

# STRIPPED

## CHARACTERS

Penny, 35, married  
Stacey, 35, single

## SETTING

PENNY and STACEY are preparing PENNY'S lounge wall for wallpaper stripping. PENNY is on a chair stripping the wallpaper and STACEY is wiping the wall down with sugar soap. They are sharing a bottle of pinot gris.

INT. SATURDAY. 2 PM

STACEY

Greg is gonna be SO impressed when he sees what you've done.

PENNY

I bloody hope so ... it's more effort than I thought it would be.

STACEY

Yeah. Bit like relationships really.

PENNY

Oh I don't know Stace. I reckon you've just had a bad run.

STACEY

Really? 10 years of a bad run? Remind me never to train for a marathon!

PENNY stops paper stripping and motions for her wine.  
STACEY hands it up and they both lean against the wall.

PENNY

Well, maybe you're just too fussy?

STACEY

I don't think so. Is that what YOU think?

PENNY

Yeah. I mean, well, there's been a few. Like ... David?

STACEY

He gets BOTOX!!

PENNY

... and Robert?

STACEY

He had *extremely* bad breath. And I *mean* HONKING!

PENNY

And, who was that guy you met from rock climbing ...  
Ron?

STACEY

Yeah, but come on ...

PENNY

What?

STACEY

He's a ginger and his last name's McDonald!

PENNY looks confused.

STACEY

Ronald McDonald?

PENNY

Oh. Oooh, cruel parents.

STACEY

Totally.

PENNY hands over her glass, turns back to the wall and  
continues stripping paper.

PENNY

Ok, who else was there ... what about Kyle?

STACEY

He smelt funny.

PENNY

In what way?

STACEY

What'd you mean 'in what way'? In the B.O. way.  
What other way is there?

PENNY

(Sarcastically) Okay. Well, I dunno. What about  
rat guy.

STACEY

Rat guy?

PENNY

Yeah, that pest exterminator guy.

STACEY

Oh, his mother HATED me.

PENNY

(Sighing) Well, I give up then. It's just all a bit too hard.

STACEY

(Hands on hips) God Penny, you make it sound like I'm an awful person or something. I just happen to have standards, is that alright? I don't wanna just SETTLE!

PENNY

What, like I have?

STACEY

I never said that.

PENNY

No, but that's what you're thinking.

STACEY

Where'd you get that from?

PENNY

Well, here I am, 5 years down the track. You must think I just settled?

STACEY

Did you?

PENNY

Of course not.

STACEY

Well there you go then.

PENNY

Don't do that.

STACEY

Do what.

PENNY

Say, 'well there you go then'. Meaning you think I DID settle.

STACEY

Your words.

PENNY

Your thoughts.

STACEY

Oh you can read minds now?

Beat.

STACEY

Look, this is stupid, I didn't mean that at all. I dunno, maybe I'm just jealous that you met this fabulous guy and it's worked and here I am going from one no hoper to another.

PENNY

Well you shouldn't think like that. And anyway ... it's not all plain sailing. We've had our ups and downs. It's not easy.

STACEY

Could've fooled me.

PENNY

No really. Case in point ... when I moved in here. Greg wouldn't let me put any of my stuff around the place. He was totally anal.

STACEY

Yeah but he had lived here with his ex, right?

PENNY

Yeah, but so what! Move on!

STACEY

And look at ya now! Changing the whole décor!

PENNY

Yeah, true. But it's been a long time coming. It may look like things are perfect, but don't judge your insides by others outsides. I mean, you talk about mothers. His mother HATES me.

STACEY

Really? You?

PENNY

Absolutely. She told me, and I quote, "Penny, it wont last, you are nowhere near Greg's type".

STACEY

What a bitch! What'd you say?

PENNY

I didn't have to say anything. Greg told her to shut up and we haven't seen or spoken to her since.

STACEY

Well, least he's not a mummy's boy.

PENNY

I suppose.

Beat.

STACEY

What was her name anyway?

PENNY

Who? Greg's mum?

STACEY

No ...(in a scary tone) 'the one we don't speak of'.

PENNY

Oh, Chris. Krissy. Christine, I guess.

STACEY

You don't know??

PENNY

No.

STACEY

Christine eh? She died didn't she?

PENNY

Yes and that's why she's the one we don't speak of.

STACEY

Bit strange isn't it?

PENNY

What?

STACEY

Well, the fact that you don't talk about her. I mean, it's been over 5 years now.

PENNY

No, not really. I mean, she died! I don't really want to be bringing up hurtful feelings, that's all. And then ... (Penny looks thoughtful) well, then things have moved on so there's no point.

STACEY

Yeah but that's weird, I mean you'd still think after some time ...

PENNY stops stripping and turns around to face STACEY.

PENNY

Stop that.

STACEY

(Looking innocent) What?

PENNY

That thing that you ALWAYS do. Trying to find fault where there isn't one.

STACEY

No I'm not.

PENNY

Yes you are! And you're always doing it. Even at school you did it. If I was happy you made me unhappy.

STACEY

That is SO not fair!

PENNY

No, this isn't fair. It's like you have to find something wrong in my life to make yourself feel better. In fact, I'm surprised you didn't snap Greg up for yourself! That was your standard M.O.

STACEY

Whoa there lady - back up that truck. Maybe it's your own guilty conscience talking. Maybe you actually AREN'T happy and you're projecting all this onto me!

PENNY

Oh cut the spiritual crap.

Silence. STACEY puts the sponge down and picks up her coat from the chair.

PENNY

What are you doing?

STACEY

What does it look like.

PENNY gets down from the chair and walks over to her.

PENNY

Don't go Stacey, I'm sorry. I guess I'm just wound up.

STACEY

About what? Your life is friggin perfect!

PENNY

It's not! Far from it! Oh, I don't know. What if you're right? I mean, this was his house with Christine. What if there's some bigger reason he doesn't talk about her. It is a bit odd, I guess. Arrghhhhhh! I'm just so happy right now, I don't see the point in breaking something that isn't broken. Is that wrong?

STACEY

No, so long as you don't mind living in blissful ignorance.

PENNY

Well I don't (smiling).

STACEY

Well okay then (smiling back).

PENNY

And anyway it's alright for you ...

STACEY

What is?

PENNY

You've never had to worry, like me. You've always been the sexy one, the fun one, the one guys wanted to hang out with.

STACEY

Yeah but not for long. You've got the stickability Penny! You're the one they wanna STAY with. Not me. Big difference!

STACEY walks over and gives PENNY a hug before they take up their positions again and carry on stripping.

Beat.

PENNY

Hey - what about Simon?

STACEY

Nah, too uptight.

PENNY

Gareth?

STACEY

Too skinny. I'd break him.

PENNY

Tall guy ... Jason?

STACEY

Yeah, I did like Jason.

PENNY

Sounds positive.

STACEY

But he looked too much like Hayden.

PENNY

Your brother?

STACEY

Yeah.

PENNY

Oh okay, don't go there.

Beat.

STACEY

Matt's kinda sweet though.

PENNY

Hallelujah, well that's a start.

STACEY

True.

They work in silence for a bit. PENNY turns around to face STACEY.

PENNY

Can you pass up my glass hon?

STACEY hands her the near empty glass and PENNY takes a final swig.

PENNY

That was a nice drop eh. Fancy another?

STACEY

Is the Pope catholic?

PENNY gets off her chair and picks up the empty bottle.  
She walks off stage.

PENNY (Voice coming from off-stage)  
Hey Stace, that wall should be ready now, can you  
take over the stripping. Thought I had another  
bottle, but I'm out. I'm just gonna pop round the  
corner, be back soon.

STACEY

Sure.

STACEY grabs the broad knife, moves the chair and steps  
up onto it. She uses the knife to rip a large piece of  
wallpaper off the wall. As she pulls it away, some  
writing is revealed on the original plasterboard. It  
says ...

*"Our special love"*

STACEY

Hmmm, interesting.

She crumples up the wallpaper and throws it on the floor.  
Using the knife she pulls off another large piece of  
wallpaper, revealing more writing ...

*"is a heavy load,  
but by your side,  
I'll walk this road"*

She stands back to look at it. Intrigued by the message,  
she grabs the knife and picks off another piece of  
wallpaper, revealing ...

*"I love you Chris.*

She stands back again.

STACEY

Aw, how friggin sweet is THAT!

She sees one more spot of wallpaper at the end of the  
word *Chris* and pulls that off. It reveals the letters ...

*topher"*

She stands back, aghast, noticing the final line in its  
entirety:

*"I love you Christopher".*

STACEY paces around the room, seemingly lost in thought  
as to what to do. She grabs her phone to make a call to

Penny, then puts it back down. She sits down on the coffee table staring at the poem.

Suddenly, she hears the key in the door. Looking around she spots a piece of sandpaper, picks it up and walks over to the poem. She frantically sands away the last few letters (*topher*) and puts the sandpaper in her pocket. At that moment PENNY walks in and hands Stacey a new glass of wine.

PENNY

Cheers.

STACEY

What too?

PENNY

Hmmm, I dunno. What do you reckon?

STACEY

Blissful ignorance.

PENNY

I'll drink to that.

They clink glasses.

**FADE OUT - THE END**