautiful. You have to know what you want and you have to create it. Out of the nothing that the ghosts and spirits inhabit, you have to create it. That's what matters: the creation of it out of the nothing.

MIRA But what is IT? What's the IT?

SPIRIT 3 IT is whatever it is, babe! Listen to Miles Davis. He's making it up. Making it up as he goes! And that's IT. That's the

IT for Miles Davis. The IT for you, that's
up to you.

GHOST 2

IT can be anything. Just not nothing.
Don't choose nothing. Woooooo!

EXIT GHOST 2

SPIRIT 3

Catch you 'round, cats!

EXIT SPIRIT 3

of Pish without Pish. We could be like the great ones without being great ourselves. Like Heidegger or Anne Hathaway. They'll live forever.

MIRA You have noticed that they're both dead, haven't you? All the great ones of any age, all dead.

VICTOR If this is two hundred years from now, we're dead too. Long dead.

MIRA Feels all right.

VICTOR AND MIRA HOLD HANDS AND EXIT

ACT IV

SCENE 6

GHOST DANCE IV

"YOU GOTTA GET UP AND DANCE" BEGINS
FROM 0:00

GHOSTS BOOGIE ON AND DANCE
EXUBERANTLY

AS THE SONG PROGRESSES, ALL OTHER
ACTORS, STAGE HANDS, TECHNICIANS,
DANCE ON AND JOIN THE DANCE

ALL DANCE TO END

CURTAIN AT END OF SONG