

JILL. What's that? **JILL / OLLIE SIDE 2**

START OLLIE. We've got new neighbours. House number four.

JILL. When did *they* move in?

OLLIE. Day after you went into hospital.

JILL. That was nearly three weeks ago!

OLLIE. I've had a few things on my mind, Jill.

JILL. Okay, okay. What're they like?

OLLIE. Very friendly. Nishaka and Aashiyana. Doctors. They've got an eight-year-old son. Navneet. And listen to this... Guess what they paid for their house.

JILL. Tell me.

OLLIE. *Twice* what Brandy and Mitch paid for theirs.

JILL. No?!

OLLIE. We're in a property hotspot.

JILL. And it's *our* house that got it started.

OLLIE. Talking of which—

JILL. We're home, Benjy!

OLLIE. Benjy likes his nursery.

JILL. Oh...look at him in his cot, Ollie!

OLLIE. We've got everything we could ever want.

JILL. We have... Almost.

OLLIE. *Almost?*... Whoa, whoa! You don't mean—

JILL. Let me explain.

OLLIE. You *promised*, Jill. Once Benjy's born. No more renovations.

JILL. It's *because* Benjy's here there *has* to be more.

OLLIE. I don't see how—

JILL. Let me explain.

OLLIE. But—

JILL. *Please*, sweetheart... While I was in hospital—the other mothers—they all talked about things they wanted for their baby. They showed me catalogues I'd never even heard of.

OLLIE. Here we go.

JILL. Wonderful catalogues full of wonderful things—A ceiling made of lights and sounds.

OLLIE. Lights and sounds?!

JILL. It's called *The Celestial Ceiling Cerebral Enhancer*. It improves babies' intelligence. You want Benjy to go to university, don't you?

OLLIE. Of course I do but—

JILL. And a wall-to-wall aquarium.

OLLIE. In a nursery?!

JILL. Downstairs.

OLLIE. I hate aquariums.

JILL. I've seen the perfect cocktail cabinet too.

OLLIE. We don't even drink.

JILL. Our *neighbours* will. I want us to have soirées.

OLLIE. Soirées?!

JILL. Dinner parties.

OLLIE. And all this is for *Benjy*, is it?

JILL. Ollie, we are in a property hotspot. You said that yourself. You know what that means. It means our neighbours will get richer and richer. They'll have better bathrooms than ours. Better kitchens than ours. They'll be able to buy their children everything they want. Do you want Benjamin to grow up feeling like a second-class citizen in his own neighbourhood?

OLLIE. Of course I don't.

JILL. I know what's bothering you. You don't want to be out every night. You want to be snuggled up on the sofa watching telly with me and the baby.

OLLIE. I do.

JILL. That's what *I* want too. So I've thought of a way to speed things up.

OLLIE. "Speed things up"?

JILL. One of the mothers in the maternity ward had her baby in a birthing pool. She asked me and a few others to be there with her. She joked how we could all get in the water. And that's when I had

the idea... Shall I carry on?

OLLIE. Can I stop you?

JILL. *Our* bath—we could get four in there easy. Perhaps five. And the wand—it's electric. So stick it in the water and—BZZZZZ!

*Slight pause.*

OLLIE. ...One problem.

JILL. I know what you're going to say.

OLLIE. I thought you would.

JILL. "If they're all magic-wanded in the same place how am I going to get *five* renovators to different parts of the house in—?"

OLLIE. Sixty-six point six seconds. I'll never do it.

JILL. Not *alone* you won't.

OLLIE. Are you...are you saying what I think you're—

JILL. I'll help you.

OLLIE. But I thought you—

JILL. Baby's changed everything!

OLLIE. Jill, dragging a body is not easy.

JILL. It can't be trickier than changing the duvet cover.

OLLIE. It can be *heavier*.

JILL. Then you'll just have to make sure some of the renovators are...smaller framed.

OLLIE. "Smaller framed"?... You don't mean...?

JILL. What?

OLLIE. ...Children.

JILL. *Children?! For the love of God, Ollie, of course I don't mean children.*

OLLIE. Sorry, sorry.

JILL. I'm a *mother!*

OLLIE. It was a stupid thing to say.

JILL. It reveals more about *you* than it does about *me*.

OLLIE. I know. My mind. Ugh! Yours? Yum. Okay?

JILL. Thank you.

*Slight pause.*

OLLIE. *If we're going to fill the bath with renovators...*

JILL. Mmm?

OLLIE. Then on any one night... It'll have to be same-sex renovation.

JILL. Of course! This is a *respectable* home.

OLLIE. So...on the nights it *is* only women—

JILL. I'll take them up to the bath.

OLLIE. You'll have to get them naked and then you'll—

JILL. I *know* what I have to do, Ollie. It's fine.

OLLIE. Okay.

JILL. Okay.

OLLIE. And... I will *not* be out *every* night?

JILL. No, no.

OLLIE. I *mean* it, Jill.

JILL. I mean it too. You'll just be out...

OLLIE. Mmm?

JILL. Once a week?

OLLIE. Once a month.

JILL. Once a fortnight.

OLLIE. ...When shall we start?

JILL. Oh, there's no rush?... Tonight.

OLLIE. "Hello, I'm Father Oliver. Let me offer you food and—"

JILL. Welcome!

OLLIE. Sister Jillian! We have three dear friends in need of succour.

JILL. Only three?

OLLIE. Sister Jillian always wants to help as many as possible.

JILL. God bless you, few as you are.

OLLIE. This is Margaret, Iris...and this "smaller-framed" bag of skin and bone is Terri.

JILL. Perfect—What I mean is...

OLLIE. Perfect to feed up with lots and lots of food.

JILL. Of course. Bless them.

OLLIE. Bless them.

JILL. Bless them. Would you like a bath, my children?

OLLIE. I bet they would. Would you take them up, Sister?

JILL. Of course. Oh, Father! Will you keep an eye on the beef and dumpling casserole I've got in the oven?

OLLIE. *Of course*, Sister Jillian.

JILL. This way, my children... Here's the bathroom. I'll just turn the water on. Take your clothes off. Would you like some bubble bath? We have lavender and jasmine—What's that? Oh, this thing. Yes, it does look like a magic wand, doesn't it.

OLLIE and JILL. BZZZZZ!

JILL. Champagne!

OLLIE. But we don't drink!

JILL. One glass! What harm can it do?

OLLIE. ...You're right. A toast.

JILL. Home sweet home.

JILL and OLLIE. Home sweet home.

**END**

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OLLIE. And that's how it went on.

JILL. Every fortnight—

OLLIE. Four or five renovations.

JILL. One time—Six.

OLLIE. Six is our record.

JILL. And—to be fair—the night we had six...well, it wasn't a total success, was it, sweetheart?

OLLIE. No, it wasn't.

JILL. Shall we tell them.

OLLIE. Yeah, why not.

JILL. Oh, it's *so* funny everyone.

OLLIE. We manage to get five out of the bath—

JILL. But the *sixth* renovator.

OLLIE. I couldn't get a grip.