
The World and its Arse

a play

by

David Muncaster

Cast:

Frank (Male, Eighties) Fidgets and talks to himself. Has Parkinson's Disease. Well Spoken.

Nurse (Female, Thirties) Friendly, stressed, professional.

Porter (Male, Forties) Uncompromisingly cheerful.

Brian (Male, Forties) Timid, put-upon.

Doctor (Male, Any age) Cold, busy.

Sister (Female, Any age) Cool, professional.

Len (Male, Seventies) Hardly conscious. Gentle.

Judith (Female, Forties) Brian's wife. Angry.

Maureen (Female, Seventies) Len's wife. Scared.

Rosie (Female, Forties) Len's daughter. Practical.

John (Male, Fifties) Frank's son. Menacing.

Victoria (Female, Teens) Brian's daughter. Astute.

Synopsis:

Frank's mind plays tricks on him as horrors from his past torment him. Len has nothing but memories. Brian doesn't know what he's got. He probably shouldn't even be there but he has nowhere else to go. A few days in an NHS ward give us a glimpse into the lives of a diverse set of people.

Scene One

A hospital ward. Three beds each with armchairs and cupboards. Curtains surround the centre bed. The bed to the right belongs to FRANK who is sitting in the armchair next to his bed. His speech is littered with pauses during which he fidgets or stares into space.

FRANK: Can you hear them?

Buggers. Clear off!

They think I can't hear them. I know they're there. I know you're there.

Buggers.

Using my yard. Doing their drugs and what have you.

Taking advantage. I'll put an end to it.

Yes me! Why not me? I can put an end to it.

Taking advantage. Yes you did. *(There are voices off.)* Clear off. Do you hear me? Clear off. *(More voices.)*

I'll have the police on you.

Do you hear me?

I'll speak to the police.

NURSE: *(Off)* Frank.

FRANK: Little buggers. Leave me alone.

NURSE: *(Off)* Frank. I'll be with you in a minute.

FRANK: You must think I'm soft. Clear off. Using my yard. Trying to frighten me. They are. They're trying to frighten me.

I'll give them something to think about. I can sort them out myself. I don't need any help. Don't need YOUR help.

Yes you! I'm talking to you. Don't look at your mother. What? What did you say? What?

That was a nasty trick you pulled. A nasty trick. *(Becomes distressed. Sings.)* Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature, O Thou of God and man the Son, Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honour, Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown. *(Tries to stand.)* Someone's glued this.

Would you believe it?

The buggers have glued this.

That's a nasty trick. A nasty trick they pulled. It's all... I can't...

NURSE: *(Off)* I'll be with you next, Frank.

FRANK: Fuck off.

NURSE: *(Off)* That's not very nice.

FRANK: You just fuck...

I won't...

Don't you come in here. Now, do you hear me?

NURSE: *(Enters)* Now, stop that. I won't have it, Frank. I won't have you talking to me like that.

FRANK: Oh. Sorry.

NURSE: That's better.

FRANK: I'm ever so sorry.

NURSE: All right, Frank. Now be quiet a minute, I won't be long.

NURSE exits. FRANK fidgets in his chair.

FRANK: Yes, you can laugh. Taking advantage. What!

Who's bloody glued this? Oh bloody hell. *(Sings)* Breathe on me, breath of God, Fill me with life anew...

Oh, bloody hell.

I've got to get away from here. Thieves the lot of them. I'm an old man. I've got nothing. What do they want to steal from me for? What good is it to them?

No. I can't stay here.

I'll tell her when she comes.

It's all right. You can go. Yes, yes. I'll be all right. Don't worry. No, no.

Ah! Look at this. The bloody buggers. They've glued all this. What do you want to do that for?

You should be ashamed of yourself. Stealing from an old man. Yes, you.

Come here boy. I'm talking to you.

NURSE enters.

NURSE: Now then, Frank. I'm all yours.

FRANK: Eh?

NURSE: You pressed your buzzer. Don't you remember?

FRANK: Buzzer?

NURSE: You pressed your call button. Did you want something?

FRANK: Yes, I do. I do want something.

NURSE: Well, are you going to tell me or shall we play twenty questions?

FRANK: I'll tell you, yes, I'll tell you.

NURSE: Good. Go on then, Frank.

FRANK: I want my, my thing back.

NURSE: Your thing? Give us a clue then, mate. What thing?

FRANK: They're all bloody thieves round here. You can't leave anything. Someone will have it.

NURSE: What thing?

FRANK: Bloody buggers, they are.

NURSE: Who are?

FRANK: Them. All of them.

NURSE: You are going to need to be a bit more specific, mate.

FRANK: Eh?

NURSE: What have you lost, Frank?

FRANK: I haven't lost anything.

NURSE: No? Silly me. I thought you just said you had.

FRANK: It's been stolen.

NURSE: What's been stolen?

FRANK: That thing there. That frame. That's mine.

NURSE: The Zimmer frame? That's not yours, Frank.

FRANK: Yes, that.

He...

He's stolen it.

NURSE: Who's stolen it? Len? Len hasn't stolen it, it belongs to him.

FRANK: It's mine that is. He doesn't need it. He's got one.

NURSE: Yes, he has got one. That's it.

FRANK: It's mine.

NURSE: It isn't, Frank.

FRANK: What does he want to steal it for?

NURSE: Frank. Frank, listen to me. That is Len's frame. You don't have a frame. You don't need one.

FRANK: Len?

NURSE: Yes, Frank. It belongs to Len.

FRANK: Len?

NURSE: Yes. Len in the next bed.

FRANK: It belongs to Len?

NURSE: Yes. You don't need a frame. You can walk without one.

FRANK: Oh.

NURSE: That's right.

FRANK: Oh, I'm sorry.

NURSE: That's OK.

FRANK: I hope I haven't caused any trouble.

NURSE: No.

FRANK: I don't want to offend anyone.

NURSE: Yes, well. Stop it with the swearing, that might help.

FRANK: Eh? Swearing? Who's swearing?

NURSE: Never mind, Frank. Do you want anything else while I'm here? Pedicure? Leg wax?

FRANK: Eh?

NURSE: See you later, Frank.

NURSE exits. FRANK fidgets.

FRANK: Taking advantage. Yes, you. I'm talking to you.

Don't look at your mother, she can't help you. That was a nasty trick you pulled. *(He fidgets.)*

Forty thousand pounds. It's a bloody joke. You're not leaving it like that. You can't leave it like that. Cowboys!

Well you are.

What the... Who's glued all this?

PORTER enters pushing BRIAN in a wheelchair. He stops at the bed next to the window.

PORTER: Here we are. Ground floor: perfumery, stationery and leather goods, wigs and haberdashery, kitchenware and food. Going up!

BRIAN is dressed in pyjamas and a dressing gown. He stands and puts the bag that had been on his lap on to the bed.

BRIAN: I told them, I could have walked.

PORTER: Can't have that. The goblins would be up in arms.

BRIAN: Goblins?

PORTER: Elf and safety.

BRIAN: Oh, I see.

PORTER: You got everything you need?

BRIAN: I think so.

PORTER: You haven't left anything on the other ward? Ipod?

BRIAN: Got it here.

PORTER: Louis Vuitton handbag? GHD straightener? Wonderbra?

BRIAN: Only at weekends.

PORTER: Set of encyclopedias?

BRIAN: I've decided to leave them behind for the other patients.

PORTER: How noble of you. Laptop? Mobile?

BRIAN: In the bag.

PORTER: Not that you are allowed to use your mobile of course.

BRIAN: Well... I mean. I go into the TV room to use it, of course.

PORTER: Don't worry. Nurses are on theirs all the time. I didn't tell you that, though.

BRIAN: Oh, right.

PORTER: Make yourself comfortable. Nurse will be along in a minute. (*PORTER addresses FRANK.*)
You all right there Frank?

FRANK: Eh?

PORTER: You all right?

FRANK: I'm all right.

PORTER: Tell you what, Frank. I had a bit of a mishap on Ward 7, mate. This guy is on a life support machine...

FRANK: Life support?

PORTER: Yeah, and I'm walking by and he shouts to me so I go over and he says 'turn it off.' I says 'no I can't' but he says, 'please, please just turn it off' and I says 'it isn't that bad is it?' and he says 'yes, just turn it off', I says 'I can't' and he says 'I can't do it myself, please do it for me' and I look into his sad, pleading eyes and I can't stand it any more so I do it, I turn off his life support. I know I shouldn't but I could see him suffer so I stand there watching him for a minute, see the life draining from his face and I can't bear to look so I turn around. That's when I noticed the telly.

FRANK: Telly?

PORTER: Yeah. The telly.

PORTER starts to laugh. FRANK smiles and then begins to laugh himself. We are not sure whether he has actually understood the joke.

PORTER: Here let me make you a bit more comfortable.

PORTER adjusts FRANK's blanket etc. BRIAN peers round the curtained bed to address FRANK.

BRIAN: Hello there.

FRANK: Eh?

BRIAN: I'm Brian.

FRANK: Brian?

BRIAN: Yes.

FRANK: You're not Brian.

PORTER: You tell him, Frank.

NURSE enters.

NURSE: Mr Taylor?

BRIAN: Yes.

NURSE: I'm Kim. You've come from Ward Six, I believe.

BRIAN: Yes, third ward I've been in this week.

NURSE: Yes, it's always a struggle for beds. Look, I'll come and get you sorted in a bit. There's one or two things I have to do. Just make yourself comfortable.

As NURSE exits she addresses PORTER.

NURSE: Thanks, Porter. Next time check in with me please.

PORTER: Whatever you say, Nurse Kim. (*He winks at BRIAN.*) See you later, Frank. Take care, mate.

PORTER exits. BRIAN produces an iPod, plugs in his earpiece and lies on his bed.

NURSE: (*Off*) Oh, Dr Samuel, could I just...

DOCTOR enters and goes behind the curtain of the centre bed.

DOCTOR: Mr Wilson. I'm Doctor Samuel. How are you feeling? Mr Wilson, where is your cannula? Oh, really.

DOCTOR exits. Voices off, then DOCTOR returns with SISTER. They go behind the curtain.

DOCTOR: It's not good enough.

SISTER: He must have pulled it out.

DOCTOR: Of course he pulled it out, but why didn't anyone notice?

SISTER: It's a bit difficult with the curtain around him.

DOCTOR: Yes but *why* has he got the curtain round him?

SISTER: I thought you had requested it.

DOCTOR: Me?

SISTER: Didn't you?

DOCTOR: Why would I want you to curtain off my patient?

SISTER: Don't ask me, Doctor.

SISTER draws the curtain back to reveal LEN who is apparently sleeping. DOCTOR's pager beeps.

DOCTOR: Get a cannula on him, he needs saline.

DOCTOR exits.

SISTER: Yes, Dr Samuel.

SISTER exits.

FRANK: They've glued it all up. All round here.

Buggers.

BRIAN removes his earplugs.

BRIAN: Did you say something?

FRANK: Eh?

BRIAN: Did you speak?

FRANK: I spoke. Yes I spoke.

BRIAN: Right. I've come up from Ward Six. Ward Eleven before that. Waiting to see a Urologist. They seem to be a bit of a rare species. Been here a week and haven't spotted one yet. By the time I get to see one I won't have whatever it was that I came in with. I'm not even sure I've got it now. Whatever it is. Have you been in long?

FRANK: Too long.

BRIAN: Well, any time in hospital is too long isn't it?

FRANK: Not when you're old.

BRIAN: You like it then?

FRANK: Eh?

BRIAN: You don't mind being here.

FRANK: Here?

BRIAN: Yes.

FRANK: I'm here. Yes.

BRIAN: Right.

FRANK: I was always very active, you know.

BRIAN: Oh, really.

FRANK: English and P.E. Funny combination. People used to say.

BRIAN: You were a teacher?

FRANK: Healthy minds and healthy bodies you see.

BRIAN: Can't be bad.

FRANK: Give them a proper start.

BRIAN: Not like that now eh? Don't even teach them grammar any more. When I see some of the stuff my Vicky hands in, doesn't even make sense, but her teachers seem happy enough with it. Pages upon pages without any punctuation. How can anyone read that?

FRANK: I know you, don't I?

BRIAN: I don't think so.

FRANK: You were one of my lads.

BRIAN: At your school you mean? No. I'm not from round here. I moved with work.

FRANK: Yes. I remember you. Always were cheeky.

Back of the classroom. Hiding behind the lid of your desk.

Smirking. Passing notes around.

BRIAN: You're thinking of someone else.

FRANK: I knew you wouldn't amount to much.

Call that a conservatory? It's a bloody state.

Try to cheat an old man would you?

How much? That's more than I paid for the house.

Bloody buggers.

NURSE enters and closes the curtains around LEN staying on the inside.

NURSE: Right, Len. Going to put a new cannula in. No taking this one out all right? Won't take a sec. Give me your arm then. That's it. Now a little scratch. There we are. Didn't feel a thing did you? Right, let's get you hooked up again. You need this. This is your saline. You need it because you're not eating. Right. No taking that out. Are you listening? Right.

NURSE emerges from the curtains, leaving them drawn. She exits.

BRIAN: It's all go isn't it?

FRANK: I beg your pardon.

BRIAN: I said it's all go. They're very busy.

FRANK: They should be.

BRIAN: Do you reckon?

FRANK: I've got Parkinson's.

BRIAN: Um. Oh. Have you?

FRANK: So they said.

BRIAN: I see. So you know what's wrong.

FRANK: What's wrong? What does he mean, what's wrong?

BRIAN: I don't even know. Bit of pain. Bit of blood when I pee. They bring me in here to be looked at but there doesn't seem to be anyone to do any looking. No sign of the lesser spotted Urologist.

An alarm sounds off.

FRANK: Now you'll get it. Hear that? Yes. They're coming for you now. Yes, I did call them. You see? Don't look so smart now do you. Eh?

You can try to hide your...

What? Don't you bring your drugs in my yard. Do you hear?

What?

Oh, bloody hell. Who's glued this?

Oh, you nasty buggers.

SISTER enters.

SISTER: What are you on about, Frank?

FRANK: Someone has glued all this.

SISTER: All what?

FRANK: All this. This here.

SISTER: What? The chair? The chair needs to be glued. It would fall apart otherwise. Now then, Mr Taylor. How are we doing?

BRIAN: Well, Do you mind if I could ask you something.

SISTER: Fire away.

BRIAN: I was just wondering if you knew when I would get seen.

SISTER: Seen?

BRIAN: By a doctor.

SISTER: Haven't you been seen?

BRIAN: Not as such. I've been sent for tests. X ray, Ultrasound. But nobody has actually seen me.

SISTER: You're under Dr Lyle. He only does three days a week.

BRIAN: What? But I've already been here five days, surely he must have been in at some point.

SISTER: I wouldn't know, Mr Taylor

BRIAN: Is he in today?

SISTER: I don't believe he is.

BRIAN: Is there no one else I can see?

SISTER: Doctors don't like it if we take patients off them. But, I'll see what I can do.

BRIAN: Thank you.

SISTER: Has she done your vitals?

BRIAN: Not yet.

SISTER: Sorry, Mr Taylor. We're a bit stretched.

SISTER exits.

FRANK: Who is she?

BRIAN: What's that?

FRANK: Her. Who does she think she is?

BRIAN: She's the ward sister.

FRANK: Is she now?

BRIAN: You can tell by the uniform. The darker the blue, the more senior they are. Or maybe the word I should use is superior. More fitting.

FRANK: She's your sister?

BRIAN: No. She not my sister. She's the senior nurse.

FRANK: Oh.

BRIAN: She's in charge of the other nurses.

FRANK: I thought you said she was your sister.

BRIAN: No. She's the ward sister.

FRANK: Eh?

NURSE enters.

NURSE: Right, Mr Taylor. Time to do your vitals.

BRIAN: Please, call me Brian.

During the following NURSE takes BRIAN's "vitals", blood pressure, pulse, respiratory and body temperature.

NURSE: OK.

BRIAN: Can I call you Kim?

NURSE: Of course.

BRIAN: I don't think Sister is very happy with me.

NURSE: Really?

BRIAN: The thing is, I feel like a bit of a fraud, Kim.

NURSE: Why's that?

BRIAN: Well, I'm not really ill am I?

NURSE: Best to get you checked out though. Blood in your urine isn't it?

BRIAN: It was. Seems to have cleared up now.

NURSE: What are you doing? Putting the bottles in our room for testing?

BRIAN: I have been doing that, yes.

NURSE: Well, carry on for now.

BRIAN: Sister said Dr Lyle only works three days a week.

NURSE: That's right.

BRIAN: And he's not in today.

NURSE: I think he is, as it happens.

BRIAN: Really?

NURSE: I think so.

BRIAN: Will he come to see me then? I mean, do you think he might?

NURSE: I'll let his secretary know you've moved down here. Hopefully, he'll be along later.

NURSE records BRIAN's results on his chart.

BRIAN: Everything OK?

NURSE: Yes, Brian. We must be treating you well.

NURSE exits with the trolley. BRIAN looks at FRANK who is fidgeting as usual. He puts in his earphones and lies on his bed. PORTER enters with a wheelchair.

PORTER: Taxi for Mr Taylor. Calling Mr Taylor, your time is up. Oh, that can't be right.

BRIAN: What?

PORTER: Brian Taylor. Ward 12 to Ward 6.

BRIAN: I've just come from Ward 6.

PORTER: I know you have. I brought you, remember?

BRIAN: There must be some mix up.

PORTER: Don't worry, I'll sort it. Someone's got their wires crossed, that's all. I'm not taking you back, that's for sure.

BRIAN: No, please don't.

PORTER: No worries. You'll be all right here. Best ward in the hospital.

BRIAN: Is it?

PORTER: I mean, it is the same as all the others but it, er has its compensations, if you know what I mean.

NURSE enters.

NURSE: What are you doing here?

PORTER: Lovely to see you too. We were just talking about you.

NURSE: Nice things, I hope.

PORTER: Naturally.

NURSE: So, apart from discussing me with one of my patients, what are you doing here?

PORTER: Oh, just one of my wild goose chases.

NURSE: Right, well if you've nothing to do you can help me move Mrs Harris? Come on.

PORTER: Your wish is my command. (*Nurse exits. To BRIAN.*) What's the difference between a joke and a temperature? A nurse can take a temperature.

PORTER exits.

BRIAN: Which way are the loos mate?

FRANK: What?

BRIAN: The toilet. I need the toilet.

FRANK: Toilet. Just there (*He points.*)

BRIAN: Oh, right. Cheers.

BRIAN exits taking a urine bottle with him.

FRANK: (*Gently*) They've glued it from the top, right down to the bottom.

Every inch.

Ee dear. What a thing to do.

Ee, fancy that.

Scene Two

BRIAN is sitting up in his bed listening to his iPod. FRANK is in his chair, asleep. LEN is in his chair, awake but his mind is, as usual, elsewhere. As he sits he gradually slides down in the chair until he almost comes off. At this point he will shout 'Oh bugger' and hold himself in place until somebody props him back up. BRIAN's wife, JUDITH, arrives.

JUDITH: You might have told me you'd moved.

BRIAN: (*Removing his earphones.*) I did.

JUDITH: You did not.

BRIAN: I did. I sent you a text.

JUDITH: What good is a text? You know I don't switch my phone on.

BRIAN: And I told you that you need to, whilst I'm in here.

JUDITH: What for? So I can drop everything and come running whenever you need me?

BRIAN: Like you'd do that.

JUDITH: The world doesn't revolve around you know, Brian.

BRIAN: OK. Whatever.

JUDITH: What's wrong with giving me a ring if you need me, anyway? The home phone is always on.

BRIAN: We're not supposed to use mobiles. I turned mine on, sent you a text and turned it off again.

JUDITH: You could have used the payphone.

BRIAN: Look. I told you to keep your mobile turned on. It is a perfectly reasonable request. It's not my fault if you ignore me.

JUDITH: Anyone would think you didn't want me to visit.

BRIAN: It's up to you. I don't care if you come or not. Why have you come, anyway?

JUDITH: Don't worry, it's not a social call.

BRIAN: So I gathered. We're past that. I expect that you are quite pleased not to have me in your way.

JUDITH: You never were in the way, Brian. In fact you were never there at all. That's our problem.

BRIAN: You've just come to have a row, is that it?

JUDITH: You started it.

BRIAN: No I didn't.

JUDITH: Anyway. I don't intend to stay long. I just need to talk to you about Victoria.

BRIAN: What's wrong? Is she OK? What's happened?

JUDITH: I had another letter from the school.

BRIAN: Oh.

JUDITH: They want us to go in to see them.

BRIAN: Well, I'd love to, of course, but...

JUDITH: Oh, don't be pathetic. I haven't come to ask you to hold my hand whilst I go to see the headmaster. I am quite capable of going on my own and we both know what he is going to say, don't we? We know what the problem is, Brian. We've talked about it often enough. She has become disruptive at school because of her disruptive home life. She sees us, at each other's throats all the time, she can't concentrate on her homework, she gets into trouble, she becomes disruptive.

BRIAN: Judith, we have agreed that it is best for us to split up. Best for us, and best for Vicky. We've talked about it long and hard and in an uncharacteristic incident of actually being on the same fucking wavelength, for once, we decided on the way forward. I'll find myself somewhere to go and between us, like sensible adults, we'll sort out how and when I see my daughter. Isn't that what we decided? No need to hand over our hard earned cash to solicitors when we are both, usually, capable of being rational without professional help. But my coming in here has made it difficult. We are just going to have to be patient. As soon as I am home I will start looking. Surely you don't expect me to be searching for a flat from my hospital bed?

JUDITH: You don't need a flat to move out. You could stay with a friend couldn't you? You do have friends?

BRIAN: You're not serious?

JUDITH: Even a lowlife like you can have friends.

BRIAN: You expect me to find a sofa to sleep on after I leave here?

JUDITH: It makes perfect sense. I think it would be best if you didn't come back to the house.

BRIAN: I don't believe this. Have you no feelings?

JUDITH: She has already got used to you not being around. Not that you were ever there anyway, but you know what I mean. Vicky has now adjusted to the fact that you don't live with us. We should make the most of the situation. It will only upset her if you came back home again.

BRIAN: I don't believe I'm hearing this. How can you be so heartless? We still don't know what's wrong with me. I could be seriously ill here. Have you considered that?

LEN: Oh, bugger.

JUDITH: What's wrong with him?

BRIAN: He slides out of the chair. A nurse will come and prop him back up in a minute. Don't you think I've got enough to worry about without you marching in here and telling me that you are throwing me out?

JUDITH: Why? You're not really ill are you? Seriously ill, my arse. There's nothing wrong with you.

BRIAN: I'm in hospital, Judith.

JUDITH: Yes, but you've been OK since you came in. A bit of blood in your piss, that's all it was.

BRIAN: We don't know what it was.

JUDITH: Bloody typical of you. Only you could spend a week in hospital without anyone seeing you.

NURSE enters. There is a tense silence between BRIAN and JUDITH until she leaves.

NURSE: Come on then Len. Let's be having you.

NURSE props LEN up and exits.

LEN: Thank you.

BRIAN: I've been having tests.

JUDITH: Yeah, yeah. I'm sure you are of academic interest but if there was anything wrong with you you'd have seen a doctor by now. These people know what they are doing, Brian. They know when someone is seriously ill and they deal with it. They don't shunt them round from ward to ward because nobody wants them.

BRIAN: Bring her with you tonight.

JUDITH: What makes you think I'm coming tonight?

BRIAN: I want to speak to her. Send her on the bus if you don't want to come.

JUDITH: You think I'd let our daughter come all the way here on her own on the bus? It's a good job one of us is responsible Brian.

BRIAN: Then bring her. I want to see her.

JUDITH: Oh you do, do you? Well maybe we should have that conversation, about how and when you see your daughter, right now because I'm beginning to think that the less she sees of you the better it will be for her.

BRIAN: What?

JUDITH: Actually, she hasn't asked about you once since you've been in here.

BRIAN: I don't believe you.

JUDITH: We are getting on so well without you why change a winning formula?

BRIAN: You wouldn't try to stop me from seeing Vicky!

JUDITH: I have to think what is best for her.

BRIAN: Oh, of course. I can see now that I've been looking at this from the wrong perspective.

JUDITH: What?

BRIAN: Yes, we have to do what is best for Vicky. In that case why don't *you* go and sleep on someone's sofa?

JUDITH: We agreed that you would leave.

BRIAN: I thought it would be easier. That it would disrupt her less. But don't you dare suggest that she is better off with you than she would be with me.

JUDITH: So what? Do you intend to parade all your girlfriends in front of her?

BRIAN: Here we go.

JUDITH: If you think that slut is coming anywhere near my daughter you are very much mistaken.

BRIAN: We've been through this a hundred times. Can't you give it a rest?

JUDITH: Give it a rest? Were you thinking about giving it a rest whilst you were shagging her?

BRIAN: Judith, I've told you...

JUDITH: Oh yeah. You were both drunk, it's just one of those things.

BRIAN: That isn't what I said.

JUDITH: I can't remember what you said. You've told me that many lies they all merge into one. One big lie. That about sums you up, Brian.

BRIAN: We. Did. Not. Have. Sex. How many times do I have to tell you?

JUDITH: You expect me to believe that?

BRIAN: Oh, I don't care what you believe.

JUDITH: You just held hands, is that it?

BRIAN: She just needed someone to talk to.

JUDITH: I'm not interested, Brian.

BRIAN: I deceived you. I admitted that. I told you I was some place else when I was with her. That was wrong. I should have told you the truth.

JUDITH: Do you even know what the truth is?

BRIAN: Well, maybe our marriage was over anyway. Why do you think I had to lie to you, have you thought of that?

JUDITH: Are you saying it's my fault?

BRIAN: One time I might have been able to say to you, "I've got a friend who needs a chat". You would have understood, you would have trusted me. What happened? What happened to that trust?

JUDITH: I can't believe you are still claiming innocence. Admit it, Brian, there's no point in lying about it now.

BRIAN: Exactly. That's why you should believe me. I've nothing to gain. We're splitting up. I'm moving out. Why should I lie about it? Nothing happened.

JUDITH: Well, we'll see.

BRIAN: Yes, we will see. There is no one else. There never has been. There never will be.

JUDITH: You're not going to worm your way back in.

BRIAN: I don't want to. I'm not trying to. Judith, you are the only woman I ever wanted. I just want you to know the truth.

JUDITH: Why?

BRIAN: I'm not a bad man, Judith. I think you know that really. I don't know what happened to us. Before all this, I mean. I just...

They look at each other. For a moment there is a hint of tenderness, but it is not to be.

JUDITH: I can't come tonight anyway. I've got something on.

BRIAN: What?

JUDITH: None of your business. I'll bring her tomorrow. Or the next day. If you are still here. Then you have to tell her that you are not coming home.

BRIAN: I don't think that is practical.

JUDITH: Of course it is practical. Just do it, Brian. Call one of your mates. I'm going. I hate this place.

BRIAN: She does ask about me, doesn't she?

JUDITH: Yeah, Of course she does.

BRIAN: I could text her.

JUDITH: Brian, I know you've sent her texts already. She's told me that she has had texts from you. So long as you stick to "Moved wards again, LOL", you can text her as much as you like.

BRIAN: She doesn't reply.

JUDITH: She never has any credit, and I'm not topping her phone up.

BRIAN: But anyway. That's what I meant. I can text her to pass on a message. You don't have to turn your phone on.

JUDITH: Oh, how generous. Yeah. Let her know which one of your sad mates you going to move in with.

BRIAN: Judith!

JUDITH: OK. Sorry! Look, I'm going.

BRIAN: Thanks for your visit.

JUDITH: Don't be sarcastic, Brian. It doesn't suit you.

JUDITH exits. BRIAN puts his headphones in. MAUREEN, LEN's wife and ROSIE, his daughter arrive. LEN is slumped down in the chair.

MAUREEN: Oh, Len. How have you managed this? Give me a hand to get him upright, Rosie.

ROSIE: Don't you think we should get a nurse, Mum? It's their job.

MAUREEN: Oh, what nonsense. Here, grab an arm.

They lift LEN back to a sitting position.

LEN: Thank you.

ROSIE: Hello Dad. *(She kisses him on the cheek. MAUREEN fetches a chair and sits next to her husband. ROSIE sits on the bed.)*

MAUREEN: How have you been love? It's nice to see you sitting up. They leave you in that bed too much. You'll get bed sores.

ROSIE: You should tell them, Mum.

MAUREEN: No. They're very busy. I'm sure they do their best.

ROSIE: It is their jobs to look after their patients. Their duty.

MAUREEN: You tell them, then.

ROSIE: Do you want a drink Dad? *(She pours one.)* Here you are, have a drink.

ROSIE passes her dad a drink which he shakily takes and sips at. He holds the cup out for her take back which she does.

MAUREEN: So, what have you been up to, Len? What have you been doing?

LEN: Sitting here.

ROSIE: Nice one, Dad. Sitting there, Mum. That's all he can do.

MAUREEN: Well, I don't know. He might have been watching TV.

ROSIE: Dad doesn't watch TV.

MAUREEN: He might do.

ROSIE: Do you want to watch TV, Dad? I can get you one of them cards if you like? Would you like that?

LEN: A card?

ROSIE: To watch TV.

LEN: Eh?

ROSIE: They sell them in machines outside. You put them in the TV and you can see the programmes.

LEN: I don't want to watch TV.

ROSIE: Told you.

MAUREEN: Right. Well let's see what you're having for dinner. Pass that sheet, Rosie. *(She does.)* Oh, you haven't filled it in. You never fill in your dinner sheet. How do they know what to bring you if you don't fill in your sheet?

LEN: It all tastes the same anyway.

ROSIE is amused by this.

MAUREEN: Right. To start. Your choice is tomato soup with a roll or orange juice. Orange juice isn't a starter is it? It's a drink, I'll put soup down. Main course. Shepherd's Pie, chicken, or vegetable curry?

LEN: Curry.

MAUREEN: I don't think you want curry.

ROSIE: Let him have it, if that is what he wants.

MAUREEN: It's always given him the runs.

ROSIE: I've done curry. He's not had the runs with my curry.

MAUREEN: I'll tick shepherd's pie. Now then, chocolate pudding, yoghurt or fruit? No contest there, eh Len? Right. That's done. You're eating better than me.

ROSIE: He's not eating at all, Mum. That's why he has to be on a drip.

MAUREEN: I'm not surprised if he doesn't tell them what he wants. You have to tick the boxes, Len.

LEN: Bugger!

MAUREEN and ROSIE prop him up again.

MAUREEN: It's not like they're huge portions that they give you. Not enough to feed a mouse. Wait until I get you back home, Len. You'll soon be eating properly when I'm doing the cooking, won't you? I'm doing bacon chops tonight. You'd have eaten that all right.

ROSIE: I thought you were coming back with me tonight.

MAUREEN: It's all right, Rosie. You can drop me back home.

ROSIE: Ah, mum. I thought I was cooking for you.

MAUREEN: It's very kind, love, but I can cope on my own.

ROSIE: I know you can cope, mum. I isn't a question of whether you can cope. It just makes sense if you come back with me and Steve can drop you home after dinner.

MAUREEN: But he doesn't want to be bothered with all that. He's been at work all day. He just wants to come home and have his meal, he doesn't want to go out again to take me home.

ROSIE: He doesn't mind. And if he is tired, I can always take you home myself. Tell her, Dad.

MAUREEN: Are you sure, dear?

ROSIE: Of course. What's brought this on, Mum?

MAUREEN: I don't want to be a nuisance.

ROSIE: Oh, Mum. You're not a nuisance. We like having you round. Tell her to stop being silly, Dad.

MAUREEN: I think he is off to a world of his own.

ROSIE: Are you still with us, Dad?

MAUREEN: Len.

LEN: Eh?

MAUREEN: Rosie was talking to you.

LEN: Oh.

MAUREEN: What are you thinking about?

LEN: You.

MAUREEN: Me?

ROSIE: That's nice.

MAUREEN: What are you thinking about me?

LEN: I love you.

MAUREEN was not expecting this but both she and ROSIE are touched.

MAUREEN: And I love you, Len.

MAUREEN takes LEN's hand. ROSIE kisses his forehead. It is very tender.

ROSIE: You old sweetheart.

MAUREEN: You always were a romantic at heart, weren't you love?

LEN: I should think so.

MAUREEN: You should think so? Ha, ha. Oh, Len. You're everything. You are coming home soon?

ROSIE: Don't upset yourself, Mum.

MAUREEN: I don't like being on my own.

ROSIE: Come on, Mum. You have us. Why don't you stay tonight?

MAUREEN: No, dear.

The end of visiting time bell goes.

ROSIE: Oh, there we are. Time's up, Dad.

LEN: Eh?

MAUREEN: We'll see you tomorrow love.

ROSIE: Unless you want to come tonight, Mum.

MAUREEN: I don't think so.

ROSIE: That's an idea. Come home with me. Have your dinner then we'll come back for Visiting tonight. Then you can stay the night with us.

MAUREEN: It's too much messing about.

ROSIE: It's no messing about. I can lend you a nightie if that's what you are worried about.

MAUREEN: Thank you for the offer, it's very kind, but your dad likes his routine. It would confuse him if we came tonight.

ROSIE: OK. Well, let me know if you change your mind. You will come for dinner, anyway?

MAUREEN: Yes, I'll come for dinner.

MAUREEN and ROSIE say their goodbyes. SISTER and NURSE enter and put LEN in his bed. SISTER exits. NURSE approaches FRANK.

NURSE: Are you all right in your chair, Frank? Eh? You are? Good job seeing as she's bugged off, I suppose.

FRANK: Eh?

NURSE: You all right there, Frank?

FRANK: Am I?

NURSE: Yes, are you?

FRANK: Yes.

NURSE: Yes. Good.

NURSE draws LEN's curtains and exits.

FRANK: You have to wonder sometimes. Who was she?

Her.

That nurse.

The way she talks to me.

I'll tell you who she reminds me of.

That girl. You know.

The one that was, oh. She came back to the school after she'd left to work there.

After she finished as a pupil she came back.

Not teaching. More, helping out, you know.

Pleasant girl.

JOHN, FRANK's son enters. He has a slightly menacing nature. He takes a chair to FRANK's bedside and sits on it the wrong way round.

JOHN: All right, Dad.

FRANK: What?

JOHN: Surprised? Not seen me in a while, have you?

FRANK: What do you want?

JOHN: That's not very nice. Not very welcoming. Aren't you pleased that your only son has come to visit you in hospital?

FRANK: Eh?

JOHN: It's a bit of a shit hole this, isn't it? You should have gone private. Do you want me to pay for you to go private? I could you know.

FRANK: I don't want your money.

JOHN: That's not very nice is it? Not a very nice way to speak to your son. You do recognise me don't you? You know who I am?

FRANK: I know who you are.

JOHN: Good. And don't you forget it. No, you should go private. Be a lot nicer. Wouldn't have to share. I could arrange that for you.

FRANK: Why have you come? Where's your mother?

JOHN: Mam? Oh, she doesn't know I'm here. No one knows I'm here. Guy on the end is deafening himself with his iPod. Guy in the next bed is probably dead. It's just you and me.

FRANK: What do you want?

JOHN: Just a chat, Dad. Just a chat.

The DOCTOR enters and sees LEN's curtains are drawn. He looks at the chart on the end of LEN's bed. He exits speaking to JOHN as he goes.

DOCTOR: Visiting time is over.

JOHN: Did you see that? Did you hear him? The way he just spoke to me. Like I'm a piece of shit he has just scraped off the bottom of his shoe. Bunch of Nazis, the lot of them. You don't get that if you go private.

SISTER enters, tuts and opens LEN's curtains. She speaks to John.

SISTER: I'm sorry, visiting time has just finished. You'll have to come back tonight.

JOHN: Oh, I'm sorry, nurse. I've driven up all the way from Southampton and I have to get back tonight. I got delayed on the motorway. Can't I just have ten minutes?

SISTER: Well, all right. Ten minutes, but the doctors will be doing their rounds soon so you'll have to leave if they need to speak to Frank.

JOHN: Oh thank you. That's very kind.

SISTER exits.

JOHN: Did you hear that? She called you Frank! No respect.

FRANK: I don't want you here.

JOHN: Ahh, Dad. I've come all the way from Southampton to see you. Let me stay with you.

FRANK: What do you want with me?

JOHN: I just want to spend some time with my old Dad. What's wrong with that? Catch up on the gossip. I'm sure you've got plenty of gossip. Me first though; I've got so much to tell you. Business is going really well. The digital switch-over was such a boon to the industry: it's amazing how gullible people can be. Even now I use it as a reason why people need a new aerial. Stupid cunts. Most of them don't think to ask me how come it's worked fine up to now, and if they do I just tell them it's because there has been a grace period. "Haven't you seen the adverts?" I ask them, and they say "Oh, yes." even though I've just made them up. The best one though, Dad? Are you listening? You'll like this. Some old twat rings me up and says he's getting a fuzzy picture and I say I'll come round and when he gives me his address I realise I've already got an appointment to see one of his neighbours. So, I go and see the neighbour first and flog him a new aerial. Two hundred and twenty quid, thank you very much. I sling his old aerial in the van and drive all of fifty yards to this other twat's house and flog him a new aerial as well. Another two hundred and twenty quid - that's four hundred and forty in less than an hour but here's the genius of it all. I flogged the second twat the first twat's old aerial. Can you believe it? There was nowt wrong with it of course, there never is. Aren't you proud of me? Entrepreneurial spirit, they call that. That's how come I can afford to pay for you to go private. That's the difference between you and me, you see. One of the differences. So. What have you been up to then? Dad? Come on, I'm all ears.

FRANK: Get out of here.

JOHN: What? You don't want to tell me? Come on. I'm interested. How have you been filling your time? Oh. You've not been up to your old tricks have you? Have you? 'Cos you know what? I've heard that you have. That's what I've heard. Even in here. In a hospital. Is that right?

FRANK is starting to get upset.

JOHN: Got to hand it to you, you're consistent. You know what you like, don't you, Dad? You have your own tastes. Unconventional. Is that what you would call it? You don't let the fact that you're so fucking ancient you should be fucking dead by now get in the way. Never mind the fact that you're in a shit hole NHS hospital 'cos Mam can't cope with you at home. Never mind the fact that you can't even take a piss any more. You sit there with a tube up your dick and your disgusting piss in a plastic bag for all the world to see but (*He thinks.*) but you are still a man of refinement aren't you, Dad? You still have your

preferences. Your little idiosyncrasies. It's a shame, though, that your preference is little girls isn't it, Dad? I mean, in a conventional society it is, shall we say, frowned upon but, probably, it is fine in the sick world that you live in. Nothing wrong with a bit of kiddy fiddling. Isn't that what you think? Haven't changed have you? A paedo in charge of a school! It's no surprise that you never wanted to retire. What do you do now? Do you sneak off to the kiddies ward in the middle of the night? Dragging your bag of piss with you. Is that how you get your kicks?

With a tremendous effort FRANK launches himself at John and they both end up on the floor. BRIAN hears the commotion and jumps up from his bed.

BRIAN: Jesus!

BRIAN goes to try to help FRANK as SISTER and NURSE also arrive. They get FRANK back in his chair where he sits sobbing. JOHN goes for FRANK.

JOHN: What the fuck do you think you're doing? I'll fucking kill you, you bastard. You think you have the right to attack me? After what you did?

BRIAN tries to restrain JOHN as PORTER arrives.

PORTER: Come on.

NURSE: Get him out of here.

PORTER: Come on.

FRANK: Miserere nobis, miserere nobis. *(Have mercy on us.)*

JOHN: He's a fucking nut case. What are you fucking talking about, you cunt?

PORTER: You'll have to come with me or I'll call security.

JOHN: It's him you want to lock up. He should have been put away years ago. Do you know what he did?

NURSE: I'll call security.

JOHN: Don't bother, I'm going. Hear that, Dad? They're going to call security for me!

JOHN frees himself from the clutches of BRIAN and PORTER and makes to exit.

JOHN: Just check his background. His fondness for little girls. See what sort of a man he is. Fucking perv. You won't feel so sorry for him then.

JOHN exits. SISTER follows. PORTER helps FRANK recover.

SISTER: I'll see you out.

FRANK: Miserere nobis.

NURSE: I'm so sorry Brian. We've never had anything like this happen before.

BRIAN: Not your fault. What it was all about?

NURSE: Thanks for your help. You shouldn't have got involved though.

BRIAN: Well I couldn't just sit there. I wish I hadn't had my earphones in. I might have been able to stop it sooner.

NURSE: You didn't hear any of it then?

BRIAN: Nothing before they both ended up on the floor. Did you?

NURSE: *(Quickly)* No.

BRIAN: From what I saw it looked like Frank launched himself at that guy.

NURSE: He should never have been allowed in here.

BRIAN: But, about what that guy was saying...

NURSE: At least we got it under control quickly.

PORTER: Lucky I was passing.

FRANK: Our Father. Who art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy name.

NURSE: Yes. Why were you passing?

PORTER: I've got a patient to move. *(He takes a note from his pocket and reads it. To Brian.)* Oh bollocks. Pardon my French. It's you again isn't it!

Scene Three

Curtains are drawn around LEN's bed. BRIAN is lying on his bed listening to his iPod. FRANK is in his chair.

FRANK: Bloody buggers.

Coming in my yard. I know who you are, you know.

I'll have the law onto you.

Don't think I won't.

I'm watching you. Watching all the time.

I see it all. See what you do.

BRIAN takes off iPod gets up and exits, speaking to FRANK on the way.

BRIAN: You all right mate?

FRANK: Eh? What does he mean?

You think you can pull one over me?

An old man?

Ee dear.

Bloody buggers. I can see you.

I didn't mean it, you know. No harm was meant.

I didn't do any harm. I saw her.

You understand that don't you? You know what I mean?

Ah, they've bloody glued all this. What? Why? What do they want to glue this for?

She's was all right. No harm done.

I saw her, you see. I could have taken it further. Perhaps I should have done.

I don't know.

I don't know.

But when it's one of your own. You think you can work it out.

No need for it now. It's all Facebooks.

Twitter and Facebooks.

BRIAN enters.

BRIAN: Facebook, Frank?

FRANK: Eh?

BRIAN: You on Facebook are you? Into all that are you? Social media.

FRANK: I know about Facebook.

BRIAN: You're full of surprises.

FRANK: Eh?

BRIAN: You're a bit of an enigma.

FRANK: Me?

BRIAN: What was that about yesterday?

FRANK: Yesterday?

BRIAN: Your visitor.

FRANK: He's a fool.

BRIAN: He's a maniac, I know that. Want to talk about it?

FRANK: He shouldn't be allowed in here.

BRIAN: I don't think he will be allowed in again.

BRIAN drags a visitor's chair over and sits with FRANK.

BRIAN: So. Frank. About what he was saying?

FRANK: They should have thrown away the key.

BRIAN: He's been inside?

FRANK: Not fit to be in society.

BRIAN: He's been in prison?

FRANK: He should have been.

BRIAN: What he was saying? About? Girls? You know, it was difficult to make out what he meant but... Well. I mean, he said... He suggested that there was a problem. With girls.

FRANK: I told him. You should be locked up. What he did.

BRIAN: Him?

FRANK: What?

BRIAN: He should be locked up? It was because... It's him?

FRANK: Him?

BRIAN: In prison. He should have gone to prison?

FRANK: Oh, yes.

BRIAN: Because of the, er, business with girls.

FRANK: Girls?

BRIAN: Your son.

FRANK: He's not my son.

BRIAN: No, well. I can understand you feeling like that.

FRANK: He's not my son.

BRIAN: You mean he really isn't your son? Who is he then?

FRANK: A father.

BRIAN: A father. Who's father? A father of one of the girls? *Who* should have gone to prison?

FRANK: I'm a father myself. Only had the one.

It's a boy! I always wanted a girl you know. But she wouldn't have any more.

Not going through that again.

It was difficult, you know.

Not the birth.

Well, yes. The birth, but what came after as well.

No more, she said.

No more.

BRIAN: My wife had a difficult time with Victoria. Came out backwards, you know. Different in your day, of course.

FRANK: She wanted to kill him. He's not mine she said. Not mine.

BRIAN: Oh right. Post Natal Depression.

FRANK: Eh?

BRIAN: After the birth. Your wife was depressed.

FRANK: She wasn't depressed.

BRIAN: No?

FRANK: After she found out what he did. She wanted to kill him.

BRIAN: Your son?

FRANK: He did that to you? I'll kill him.

He was always bad.

He thinks I don't know what he gets up to.

BRIAN: What did he get up to?

FRANK: Eh?

BRIAN: Your son. What did he get up to?

FRANK: My son? Do you know my son?

BRIAN: He was here yesterday. Him, yesterday. That was your son?

FRANK: Eh?

NURSE enters.

BRIAN: The guy here yesterday.

FRANK: What does he mean?

NURSE: He doesn't mean anything, Frank. He's just looking out for you.

FRANK: Looking out for me?

NURSE: That's it.

FRANK: I don't need a look out.

BRIAN: See you later, Frank.

BRIAN returns to his bed. NURSE tidies FRANK's bedding, opens the curtains around LEN's bed, which is unoccupied, and makes it up. She is cool with BRIAN - unhappy that he has been probing.

BRIAN: Is he doing OK? Len?

NURSE: I've not heard.

BRIAN: Will they keep him in intensive care now?

NURSE: Depends on the beds. Like everything else. If they are short of beds he'll come back here.

BRIAN: He gave us a bit of a fright last night. I thought we'd had enough drama for one day.

NURSE doesn't respond.

BRIAN: It was impressive though. How professional everyone became. Saved his life.

NURSE: That's what we are here for.

BRIAN: Bet you're glad it wasn't on your shift.

NURSE: We have to take what comes. Save a life, you're a hero: save a hundred lives, you're a nurse.

NURSE passes close to BRIAN as she is about to leave.

BRIAN: I assume that was his son last night.

NURSE: I believe so, yes.

BRIAN: What he was saying? Was it? I mean, is there any...

NURSE: I can't really talk about it.

BRIAN: I know but... That stuff he was saying. Was there anything in it? I mean, you never know do you? The thing is, I'm expecting a visit from my daughter and...

NURSE: She'll be perfectly safe.

BRIAN: That's not what I mean. I know. I know she'll be safe. But I don't want here her if he...

NURSE: Don't worry.

BRIAN: It's just that. The guy last night. I mean. Frank said something about a father. If the guy who came last night was the father of... I mean, if he wasn't Frank's son, but the father of someone who...

NURSE: Look. Don't worry about Frank. And his son won't be coming back.

BRIAN: You're sure it was his son?

NURSE: Yes.

BRIAN: And, what? Frank's son was accusing his dad of child abuse when it is actually himself?

NURSE: I really don't know very much about it. To put your mind at rest, there is nothing on Frank's records to say that he is a risk. OK? I shouldn't be telling you that, but I can see that you're concerned and I don't want you probing my patient.

BRIAN: No. of course. Sorry.

NURSE: It's OK.

NURSE exits. BRIAN puts his iPod on. FRANK fidgets. A moment passes. JUDITH and VICTORIA enter.

JUDITH: Take it easy why don't you?

VICTORIA: Dad!

BRIAN removes his earphones delighted to see his daughter.

BRIAN: Hello sweetheart.

VICTORIA: I've missed you, Dad. When are you coming home?

BRIAN: I've missed you too, sweetheart. Would you believe I haven't even seen a doctor yet? I might as well be at home.

VICTORIA: You can come home with us now. Can't he, mum?

BRIAN: I really ought to wait. It will be today, hopefully. So what have you been up to?

VICTORIA: The usual, you know.

BRIAN: Oh yeah. I thought the jet ski was broken. And you've not been flying your helicopter before you've finished your homework, I hope.

VICTORIA: Only once or twice. But mostly...

BRIAN: Yeah?

VICTORIA: Mostly I've been playing Angry Birds.

JUDITH: Did you want anything from the shop?

BRIAN: Eh?

JUDITH: I'm going to the shop. Do you want anything?

VICTORIA: I'll go, mum.

JUDITH: No, you stay, Vickie. Your father has something to tell you. Well?

BRIAN: Judith, I don't think...

JUDITH: Do you want anything?

BRIAN: No.

JUDITH: Right. Well I'll be ten minutes. You know what you need to do.

JUDITH exits.

VICTORIA: What's up with her?

BRIAN: She's just a bit tense, that's all.

VICTORIA: She's a cow.

BRIAN: Now, Vic. You mustn't talk like that about your mother.

VICTORIA: You should hear what she says about you.

BRIAN: Well. Things aren't too good between us at the moment.

VICTORIA: You're telling me.

BRIAN: Vic, you are almost an adult now, so there is no point in treating you like a child.

VICTORIA: Yeah...?

BRIAN: So. You will have noticed that the relationship between your mother and I has deteriorated a lot recently and, for some time, we have found living together quite difficult.

VICTORIA: What are you saying, Dad?

BRIAN: The thing is. Look, there is no easy way of putting this.

VICTORIA: No easy way of putting what?

BRIAN: The thing is...

VICTORIA: Hang on.

BRIAN: Your mum and me...

VICTORIA: Oh no!

BRIAN: Vic.

VICTORIA: Don't say it. Don't say it!

BRIAN: I'm sorry, Vic.

VICTORIA: You're getting a divorce!

BRIAN: I don't know what to say. Sorry.

VICTORIA: Sorry!

BRIAN: Vic...

VICTORIA: You're sorry?

BRIAN: Please...

VICTORIA: Fuck my life up, why don't you?

BRIAN: Vic.

VICTORIA: Great. My parents are getting a divorce. Bollocks to my exams. So, you hate each other? So what? Most married couple hate each other, don't they?

BRIAN: Vic, calm down. I know this is difficult. And this isn't the best way to have to tell you.

VICTORIA: Yeah. Why are you telling me now, Dad? What's the point? Why not wait till you get home? Wait until the summer? Choose your moment. Jesus!

BRIAN: Well, we thought that. I might...

VICTORIA: What? What did you think, Dad?

BRIAN: It's just that I don't know how long I'm going to be in here. Not long hopefully, but when I do leave....

VICTORIA: Yeah?

BRIAN: I thought I might go to Jim's.

VICTORIA: Jim?

BRIAN: You know. Jim from the quiz team.

VICTORIA: Yeah. I know who Jim is. I'm not thick. What's going on, Dad?

BRIAN: If I come home, I'm bound to be off work for a bit. Under your mum's feet. So...

VICTORIA: So you're not coming home.

BRIAN: No.

VICTORIA: Fucking great. Fucking marvellous.

BRIAN: I'm really sorry, Victoria.

VICTORIA: Has she put you up to this? She has, hasn't she? It's her idea.

BRIAN: We just thought it best...

VICTORIA: Don't give me that. Wait a minute. She's told you to tell me you're not coming home. That's why she gone to the shop. The coward can't even stand to be here whilst you do her dirty business. Why don't you stand up to her, Dad?

BRIAN: It's. Complicated.

VICTORIA: Complicated? What's complicated?

BRIAN: Your mum is very angry with me at the moment.

VICTORIA: Yeah? Well, so am I. Have either of you considered me in this? I thought we were a family. You say that I'm *almost* an adult, so treat me like one. Can't we sit down and talk about this and decide what is best? Isn't that what families do? Or don't you care? Are you so frightened of her, you just do what she tells you?

BRIAN: I'm sorry.

VICTORIA: So you're not coming home. I can't understand why you need to do this now. How long have you been married?

BRIAN: Yes, but we are facing a kind of crisis and...

VICTORIA: Hang on. Why did you say she's angry with you "at the moment"? Why?

BRIAN: It's just a - misunderstanding, that's all.

VICTORIA: A misunderstanding. What the fuck does that mean?

BRIAN: It means a misunderstanding. You don't need to know.

VICTORIA: Oh thanks. Don't mind me. I'm just your daughter. My parents are getting a divorce because of a little misunderstanding. (*As though she is speaking to someone else.*) No, I don't know what it is - they didn't tell me, so it can't have been anything important. I expect it is just something like, um, my father forgot to pick up some milk on his way home so there was none for the coffee, or my mother thought that my father had put out the wheelie bin and he thought she had, so it didn't get collected. Such a nuisance. I know it sounds trivial, but it really can't have been more than that, otherwise I'm sure they would have told me.

BRIAN: I don't mean that you don't need to know.

VICTORIA: That's what you just said!

BRIAN: I mean that it is something trivial. It's unimportant.

VICTORIA: Dad! It can't be unimportant if it is the reason you are splitting up!

BRIAN: I went for a drink with a mate.

VICTORIA: So?

BRIAN: I didn't tell you mum.

VICTORIA: And? What? She wondered where you were?

BRIAN: She found out that I had been for a drink and, because I hadn't told her, she jumped to conclusions.

VICTORIA: Hang on. I'm missing something here? Oh! I see. This "mate"...

BRIAN: A woman.

VICTORIA: Christ, Dad!

BRIAN: We've become quite close, but she is just a mate, believe me.

VICTORIA: Yeah. Of course I believe you. What is suspicious about that?

BRIAN: It's the truth.

VICTORIA: How many times did you "go for a drink"?

BRIAN: Just the once.

VICTORIA: And how many times did you shag her?

BRIAN: Believe me, Vic. I wouldn't lie to you.

VICTORIA: Does mum believe you?

BRIAN: What do you think?

VICTORIA: Are you telling me the truth, Dad?

BRIAN: I am, Vic. Honestly. My friend just needed someone to talk to. It was nothing.

VICTORIA: So, you're getting a divorce over nothing? Why you?

BRIAN: What?

VICTORIA: Why did your friend choose you to talk to? Doesn't she have any other friends?

BRIAN: I think she just thought I'd be a good listener.

VICTORIA: It's a bit odd though isn't it? I mean, if I needed to talk to someone about something I would probably either talk to you about it or to one of my girlfriends.

BRIAN: Everyone's different.

VICTORIA: Why did she choose you, Dad?

BRIAN: Because... Because it concerned me.

VICTORIA: Ah! So, not just because you are a good listener then?

BRIAN: No. She wanted to clear the air, that's all.

VICTORIA: What does that mean?

BRIAN: I said that we'd become quite close. It was just a case of working out where we stood.

VICTORIA: I see.

BRIAN: I shouldn't be burdening you with this, Vic. This isn't right.

VICTORIA: Have you told Mum this?

BRIAN: I've tried.

VICTORIA: She wouldn't listen to you?

BRIAN: It isn't her fault. Anyone would react the same way.

VICTORIA: I'm not. Tell me, Dad. I'm listening.

BRIAN: It won't do any good.

VICTORIA: I don't care. If you and Mum are splitting up I want to know why.

BRIAN: I asked her to go for a drink with me.

VICTORIA: And?

BRIAN: She did.

VICTORIA: Don't be funny, Dad. Why did you ask her to go for a drink with you?

BRIAN: Like I said. To work out where we stood. She had become very fond of me.

VICTORIA: So you were trying to decide whether to leave us and move in with her. Is that it?

BRIAN: No. I would never... I had no interest. But, it was obvious that she was... What I mean is that she misread the situation. I was just being friendly towards her and she thought...

VICTORIA: When you say "Work out where we stood", you really mean tell her where she stood.

BRIAN: No. I suppose so, yes.

VICTORIA: So why don't you say that?

BRIAN: I don't know, it's...

VICTORIA: You're too nice, that's your trouble. You said it like that to spare your friend's feelings and she's not even here. So what did you tell her?

BRIAN: Just that I was sorry if she'd got the wrong impression but... but there was nothing doing.

VICTORIA: And that's everything?

BRIAN: Yes.

VICTORIA: No it isn't.

BRIAN: What?

VICTORIA: How did she get the wrong impression?

BRIAN: Oh.

VICTORIA: Come on, Dad.

BRIAN: OK. I... We... Just once we, we were celebrating something and, and there was a moment.

VICTORIA: A moment?

BRIAN: Yes. Everyone was hugging each other and...

VICTORIA: You had a snog.

BRIAN: Um...

VICTORIA: You had a snog, she thought she was in and you had to put her right. Is that it?

BRIAN: I suppose. In a nutshell.

VICTORIA: How did Mum find out?

BRIAN: Someone saw us. Some kind soul decided she had to ask your mum who the woman was that I was having a drink with.

VICTORIA: Which pub did you go in?

BRIAN: The Traveller's Rest.

VICTORIA: For fuck's sake, Dad. Couldn't you go anywhere else? You're shit at deception.

BRIAN: It was never my intention to deceive anyone.

VICTORIA: And for this you are getting a divorce.

BRIAN: Not just that.

VICTORIA: What! How many others were there?

BRIAN: No one. I mean, I guess it's been coming for a while. Your mum and me.

VICTORIA: What do you mean?

BRIAN: You know things haven't been great, Vic.

VICTORIA: And you've given her an excuse to kick you out.

BRIAN: The way your mother sees it...

VICTORIA: But you're innocent?

BRIAN: Well. Yes.

VICTORIA: So, stand up to her, Dad. Tell her what you told me. She'll forgive you one snog, surely.

BRIAN: I've tried, Vic. I really don't want to leave you. You know that.

VICTORIA: Try harder.

BRIAN: It's too late.

VICTORIA: Why doesn't she go? Why do you have to leave?

BRIAN: That isn't how it works.

VICTORIA: I want to live with you, not her. If I have to chose.

BRIAN: It isn't practical...

VICTORIA: Fuck practical! I'm *almost* adult, you said.

BRIAN: Vic. Try to keep calm. And your language, please. You shouldn't speak to me like that.

VICTORIA: You're bothered about my language all of a sudden! Fuck, fuck fuck fuck fuck. Cunt.

BRIAN: Please.

VICTORIA: What? Are people looking at us?

BRIAN: I don't care if people are looking at us. I'm sorry, Vic. This isn't the place.

VICTORIA: Exactly my point, but you're telling me all this now because she told you to. Well, I'm not going home with her.

BRIAN: Vic.

VICTORIA: I'm staying here, with you. I'll sleep in the chair. And when you go to Jim's, I'll go with you. We can both sleep on the sofa.

BRIAN: You can't, Vic. Things will sort themselves out. She's a good mum. And she loves you, you know she does. You do don't you? She thinks the world of you. It would break her heart if you moved out and I'll see you all the time. That's a promise.

VICTORIA's resolve breaks and she begins to cry. She is a child again.

VICTORIA: Dad.

BRIAN: Come here.

They hug. FRANK half sings, half recites.

FRANK: Glory be to God on high and on earth peace good will towards men we praise thee.

You must think I'm soft.

Yes you! I'm talking to you.

Don't look at your mother.

What?

That was a nasty trick you pulled. A nasty trick.

Thou takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Receive our prayer.

Scene Four

The curtains around LEN's bed are closed. FRANK is asleep. BRIAN is sitting on his bed typing into a laptop. NURSE enters with MAUREEN and ROSIE.

NURSE: Take as much time as you want. I'll be at my station if you need me.

NURSE exits. Out of respect BRIAN stops typing. MAUREEN and ROSIE pull open LEN's curtain enough for them to be seen.

ROSIE: Doesn't he look peaceful?

MAUREEN: Why do you say that? What a stupid thing to say. People always say stupid things.

ROSIE: Sorry, Mum.

MAUREEN: Course he looks peaceful. He's hardly likely to be doing the Hokey Cokey is he?

ROSIE: No.

MAUREEN: Oh, Len.

ROSIE: I'll leave you alone for a bit.

MAUREEN: I'm sorry, Rosie. I shouldn't have snapped.

ROSIE: It's OK, Mum. I'll leave you with Dad.

MAUREEN: No, don't go. Stay for a bit.

ROSIE fetches a chair and they sit.

ROSIE: Are you alright, Mum?

MAUREEN: Yes. Well, I will be. Look at him. Do you remember, he was always one for joining clubs? The Caravan Club, The Camping and Caravan Club, English Heritage, The National Trust. I wouldn't mind but he kept up the membership for years after we sold the caravan. And he never did like visiting stately homes. He just liked looking at the catalogues. Well now I've joined a club. Not a very exclusive one. The Widows' Club. Do you know how many men live to Len's age? Not many. I'm lucky I suppose. If he'd had a manual job he would have gone years ago with asbestos poisoning or some other horrible industrial disease.

ROSIE: Dad loved his job didn't he?

MAUREEN: I wouldn't go that far. He was proud when he got his qualification though. "There will always be work for an accountant", he told me. That was before computers, of course, but he didn't let that get in the way. I think he was using a computer to do his job whilst the rest of the world was still on an abacus. (*She smiles.*) He used to tell me off for saying that. "Accountants don't count numbers, it's bookkeepers that do that. Accountants present information. I'll never lose my job to a computer, but a bookkeeper might." He always insisted on making the distinction. But he was happy enough when it came to retirement. Bought the caravan with his lump sum and never looked back.

ROSIE: Dan and Kate loved the caravan.

MAUREEN: I'd never seen him so happy. He would make out that was to give you and Steve a break but we both knew the truth. Having the children with us made us both feel young again. I think that was the happiest time of our lives. Good while it lasted.

Silence. MAUREEN is brooding. ROSIE is uncomfortable.

MAUREEN: You can leave me. I can see that you are itching to go.

ROSIE is about to argue but realises there is no point.

ROSIE: Don't be long, Mum.

MAUREEN: Why? Have you got an appointment? Somewhere you need to be? I can get the bus home.

ROSIE: You know that's not what I meant. It's just that I don't think it's a good idea to sit here for too long.

MAUREEN: What else have I got to do? Oh, you mean I have to get on with my life. Move on?

ROSIE: No. I don't know why I said it. It was a silly thing to say. Sorry. Take as long as you like.

MAUREEN: Perhaps you *should* go, Rosie. I can get the bus. Really, I can. I've got change.

ROSIE: Not today, Mum.

MAUREEN: Isn't that what you said before? It's time to move on.

ROSIE: That was a long time ago, Mum.

MAUREEN: I know it was a long time ago. It broke your Dad's heart.

ROSIE: Mum...

MAUREEN: How can you sit there and say Kate loved the caravan when you banned her from coming with us.

ROSIE: I meant she loved it when she was little.

MAUREEN: She never grew out of it. She always loved coming with us.

ROSIE: Because you were too soft on her. Teenage girls need discipline.

MAUREEN: Of course, your Dad and me knew nothing about bringing up children.

ROSIE: We've been over this again and again, Mum. I thought we'd...

MAUREEN: Moved on?

ROSIE: I'm really sorry it upset you so much. We didn't stop Kate from visiting you.

MAUREEN: That's why Len sold the caravan. Dan had lost interest and Kate wasn't allowed.

ROSIE: If you had just waited a bit. Waited until Kate got over her rebellious stage.

MAUREEN: I wasn't enough for him.

ROSIE: That's not true.

MAUREEN: It's how it felt at the time. I thought I'd never forgive him. But I did. You don't stay married to someone for nearly sixty years without a bit of forgiveness.

ROSIE: I'll try to remember that!

MAUREEN: Of course you married young as well didn't you? Not as young as me though. My mother, your grandmother, said it would never last. That I only wanted to get married because I was going through my "rebellious stage".

ROSIE: I'll go along to the day room. Stay as long as you like, Mum. Bye, Dad. I'm going to miss you.

ROSIE to kisses her father then partially closes the curtain leaving it open enough for MAUREEN to be seen. MAUREEN stands by the bed. ROSIE exits.

MAUREEN: Well, Len, this is it then. Didn't keep your promise did you? Don't die before me, I said. We knew that wasn't going to happen didn't we? Like I said to Rosie, it's always the wives that are left behind. And no, it isn't because men do all the bloody work no matter how many times you said it. *(Pause)* I'm sorry I was so hard on Rosie. I don't even know why I had to drag up all that business about Kate again. I remember how angry you were when she said Kate couldn't come with us but it wasn't what you thought was it? We were too soft on her if we are honest. And we didn't even tell Rosie about most of the things she got up to. *(Pause)* I was angry with you for selling the caravan. And I know you regretted it. It isn't often you do something impetuous but when you do, my God! Why didn't we get another one, Len? Why be a member of the club and not own a caravan? Still, it would have to go eventually wouldn't it? And we did all right. We didn't need anyone else did we? And now it's just me. What am I going to do, Len? What am I going to do?

MAUREEN starts to sob. SISTER goes to her.

SISTER: *(Gently)* Is there anything I can get you?

MAUREEN: No. I just. I don't...

SISTER: Is your daughter here? Shall I fetch her?

MAUREEN: No. She's here but I don't want her to see me.

SISTER: Why ever not?

MAUREEN: I have to be strong. For her sake.

SISTER: You just think about yourself.

MAUREEN: I don't know what I'm going to do. Sixty years we were married. Sixty! Nearly. Never apart. Never a night apart until he came in here. I still ask him if he wants a cup of tea now. I'm in the kitchen and I shout to him and when I come through to see why he hasn't answered I remember. Four months he has been in here. The longest four months of my life. But now it's going to last forever.

SISTER: I know it seems impossible at the moment, but you will find a way to go on. You will always have your memories.

MAUREEN: What use are memories?

SISTER: It sounds like you had a very happy marriage.

MAUREEN: There was never anyone else. Except Rosie, of course. And her Steve and their children. Except they are grown up of course. Len would have been a great granddad in a few more months...

SISTER: Sounds lovely.

MAUREEN: I'm lucky. Is that what you're saying? I suppose you are right, I know I was lucky. You see so many divorces. Lying, cheating. But not Len. Or Steve. Must be something in the genes, he always said. Something I passed onto to Rosie - the ability to pick a good man.

SISTER: Are you stopping with Rosie at the moment?

MAUREEN: They don't want me under their feet.

SISTER: I'm sure they wouldn't mind.

MAUREEN: Why wouldn't they mind? They have their own lives.

SISTER: Perhaps they would like to have you staying with them.

MAUREEN: They say that.

SISTER: Well then?

MAUREEN: Rosie is trying to do the right thing. To do her duty. No, that's not fair. She wants to repay me, I suppose. We're a traditional family. You look after your children and then, when you are old, they look after you. That's the way she's been brought up. But I don't want looking after. Len's been part of my life for sixty years but, now that he's gone, it doesn't mean that I need to replace him with Rosie. I don't know how I'm going to do it but I'm going to do it on my own

SISTER: That's why you wouldn't stay with her whilst Len's been in here?

MAUREEN: How do you know that? Oh, I see. She's had a word has she?

SISTER: She's just worried about you.

MAUREEN: So she's asked you to come and make me see sense.

SISTER: Nothing like that. She didn't ask me to speak to you.

MAUREEN: So why did you?

SISTER: We all grew quite fond of Len. He always had a bit of a twinkle in his eye, didn't he? A bit of a mischievous streak. He could have the nurses in stitches. He thought the world of you, he told me himself. When I first started in nursing I used to get upset when we lost a patient. I nearly gave up. It's part of the job and I couldn't cope with it. But then I found a way to cope. I distanced myself. People think I'm cold. Efficient. I've been called heartless by both staff and patients. But I'm good at my job and that's what counts. Len saw through it all. He knew I was putting up a front. Even though I wouldn't admit it he just said, "Don't worry. It will be our secret". And he told me all about you and how he'd promised that he wouldn't die first, knowing that it was a promise he couldn't keep. He told me that you were preparing yourself for the fact that he wouldn't be going home by trying to get used to life on your own, even though Rosie begged you to go and stay with her. He never doubted that you would be OK. He said that you have an inner strength, you would adapt to life without him. The one thing that worried him was Rosie. He said that he was always the peacemaker.

MAUREEN: Did he, now? Well, some of the time, I suppose.

SISTER: He wanted me to tell you to go gentle on her. I shouldn't have agreed, really, but he can be very persuasive.

MAUREEN: He's a crafty one. All right, Len. I'll stay with her for a couple of days. While we sort out the funeral. Then I'll go home. If she's up to it.

SISTER: Do you need anything?

MAUREEN: No. I'll just say goodbye.

Sister exits.

MAUREEN: Where would I be without you eh, Len? Don't worry. I'll be all right. Keep a place for me, won't you? Goodnight Len.

Scene Five

LEN's bed is made and the curtains pushed back. FRANK is alone in the ward.

FRANK: What have they done here? It's all glued. What do you want to do that for?

Buggers.

I can see you. Don't look at your mother. She can't help you.

Coming in my yard.

What? What are you doing to her? That's a nasty trick.

(Sings) Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature, O Thou of God and man the Son.

Let her go. What's wrong with her?

Doing drugs in my yard. Giving her drugs.

Get her out of here. And you. Go. Don't come back.

Yes, you. I know who you are. You're no son of mine.

I couldn't.

I know, I know. I should have done. Should have reported it. Put a stop to it. Then he wouldn't.

I'm so sorry. So sorry.

Those kiddies. How could you?

I should have put an end to it. I should have called them.

Taking advantage.

How could you? Such a nasty trick. A nasty trick you pulled.

(Sings) Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature, O Thou of God and man the Son, Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honour, Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown.

What? What have they done to this? Taking advantage.

Clear off. Using my yard.

(Sings) Breathe on me, breath of God, Fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

I'm sorry.

I'm so sorry.

Scene Six

FRANK fidgets in his chair. BRIAN is dressed. NURSE enters.

NURSE: You're leaving us then?

BRIAN: Yes. Just waiting for my prescription to be ready.

NURSE: Oh, right. You've ordered an evening meal then? Joke. It shouldn't be too long. Home cooking for you tonight, eh?

BRIAN: I'm not so sure about that.

NURSE: Or a takeaway?

BRIAN: I don't even know where I'm going. I tried to get hold of my mate but I think he must be away.

NURSE: You're not going home?

BRIAN: I kind of made an agreement with my wife. As we are splitting up anyway, we might as well make a clean breast of it.

NURSE: But we can't discharge you if you haven't got anywhere to go.

BRIAN: I'll be all right.

NURSE: No, I mean, really. It's against the rules.

BRIAN: Oh. I see.

NURSE: Maybe if you explained to her that there is nowhere for you to go... Sorry. None of my business.

BRIAN: I'm not sure.

NURSE: You can stay in you know. We kind of assume that people will want to go home if the doctor says they can but, as we haven't actually found the cause of your problems, you could stay a few more nights. I mean, do you want me to have a word?

BRIAN: What about the bed situation?

NURSE: That's OK. There isn't actually a shortage of beds in this hospital, just a shortage of staff. That's why you kept getting shunted from ward to another. Just to keep the patient numbers down. But you don't use up much resource. You're no trouble. Well, not much anyway.

BRIAN: It might be an idea of having the option of staying tonight. You know, just in case. I'll keep trying my mate.

PORTER enters.

PORTER: Stand by your beds. It's OK. Not you, Frank.

NURSE: Can I help you?

PORTER: Now there's a leading question. About time isn't it? Lunch?

NURSE: Oh. Right.

PORTER: Or are you busy?

NURSE: No. I'll just go and make sure I've got cover.

PORTER: Don't bother on my account.

NURSE exits. PORTER speaks to BRIAN.

PORTER: Think I've embarrassed her. We are not supposed to fraternise in front of the patients.

BRIAN: You were hardly fraternising.

PORTER: Well, you know what I mean. You off then?

BRIAN: Not quite decided yet.

PORTER: You've not decided? Don't hang about, they might change their minds.

FRANK: Bollocks!

PORTER: Francis! Wash your mouth out.

FRANK: What?

PORTER goes to FRANK.

PORTER: You OK there mate? Were you sleeping?

FRANK: What?

PORTER: Or was your head in the clouds? That might explain the spherical objects.

FRANK: I don't know. I...

FRANK is becoming distressed.

PORTER: Listen, Frank. I just had this job to take a patient down to Discharge so I get there with the wheelchair and he's sat on the bed, fully dressed ready to go. I tell him to get in the wheelchair but he says he doesn't need it. But rules are rules so eventually he agreed. As we are going down in the lift I ask him if his wife is waiting for him in the Discharge Room and he says "No, I don't think so. She was still in the bathroom changing out of the hospital gown when we left".

PORTER waits. Eventually FRANK chuckles.

PORTER: Thought you'd like that one.

BRIAN: Has he been here long?

PORTER: Frank? About six months. Maybe more.

BRIAN: He was a headmaster, I believe.

PORTER: Don't know. I never concern myself with what people have been. It's what they are now that matters.

BRIAN: You are very good with him. Have you worked here long?

PORTER: Oh aye. I'm part of the furniture, me. I couldn't go back to my old job now. Not that there's any factories left anyway.

BRIAN: I suppose no two days are the same.

PORTER: Well, even if you're doing the same thing everyday it's the people that make it interesting. You see all sorts in here. Any colour, any class, any religion. Disease doesn't discriminate. The world and its arse comes through that door. You never know what's coming. Keeps you on your toes, I can tell you. We had that James Brown in here you know.

BRIAN: James Brown! Are you sure?

PORTER: Oh yes. He come in and he laid down the boogie and played that funky music till he died.

BRIAN: Very good.

PORTER: Glad you think so. My sense of humour gets me into more trouble than anything else.

BRIAN: You get a lot of satisfaction though.

PORTER: We have our moments I suppose. Speaking of which, the moment I've been waiting for all my life might be just about to happen. I'll go to see where her highness has got to. Um. Take care, mate. If I don't see you again. See you later, Frank.

PORTER exits. BRIAN takes out his mobile phone and turns it on. FRANK fidgets and hums to himself. BRIAN's phone beeps to indicate a message. He reads it, turns the phone off and packs his remaining bits into his bag. As he does so VICTORIA enters.

VICTORIA: Dad!

BRIAN: Vic! What are you doing here?

VICTORIA: Jim rang.

BRIAN: Jim?

VICTORIA: You know. "Jim from the quiz team". Your new flat mate. Not.

BRIAN: I just had a text from him. He said to get a taxi.

VICTORIA: Check the time on the text, Dad. He rang after he sent it.

BRIAN: But why did he ring?

VICTORIA: To tell mum to stop being a twat.

BRIAN: What?

VICTORIA: I didn't think he had it in him.

BRIAN: He hardly knows your mum.

VICTORIA: Good job. I can't see him speaking to her like that otherwise.

BRIAN: And what did she say?

VICTORIA: What do you think she said? She told him to fuck off and mind his own business.

BRIAN: Right.

VICTORIA: So I told her that it was my business and if she wouldn't listen to him, she could fucking listen to me. There's more chance of you sprouting breasts and changing your name to Trixie than there is of you shagging another woman. She should know that.

BRIAN: Vic, it's more complicated than that. It isn't just this, it's been going on for years.

VICTORIA: What has?

BRIAN: We've been growing apart.

VICTORIA: Fuck sake, Dad. I've spent all morning persuading mum to let you come home. You go to Jim's and it's finished. The end. Come home and give it another try. Please.

BRIAN: We've talked about it...

VICTORIA: *We* haven't talked about it. You and mum have talked about it. I was never part of that discussion

BRIAN: But...

VICTORIA: Who do you love, Dad? Apart from me?

BRIAN: (*Eventually*) Your mother.

VICTORIA: Right, so come on.

BRIAN: Where is she?

VICTORIA: In the car.

BRIAN: She brought you?

VICTORIA: Yes! Haven't you been listening? We've come to take you home.

BRIAN: Why didn't she come up?

VICTORIA: Because she's too tight to pay four quid to park. She's sat in the pickup area with the engine running.

BRIAN: I just need to get my head round this.

VICTORIA: Get your head round it in the car. Mum's driving and don't you dare say a word to her about it. I'm not having an argument before we even get home.

BRIAN: But. Jim....

VICTORIA: Dad! There's nothing to think about. Come on. You're coming home.

BRIAN: OK, Vic. You're incredible, do you know that. I'll give it a go.

VICTORIA: Don't sound like you are doing me a favour. Few years from now I'll be gone to uni and all you two will have is each other, so you'd best do more than 'give it a go', you'd best make it work, OK?

BRIAN: I love you, Vic.

VICTORIA: Whatever. Yeah, Dad. I love you too. Come on.

BRAIN and VICTORIA exit. FRANK fidgets.

FRANK: (*Sings*) Breathe on me, breath of God, Fill me with life anew...

Clear off. I know you're there.

Buggers. Using my yard.

Clear off with your drugs.

Taking advantage.

What? What have they done here? They've bloody glued all this.

As FRANK sings the remainder of the hymn the lights fade and music fades in.

FRANK: Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure, until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine, till all this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die, but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

End
