

training, plus the equipment – the plastic-coated, grade-three rope and half-a-dozen anchors – you'd get five hundred commandos over that wall and inside in three minutes.

*Pause.*

**Jan** Pity we ain't got no rope or anchors.

**Louis** Yeah.

**Jan** Is that what you tried to sign up for?

**Louis** What?

**Jan** A commando?

**Louis** Oh, not a commando, no. I wouldn't mind being a commando, but I didn't try that. I mean, they only take the cream, just the cream. I thought: well, I know I ain't the cream. You've got to be the cream. I didn't think it was worth trying the commandos, since I didn't have a chance. I thought I'd try something where I had a chance, you know. Avoid the frustration of getting turned down.

**Jan** Yeah.

**Louis** So I tried what I thought I had a chance, a good chance. That's what bugged me, getting turned down.

**Jan** It would.

*The crowd roars.*

Hilly, header – over.

**Louis** We're murdering them.

**Jan** Yeah. There was a mate of mine who went to Paris. And he got really pissed, so pissed. On that aniseed drink. Makes you really pissed, so next morning, if you drink a glass of water you get pissed all over again.

**Louis** Commandos ain't allowed to touch that stuff. Not allowed to drink, except after a mission successfully accomplished.

**Jan** Well, he was in the Navy, see.

**Louis** Rum.

**Jan** And he ended up in Paris with a few blokes and got smashed out of his head on this aniseed drink. An' he signed up for the Foreign Legion. Walked in pissed and said, 'I want to sign up.' So they give him the form and he signed up. For thirty years. And when he sobered up he was in the Sahara.

**Louis** Christ.

**Jan** Only another twenty-seven years and he's out.

**Louis** Jesus.

**Jan** His mum was arf annoyed.

**Louis** I wish me mum ain't hidden me Doc Martens.

**Jan** His mum said to my mum, she said, 'Tony he's always been difficult, always had problems with him. But this time he's gone too far.'

**Louis** I wouldn't mind joining the Foreign Legion. To forget.

**Jan** Yeah.

**Louis** If I wanted to forget, I'd sign up like a shot.

**Jan** He'll be an old man when he comes out.

**Louis** There's some vicious bastards in the Foreign Legion. Vicious.

**Jan** He don't send nothing home neither. At least when he was in the Navy he sent something home.

**Louis** They've been playing fifteen minutes.

**Jan** Yeah.

**Louis** Paul'll go spare if we don't get in.

**Jan** It ain't my fault.

**Louis** I'm not saying it's your fault. Put it this way: I wouldn't like to be in your Uncle Harold's shoes if Paul sees him.

**Jan** No.

**Louis** He shouldn't have done that, Jan. Shouldn't have promised.

**Jan** How do you think I feel?

*Silence. The crowd is gently murmuring off.*

*Enter Paul. He looks livid. He paces, turns, grimaces, smashes his fist against the wall.*

**Jan** No luck?

**Paul** *glares at him.*

**Paul** Fucking tout – asking, asking twenty-five quid for a standing ticket. Twenty-five quid for one. Jesus.

*Pause.*

**Louis** Bit steep.

**Paul** Held it up, he did. In his hand, held it up. Said, 'How much am I offered?' Great crowd round him. Blokes in suits, ties and that. Posh voice, said 'Thirty quid.' He got it. Cunt. Flash cunt. *(He paces about again.)*

**Jan** We... ain't gonna get in, are we?

*Pause.*

**Louis** I was saying, if only I had a thirty-foot length of rope and an anchor – over the top.

**Paul** Is that all you need? What have I got here? *(He bats his pockets.)* Electric toothbrush, complete works of Charles Dickens, packet of three, six light bulbs and a set of sparking plugs but... no anchor and no thirty-foot length of rope. Sorry.

*Pause.*

This is disgusting. Disgusting. This shouldn't be allowed. Shouldn't be allowed. Twenty-odd times I've been to Manchester this year. An' to Wolverhampton, Burnley, Sheffield. To Birmingham, Ipswich, Villa Park, Newcastle, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Derby. An' Leicester and Stoke and Leeds and Coventry. All that, on fares. Standing in the train, five hours... eight hours... standing up in wet clothes, no fucking food on the train... standing up in the rain on the terraces... like... cattle. No roof to keep the rain off... Lavatories stinking like cesspits. Warm beer in paper cups... no food at the grounds... herded about by the cops. No wonder they call us animals. That's how they fucking treat us. *(He growls, impersonating an ape.)*

**Jan and Louis** *laugh, goad him on. He belabours more ape-like. He stops.*

**Paul** They treat dogs better. That's 'cause we're fucking animals, Lou, son.

**Louis** *(acts ape)* Yeah.

**Paul** Treat people like animals, that's how they act. Those bloody lavatories at most of the football grounds in England, if they were like that at the factory, Lou, everyone'd walk out. Suike until they're cleaned up. Bloody clubs expect you to pay to get into them.

**Louis** I reckon I missed about fifteen goals this season, 'cause I couldn't see.

**Paul** Whole day and twenty quid to see the match at Coventry and I couldn't see either fucking goal. Talked to this bloke who went to Holland one year... see United against Ajax. Oh, it's a different world over there. Never have to bother over there... sit down... bring round beer and lovely hot food, waiters do... while you're sitting there, while the match is on... like a fucking nightclub, not like a football ground... All the geezers take their bins... great.

**Louis** Like cricket.

**Paul** Eh?

**Louis** Never have no riots at cricket.

**Paul** Well, not often.

**Jan** Never have no aggro at Wimbledon – tennis and that.

**Louis** Treat you better. You can see. Get something for your money more than the game.

**Jan** Don't exploit you.

**Paul** You what?

**Jan** Me Uncle . . . Tom –

**Paul** Oh.

**Jan** Said he hates being exploited. His governor exploited him, he said. He told him what to do. Where to go.

**Paul** I wish . . .

*Pause.*

There was something else. To make me blood bubble, to look forward to . . . to . . . mean something.

*Pause.*

There was this boy I used to know . . . a student, at the factory, one summer . . . for a bit of pocket money, he worked a couple of weeks . . . then Mr Baker found out about him and got him out of the factory so fast you couldn't see him move. Junkie, see. Oh yeah. I saw him after, in the High Street. Said it happened at the Black Lion. Lot of pushers there. An' he didn't want to know. They pumped him with the stuff. Held him down and shot it into him . . . and then, later, after he'd got hooked, they wouldn't always sell him it, 'cause they kept putting up the price. See. An' he said, 'Cunts, they got me hooked an' then said no.' (*He paces, tenses.*) Bloody football clubs. Get you hooked, get you boiling, get

the fever rushing through you – all of them, build it up, get a head of steam and then when it explodes, wash their hands of you, call you animals, say piss off we don't want you. (*Pause*) An' they know they've got you hooked. That you can't do without them. That seems more of a crime to me. Than the crimes we're supposed to do.

**Louis** At least we'll be able to see it on the telly tomorrow.

**Paul** Fucking Jesus.

**Louis** That's blasphemy.

**Paul** So what. God's dead. They killed him in the war.

**Louis** No.

**Paul** Up there, laid out his corpse and wrapped it in a sky-blue shroud. Shows he was always a fucking Manchester City supporter.

*More roars off.*

Christ, what's happening. Jan, what's –

**Louis** A goal! We've scored! We're winning –

**Paul** Nar, weren't loud enough for a goal. Jan, the radio.

**Jan** (*struggling with it*) Bloody dial – busted.

**Paul** What – give's.

**Jan** Bloody dial fucked, or the batteries gone flat.

**Louis** What happened? Gotta know what happened –

**Jan** I can't help it –

**Paul** Pissing hell.

**Louis** It must be a goal, it must be a goal!

**Jan** Sod it.

**Louis** We're winning – we must be winning –

**Paul** Get that radio –

**Jan** I can't Paul, it's smashed.

**Paul** Smashed. I'll fucking smash it -

*He hurts the radio against the wall. The plastic casing smashes, the radio falls to the floor in pieces. He stands breathing raggedly.*

**Jan** You've busted it . . . we'll never find out who scored now.

**Louis** I wanted to see that . . . wanted to see that.

*Paul lets out an animal cry and runs against the wall, smashing himself against it.*

**Louis** Paul, for Christ's sake.

**Paul** If it weren't for that wall.

**Louis** Paul, don't be a stoopid bastard, you'll -

**Paul** There's always a fucking wall in the way. Always get so far, and there's a wall to block it. Smash it down, smash it down -

*He charges it again. Louis tries to stop him. Paul hits the wall and screams. He crumples to the floor. A great roar from the crowd. Jan and Louis approach the wall. Paul has there groaning.*

**Jan** Better find the St John's men.

**Louis** He's mad, he's crazy.

**Jan** Yeah.

**Louis** I wonder who scored?

*The roars grow, the lights fade. Blackout.*

### Scene Three

*Later. The sound of the crowd roaring. Lights up.*

*Louis is fixing the radio with a plastic spoon. The roars continue.*

*Enter Jan.*

**Jan** Still nil-nil.

**Louis** Oh.

**Jan** Apparently it's all United. Southampton are right - knackered. They're soaking up so much punishment. The bloke on the ice-cream van said - he's got a portable telly.

**Louis** See it?

**Jan** Nar, there was such a crowd there. Anyway he said it looks like there'll be an avalanche in the last twenty minutes. Six or seven goals.

**Louis** Great.

**Jan** What you doing?

**Louis** Fixing the tranny.

**Jan** *(looks)* Bloody hell. You've . . . got it all back together.

**Louis** Yeah, still ain't working yet, but -

**Jan** I didn't know you could fix radios.

**Louis** Me sister's husband, he does radios an' that. In the Navy. Wireless operator. Real skill. He'll make a bomb when he gets out. Electronics an' that. Tried to get me to have a go at it. I said, 'Leave off; I work in a factory, mare. No chance.' So's he tried to show me how to do it. An' showed me how trannys work.

**Jan** Christ. I didn't know you was good at that sort of thing.

**Louis** No? Learned the basics on me refrigeration course.

*The crowd roars.*

**Jan** It'll be good to hear the last fifteen minutes.

**Louis** If I can get it fixed . . . See, it's the . . . I dunno how to explain it, I dunno what the things are called.

**Jan** Well, so long as you can fix it - that's the important thing.

**Louis** Is it?

**Jan** Sure, course it is. That's what counts.

**Louis** Pity the recruiting officer didn't agree.

**Jan** Oh.

**Louis** Told him I could fix radios. An' phones. An' alarm clocks. He said there's not much call for alarm clock repairs in Belfast.

*Pause.*

He was right sarcastic. The other bloke weren't so bad. He said: 'Look, son, you ain't got too much going for you at the moment. But if you can prove yourself as a competent electrician, if you learn a bit more, come back in a year and we'll have another look at you.'

**Jan** Oh.

**Louis** At two o'clock in the afternoon.

**Jan** Eh?

**Louis** I wrote it down when to go back. I'll go back then. Me brother-in-law, when he's on leave, he's going to show me a few things. Get me to look a bit competent as an electrician, and then, well – fingers crossed, I'm keeping me fingers crossed.

**Jan** Bit difficult mending wirelasses with crossed fingers, in't it?

*They laugh.*

**Louis** Come in handy on the Plain though –

**Jan** Eh?

**Louis** With the cadets, two weeks, Salisbury. Full manoeuvres. Had to do everything, we did. Guard duty, rifle range, camping, oh a lot of camping. Food never tastes so good as when you're out in the open . . .

**Jan** I remember when you come back – so energetic!

**Louis** It's a different world. Just like the Army, it is. Like a family. Looks after you, looks after you.

*Pause.*

**Jan** More bloody reliable than me Uncle Harold.

**Louis** Well –

**Jan** When me dad pissed off, he said he'd treat me like his own son.

*Pause.*

His son never hears from him neither.

*Pause.*

Me granddad always said they'd hang Harold.

**Louis** They don't hang people no more.

**Jan** Me granddad said they'd bring back hanging specially for him.

**Louis** You oughta join the cadets, Jan. That's what you oughta do.

**Jan** I want to . . . be part of something.

**Louis** Yeah –

**Jan** Like when we're standing there . . . on the Stretford End . . . crushed in, thousands of us . . . and 'cause you're in the red and white, it don't matter that no one knows you, 'cause you're like brothers, so close . . . all together . . . all together . . . and all leaning together, the same way, and all breathing together, like, not thousands of people, but like one . . . like a great giant breathing.

*The crowd's roars subside*

I wish it could be like that every day of the week. Better than the fucking factory.

**Louis** Give it a try on Thursday . . . that way, get in, enlist, it'll be like it all the time, every day of the week.

**Jan** Well?

**Louis** Thursday night.

**Jan** I'll have . . . a look. But I ain't saying I'll join.

**Louis** Thursday then.

**Jan** Right.

*Enter Paul, his head bandaged.*

**Paul** Would have to be the same fucking eye.

**Jan** Paul — you all right?

**Paul** Yeah, I'm all right. Couple of stitches.

**Jan** Oh —

**Paul** No anaesthetic.

**Louis** No?

**Paul** St John's bloke said, 'I'll give you a shot.' I said, 'Stuff that son, I don't want none of that. Just bung the stitches in.' Still nil-nil.

**Louis** Yeah.

**Paul** Last ten minutes, there'll be a flood of goals. Two a minute, I reckon. What you doing?

**Louis** Fixing the tranny. Nearly fixed it.

*Silence.*

**Paul** Didn't know you could —

**Louis** Yeah.

**Paul** Oh. You don't want to let Mr Baker hear you can fix radios. An' that. Oh, he'll have you doing all the sodding plug-fixing and that, if he knows you can twiddle with wires.

**Louis** I wouldn't mind that. Out of the spray shop, more money doing electrics than shoving cans through an oven.

*Pause.*

**Paul** I'd not let Mr Baker hear about that, if I was you. Right, Jan?

*Pause.*

I said —

**Jan** Right.

*Pause.*

At least . . . we was here on the day.

*Pause.*

Something to tell our grandchildren.

**Paul** What?

**Jan** Here on the day . . . Man United, the Red Devils, Doc's Army won the cup . . .

**Paul** Doc's Red Army, an' Doc's cockney army — we'll be marching tonight, mate . . . Oh Christ . . . missed the match, but — tonight . . . marching through Piccadilly, thousands of us . . . see the lights going off in the pubs as we approach . . . Be some glass flying tonight, be some glass smashed tonight . . . worse than the blitz. All together, marching through London . . .

*Pause.*

Just the thought of it . . . makes me wanna wet meself.

**Jan** Eh?

**Paul** Felt like that after the semi . . . felt it throbbing through me . . . We'll be marching tonight. Better not catch sight of your Uncle Harold.

**Jan** N-no.



**Paul** All together.

**Jan** Yeah.

**Paul** No worries, no cares, nothing to have to think about. All that obliterated, just the —

**Louis** Like the cadets, Jan.

**Paul** Eh?

**Louis** Plunge in, no cares, all together.

**Paul** Wrong army.

**Louis** No.

*Long pause.*

**Paul** You fixed that radio yet?

**Louis** Almost.

**Paul** Gonna be a replay . . .

**Jan** Still ten minutes.

**Paul** They'll close the game up now . . . too much to risk losing. Here again, Thursday night. We'll fucking have tickets then.

**Louis** I thought it was Wednesday —

**Paul** Thursday.

**Louis** But Thursday, see, Thursday —

*Pause.*

**Paul** What?

**Louis** Thursday, well, every Thursday, cadets' night.

*Pause.*

Go on Thursdays to the cadets.

**Paul** Not when United are playing.

**Louis** They never play on a Thursday.

**Paul** This Thursday, the replay —

**Louis** But Paul . . . got to have a hundred per cent record. For the regular army, got to prove I'm hundred per cent.

**Paul** Lou baby, you've gotta get your priorities right, son.

**Louis** I seen all the matches.

**Paul** Can't miss the replay. Can he, Jan?

*Silence. The crowd is roaring.*

**Louis** But Paul —

**Paul** Can't let everyone down, Lou.

**Louis** Won't make no difference whether I'm there or not.

**Paul** (*grabs him*) Lou, kiddo — United need you.

**Louis** Need me? They don't need me. Or you. Or Jan. Don't give a fuck about us. How come we're outside if they need us? Cadets need me, make me a part of them, take me in, give me food, give me a home, give me . . . a job. Give me something to do. United don't give a shit. Take me money; that's all.

**Paul** No . . . they've got us all, got you . . . You can't do without them.

**Louis** Gonna try hard, Paul.

**Paul** Tell him, Jan.

*Silence. Roars.*

Jan, I said —

**Jan** Gotta come, Lou. Gotta come.

**Louis** Want the Army, Paul. Like you want it, Jan.

**Paul** Jan, don't be a prick — Jan don't want —

**Louis** Be someone?

**Paul** Is someone. Right, Jan? Down your road, when you set out in your drills and tartan, eh?

**Louis** When I set out in my cadet's drills and –

**Paul** Lou, son –

*They struggle.*

You're fucking coming.

**Louis** Ain't throwing it away, boy. Ain't gonna be like you when I'm your age. Factory six days, life on one? That ain't a life. That ain't living.

*He pulls away. Paul flicks a knife, holds it towards Louis.*

**Louis** Aw, don't be stupid. I'm on your side.

**Paul** You've changed sides.

**Jan** Paul . . . he's Lou.

**Paul** Done things for you, Lou son, done things for you this year. At Sheffield when they got you in the bog, twenty of them . . . when you went in the wrong bog and they got you, I waded in . . . kicked his fucking head in to release you.

**Louis** You didn't do that for me, Paul. You did it 'cause you get your fix kicking fucking heads in. Me, I was just the excuse.

**Paul** Did it for you . . . 'cause you're one of Doc's soldiers.

**Louis** No, Paul . . . put it away, Paul . . .

**Jan** Not today, Paul . . . not on the Cup Final. No sense of occasion.

**Paul** You sound like your fucking Uncle Harold. cunt –

**Jan** Good bloke.

**Paul** What's he ever done for you?

**Jan** Visited me in the home every week, some boys had no one visit them.

**Paul** Bollocks. He was probably screwing the matron.

**Jan** Paul . . . drop it, let it drop.

**Paul** You're gonna be here Thursday, Lou, gonna be here at the replay.

**Louis** *begins to shake his head. Paul goes to lunge at him but the crowd lets out a deafening roar. It continues loud.*

**Jan** Christ.

**Paul** That's a goal.

**Jan** Scored!

**Paul** Jesus.

**Jan** Just before the death –

*Euphoria. They leap about. Embrace. Louis stands apart from them. The roars continue.*

**Paul** Musta been Pearson –

**Jan** Hill was going close.

**Paul** Radio working. Lou – quick.

**Louis** Working.

*He hands the radio to Paul*

**Paul** Only joking, see, no problem. Thursday, cadets all right. No replay now – we've done it . . . Oh great. *(He holds the radio to one ear.)*

**Jan** Who scored it? . . . Got the station. Who –

**Paul** *is deathly. Pause. The roars continue.*

**Paul** Stokes.

*Pause.*

**Jan** Own goal?

*Pause.*



**Paul** McCalliog split the defence with a long through-ball and Stokes . . . put it in the corner.

*Pause.*

**Jan** It's not possible.

**Paul** Fucking radio ain't lying.

*Pause.*

Oh Jesus. (*He holds his head.*)

**Jan** Five minutes to go still . . .

**Paul** *looks at him.*

**Jan** Oh Christ. (*Almost tearful.*)

**Paul** How's it possible? How's it possible? After all we've done this season . . . so far, so much . . . days in trains, all that attacking; all that . . . fighting . . . Pipped for the League and now . . .

**Louis** *edges away.*

**Paul** Where you sneaking off to?

**Louis** I'm going home.

**Paul** Match ain't over.

**Louis** It is now.

**Paul** When the mob gets out . . . tonight, oh tonight there'll be fucking hell break loose.

**Louis** That's why I'm going home.

*Pause.*

I'll come round for you Thursday, Jan.

*He goes.*

**Paul** What's he mean by that?

*Pause.*

**Jan** Dunno. Dunno what he means.

*Pause. The roars continue.*

**Paul** He's gone. He's chicken. He's a wank. There, that's what happens when ol' Lil gropes you.

**Jan** She used to grope everyone.

**Paul** Did she grope you?

**Jan** Used to, till Lou came.

**Paul** I wonder why she never groped me?

*Pause.*

Tonight . . . oh Christ, tonight . . . it'll be like . . . He weren't trying to chat you into joining the fucking Army was he?

*Pause.*

Said -

**Jan** The cadets, he made it sound like . . . a family.

**Paul** We're your family. United, the biggest family in the hand . . . oh tonight, you'll see tonight . . . it'll be like after the Spurs match . . . after coming back from White Hart Lane . . . We'll assemble at Euston . . . we'll march in file, wave after wave of us . . . the streets'll empty as we approach . . .

*The lights begin to fade. Jan goes the way Louis went.*

**Paul** *is alone stage centre. As the lights fade, a spot continues to illuminate his face until only his face is lit.*

**Paul** They'll barricade the windows, the pubs'll lock their doors, the lights will go off in the shops and the police will line the pavements, white with fear . . . Cops' hats'll bobble like decorations on a windy promenade . . . The air will be heavy with shouts and yells and the smashing of glass . . . No one will ignore us. We will not be ignored. They'll talk about us, write about us, hate us. Hate us. Hate us. Animals, call us animals . . . not ignore me . . . won't be ignored . . . not ignore me . . . not . . . ignore . . . me.

*The lights go to black. More roars.*