

Apple

(c)

FADE IN:

INT. JOHNSON'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

SUPER:

"1981"

Drying laundry hangs everywhere in the squalid and dated room. Broken cabinets cling precariously to the wall, whilst lengths of mouldy wallpaper peel off around them.

ANNIE JOHNSON (30), scurries around with purpose. An attractive woman, the only blemish on her perfect skin is a split lip surrounded by a large, purple-grey bruise.

Sat on one of the worktops watching her every move is her son, JOE (7). A frail looking boy, his arms are covered by a multitude of small bruises.

ANNIE

Best get the pudding done now, eh  
Joe, or your father won't be happy.

Joe pulls a glum face.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

BUT...I'm making us an apple pie!

A huge, cheeky grin of excitement spreads across Joe's face.

With the speed and dexterity of a seasoned cook, Annie peels, cores and slices a large cooking apple.

JOE

Wow, you're really quick, Mummy!

Annie smiles as she prepares another apple.

ANNIE

It's taken a lot of practice,  
sweetheart, a lot of practice. One  
day, you'll be doing this with your  
children.

Joe looks at the pile of offcuts and fiddles with some of the cores. He takes a pip and goes to put it in his mouth.

ANNIE

Uh, uh, uh! Mustn't eat those!

She gently prises the pip from his little fingers, leaving him looking a little confused.

JOE

Why?

ANNIE

Well, when I was a little girl and I used to help Nanny make apple pie, she always used to say that the pips had poison in them.

Joe's eyes widen.

JOE

POISON? WOW!

Suddenly, the kitchen door flies open, startling Joe and Annie into silence.

Into the doorway looms Annie's husband, GEORGE (40's), a thick-set ogre of a man. Clearly drunk, he sways back and forth, supporting himself on the door frame. He glares at Annie, but she avoids eye contact.

Joe jumps down from the worktop and hides behind his mother.

GEORGE

(Slurred)

Where's my dinner?

He takes a long drag on his cigarette, then flicks the butt into the sink full of dishes.

ANNIE

It's not ready yet.

George's nostrils flare as he purses his lips.

GEORGE

Well get a fuckin' move on! I could've eaten something at the pub!

He starts to cough, and thumps his fist into his chest to try to stop it.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

It's better...

(coughs)

Better than the slop you dish up anyway.

Annie looks pained by the comment.

George's cough grows into a loud, rasping gurgle which makes his eyes water and his face turn bright red. He fumbles in his pocket, pulls out his Ventolin inhaler and hastily takes a couple of deep puffs on it.

The cough begins to subside.

Annie looks at him, completely devoid of emotion.

ANNIE

Go and sit in the other room. I'll  
bring it through when it's ready.

With a couple of splutters and grunts, George turns and makes his way down the hallway.

GEORGE (O.S)

Don't make me wait now!

Annie leans on the worktop and breathes a sigh of relief.

ANNIE

(to herself)

God, I really wish you were dead  
sometimes.

She looks down at Joe by her side and her sweet smile returns. She smiles lifts him up and sits him back on the worktop.

ANNIE

Now then, my little soldier, where  
were we?

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The decor is as dated as the kitchen with the cheap, mismatched furniture having seen better days.

At the dining table, George eats his dinner with all the gusto of a builder loading a cement mixer with a shovel. He only stops every now and then to belch.

Joe watches the repugnant display from the...

HALLWAY

Annie checks herself in the hall mirror, her bruise now crudely covered up with makeup.

She puts on her coat, picks up her handbag and beckons Joe to her.

ANNIE  
(whispers)  
Joe. Joe. Come here.

As he walks towards her, she crouches down to his eye level.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
I've got to go to work, sweetheart.  
I'm sorry. I'll only be gone a  
couple of hours, so don't worry.  
Just stay upstairs in your room,  
and if anything happens, go round  
to Rosie next door and get her to  
call me, ok? Promise?

He nods. She plants a kiss on his forehead.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
Good boy. I'll see you later on.

She ushers Joe up the stairs, takes a deep breath and leaves through the front door.

INT. JOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

A wardrobe with a broken off door and a mangy looking bed are the only contents of the otherwise empty room. A few random toys lay scattered around on the carpetless floor.

Joe, lost in thought, sits on the edge of his bed looking at his one-legged Action Man figure.

He puts the toy down on the bed and creeps out of the door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Joe tiptoes in and up to the waste bin beside the sink.

He glances around to make sure noone sees him and opens the bin lid. On top of the rubbish are the apple cores and skins. He roots around inside and delicately picks out several of the discarded pips, keeping them to one side.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

George sits asleep in his armchair, SNORING loudly. On one of the chair's arms is a large glassful of Whiskey. On the other, a plate with a large slice of apple pie on it.

Joe creeps up to the slumbering George. He watches him for a moment before dropping several pips into the Whiskey. He turns and runs out of the room, leaving George asleep.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Joe sits on a swing, gently swinging backwards and forwards.

COUGHING can be heard from inside the house.

He puts his feet onto the floor and stops himself swinging.

The coughing, interspersed with a grotesque, chesty wheeze, grows louder and louder until...silence.

Joe listens and waits. Still silence. He calmly gets off the swing and walks towards the house.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Joe cautiously pokes his head around the door into the...

LIVING ROOM

On the floor in front of him lies a motionless, purple-faced, George. The slice of apple pie is half-eaten and the Whiskey glass empty.

Joe stands there for a moment, watching for any kind of response from George.

Nothing.

He turns and walks out of the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A PARAMEDIC stands talking to Annie, who seems surprisingly calm and collected.

PARAMEDIC

You've got a brave little boy there, Mrs Harris, raising the alarm like that.

ANNIE

He's a smart boy. Whatever he's told, it just sinks straight in. So...what happens now?

PARAMEDIC  
Well, there'll have to be a  
post-mortem, I'm afraid.

Annie nods.

PARAMEDIC(CONT'D)  
That'll be able to confirm the  
actual cause of death. But, it  
looks to me as though he began  
choking which brought on an asthma  
attack.

INT. HALLWAY

Joe creeps towards the kitchen door and listens in.

PARAMEDIC(CONT'D O.S)  
It's tragic what just a couple of  
apple pips can do.

Joe turns away, smiles faintly and runs off up the stairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. JOHNSON'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Now stylishly desgined with sleek cupboards and granite  
worktops, the room looks opulent.

SUPER:

"THIRTY YEARS LATER"

Joe, now a good looking man, prepares some food on a  
worktop. Sat on the worktop beside him and watching  
everything he does, his daughter, EMILY (7).

He peels, cores and slices some apples.

Emily fiddles with the chopped out cores.

EMILY  
Daddy, what are these black things?

She prods several of the pips on the chopping board.

JOE  
Those are the pips, darling.

EMILY  
Why are you cutting them out? Can't  
you eat them?

JOE  
Ooh, no darling, you mustn't ever  
eat them. Nanny once told me that  
they had poison in them.

EMILY  
Really? But how do you know, Daddy?

Joe scoops up all the cores and pips.

JOE  
Trust me, sweetheart...

He plants a big kiss on top of her head and dumps the lot  
into the bin.

JOE (CONT'D)  
I *know*.

FADE OUT

THE END.