

1 EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY 1

A large old house set in rolling English countryside. A number of cars are parked outside. We pull back and see the large wrought iron gates which show the number '9'.

TITLE: 'SARDINES'

2 INT. BEDROOM - DAY 2

A double bedroom in a large house in the country. It is a guest bedroom so devoid of any personal belongings, rather like a hotel room.

REBECCA, a smartly-dressed woman in her mid 30s, runs into the room. She looks around thoughtfully before heading into the ensuite bathroom.

3 INT. ENSUITE - DAY 3

REBECCA draws back the shower curtain but there is nobody there. She stops at the sink, picks up the big block of carbolic soap and smells it. She smiles to herself wistfully.

4 INT. BEDROOM - DAY 4

REBECCA re-enters the bedroom and looks under the bed: nothing there apart from a couple of old suitcases.

REBECCA gets up and looks at the large old wooden wardrobe. She sees herself in the mirrored door, then reaches for the handle and pulls the door open...

IAN is standing in the middle of the wardrobe. He is a socially-awkward bespectacled IT consultant in a shirt and tie.

IAN
Oh, hello.

REBECCA
Hello!

IAN
That was quick.

REBECCA
Well obviously I know the house,
so...

IAN
You have an...

IAN & REBECCA
... unfair advantage.

REBECCA
Yes!

REBECCA gets into the wardrobe with IAN and closes the door.

5 INT. WARDROBE - DAY

5

The wardrobe is fairly empty, save for a couple of boxes of Christmas decorations and some outdoor coats hung up at one end. REBECCA stands next to IAN.

IAN
We weren't properly introduced, I'm
Ian by the way.

REBECCA
Hello.

They shake hands.

IAN
It's Rachel isn't it?

REBECCA
Rebecca.

IAN
That's right. I work with Jeremy.

REBECCA
Oh!

IAN
Well, I say "work with", I'm more
on the IT side but with Jeremy
being the office manager we
obviously have overlaps. He's
responsible for infrastructure
whereas I take more of a lead in
programme development...

REBECCA
Right, right. What did you say
your name was again?

IAN
Ian.

REBECCA
That's right, yes. Jeremy has
mentioned you.

6 INT. BEDROOM - DAY 6

KEV, a good-looking lad in a trendy t-shirt and jeans runs into the room and pops his head into the ensuite bathroom. He sees that there is nobody there then runs out again.

7 INT. WARDROBE - DAY 7

REBECCA and IAN hear KEV depart.

IAN
Who was that I wonder?

REBECCA
Don't know!

IAN
Could be a long game!

REBECCA
Yes!

Silence.

IAN
So how does it feel to be engaged Rachel?

REBECCA
Rebecca.

IAN
Sorry. Have you set a date yet...?

REBECCA
9th of November.

IAN
Oh. 9-11. You won't forget that will you?

REBECCA
No. I hadn't thought of it that way to be honest...

Suddenly the wardrobe door opens and CARL is standing in front of them. CARL is REBECCA's brother. He wears a smart suit and has a dry sense of humour.

CARL
Boo.

REBECCA
Oh Carl, get in quick.

CARL
I heard you talking. Why are you
hiding in here?

REBECCA
I didn't choose it did I?

IAN
Guilty as charged!

REBECCA
Have you met Ian?

CARL
No I don't believe I've had that
pleasure. Carl, I'm Rebecca's
brother.

IAN
Ah, so you two'll know all the
nooks and crannies of the house
then!

CARL
Oh yes. I've spent most of my
Christmases hiding in various
cupboards waiting for my bossy
little sister to find me. You
never could though, could you?

REBECCA
Get in!

CARL steps into the wardrobe and closes the door.

8 INT. WARDROBE - DAY

8

CARL stands next to REBECCA.

REBECCA
Is Daddy playing?

CARL
He said he would. He's out showing
Mark and Elizabeth the stables.

REBECCA
He can do that afterwards, we're
meant to playing the game!

CARL
Alright, keep your voice down or
you'll give us all away.

IAN
(jokingly)
Yeah, chill out bitch!

Silence. REBECCA and CARL are stunned.

IAN (CONT'D)
Sorry, that was misjudged.

CARL
Actually it was quite funny. She
is a bit of a bitch, aren't you
Becks?

9 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

9

The bedroom door opens and STU enters, flamboyantly dressed, camp, 40s. He is carrying a glass and a bottle of champagne.

STU
Lollipops, come and get your
lollipops! And all free today!

STU looks around the room.

STU (CONT'D)
Now then... if were I hiding in
this room where would I go? Not
behind those curtains - they're a
migraine waiting to happen.
Hanging round the toilet perhaps -
it has been known. Or would I
enjoying spending time... in the
closet!

STU opens the wardrobe door to find CARL, REBECCA and IAN.

STU (CONT'D)
Oh! Not interrupting anything am
I?

REBECCA
Come on!

STU steps in the wardrobe and closes the door.

10 INT. WARDROBE - DAY

10

STU joins CARL, REBECCA and IAN.

STU
Oh it's like the back room of
Cinderella's in Wakefield. Anyone
got any poppers or lube?

CARL
(a warning)
Stuart.

STU

What is it, is it his clothes, his
breath...?

REBECCA

I don't know, he was at school with
us wasn't he Carl?

CARL

Yes, when he was just John, not
Stinky John.

REBECCA

Something must have happened to
him, he just stopped washing one
day. Maybe we should trace it
back?

CARL

Yes. Maybe we should. 'Who Do You
Stink You Are?'

STU

STU
Well thank God I brought champagne.
Who wants a swig?

STU drinks from his glass of champagne.

11 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

11

RACHEL, a pretty but dumb girl in her 30s, runs into the room. She looks around, goes over to the bedside cabinet and looks inside. Unsurprisingly there is nobody hiding there.

RACHEL looks around the room, then goes over to the wardrobe and flings the door open to reveal STU, CARL, REBECCA and IAN. RACHEL calls out:

RACHEL
Found them! They're in here!

REBECCA
Sssshhhh!

RACHEL
That's it isn't it? I've won!

REBECCA
No you've got to hide as well.

RACHEL
Oh, OK...

RACHEL hurries over to the window.

REBECCA
No, in here, with us.

RACHEL
Oh. There's not much space.

CARL
That's why it's fun apparently.

RACHEL
But I'm a little bit
claustrophobic.

CARL
Then it's even more fun.

REBECCA
Quick before someone sees you.

REBECCA pulls RACHEL into the wardrobe and closes the door.

REBECCA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Could you just move back a bit Ian.
Have you got space?

IAN (O.S.) JOT
Er, yes, I've just got a Christmas
tree sticking in my bottom.

STU (O.S.)
Memories!

REBECCA (O.S.)
Sssshhh!

12 INT. WARDROBE - DAY

12

RACHEL is huddled in the wardrobe between IAN and REBECCA.
She whispers.

RACHEL
So what happens now?

REBECCA
We wait for the others to find us.

RACHEL
So how do you win?

REBECCA
Nobody wins, you just wait.

RACHEL
Oh. Right. So when does the game
start?

REBECCA
This is the game Rachel, we're
playing it.

IAN
Oh - so Rachel.

RACHEL
Yes, hello!

Yes, hello!

IAN (CONT' D)

Yes.

REBECCA

Who were you talking to?

IAN

Erm, which one are you?

REBECCA

Rebecca.

IAN

Yes.

An awkward silence.

STU

I spy with my little eye something
beginning with WD.

CARL

Wardrobe door?

STU

How did you guess? Oh I haven't
seen this much wood since...

CARL

Don't!

STU pokes his tongue out at CARL.

REBECCA

(to IAN)

So what does Jeremy say about me?

IAN

IAN

Yes.

REBECCA

Well coming from you Ian that's quite something. Thank you.

IAN

You're welcome.

RACHEL fans herself.

RACHEL

Is anyone else hot in here? Can we just open the door a crack, I need to get some air...

CARL

Wait 'til John gets here, you'll need more than a crack.

RACHEL

Is Stinky John playing?

REBECCA

Everybody's playing, it's Sardines.

RACHEL

I might not be able to stay here if he gets in. I do get a bit...

RACHEL fans herself.

STU

Don't worry dear, me and you'll nip through to Narnia, have a snowball fight and a Turkish Delight.

RACHEL opens the door to get some air. She steps out.

RACHEL

I'm sorry I need to breathe...

REBECCA

No - you're not allowed!

CARL

She's allowed to breathe.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

IAN
I wouldn't mind stretching my legs
actually. Been here a while...

IAN steps out of the wardrobe.

REBECCA
What? Oh this is ridiculous!

STU
Well I'm going to have a pee break
then. All that champagne has gone
straight through me.

STU gets out and nips across to the ensuite. He opens the
door to find GERALDINE sitting on the toilet.

GERALDINE
Hang on! Occupied!

STU slams the door shut.

STU
Sorry! Well that's something I'll
never unsee.

REBECCA
Who is it?

STU
Feed the birds.

REBECCA
Geraldine?

IAN
Shouldn't she be using the staff
toilets?

The toilet flushes and we hear the tap running. REBECCA sees
that CARL is looking very preoccupied.

REBECCA
Are you OK? What's the matter with
you?

CARL
(acidly)
What do you think Rebecca? Look
where we are.

GERALDINE emerges from the ensuite. She is in her 70s and
wears her best dress and hat, also '70s.

GERALDINE
There you go lovey. It doesn't
have a lock, it's an "on-sweetie".

STU

Well you've warmed the seat for me.

RACHEL

Thought it was a pee break?

STU

Ladies sit.

STUART enters the ensuite and shuts the door.

GERALDINE

I heard you all talking in there
but I didn't want to disturb you.

(to RACHEL)

Hello lovey.

RACHEL

I was just getting some air. I'm a
bit claustrophobic.

GERALDINE

Oh dear. Is that where you can't

GERALDINE

So Rachel, tell me again how you know Jeremy?

There is an awkward pause.

RACHEL

Erm...

REBECCA

Rachel is Jeremy's ex, Geraldine.

GERALDINE

That's it. I knew it was something I wasn't supposed to mention.

RACHEL

We're just mates now.

GERALDINE

Lovely. Oh it's been ages since I've been in this room. Your dad usually keeps it locked up. You know, after...

REBECCA

We're not going down that road Geraldine. It's a party, remember?

GERALDINE

Oh yes! "Why am I always the bridesmaid, never the blushing bride? Ding dong wedding bells, always ring for other girls, but one fine day - oh let it be soon - I will wake up in the morning on my own honeymoon!"

During this, RACHEL smiles at REBECCA, who smiles back thinly. REBECCA tries to take CARL's hand but he removes it.

STU opens the wardrobe door and steps back in.

STU

Right I'm coming in, nobody fart.

STU closes the wardrobe door. STU places his fingers under CARL's nose.

STU (CONT'D)

Smell that. Carbolic. We should get some for our 'on-sweetie'.

GERALDINE

Well this is fun isn't it?

REBECCA

Thank you Geraldine, yes it is.
Fun.

GERALDINE

Do you have a girlfriend Ian?

REBECCA peeps through a crack in the wardrobe door to see ELIZABETH come into the room and look around. ELIZABETH whispers loudly.

ELIZABETH
Mark! In here.

15 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

15

MARK enters the bedroom to join his wife ELIZABETH. Both ELIZABETH and MARK are tall, elegant, well-dressed snobs.

ELIZABETH
Have you got rid of him?

MARK
Yes, he's off looking for the others. God I loathe playing other people's family games, it's such a bore.

ELIZABETH
We've done long enough now. You said we'd be out by three.

MARK
Well why didn't you just do the lie about the baby-sitter getting ill?

ELIZABETH
Because that needs to be seeded. You need to seed it.

MARK
You don't need to seed it, you just say it. "Sorry we've got to go now the baby-sitter's ill."

ELIZABETH
Oh Mark you're so naive. What awful curtains.

MARK
Anyway the old man might be tedious but he's our way in to Dickie Lawrence so we have to put a shift in.

ELIZABETH
I thought you hated Dickie Lawrence?

MARK
I do, he's a first class prick. But I need him to smooth over that merger next year.

(MORE)

You know what they say: keep your
friends close and your enemies
closer.

ELI ZABETH
You're such a horrible shit Mark.

MARK
That's why you love me.

MARK grabs ELI ZABETH and kisses her.

16

INT. WARDROBE - DAY

16

Inside the wardrobe REBECCA and the others can hear MARK and
ELI ZABETH.

ELI ZABETH (O.S.)
Mark stop it... no, not here...

MARK (O.S.)
Come on. Just fingers.

ELI ZABETH (O.S.)
No!

RACHEL whispers.

RACHEL
Do you think we should say
something?

REBECCA
We're it too late now.

Six smiling faces look out at him.

REBECCA
Oh! You found us, well done!

ELIZABETH
What the hell...?

MARK remembers.

MARK
Sardines.

IAN
Hi Mark! Welcome to the wardrobe!

MARK stares blankly.

IAN (CONT'D)
Ian. I work for you. In IT.

MARK
Of course, hi.

REBECCA
We've been hiding here for ages
waiting for someone to find us and
these doors are so thick, we didn't
hear anything did we?

Assorted mumbles of 'No, no' from the others.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Do you want to come in then, before

ELIZABETH

Yes. Looks like a lot of fun.

ELIZABETH gingerly moves forward as if she's going to walk into a pig sty. She braces herself and steps into the wardrobe.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Right. Please mind the shoes everybody. Maybe I should take them off?

MARK

No just get in Liz. The sooner we start...

MARK and ELIZABETH step into the wardrobe.

MARK (CONT'D)

Stand there next to Rachel.

REBECCA

Rebecca!

MARK

Sorry.

REBECCA

It's my engagement party and nobody seems to know my name!

MARK

It's just that Jeremy always...

REBECCA

What?

IAN

This one's Rachel!

IAN points knowingly to RACHEL.

MARK

Ah. Nice to meet you.

RACHEL

Nice to meet you too.

KEV enters the room.

KEV

There you all are! I've already been in here once!

RACHEL

Kev! Come in, we're having such a laugh. Might be a bit of a squeeze.

KEV climbs into the wardrobe.

ELIZABETH

Oh God...

KEV closes the wardrobe door.

18

INT. WARDROBE - DAY

18

KEV stands next to RACHEL.

KEV

Can't believe I didn't check in the
fucking wardrobe, what a knob!
I thought I heard someone shouting?

GERALDINE

That was me, I said 'Geronimo' -
don't ask me why.

RACHEL

Have you met everyone Kev? This is
Ian, who works with Mark.

MARK

Mark actually. I own the
company.

KEV

Oh right, if you ever need any
roofing doing...

RACHEL

You know Rebecca obviously. This
is Mark's wife Elizabeth.

KEV

Al ri ght.

RACHEL

And thi s i s Geral di ne.

KEV

Yeah I know. I wou ldn' t mi nd a
l i ttle top-up i f you don' t mi nd.

KEV proffers hi s empty champagne gl ass to GERALDI NE.

GERALDI NE

Pardon?

KEV

A l i ttle cheeky champers, there' s a
good gi rl .

GERALDI NE

Why do you keep aski ng me?

KEV

Rebecca sai d you were servi ng
drinks?

REBECCA

No. . .

GERALDI NE

No I' m a guest! He' s got hi s wi res
crossed.

REBECCA

Yes we' re al l guests here. Al l
equal .

GERALDI NE

I used to be thei r Nanny you know.
I' ve known al l three of them si nce
they were so hi gh.

RACHEL

Three of them?

REBECCA

Yes, we' ve got a si ster, Carol i ne.
She moved away.

GERALDI NE

I s she not comi ng Becky? I' d l o ve

REBECCA
No they can't make it. It's a bit
too far to travel.

GERALDINE
Aaaahhh...

REBECCA and CARL exchange looks.

KEV
I'll go and get my own drink then.

KEV opens the wardrobe door.

STU
Here you go Kevin, I've got some
contraband you can have...

19 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

19

STU pushes his way out of the wardrobe and approaches KEV
with his champagne bottle.

STU
Let's form a splinter group under
the bed.

REBECCA
You can't do that.

STU

IAN
Yes, it's almost like we're tin of
"Sardines"!

MARK
Tell you what Colin, why don't you
step out for a bit, make some room.

IAN climbs out of the wardrobe.

IAN
It's Ian...

MARK
Sorry, Ian - you can go under the
bed with those two.

KEV and STU are climbing under the bed.

STU
No, sorry, private party.

REBECCA
Look, you cannot play Sardines
unless everyone is hiding in the
same place together, that's what
makes it fun...

MARK closes the wardrobe door, leaving IAN on the outside.
IAN looks around and heads into the bathroom, closing the
door behind him. We stay on the empty room.

STU (O.S.)
Oh yes, Kevin, that's nice, keep
doing that, what big hands you've
got, oh yes...

RACHEL (O.S.)
Kevin?

KEV (O.S.)
I'm not doing anything!

CARL (O.S.)
Leave him alone Stuart.

STU (O.S.)
Oh, what's the matter Carl, are you
jealous?

CARL (O.S.)
Piss off.

REBECCA (O.S.)
Stop arguing you two, this is
ridiculous!

STU (O.S.)
It's not my fault that you're
afraid of intimacy Carl!

CARL (O.S.)
(emotionally)
And it's not my fault either!
You've got no idea...

A moment of silence in the empty room.

The door opens and in comes STINKY JOHN. He is overweight with long hair and wears an ill-fitting suit. He creeps into the room and looks around.

STINKY JOHN approaches the wardrobe. He throws the wardrobe door open to reveal MARK, GERALDINE, RACHEL, REBECCA, ELIZABETH and CARL. They stare at him with looks of horror on their faces.

STINKY JOHN
Ta dah!

REBECCA
John!

REBECCA instinctively puts her hand over her mouth.

STINKY JOHN
Oh looks like I'm one of the last
to join the party. Can I squeeze
in?

He makes to step into the wardrobe.

RACHEL/REBECCA/ELIZABETH
No!

REBECCA
I just think it's a bit too full.

STINKY JOHN
No, there's plenty of room...

STINKY JOHN tries to get in. They all bunch up to stop him.

ELIZABETH
I feel sick.

MARK
Breathe through your mouth.

CARL
Actually John - some people are
hiding under the bed...

STU (O.S.)
Oh no you don't!

RACHEL

Yes, we just thought as I'm claustrophobic...

STINKY JOHN

But that's not the game is it? You're all meant to be squashed in together. That's the rules.

REBECCA

Yes but we thought it doesn't really matter about the rules. As long as we're all in the same room it still counts.

STINKY JOHN

Alright, as you wish.

STINKY JOHN goes towards the bed, and looks under it. STU's face peeps out.

STU

Actually John, there really isn't room under here. There's suitcases and everything, isn't that right Kevin.

KEV (V.O.)

Yeah it's packed mate, sorry.

STINKY JOHN

I don't think I'd fit under there anyway to be honest, what with the old 26 pack.

He wobbles his gut.

STU

Yeah, you're far better off going with the wardrobe group.

STINKY JOHN

Alright, pillar to post! I'm back again!

STINKY JOHN heads back to the wardrobe but the door has been pulled to. STINKY JOHN tries to open it but encounters resistance.

STINKY JOHN (CONT'D)

Hang on. What's going on here? Is it caught or something?

REBECCA
It's stuck John. Maybe try going
in the bathroom.

MARK
First time for everything.

21 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

21

STINKY JOHN can see through the crack in the wardrobe door.

STINKY JOHN
I can see what it is. It's

STINKY JOHN

And there's two under the bed -
it's a shambles!

STINKY JOHN hides behind the curtain as JEREMY approaches the wardrobe.

JEREMY

Bex, it's Jeremy.

REBECCA (O.S.)

Hi!

JEREMY

Listen darling, I'm just going to
pop down to the station to pick up
a chum who's running late and I
can't seem to find my keys. You
haven't had them have you?

REBECCA (O.S.)

No, they were in your jacket.

~~REBECCA~~ REBECCA (O.S.)

I looked, they're not there. If I
can't find them I might have to
tm B, N' 6ni Bexchesat OKyou

B

REBECCA

JEREMY

Er - yes. I believe there's some people hiding in the wardrobe, some under the bed. And Stinky Jo... John behind the curtains.

ANDREW

No, no, no. This is all wrong. Come out from there boy!

STINKY JOHN steps out from the curtain, head bowed. He seems cowed by ANDREW's presence.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

You've all got to be in the same place! This isn't 'Hide and Go Seek'. You know the rules don't you?

STINKY JOHN

Yes Sir.

ANDREW kicks the bed.

ANDREW

Come on, out! Out, I say!

STU and KEV climb out from under the bed.

STU

It's like 'The Diary of Anne Frank'.

KEV

I've not seen that one. Is it like 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid'?

ANDREW opens the wardrobe door. REBECCA puts on a brave face.

REBECCA

Hi Daddy.

ANDREW

Here. Five more sardines to go in the tin.

JEREMY

Oh, I just need to...

ANDREW

Come on, chop chop. In we go...

JEREMY gets in next to REBECCA but she turns away from him.

STINKY JOHN squeezes in next to ELIZABETH, who blanches and gags.

STINKY JOHN looks over at CARL, who looks down.

KEV and STU climb into the wardrobe, followed by ANDREW who closes the door behind him.

22

INT. WARDROBE - DAY

22

It is now ridiculously packed in the wardrobe with MARK, GERALDINE, STU, KEV, RACHEL, STINKY JOHN, ELIZABETH, JEREMY, ANDREW, REBECCA and CARL all squashed in two deep.

ANDREW

There we go. That's the name of the game. Sardines.

JEREMY

(to REBECCA)

They both start with an 'R'...

MARK

Oh Andrew, Elizabeth was just asking after Dickie Lawrence, how is he these days?

ANDREW

Dickie Lawrence? Haven't spoken to him for two years. Hateful man.

MARK

Oh, I thought...

ANDREW

Thought you could use me as a stepping stone did you? Well tough titty. That bridge was burned a long time ago.

ELIZABETH looks stricken.

ELIZABETH

(weakly)

Babysitter...?

REBECCA

(to JEREMY)

You're still in love with her aren't you?

JEREMY falters, but says nothing. RACHEL looks away, taking KEV's hand.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

We used to love playing Sardines at parties didn't we Daddy?

ANDREW

Oh yes. What we call an ice-breaker. Do you remember the Sardine Song?

REBECCA

Of course.

ANDREW

(sings)

"A baby sardine saw his first submarine..."

CARL

Don't you dare sing that.

ANDREW

My house, I'll do what I bloody well like!

Silence.

GERALDINE

Oh do you remember that year when we had the cub scouts jamboree? Chaos it was, kiddies everywhere...

REBECCA

That was a long time ago.

GERALDINE

We were all having such a laugh and then this one little boy spoiled it, what was his name...

RACHEL

Er, I think we should be making a move now...

GERALDINE

Oh the police were involved and everything, do you remember John?

STINKY JOHN

Philip **Harri**son.

GERALDINE

That was it, Little Pip. Whatever happened to him?

ANDREW

The family moved away as I recall. Spain or some such.

GERALDINE

Well good riddance I say. Accusing you of such horrible things.

CARL
He paid them to go away.

ANDREW
I was teaching the boy how to wash
himself. Basic hygiene.

CARL
We weren't all that lucky, were we
John?

STINKY JOHN
I can smell Carbolic soap...

STINKY JOHN starts to gag.

ANDREW
Alright, that's enough!

Silence.

STU
Now before I ring Jeremy Kyle, can
I just say there's no one actually
looking for us any more? We're all
here.

KEV
No we're not. That Ian's not here.

JEREMY
Yes, I do have to go and pick him
up from the station.

MARK
He's in the bathroom.

JEREMY
What?

MARK
The boring chap with glasses on.

JEREMY
That's not Ian...

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

