

Yen

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Characters

- HENCH *sixteen*
- BOBBIE *thirteen*
- MAGGIE *thirty-six*
- JENNIFER *sixteen*

Scene One

*Present day. An estate in Feltham. 10 p.m. A living room which has been made into a bedroom. **Hench** sits on the end of an open sofa bed in the middle of the room and **Bobbie** lies face down on it. Next to the sofa bed an old armchair. Everything is tatty and worn, apart from a collection of shiny equipment: a flat-screen TV, PlayStation, laptop and some speakers. Both boys are bare-chested and barefoot. **Bobbie** wears some dirty tracksuit bottoms. He is a little pudgy, rosy cheeks, bright eyes, at the first flush of adolescence but quite physically strong and bullish. He has a rash at the top of his back. **Hench** is anything but hench; painfully skinny, very pale, perhaps the suggestion of some acne. He wears scruffy jeans. They are watching hardcore pornography linked from the laptop to the TV by HDMI. The room is dull and dark, but the TV flickers and lights up their faces. We hear grunting, moaning, a few words, a couple of yelps; indecipherable between pleasure and pain. The boys' faces are transfixed but blank. After some moments **Bobbie** leans down by the side of the bed, not taking his eyes off the screen, and comes back with a pint of milk in a glass bottle. He downs quite a lot of it and does a little burp after. He puts the milk down and runs over to a window. He looks out.*

Bobbie She's still there.

Hench Is it?

Bobbie Yeah.

Hench glances briefly towards the window, and then back to the TV.

What a skank. **Hench**? 

*Beat. Nothing from **Hench**. **Bobbie** leans out of the window.*

Piss off, you skank! –

Hench Shhhh, man! You'll wake the dog.

Beat.

Bobbie What does she want?

Hench I dunno, do I?

Bobbie Maybe she wants to fuck you.

Hench Fuck off.

Bobbie (*looking out*) She's got reeeaaaaalllly small tits, man. I need a sniper scope just to see 'em.

Beat.

Hench?

No response from **Hench**. **Bobbie** runs towards the bed and jumps on it three times, annoying **Hench**. Then he flops down next to him and looks at the screen.

Not like those, bruv. (*Pointing.*) One of those is bigger than your head.

Hench They're fake innit.

Bobbie Is it?

Hench Yeah!

Beat. **Bobbie** ponders this.

Bobbie I would want a girlfriend with fake tits.

Bobbie rests his chin on **Hench**'s shoulder.

Hench Get off, man.

Bobbie (*still watching*) Can a man's arsehole go like that?

Hench Like what?

Bobbie All big, like that?

☐

He makes a circle with his hands.

Hench S'pose.

Bobbie Oh my DAYS!

Hench (*irritated*) A man's arsehole can basically do whatever a woman's arsehole can do innit?

Bobbie Is it?

Hench Yeah! How do you think gays do it?

Bobbie Gays are dirty.

Hench Yep.

Bobbie I fucking hate gays.

Beat. **Bobbie** thinks.

Do you think my arsehole would do that?

Hench DON'T even think about it!

Beat. **Bobbie** runs round in front of **Hench**.

Bobbie Can you scratch my back?

Hench No. MOVE.

Bobbie But I got an itch! And it's a bitch! (*Thinks for a sec.*) Oi. **Hench**. (*Like Jay Z.*) 'I got 99 problems but an itch ain't one!'

Hench picks up a large bottle of Lucozade from the side of the bed and has a swig.

Don't drink the Lucozade!

Hench She's not coming!

Bobbie In case she does though and she needs it.

Hench (*like he's stupid*) Bob, she's all loved up with Minge-Face Alan. Rolling his fags. Washing his socks. And you know what they smell like.

Bobbie Like sick.

☐

Hench Right. So she ain't coming, is she?

Beat. **Bobbie** looks sad.

She never washed our fucking socks.

Bobbie We haven't got any socks.

Hench We used to.

Beat.

Bobbie She might want a break from it all.

Hench What and you reckon she'd come here? It's hardly a Premier fucking Inn is it?

Bobbie What if she comes round and goes low and has a hypo and DIES cos we've got nothing to give her! That would be you then, that would, you would have *killed* our mother.

Beat. **Hench** sighs and puts the Lucozade down.

Ah fanks, bro. Here.

Bobbie fetches the bottle of half-drunk milk from the side of the bed.

Have some milk.

Hench I don't want your fucking milk, do I? What d'you nick milk for?

Bobbie It was off a doorstep.

Beat.

Might make you stronger.

Hench Fuck off.

Beat. Bobbie thinks. To make amends he runs up to the window. He pulls his trousers down and presses his bare bottom against the glass.

Bobbie HENCH!

No response from Hench.

☞**Hench.** Bruv. LOOK!

Hench glances. **Bobbie** turns back and looks out of the window.

Oh.

He wanders back to the sofa bed but doesn't sit.

She's gone. She was waiting for you.

Hench You should show her your shrivelled little cock. Then she'd go and never come back.

Bobbie slaps **Hench** around the back of the head. **Hench** jumps up.

Don't fucking hit me, right? I told you not to hit me!

Hench gets **Bobbie** in a headlock. They struggle.

Suddenly Bobbie begins to bark viciously at Hench. Hench stumbles back and knocks the Lucozade over.

Bobbie The LUCOZADE!

He goes to rescue it.

Hench You're a fucking animal.

Suddenly a dog starts barking for real, loud and aggressive, from the other room.

Now look what you've done, prick. Shut UP, TALIBAN!

He pushes Bobbie towards the door.

Right, you're going in with him!

Bobbie I can't – we got no food for him!

Hench Well, you should have thought of that, shouldn't you?? Prick.

He kicks Bobbie hard in the arse and Bobbie skids a bit. A stand-off. The dog stops barking now. Calm descends for a moment. Hench sits back down.

You stink.

☞

Bobbie You're ugly.

Hench Your pits, man. And your hair. And your breath. You stink like rotten milk. Go brush your teeth.

Bobbie I haven't got a toothbrush.

Hench What you been using then?

Bobbie Yours.

Hench lunges for **Bobbie** and **Bobbie** hops away, laughing gleefully.

HA! Just jokes, bruvva! Just jokes innit.

Hench Fuck you. Have a wash.

Bobbie Oi. You're Hench. I'm Stench. Gettit?

Bobbie wanders over to the shelf, grabs a can of Lynx and sprays it liberally under his arms. He hovers it over his open tracksuit bottoms.

Hench.

No response from **Hench**. **Bobbie** sprays liberally into his shorts. Then he sprays his hair. Then he sprays into his mouth and starts to cough. **Hench** ignores him. He wanders back over to the screen.

Oh snap! Look how far his cum shoots out of his dick, bruv! Does yours go that far?

Hench Shut up.

Bobbie We should have a competition.

Hench Fuck off.

Bobbie If you could cum on any part of a woman where would it be?

Hench Dunno.

Bobbie Come on. Think!

Hench Tits I guess.

□

Bobbie I'd cum in her eyes. Blind the bitch.

Beat. **Bobbie** loses interest in the video and starts wandering the room. He picks up an old T-shirt from the floor, puts it on.

I'm hungry, bruv. I feel like I got a monster in me tummy. Are there any Wheat Crunchies left?

Hench You gave the last bag to Taliban.

Bobbie (in a cod-American accent) Oh man!

Hench There's Twiglets.

Bobbie Twiglets???

Hench Yeah.

Bobbie Twiglets taste like your arsehole.

Beat. **Bobbie** has an idea.

And they look like your dick!

Hench WELL, DON'T FUCKING EAT THEM THEN!

Bobbie Ooh alright, don't have a period! Jeezus.

Hench (slamming the laptop shut) I'm going to bed.

Bobbie What about COD?

Hench What about it?

Bobbie We was gonna have a night sesh! Fuck up those – (In a cod-American accent.) American faggots.

Hench You do my head in, Bobbie.

Hench turns the light off.

Bobbie What if I want it on?

Hench Tough shit.

Bobbie Oh brother!

Hench takes his jeans off and gets into bed.

□ You're not sleeping in your pants, are you? What if your horrible cock escapes and touches me in the night?

Hench throws a pillow at **Bobbie**. **Bobbie** giggles. He opens the laptop. The porn noise starts again.

Hench Switch it off.

Bobbie I wanna watch it.

Hench Put it on mute then!

Bobbie Oh. It's no fun without the noises.

Bobbie puts it on mute. He carefully puts it down in front of him. He sits at the end of the bed, the screen lighting his face. **Bobbie** turns round to check behind him, then puts his hand down his tracksuit bottoms and starts wanking a little bit inside them.

*Pause. Calm descends for a moment, just a little twitching noise. Suddenly **Hench** sits upright in bed.*

Hench BOBBIE, STOP WANKING!

Bobbie jumps with shock and then shows him both hands.

Bobbie I wasn't! I swear. Go to sleep!

Hench lies back down. **Bobbie** dissolves into a fit of giggles.

Your face, bruv. 'STOP WANKING.' 'BOBBIE, STOP WANKING.'

*He giggles. He sniffs his fingers. Thinks about sticking them under **Hench**'s nose. Thinks better of it.*

Goodnight, brother. Dream about that skank.

*Time passes. **Bobbie** picks up the controller – plays the game for a while, chucks it down again. Amuses himself. Suddenly there is a noise – loud – close to the window. **Bobbie** is startled, genuinely scared. Then there is a ¹³thump, then a moan; a female voice. **Bobbie**'s face lights up – a picture of pure joy and expectation. He goes to the window. Taliban whines gently.*

Hench!

Hench sits up in bed with a start

Hench What? What is it? Is it that girl?

Bobbie (beaming) No. It's Mum.

Hench Fuck off.

Bobbie Told you.

Hench Fuck off.

Bobbie I knew she was coming. I could feel it in the stars.

Hench Shut up. (Getting out of bed.) What's she doing?

Bobbie She's lying on the grass.

Hench (putting his jeans on) Is she awake?

Bobbie Don't think so.

Hench Fuck.

Hench goes to the window.

Bobbie Bring her in for me.

Hench No. I did my back in last time.

Bobbie Oh go on, bro! She might be low!

Hench She's pissed.

Bobbie Might not be pissed.

Hench Course she is.

Bobbie Then she's even more likely to be low. Diabetes and alcohol don't mix!

Hench is rubbing his eyes, looking at his mother, comatose on the lawn.

¹⁴

Hench We'll put a duvet over her.

Bobbie It's night-time. What if someone rapes her?

Hench Look at the state of her! Who's gonna rape that?

Bobbie (punches **Hench** in the arm) Hench!

Hench OW!

Bobbie GO ON!

*Beat. **Hench** sighs.*

Hench Gimme the T-shirt then.

Bobbie beams at him and gives him the T-shirt. It is far too small.

Oh great. I look like a right fucking cunt now, don't I?

Bobbie It's alright. It's only Mum.

Hench We need to get some clothes.

Hench heads out. **Bobbie** watches at the window, a mixture of concern and excitement on his face. We hear a little female moaning and some grunting from **Hench**. **Bobbie** straightens out the sheet on the sofa bed, ready for her. **Hench** drags in **Maggie**, holding her under the arms. She is dressed in faded sweatshirt, skinny jeans, white trainers, her looks are ravaged by an excessive and stressful lifestyle. **Hench** has woken her, and she is in the middle of a diabetic hypo. He tries to sit her on the armchair, but she begins to scuffle and struggle.

Shit.

Maggie grabs his face.

Fuck it!

She pokes him in the eye.

Get her off me!

Bobbie helps to separate them. **Maggie** goes limp for a moment and **Bobbie** is able to lay her down. But then she^[15] starts to writhe. She begins muttering and murmuring, convulsing slightly.

Maggie No!

Bobbie looms over her.

Bobbie Mum? It's me. **Bobbie**. It's alright.

Maggie opens her eyes and sees him. She begins to laugh. **Bobbie** joins in, laughing with her. **Hench** moves away, repulsed.

Hench Stop it. Shut up.

Bobbie Shhh, get the Lucozade.

Hench passes it to **Bobbie**. **Bobbie** takes the lid off, looks at the bottle and looks at **Maggie**, still writhing and laughing.

You do it, bruvver. I can never get it in her mouth.

Hench sighs.

Hench Get off her then.

Bobbie stands to the side, hands clasped up to his face. **Hench** expertly sits astride **Maggie**'s chest, pinning her arms to her sides. Disorientated and slurring, she begins to shout.

Maggie Get off me. ALAN! What you doing?

She begins to kick.

Hench Sit on her legs, Bob.

Bobbie I can't!

Hench DO IT!

Bobbie sits on her legs. **Hench** firmly takes her face.

MUM. OPEN GOB. MUM. MAGGIE! OPEN... GOB!

Bobbie Don't let her choke!

Hench Don't be a prick!^[16]

They wait. She swallows. **Hench** looks back at **Bobbie**, relieved.

Swallowed.

Bobbie Thank God.

Hench pours more and she drinks it.

Give her more.

Hench I am.

Bobbie Make her better.

A quiet moment. They both catch their breath. **Hench** pours the last of the bottle in her mouth. **Maggie** smiles up at him, warmly, as he waits for her to swallow. Suddenly she spits the mouthful into **Hench**'s face. **Bobbie** laughs. **Maggie** laughs. **Hench** gets up.

Hench Fuck's SAKE!

Bobbie Shiiit she got you, bruvva!

Hench Fucking bitch.

Bobbie She got you proper!

Hench *wipes his face on the sheet.*

Hench I don't care if she dies.

Bobbie *moves his mother up so he is closer to her. She has settled now.*

Bobbie Ah look. She's sleeping like a queen.

Hench I don't give two fucks.

Bobbie Shhh.

Beat.

That was a bad one.

No response from Hench.

That was definitely top three, bruv. Worse than the one on the H28. Not as bad as Poundland though.

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Hench *puts the TV on, and starts to play Call of Duty. Bobbie remains straddling his mother, looking at her, drinking in her presence. Pause. Hench glances over.*

Hench You can get off her now.

Bobbie She might need a bath. She might have wet herself.

Hench I ain't doing that and you ain't doing that. That's fucked up.

Bobbie *(checking)* It's alright. She hasn't.

Beat.

Hench I hate her.

Bobbie I love her. She's the best thing that's ever happened to me.

Hench That don't even make sense.

Bobbie I don't care. Let's get her into bed.

Hench *sighs and gets up. They pick her up – teamwork, done many times before – and lay her on the sofa bed. Bobbie switches the light off. He gets into bed with his mother and cuddles her. Hench looks on, perturbed.*

Hench Bobbie. Bobbie?

Beat.

BOB!

Bobbie Shhhhhh!

Hench Bobbie, that's just fucking weird, man.

Bobbie Go to sleep.

Hench *looks on for a moment, considers intervening. Then he goes back to his game.*

Scene Two

The next morning. Maggie sits in the armchair with the duvet round her shoulders. She shivers a bit. She looks around the room at the state of it.

Maggie *(under her breath)* Jesus Christ.

Bobbie *enters proudly with a steaming cup of tea made in a massive Sports Direct mug. He gives it to her.*

Thanks, beaus.

Bobbie Hang on.

He gets his pint of milk from down the side of the bed, sniffs it, and pours it in the tea.

Here.

Maggie My little diamond.

Bobbie Hang on.

He goes to her jacket, gets out her fags and lighter and puts one in her mouth and lights it. She takes a drag and looks at him.

Maggie Ah. Bobbie, you're my baby, aren't ya?

Bobbie I'm not a baby any more, I'm a man, Mum.

Maggie You'll always be my baby.

Bobbie Do you like my hair? Hench did it, with Nanny's clippers.

Maggie Mmm... excellent.

She smokes and beams at him, not knowing quite what to say.

Bobbie Miss ya.

Maggie Do ya?

Bobbie Can I come and see ya?

Maggie When Alan's calmed down a bit.

Bobbie It was an accident.

Maggie You don't bite someone by accident, Bob.

Bobbie I tripped and fell. With my mouth open.

Maggie (*chuckling*)Porky fucking pies.

Beat.

Bobbie It's eight-thirty.

Maggie Is it, sweetness?

Bobbie Do you wanna watch *Lorraine*?

Maggie Yeah, alright then.

He puts it on. They watch. She smokes.

Bobbie You scared me last night.

Maggie Did I?

Bobbie *nods emphatically.*

What am I like eh, bubs?

Bobbie You're alright now though, yeah?

She smiles and nods.

Maggie All the better for seeing you.

Bobbie All the better for seeing you –

Maggie All the better for seeing / you.

Bobbie All the better for seeing YOU!

Hench *bares in, doing up his flies. He goes straight to the TV and changes the channel and plays Call of Duty.*

Bobbie We was watching *Lorraine*!

Maggie Alright, Hench?

Hench *ignores them.*

What's wrong with you?

Bobbie He's got his period. Mum, my back really itches.

Maggie Does it, darlin'? We'll have to get you one of them back-scratchers. I think Alan's got one.

Bobbie (*quietly*)I don't want his.

Maggie (*to Hench*)You got a girlfriend yet, you little prick?

Bobbie He has!

Maggie Has he?

Hench Shut up.

Bobbie She stands across the road and stares through our window and Hench sneaks out at night and fucks her.

Maggie You dirty dog!

Hench He's bullshitting you.

Bobbie Yeah. He doesn't really. He's always looking out the window for her though.

Hench No I ain't.

Bobbie And he dreams about her. He wakes up in the morning with a hard-on.

Maggie Does he?

Bobbie Yep!

He does a little pinky (small dick) sign for his mum. Maggie and Bobbie laugh. Hench sees and is embarrassed.

Hench Fuck you.

Maggie (*through laughter*) Oh don't worry, Hench. It's what you do with it that counts.

Bobbie Sometimes it sticks in my back! It's like a chipolata!

They laugh. Maggie spits a bit of her tea out.

Hench Well, don't sleep so close to me then like a little... like a little gayboy cunt.

Maggie Don't call your brother a cunt, Hench. It's an ugly word.

Hench Like you can tell me what to do.

Maggie Just remember who pays the rent here, Hench.

Hench *snorts at Maggie.*

Hench 'Pays the fucking rent'...

Maggie Well, it's all in my name and that, isn't it? You remember that, mate.

Pause. Maggie softens.

Is there really a girl?

Hench Yeah.

Bobbie She's got really small tits.

Maggie Well, never mind. (*To Hench.*) Why don't you invite her in? Proper little bachelor pad now innit? Bet your mates are jealous, Hench.

Bobbie (*matter-of-fact*) He hasn't got any mates.

Beat. Hench and Bobbie watch the screen where Hench is playing. Maggie watches for a moment too.

Maggie God, don't you ever get bored of shooting shit?

Hench Nope.

Beat.

Fuck!

Bobbie Noob, bruv?

Hench Yeah.

Maggie What you on about? What's a noob?

Bobbie Black Ops. (*Cod-American accent.*) Some Yank faggot just tried to noobtube him.

Maggie What Yank?

Bobbie The DefGnome.

Maggie The what-gnome?

Bobbie (*cod-American accent*) He's a faggot, Mom. That's all you need to know.

Hench Shit!

Maggie (*with sudden realisation*) Where's Taliban?

Silence. Bobbie and Hench look at each other.

Where is he? Is he dead?

Bobbie No! He's not dead. He's living in our room.

Maggie Is that why you're sleeping in here?

Hench Yeah.

Maggie Why don't you sleep in my room?

Hench Cos you took the fucking bed.

Maggie Oh yeah. Fair enough.

Beat.

Well, you can't just keep him in there!

Hench We need to have him destroyed.

Bobbie / Maggie No WAY!

Hench He bit someone on the estate.

Bobbie Yeah, but she was winding him up bad, Mum. She was pulling his tail.

Maggie Was he on a leash?

Beat.

You gotta keep him on a fucking leash, boys! He's a bloodthirsty animal.

Bobbie Sorry, Mum.

Maggie Jesus.

Beat. Maggie is pissed off.

Well, you're not having him destroyed.

Hench It costs two hundred notes.

Maggie Well, you're definitely not then.

Beat.

Ah. Poor Tali. I might go in and see him.

Hench Nah, leave it.

Maggie Why?

Beat. Nothing from Hench.

Bob?

Bobbie Hench hasn't been clearing up his shit!

Hench Shut up, Bobbie! –

Maggie Fucking hell, Hench –

Bobbie I like your earrings, Mum.

Maggie Do you, beauts? Hench, you gotta clean up after him! –

Hench You clean up after him! –

Bobbie Are they real diamonds? –

Maggie God, you can't even clean up a bit of dog shit? Don't think so, darlin', Alan bought 'em –

Bobbie I'd buy you real diamonds –

Maggie Would you, sweetness? HENCH –

Hench WHAT? You clean it up. He's your fucking dog. Take him back to Minge-Face Alan. See what he says about it.

Maggie DON'T call him that!

Hench *shrugs.*

Hench Just say what I see innit.

Beat. Maggie finds this quite funny, despite herself. She starts to giggle a little. Bobbie clocks this, and joins in – enjoying the moment. Even Hench joins in. They laugh for a little while; a glimpse of times past.

Bobbie 'Just say what I see innit.'

Laughter fades. Just the sound of the controller as Hench kills things. Beat.

Maggie Hench, have you got any money?

Hench *snorts.*

Hench Nuh.

Beat. Bobbie watches the game.

Bobbie Yes, bruv. Swarm and Dogs!

Hench Twenty gun-streak.

Maggie I've spent half my life watching you two on that thing.

Bobbie (*mimicking the game*) HOSTILES ON THE ROOF!

Hench Shut up!

Maggie You got anything to drink here, Hench?

Hench No.

Beat. Something goes wrong in his game.

Bollocks!

Bobbie (*going back to the seat next to his mum*) You was owned then, bruv.

Maggie Got anything to smoke then. Bit of weed?

Hench No.

Maggie God, what sort of teenager are you?

Hench I haven't got any money!

Bobbie *takes the silver paper out of his mum's fag packet and over the following lines proceeds to roll an imaginary spliff with it. Then he unrolls it and makes a paper aeroplane out of it.* **Hench** *starts a new game.*

Maggie What about the money Mum gave you?

Hench That was weeks ago.

Bobbie Nanny's gone away.

Maggie What?

Bobbie With Slick Vik – the smooth-talking asylum seeker. That's why we don't have any clothes.

Maggie Are you fucking joking me? Hench?

Hench She has. He's gonna be deported.

Bobbie They've gone on the run.

Maggie To where???

Hench I dunno, do I? Not much point going on the run if you tell everyone where you're fucking going!

Maggie Alright, smart-arse.

Bobbie She fell for his Eastern charms.

Maggie When was this? Hench? Will you put that fucking controller down for one minute? *He sighs and puts it down.*

Hench Three, four weeks ago.

Bobbie Hench took a big bag of washing round the day before she left. It's why we don't have any clothes.

Maggie Seriously?

Hench Yep.

Beat. **Hench** *picks up his controller again.*

Maggie Well, she's showing her true colours now. I told you what she was like. Never fucking believed me though, did ya?

Hench What?

Maggie Couldn't put a foot wrong, could she? With you two... *Now* you see.

Bobbie (*with relish*) She's in love!

Beat.

Maggie Oh she don't know the meaning of the word.

Bobbie She loves him more than she loves us.

Hench Shut up, Bobbie.

Maggie He's thirty-fucking-nine!

Bobbie She loves him like you loved my dad I think.

Maggie She couldn't possibly love him that much, Bobbles.

Bobbie *Is it?*

Maggie It is. When he died my sun went in.

Bobbie Ahhh.

Maggie You look just like him you know.

Bobbie Do I?

Maggie Yep. You're gonna be a right heartbreaker.

Bobbie Does that mean I'll have shitloads of hos?

Maggie (*laughing*) Yeah.

Bobbie And I'll break their hearts?

Maggie Yep!

Bobbie Sick.

Beat.

Mum. Can you tell me how my dad died?

Hench *tuts.*

Maggie Oh, Bob, again?

Bobbie Pleeeeease?

Maggie *sighs. Reluctantly she obliges – she's had to do this many times over the years and at first it grates on her slightly.*

Maggie Alright. Come here.

Bobbie Share a chair?

Maggie Share a chair.

Hench *sighs. Maggie makes enough room on the chair for Bobbie.*

You're getting too big for this.

Bobbie NEVER!

Maggie Okay. So it was a cold cold winter. We was in the park. You were in the pushchair and Hench was on the swings. Me and your dad were just smoking a ciggie on the bench. The big pond was all frozen and there was this little girl pretending to skate on it. Her mum was shouting her name.

Bobbie What was it?

Maggie It was a long time ago, bubs.

Bobbie But you knew last time. It was Katie.

Maggie Fuck's sake, Bob! If you knew why did you ask?

Bobbie Sorry, Mum.

Maggie So she's screaming KATIE! KATIE! And then we hear this CRACK.

Bobbie Like a dry branch breaking?

Maggie That's right.

Bobbie And Katie just disappears?

Maggie That's right. And your dad, well, he just chucks his fag and goes running over there, and leans over and sort of slides onto the ice.

Bobbie Like this?

He shows her the action.

Maggie Yep. And we can see this little hand wavering through the hole in the ice. And your dad grabs the hand. And then he's gone.

Bobbie *puts his hands up to his face in mock-horror. Maggie is getting more into the drama of it now.*

And there's this eerie silence. Like the whole park is holding its breath. And we wait.

Bobbie And we wait.

Maggie And we wait.

Hench *makes a sort of snorting noise. Bobbie flips him the bird and Maggie sticks two fingers up.*

Suddenly – Katie is pushed up from below!

Bobbie YESSSSSS! –

Maggie Her mum grabs her and cuddles her and she's crying and shivering but she's okay.

Bobbie And Dad???

Maggie You know this, Bobbles.

Bobbie No Dad.

Maggie That's right. No Dad.

Bobbie You called the police. The ambulance. But it was too late.

Maggie That's right.

Bobbie And when they got him out he was...

Maggie (*almost a whisper*)...blue.

Bobbie (*sadly*)That's right.

Beat.

Hench That's fucking bollocks.

Maggie You *what*?

Hench He died on Tony's kitchen floor with a needle sticking out of his arm.

Maggie FUCK YOU, HENCH!

Simultaneously Bobbie jumps up and begins to bark at Hench. Taliban begins to bark too. Maggie tries to calm Bobbie.

(*To Bobbie.*)Shhh! 'S alright, darlin'. (*To Hench.*)You just keep THAT – (*Points to nose.*)OUT, right, Hench? He's just jealous, Bob –

Bobbie Yeah. Dickhead Hench –

Maggie Cos we all know about your dad, don't we, Hench?

Bobbie Yeah!

Hench Do I look like it / bothers me?

Maggie We all know what kind of a man he was!

Bobbie Yeah! My dad's a hero. Your dad's a rapist.

Hench (*to Maggie*)Then why d'you stay with him for so long then?

Maggie (*jumping up*)YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I BEEN THROUGH, RIGHT? You haven't walked in my shoes.

Beat. She sits down. Lights another fag.

You haven't walked in my shoes. No one has.

Bobbie I'll buy you some new / shoes –

Maggie God I need a fucking drink!

Maggie *puts her head in her hands.* **Bobbie** *gets up and whispers something in his mum's ear.*

Alright then, sweetness. Good boy.

Bobbie *goes to Hench and holds out his hand. Hench sighs, takes the T-shirt off and passes it to him. Bobbie puts the T-shirt on and makes a face at Hench, smiles at his mum and then leaves. Silence. Hench looks at his mum, shakes his head, goes back to his game.*

Hench You shouldn't encourage him to nick things.

Maggie Why?

Hench Cos he's shit at it. He keeps getting caught.

Beat.

Maggie If that's how he wants to remember his dad, why can't you let him? He was a good man, right? We all make mistakes. You're far from fucking perfect.

Beat.

Sometimes I think about what my life might have been.

Beat.

Do you want me to bring you some of Alan's shirts?

Hench No.

Maggie Well don't say I never offered.

Pause. Maggie has an idea.

Oh yeah, I forgot. Alan's got an X-Box for you.

Hench What?

Maggie X-Box 360... Or something. Got it off Bailey; part-exchange. You just need to give him your PlayStation and he'll drop it round to you tonight.

Hench *snorts.*

What? I thought X-Box was better than a PlayStation – is it not? Well, don't ask me, I don't fucking know. Do what you want.

Beat.

So do you want it then?

Hench NO!

Maggie Hench, I need some money!

Hench I ain't got any!

Maggie The telly then. It's half mine anyway.

Hench *runs to the TV and stands in front of it.*

Hench No it fucking isn't.

Maggie What about the laptop?

Hench There's nothing here for you.

Maggie I need food, Hench! My blood sugar's all over the shop.

Hench *snorts.*

Hench Yeah right. 'You need food.'

Maggie I'm trying to take care of myself, right? God, don't you have a heart?

Beat. She looks around, thinking of her current situation at Alan's, weighing up her options.

I might come back.

Hench NO.

Suddenly Hench springs into action. He gathers up her bag and jacket and thrusts it at her. He is strangely assertive with her, a new experience for them both.

Go on. Go.

Maggie What you doing?

Hench GO.

Maggie Hench!

She hovers for a moment, looking hurt and outraged. Then she darts past Hench and grabs the laptop, he gets in front of her and retrieves it from her. In a panic she goes for the TV but he manages to stand in front of it, blocking it expertly. She then attempts to grab the PlayStation and handfuls of DVDs from the bottom of the TV unit but Hench deftly blocks her every attempt, far more alert and agile than her.

Hench GO AWAY THERE'S NOTHING HERE FOR YOU.

Maggie This is my flat!

Hench I'll tell Bobbie it was you that nicked his iPod. I'll tell him.

Pause. A stand-off. They get their breath back.

Maggie You look just like your dad.

Maggie *grabs her bag from where it has fallen on the floor and leaves. She slams the door.*

Taliban starts to bark a bit. Hench stands motionless in the middle of the room for a moment. Maggie has left her fags. He spies them, lights one and smokes. He goes about trying to straighten up the room. The door slams again and Bobbie runs in breathless, with two cans of premium lager in his pockets and carrying a bottle of Lucozade.

Bobbie They chased me.

Hench Who?

Bobbie Kareem and his hairy daughter. Where is she?

He looks around frantically.

Is she in the loo?

Hench Didn't you see her?

Bobbie No!

Hench She had to go.

Bobbie WHAT???

Hench Minge-Face Alan texted. Something about the washing machine or something.

Bobbie That's bollocks. She'd never go without saying goodbye.

Sadly, Bobbie takes the cans and bottles out of his pocket and puts them on the side.

Anyway. Alan never has any credit.

Bobbie *sits on the bed. He sort of internally collapses. Pause.* **Hench** offers him a fag.

Hench You want one of these?

No response. Hench opens a can and offers it to Bobbie. No response.

You wanna play COD?

Beat.

Wanna go on RedTube? Find the one where they put stuff up that woman? Remember the watermelon? That's jokes. Bob?

No response. Hench takes a long swig of beer.

Bobbie Hench?

Hench Yeah?

Bobbie I wish I was a millionaire.

Hench Do ya?

Bobbie Yeah.

Lights fade.

Scene Three

Bobbie and **Hench** are asleep in bed, close, two sets of pale white feet sticking out of the end of the duvet. Gentle whining from Taliban in the next room. **Hench** starts to murmur in his sleep, and toss and turn a little.

Hench No. NO.

Beat. He stirs and twitches some more.

Stop it. Don't. Stop. NO.

Bobbie wakes up.

Bobbie Hench.

Hench *(still in sleep – louder)*No no no NO!

Bobbie Hench. HENCH!

He shakes Hench a little. Hench is dead to the world.

Shit!

Bobbie jumps out of bed. He looks down. The bottom of his T-shirt is soaked, as is the bed.

Oh brother. Not again.

Scene Four

The next day. Hench sits at the bottom of the sofa bed, playing Playstation. He has no shirt on and is smoking a fag. Bobbie is standing on one end of the sofa bed. He has a wet sheet, duvet cover and T-shirt to hang up. He's washed them in the bath and is creating a makeshift washing line made from a connector wire, which is hanging from the door to the corner of the window. He starts with the sheet. He is a little melancholy.

BobbieClean.

Bobbie looks at **Hench**. **Hench** is fixated on the game. **Bobbie** looks at the sheet, looks around the room and has an idea.

*(Excitedly)*I'm gonna clean everything. Hench.

Bobbie starts randomly cleaning and tidying. He gets near **Hench**'s feet.

Your feet smell like the end of the world!

Nothing from Hench.

Hench! No wonder Mum don't wanna stay here. This whole flat smells like Bombay Bad Boy Pot Noodles. I'm gonna clean your feet.

Bobbie *grabs the Lynx spray and wet T-shirt.*

Hench You ain't gonna touch my feet, don't be stupid.

Bobbie You just play your game! Don't mind me.

Hench *folds his feet under him, cross-legged. Bobbie sighs. Bobbie jumps up on the bed, looks up in the corner of the room. He tuts, like his nan might have done.*

Cobwebs.

Beat.

Have we got a feather duster?

Hench What do you reckon?

Bobbie Nanny used to have one. She used to put it down our trousers, remember?

Bobbie *jumps up, trying to bring down the cobweb, disturbing Hench.*

Hench Fuck's SAKE!

Suddenly there is a loud hammering on the door. Hench and Bobbie look at each other. Hench pauses his game, tense. The knocking continues intermittantly over the following text, building in urgency,

Bobbie Mum!

Hench Shhhh! –

Bobbie I told you!

Hench Don't be a dick. She wouldn't knock, would she?

Bobbie She might.

Hench She's got a key.

Bobbie She might have lost it. I told you she'd come back for me! You're a prick.

Bobbie *heads towards the door.*

Hench Shhhhhh!

Hench *pulls Bobbie back to the ground. Another loud knock.*

That ain't Mum.

Bobbie Hench, she / might go if we don't –

Hench If it's someone from the unit looking for you then Mum's gonna get fined again, isn't she? Then she really won't come back. For real.

Another bang. Bobbie looks at Hench, worried now.

Bobbie Shit!

Hench Just stay there.

Hench *begins to edge towards the door, Bobbie tentatively follows. Hench whips around.*

Bobbie, sit!

Hench *goes to the front door. Bobbie waits with baited breath. Voices from the hallway.*

Umm... yeah, what do you / want?

Jennifer I don't want any trouble but I need you to hear me out, okay?

Jennifer *barges into the room. She is petite, thin, and pretty in a wild, odd way. She is dressed in leggings and an old flannel shirt, too big for her. In one hand she clutches a brand-new dog chain, in the other a mobile phone. Hench enters behind her, completely lost for words – stunned at her presence.*

Bobbie What's going on? Who are you?

Hench *is rendered speechless. Jennifer is nervous but resolute; strong. She begins her speech which she has clearly prepared, in a voice that only wavers slightly.*

Jennifer My name is Jennifer. I don't want any trouble I am here to help. Now / all I want you to do –

Bobbie Hench, it's the girl that stares up at the window! The skank with the little tits!

Jennifer *instinctively covers her chest with one arm.*

Jennifer What? What do you mean?

Hench Nothing. Bobbie, shut up –

Bobbie It's her!

Jennifer Okay, I have been staring up at your window. I've been watching your dog. You keep him shut up in that back room all the time. I never see you go in and feed him. Never see you go in and clean up after him. I *never* see you walk him. And he's always howling, barking, scratching at the window, up on his back legs. He's skin and bone!

Bobbie She's a weirdo, bruv. Oi, she's a paedophile for dogs! –

Jennifer You're not meeting his 'basic welfare needs', which means providing a safe environment, a suitable diet and protecting him from pain and suffering – under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Beat.

Hench What? –

Bobbie BOLLOCKS!

Jennifer (*really gathering strength now*) Which means you're breaking the law. Mistreating an animal is a criminal offence. I've dialled 999 on this phone I'm not afraid to press send. The police will be here in minutes.

Bobbie She's off her tits, man! –

Hench Shhh.

Jennifer They'll take him away and you'll never be allowed to own an animal again. AND you could be fined thousands of pounds –

Bobbie Well, we're skint!

Jennifer You could go to prison! For fifty-one weeks!

Bobbie HENCH!

Hench *is still gobsmacked that Jennifer is in their flat at all. Jennifer moves swiftly from bad cop to good cop.*

Jennifer BUT it doesn't have to be that way! I can take him home with me, today, and you'll never have to worry about him ever again. Never have to feed him or walk him. And I won't say a word to anyone. I'll just say I found him... on the street.

Bobbie Say something, Hench!

Jennifer I live just in Keating House. Over there. Our flat's bigger than yours. We've even got a garden. Well, a little patch of grass / anyway.

Bobbie BROTHER! –

Jennifer I love animals! So much. What's his name?

Hench Errrr...

Bobbie Don't tell her! –

Jennifer What do you call him?

Hench Taliban.

Bobbie BRUV, DON'T / DO IT!

Jennifer Taliban? Jesus...

Hench I – I –

Bobbie Fucking *say* something, Hench.

Hench I dunno... I –

Jennifer I used to have three dogs myself. I can take proper care of him, I swear to you –

Bobbie No! NO! You're not taking our dog, you fucking BITCH!

Bobbie *charges towards Jennifer and Hench gets in between them. Jennifer is scared and jumps back but keeps arms outstretched – resolute.*

Hench Bobbie!

Bobbie She can't!

Hench (*turning to Jennifer*) Look, maybe you should / go –

Jennifer I'm not going without him. Give him to me or I call the police. YOUR CHOICE!

Bobbie *ducks under Hench's arm and deftly grabs the phone from Jennifer.*

Hench Bobbie!

Jennifer Give me that back!

Bobbie No –

Hench Bobbie! –

Bobbie I'm gonna stamp it to death!

Hench goes after **Bobbie**. **Bobbie** runs away, holding the phone out of his reach. **Bobbie** is surprised by **Hench** pursuing him.

What you doing, bruv?

Hench Give me the phone.

Bobbie She's in our territory she's in our / territory –

Hench COME HERE!

Hench chases **Bobbie** around the flat, then rugby-tackles him to the floor and they squirm and wrestle for a while. **Hench** holds **Bobbie**'s head against the floor and **Bobbie** starts to bark. **Jennifer** looks on, shaken – frozen to the spot.

Hench grabs the phone from **Bobbie**. **Bobbie** spits in **Hench**'s face. **Hench** freezes, **Bobbie** freezes, the room holds its breath. **Hench** wipes his face, looks down at **Bobbie**, shakes his head, then gets up, white with rage. He walks towards **Jennifer**. He hands her the phone.

Hang on a minute, yeah, / and I'll go and –
Suddenly from **Bobbie**.

Bobbie PLEASE!

Beat. They look at him.

PLEASE, HENCH, PLEASE! PLEASE DON'T LET HER TAKE HIM.

Hench stops in the doorway. **Jennifer** looks over at **Bobbie** in dismay.

I'LL BE THE BEST BROTHER EVER I PROMISE PLEASE I PROMISE I'LL STOP BEING SUCH A LITTLE CUNT AND I WON'T EVEN SPEAK TO YOU IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO! Brother? I'll just stay quiet, yeah. I'll just sleep in with Taliban and clear up all his shit and you can play COD without me you can have the whole bed to yourself I'll never talk to you again if you want I'll just be quiet just PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE!

Hench Bob, it might be better if we –

Bobbie NO! It's not better it's never never better, please don't take him! Oh, HENCH!
I'M BEGGING YOU! PLEASE!

Bobbie throws himself face down on the floor and weeps with all his heart.

It is a pitiful sight. Hench hovers in the doorway, Jennifer in the middle, clearly moved by what she sees. Bobbie cries into the floor.

Hench (looking at **Jennifer**, unsure) I – I'm not sure / if I can –

Jennifer It's okay.

She looks at Bobbie.

I understand.

She edges towards Bobbie, who has quietened himself now and sort of whimpers on the floor, given up, distraught. She stops a little short of where he is. She kneels down, making no sudden movements. Very quietly she speaks.

Shhhh. Shhhh. Hey. Hey?

Bobbie looks up at her. She hands out the dog lead for him to take from her. He looks at it confused for a moment. Takes it. Blackout.

Scene Five

Lights fade up.

The next day. Afternoon. Jennifer stands in the middle of the room with a large carrier bag. Hench and Bobbie are apprehensive, suspicious. She looks at them both, then reaches into the bag. She pulls out a bouncy ball, shows it to them, then places it on the floor in front of her.

*She pulls out a squeaky dog's toy, gives it a little squeak by accident, and it makes **Bobbie** and **Hench** jump. She lays it out in front of her, next to the ball. Next, a can of dog food and spoon. She shows them the bag is empty and then steps back. An offering of gifts for Taliban.*

Pause.

Bobbie *begins to edge towards the toys, to inspect them. He picks up the dog food, reads the label.*

Bobbie 'Meaty chunks.'

*He looks at **Jennifer**. Looks back.*

'In gravy.'

Bobbie *makes a retching noise, then puts the tin down. **Hench** skirts around the edge of the room, trying to be inconspicuous. **Bobbie** picks up the ball and starts bouncing it, kicking it, slamming it; darting around the room, agile and animal-like.*

This is the bounciest ball in the world!

Bobbie *bounces it hard against the wall and watches.*

Look! It's still going!

Hench and **Jennifer** *both watch **Bobbie**. After a while **Jennifer** switches her focus to **Hench** while **Bobbie** plays on, oblivious. **Hench** realises **Jennifer** is looking at him and it shakes him to his core. **Bobbie** lets the ball stop bouncing and looks over at **Jennifer**. Not quite convinced by her presence yet, he asks her quick-fire questions; a sort of cop-style interrogation. What are you doing here?*

⁴³

Jennifer I live here.

Bobbie In Feltham?

Jennifer Yep. In Keating House. Just over there.

She points.

Bobbie And you're not going to call the police, or the RSPCA, or the Social Services?

Jennifer No.

Bobbie Swear down.

Jennifer I swear... (*Slightly confused.*)down.

Bobbie On your mum's life?

Jennifer Okay, yeah.

Bobbie *looks to **Hench** – gives him a little nod. Then he warms to **Jennifer**, becomes more playful.*

Bobbie So your name's Jennifer?

Jennifer Right.

Bobbie Do some people call you Jenny?

Jennifer Sometimes.

Bobbie Can I?

Jennifer You can, yes.

Bobbie I'm Bobbie. As in Bobbie Dazzler, my nan says, although I don't know who that is. And this is my brother Hench. He's got a face for radio.

Hench Shut up, man.

Bobbie I'm thirteen, he's sixteen. How old are you?

Jennifer Sixteen. Just turned.

Bobbie *has a mischievous glance at **Hench**.*

Bobbie So when you were looking at the window it was cos of the dog?

⁴⁴

Jennifer That's right.

Bobbie Is it? Cos my brother thought it was because you wanted to suck his dick!

Bobbie *dissolves into a fit of giggles.*

Hench BOBBIE!

Jennifer Oh – I –

Hench Ignore him, he's got ADHD.

Bobbie I haven't!

Hench He's got Tourette's!

Bobbie Fuck you!

Hench See?

Bobbie *lunges towards Hench and Hench pushes him away. Bobbie laughs gleefully.*

Bobbie Nah, just jokes, Jenny, just jokes.

Jennifer Oh. Okay.

Bobbie So what school are you at?

Jennifer I'm not. I start at Thames Park in September.

Bobbie (to **Hench**) Fuck that. Thames Park, bruv!

Jennifer What do you mean?

Hench Nothing.

Bobbie Why do you talk funny?

Hench Bobbie.

Jennifer I'm from Wales.

Bobbie How long have you lived here then?

Jennifer About three months.

Bobbie Do you like it?

Jennifer Not really.

⁴⁵

Bobbie Nah it's shit, isn't it? Did you know Feltham has the highest rate of incest in the country?

Jennifer Oh... Really?

Bobbie That means sisters having sex with brothers. And dads and cousins.

Hench Bobbie.

Bobbie *picks up the pace a bit, using the PlayStation controller as a microphone.*

Bobbie Where in Wales?

Jennifer Aberthin.

Bobbie WHAT?

Jennifer ABERTHIN. It's a little village.

Bobbie How long would it take to walk there?

Jennifer Three weeks.

Bobbie How long to run?

Jennifer At least two weeks.

Bobbie How long on a scooter?

Jennifer Umm... next question.

Bobbie Whose house do you live in?

Jennifer My Uncle Keith.

Bobbie Your mum's boyfriend sort of uncle?

Jennifer No, my mum's brother sort of uncle.

Bobbie Where's your mum now?

Jennifer She's over there, in Keating House.

Bobbie What about your dad?

Beat. It's hard for Jennifer to answer.

Jennifer He's dead.

Bobbie For real?

⁴⁶

Jennifer Yes.

Bobbie Did you watch him die?

Hench Bobbie!

Bobbie What, I'm just doing a quiz!

Hench You're asking her questions about herself – how is that a quiz?

Bobbie Well, she's getting them all right!

Beat. Bobbie is back in interview mode, maybe copying some styles off the TV he's seen.

Why do you love Taliban so much?

Jennifer Because I love animals.

Bobbie Is a dog your favourite animal?

Jennifer Yes.

Bobbie Do *you* have any dogs?

Jennifer I used to have three.

Bobbie Names?

Jennifer Pero, Dewi and Gruff.

Bobbie WHAT?

Jennifer Pero, Dewi and Gruff.

Beat.

Bobbie That was just a noise. What's your second favourite animal?

Jennifer Umm...

Bobbie I'm going to have to hurry you.

Jennifer Okay. A donkey.

Bobbie Would you like to own a donkey?

⁴⁷

Jennifer Yes! I'd love to.

Bobbie Would you like to own two, or do you think that would be unbearable?

Jennifer I'd like to own a whole farm!

Hench That's enough questions now.

Bobbie I haven't finished yet! You're the Weakest Link, Hench. Goodbye!

Jennifer I've got a question.

Bobbie Go on. Oh hang on. Here.

He passes her the controller so she can interview him, enjoying the role reversal.

Jennifer Why do you call him Taliban?

Bobbie Cos he's vicious.

Jennifer Right.

Beat.

Bobbie And he's brown.

Jennifer's face drops a little. Hench puts his face in his hands. Through his fingers:

Hench Fucking hell, Bob.

A fade. Some time passes. A couple of hours later.

Jennifer now sits on the edge of the sofa bed with **Bobbie**. She holds the controller. It's quite alien for her, but she's not terrible at it. **Hench** is somewhere further off, out of the picture almost. He feeds her directions in a calm, almost mesmeric way. He hates the sound of his own voice. This is the first time he has spoken more than a few syllables since **Jennifer** arrived.

So now you see you're in this sort of forest thing... Yeah, and you can see around you. And this guy's coming up to you now. Now press R1 cos you're on the... nah R1. R1 - ⁴⁸ that's your gun. And you can change it cos that gun's shit. Now you press square. That's it. Now move the joystick around. And you can go to a different weapon I'd say go for the rifle cos that's the one I usually use. Yeah. Yeah. Now triangle to select. So now you got that. So now go forward basically into the trees. Use the joy pad. No not the joy pad - er - the - the - the stick.

Beginning to notice Hench is a bit flustered, a grin spreads over Bobbie's face.

Hang on.

Hench tentatively comes over to where **Jennifer** is sitting, careful not to invade her personal space, and shows her what he means.

Bobbie stands behind **Hench** and begins to mimic everything he does.

So hit the triangle. Crouch down. That's it, lay down.

Bobbie 'That's it, lay down.'

Hench Now press L1.

Bobbie 'Now press L1.'

Hench Bobbie, what the fuck?

Bobbie ‘Bobbie, what the fuck?’

Jennifer What now?

HenchR1 R1 R1!

Bobbie‘R1 R1 R1!’

Hench (to **Bobbie**)Fuck’s sake!

Bobbie ‘Fuck’s sake!’

Hench lunges at **Bobbie**. **Bobbie** pushes **Hench**. **Hench** moves away, but **Bobbie** follows him. He sits down, but **Bobbie** copies him. **Hench** sighs, tuts. **Bobbie** copies him. **Hench** pushes him, **Bobbie** grabs him in a headlock; and they get into a full on play-fight⁴⁹ which takes them down to the floor. At some point, **Jennifer** stands, grabs the tin of dog food and the spoon, and heads into **Taliban**’s room. They don’t notice, and continue to tumble. **Hench** then senses she is not there, jumps up quickly and heads towards the door to look for her. **Bobbie** jumps up too. He thinks she has gone. **Hench** looks back at **Bobbie**.

Hench Idiot.

Hench sits in the chair, crestfallen. **Bobbie** lies down on the floor.

Bobbie Oh well, bruv.

A fade. Some time passes. Half an hour, maybe.

Bobbie is asleep.

Jennifer re-enters with the tin and spoon. **Hench** starts.

Hench I thought you’d gone.

Jennifer shakes her head.

Jennifer He’s such a lovely dog. I had to have a little play with him.

Beat. **Hench** is mortified – thinking of the shit.

It’s a bit of a mess in there.

Beat.

Hench, where’s your mum?

Hench She’s living with her boyfriend. Min– (*Stops himself.*)Alan.

Jennifer Why doesn’t she live here with you?

Beat.

Hench She’s sick.

Jennifer So you’re Bobbie’s carer?

Hench shrugs. *It’s not a word he’s considered before.*

⁵⁰I cared for my dad when he was ill.

Pause.

So... What school are you at?

Hench I’m not. I left.

Jennifer Did you do your GCSEs?

Hench Nah.

Jennifer Why?

Hench Boring, innit.

Beat. **Jennifer** looks depressed for a second.

Jennifer I have to redo Year 11.

Beat.

Where does Bobbie go?

Beat.

Hench He’s meant to go to a unit.

Jennifer A unit?

Hench Yeah. But he don’t go.

Beat.

Jennifer Oh God. What’s the time?

Hench gets his phone out of his pocket.

Hench It's six-thirty. Nearly.

Jennifer God, where's the day gone?

Hench Dunno.

Jennifer I think I need to go. I *do* need to go.

Jennifer *walks quickly to the window to see if she can see what's going on in her flat.*

I can see into my flat from your window!

51

Hench Is it?

Jennifer Come and look.

Hench *walks over.*

Hench Oh yeah. Is that your mum?

Jennifer That's my Uncle Keith's fiancée, Michelle. And that's her daughter, Kayleigh. See?

Hench The one that looks a bit like a pig?

Jennifer *laughs a bit.*

Sorry.

Jennifer It's okay. I don't like them. I call them *The Blonde Bastards*.

Hench *laughs a little bit.*

Hench It's funny the way you say that word.

Jennifer What, bastards?

Hench Yeah.

Jennifer Why, how do you say it?

Hench I suppose... bastards, innit?

Jennifer 'Bastards, innit?'

They laugh a little bit.

Hench Why don't you like them?

Jennifer They think I'm a freak.

Hench How do you know?

Jennifer They told me they do.

Hench *nods.*

Hench Haters.

Jennifer What?

Hench Nothing. How come you're living with them then?

52

Jennifer After my dad died my mum... struggled.

Hench Is it?

Jennifer We lost our pub we ran. We lost our home. Mum didn't even fight for it.

Frustrated, she gives a little stamp or kicks a cushion – seeming a little like Bobbie for a moment.

She didn't even *try*! Sorry.

Hench It's okay.

Beat.

Jennifer Then we were moved to a hostel for a couple of months, in Merthyr Tydfil.

Hench What's that like?

Jennifer It's like the Feltham of Wales.

Hench Fuck.

Jennifer Mum couldn't take it. She rang Keith. Hello, Feltham.

Beat. **Hench** *gazes over to the flat.*

Hench They're putting your dinner out, look.

Jennifer *(sighs and looks)* Yeah.

Hench Looks like a really nice flat.

Jennifer Are you *serious*?

Hench Yeah. What?

Jennifer It's horrible! Everything's laminated. It stinks of chip fat and perfume. And *everything* revolves around the TV. Who's watching what? Who's Sky Plussing what? See? *She points.*

Hench What?

53

Jennifer The bloody Kardashians. Kayleigh wants to be her.

Hench *laughs a bit at her outrage.*

Hench You're jokes.

Jennifer What do you mean? I'm a joke?

Hench No, I mean you're jokes. You're funny.

Beat.

Which one's your bedroom?

Jennifer Why?

Hench (*panicked*) Oh no reason! Just askin', like.

Jennifer It's at the back. Me and my mum share Dannii's room – Michelle's oldest, she's moved out. It's all pink-satin hearts and black lacy pillows; it's like sleeping in a brothel.

She looks at him.

I sleep in a bed with my mum. Have you ever heard of a teenager sharing a bed with their mother?

Hench Nah... that's fucked-up.

Jennifer Do you think I'm weird?

Hench No, it just must be difficult like.

Beat.

Jennifer There's my mum.

Beat. Hench looks.

You know at night I lay awake and watch her sleeping. And I think, 'I wish it was you that had died.'

Beat.

I've never told anyone that before. I've got no one to tell.

Beat.

I've got to go.

54

Hench Okay.

Jennifer Thanks for today.

Hench How do you mean?

Jennifer Say bye to Bobbie.

Hench Okay.

Jennifer And Taliban.

Hench I will.

Jennifer We could walk him. Tomorrow?

Hench I can't let him out.

Jennifer Just a quick one?

Hench I really can't. He might bite someone.

Jennifer Oh, he wouldn't! He's a big softie.

Beat.

Do you know Hounslow Heath? I go all the time. I've got a favourite tree there.

Hench *doesn't know how to respond to this.* **Jennifer** *feels stupid.*

Well, maybe one day in the future then.

Hench Maybe.

Jennifer See you, Hench.

Maybe she expects him to see her out. It doesn't occur to Hench.

Hench See you.

She leaves. Hench sits in the chair.

Scene Six

Three weeks later. Bobbie and Hench's living room, late afternoon. The TV has been moved off the unit and the unit has been moved into the middle of the room. It has a sheet over it, providing a makeshift table. Bobbie and Jennifer are play-fighting, a mixture of wrestling and tickling. They are having great fun; squeals and yelps of delight and laughter. Bobbie is dressed in his same trackie bottoms but with a different shirt – the sort made for a large businessman. As they fight, Hench enters, wearing his scruffy jeans also with a similar shirt. He clocks them. He puts cutlery, ketchup and salad cream down on the unit and goes back out. Jennifer gets Bobbie to the floor and straddles him.

Jennifer Feltham Hoodrat, surrender!

Bobbie Never to the Country Bumpkin!

She proceeds to tickle him into submission. Hench re-enters with a plate stacked high with nuggets. He puts them down.

Hench Um – there's something happening out here.

Jennifer Oh I forgot!

Jennifer gets up. Laughing and breathless she says to **Bobbie** over her shoulder as she exits: That is not a win for Hoodratz!

Bobbie Hoodratz for ever!

Jennifer (from the hall) Bumpkins for ever!

Hench goes out to the kitchen with **Jennifer**. **Bobbie** gets up. He pulls the front of his trackie bottoms out a bit and looks down them. He then rearranges himself slightly as he has a hard-on. He strolls over to the table, grabs a nugget, throws it up into the air and catches it in his mouth. **Hench** comes in with an upturned bin for **Bobbie**.

Hench Oi.

He gives the bin to Bobbie.

Bobbie What's this?

Hench Chair.

Bobbie puts it down by the unit. **Hench** goes out again. **Bobbie** goes to a black bin liner full of clothes in the corner. He rifles through it, holds up a skimpy black boob-tube dress. He smooths it against himself and practises some sexy walking. He puts it back, then finds a bow tie on elastic, which he puts on. **Hench** comes in with a plate of oven chips.

Bobbie Bruv, come here.

Bobbie has a normal tie for **Hench**. He puts it round **Hench's** neck and tries to tie it.

Hench Bobbie, what are you doing?

Bobbie Bruv, you need to dress to impress!

Jennifer comes in with a plate of fish fingers. **Hench** knocks **Bobbie's** hand away.

Jennifer What are you two up to?

Bobbie Nothing!

She smiles and exits.

Hench Dick!

Bobbie giggles. **Hench** sits on the end of the sofa at one end of the unit. **Bobbie** sits on the upturned bin at the other end of the unit.

Bobbie JEEESUS! This could feed the whole of Africa! Imagine if the girls and boys with flies in their eyes could see this. Do you think we should send some to Comic Relief?

Hench What do you reckon?

Bobbie Nah, fuck 'em.

Bobbie takes a chip and puts it straight in his mouth.

Let 'em starve.

Bobbie takes a handful of chips. **Jennifer** enters with a large steaming saucepan and puts it down on the table. She smiles at **Hench** excitedly and flicks **Bobbie**'s ear and exits again. **Bobbie** stands up and peers into the saucepan. He looks at **Hench**.

Uh-oh.

Hench Shhh.

Jennifer re-enters. She holds a lit tealight which she puts in the centre of the unit.

Jennifer There. (Points to **Bobbie**'s bow tie.) This is very smart!

Bobbie beams. **Jennifer** sits on the armchair in the centre of the unit. Beat.

Hench, would you...

Hench What?

Jennifer Would you do the soup?

Hench Oh yeah, yeah...

Hench gets up and, using a ladle, inexpertly dishes some of the soup in each bowl. **Bobbie** and **Jennifer** wait and watch. **Hench** feels himself being watched. **Bobbie** smirks at him.

Bobbie What's this?

Jennifer It's leek and potato soup.

Bobbie Looks like snot.

Hench Shut up, Bob –

Bobbie Hope it doesn't taste like snot.

Jennifer Well, you'd know what snot tastes like.

Bobbie Jokes!

Jennifer tickles **Bobbie** under the arm and **Bobbie** yelps but enjoys it. They taste it.

Can I have a fish finger now?

Jennifer Don't you like it?

Hench Ignore him. It's nice.

Beat. They eat. **Bobbie** has an idea and a big grin.

Bobbie Jenny.

Jennifer Yeah?

Bobbie Bore da.

Jennifer is really pleased about this. **Bobbie** is very excited.

Jennifer Bore da. Sut wyt ti?

Bobbie (struggles with the Welsh but ultimately manages it) Dwi'n dda... iawn, Diolch.

Jennifer Yay!

Hench looks on – open-mouthed.

Bobbie, bore da!

Bobbie Bore da. Sut wyt ti?

Jennifer Dwi'n dda iawn, Diolch!

Hench What the fuck is that?

Jennifer I've been teaching Bobbie Welsh.

Hench Is it?

Bobbie Go on, bruv – try it. Bore da means 'good morning'.

Hench Nah.

Bobbie Just try it! BOH-REH-DAH.

Hench No.

Bobbie Why?

Hench (hackles rising a bit) I just ain't bothered, okay?

Bobbie Okay, bruv. Don't have a period.

Beat.

(To **Jennifer**.) Will you ever go back?

Jennifer To Wales?

Bobbie nods.

I am. Next month. No one knows.

Bobbie *puts his hands up to his face in mock-horror.*

Bobbie Don't leave us!

Jennifer Come with me! I'm going to ride the Severn Bore.

Hench Is that a pig?

Jennifer No, you idiot, it's a wave!

Bobbie Ha! Wasteman Hench.

Jennifer You surf it. A couple of times a year there's a really big one. I watched my dad do it a few years ago. I'm doing it in memory of him.

Bobbie Ahh.

Hench Is it?

Bobbie I'll come! I'll surf the big wave!

Hench You can't even swim, Bobbie.

Bobbie *(flips him the bird)* Swivel on that, bruv.

Hench Grow up.

Jennifer *(to Hench)* What about you?

Hench What?

Jennifer Would you like to?

Hench Yeah yeah.

Beat.

Why not?

Bobbie Oi, Hench. Guess what's Welsh for 'back'?

Hench What?

Bobbie KEVIN!

Hench *(nonplussed)* Is it?

Bobbie Yeah, man! I've got an itchy KEVIN!

Jennifer *(to Hench)* He's a very quick learner.

Hench Where were you last night?

Jennifer I had to stay in.

Bobbie Hench was missing you.

Jennifer Was he now?

Hench No.

Bobbie Who were those blokes in your kitchen?

Jennifer Kayleigh had two boys from sixth form over. Keith and Michelle were out.

Hench Is it?

Jennifer Yeah. It was disgusting. One of them was fingering her on the sofa and the other one just hung around, staring at me, smoking spliffs out of the window. Then Kayleigh tried to get me to go with him.

Bobbie Fuck that! Pimped out by your own cousin.

Jennifer She's not my cousin. She's not my blood. I think family's important. *(To Hench.)* Don't you?

Bobbie A girl called Angel asked me to finger her at the unit. But I didn't want to cos she had hair on her fanny.

A bit of a stunned beat.

Hench Bobbie –

Jennifer That's not very nice, Bobbie.

Bobbie You're telling me! It was dis-gus-ting!

Hench *(to Jennifer)* Sorry.

Jennifer It's okay.

Hench Bobbie, why don't you take Taliban a fish finger?

Bobbie *(sensing Hench wants to be alone with Jennifer)* Nah.

Hench What about a nugget?

Bobbie Nope. (*Glances at Jennifer.*) No nuggets, no crisps and –

Bobbie / Jennifer Definitely no Twix!

Jennifer *smiles.*

Bobbie You can't feed a dog human food, bruvva! It's bad for his teeth.

Hench (*sharply*) Just eat your dinner, Bob!

Bobbie Ooooh okay, don't have a period!

Beat. They eat.

When did we last have a real meal like this, Hench?

Hench *shrugs.*

It must have been Nanny's. Nanny made everything in the Lean Mean Grilling Machine. *Everything.* Toast. Sausages. Eggs...

Hench (*to Jennifer quietly*) She didn't make eggs in it.

Bobbie But then she started cooking curries for Slick Vik.

Jennifer You have to eat dinner together sometimes. Otherwise you never see each other's faces properly.

Beat. Bobbie and Hench look at each other's faces. Neither are sure how to react.

Hench Yeah. S'pose.

Bobbie We went out for dinner with Mum and Alan once.

Jennifer That's nice.

Bobbie Yeah but Alan ruined it. He gave me a Chinese burn while Mum was outside on the phone to her mate.

Jennifer Poor Bobbie.

Bobbie He was just pissed off cos Mum made him take us out for the day. It was my birthday. I was twelve.

Jennifer Ah, where did you go?

Bobbie Heston Services.

Jennifer *looks to Hench.*

Hench He likes the arcades.

Bobbie Jenny. Can I call you Jen?

Jennifer (*smiles*) If you want to.

Bobbie Does anyone else call you Jen?

Jennifer No. My dad used to call me...

Beat.

Hench What?

Jennifer It's stupid.

Bobbie Go on. He's called Hench. Can't get much more stupid than that.

Jennifer My dad used to call me Yen.

Hench Isn't that a Japanese quid?

Jennifer Yeah it is but it's got another meaning too. My mum and dad were quite old when they had me, in their late thirties.

Bobbie Ancient!

Jennifer They were trying for me for a long *long* time. And they really wanted me. Yen means longing; to long for something.

Her eyes meet Hench's for a brief second.

Bobbie GAY!

Hench *picks up his spoon.*

Jennifer (*to Hench*) What's your real name?

Hench Paul.

Jennifer Paul?

Hench Yep. Plain old Paul.

Beat. They eat.

Jennifer So are you going to try and go to college?

Hench *stops, spoon midway to mouth.*

Hench What?

Jennifer After the summer maybe?

Hench No.

Jennifer Why not?

Hench Haven't got my GCSEs, have I?

Jennifer There must be something you can study. What are you interested in?

Hench *shrugs.*

What did you like at school?

Hench Break.

Jennifer *laughs and so does Bobbie.*

Jennifer I'm serious! We could get a prospectus. Or look online.

Hench Nah. I'll probably just get a job or something probably.

A stifled laugh from Bobbie.

Jennifer You should do something. You'd be good at working with people. You're quite... gentle.

Hench *doesn't know how to react to this.* **Bobbie** *mouths 'GAY' to Hench.* **Jennifer** *doesn't see.* (*Then to Bobbie.*) What about you, Hoodrat?

Bobbie I'm not going back to the unit.

Hench What do you mean 'going back'? You never went!

Bobbie I went a few times.

Jennifer We could get some textbooks. Do a bit of work over the summer? There's a sharp little brain in there going to waste.

Bobbie Why do you wanna help us?

Beat.

Hench Bobbie!

Bobbie No what I mean is –

Beat.

Look at us.

Jennifer (*leans over and ruffles his hair*). Bobbie? Don't be a dick.

Bobbie *smiles and has another nugget.*

Bobbie Jen.

Jennifer Yep?

Bobbie You know every time you come round here, or every time we take Taliban for a walk...

Jennifer Yep?

Bobbie Well – why do you always wear old jumpers and that?

Hench Bob –

Bobbie Cos all of our clothes are shitty and old – but that's cos we nicked them from outside a charity shop.

Hench BOBBIE!

Hench *hurls a fish finger at Bobbie and it bounces off his forehead. He immediately regrets it.*

Bobbie OI!

Hench Fuck's sake.

Hench *stops eating and puts his head in his hands. Beat.*

Jennifer (*gently, putting her hand on his back briefly*) It's okay. He's only asking. (*To Bobbie.*) They're my dad's clothes.

Bobbie Your dad?

Jennifer Yeah.

Bobbie Your *dead* dad?

Jennifer Yeah.

Bobbie Do they smell like death?

Jennifer No. They smell like him. See.

*She holds the sleeve out for **Bobbie**. He sniffs gingerly.*

Bobbie It smells a bit like earth. And baccy.

Jennifer *smiles and nods.* **Bobbie** *sniffs again.*

And chip fat.

*She pulls the sleeve away and looks at **Hench**.*

Jennifer See. They ruin everything.

Beat. **Bobbie** *tries to get **Hench**'s attention, winks at him.*

Bobbie Jen, me and Hench got dressed up for our dinner party. We've got a really nice dress that you could wear.

Jennifer What?

Bobbie We found it outside the charity shop. It's sick. It's designer.

Hench It's alright actually. Looks shit on Bobbie though.

Bobbie Hang on.

*He goes to the corner of the room, delves into the bin liner and brings out the slinky black boob-tube dress. He hands it to **Jennifer**.*

Go on, Jen. Put it on.

Jennifer *takes the dress.*

Jennifer It's quite nice actually. (*Checks.*) It's my size too.

Bobbie Go on. Try it.

Jennifer I've never worn anything this classy before.

Hench (*shrugs*) Wear it. We ain't gonna use it.

Bobbie We was gonna eBay it, but we'd rather you had it.

Jennifer (*smiling*) Okay.

Jennifer *goes out of the room with the dress.* **Hench** *squirts some ketchup on his plate.*

Bobbie Hench. Am I a fucking sick wingman or what?

Hench What?

Bobbie Getting her out of those old leggings!

Hench What do you mean?

Bobbie Now we get to see her body innit? I reckon you can fuck her tonight.

Hench Shhh! –

Bobbie I'm just saying, bruvva. And I can watch! Oh snap! I could film it, bruv! (*Cod-American accent.*) Make a fucking movie...

Hench (*repelled*) Stop it!

Bobbie Alright, I'll go in with Taliban. But you gotta tell me everything, promise? Oi, Hench, you should fuck her up the arsehole! When you fuck a woman in the arsehole they squeal more than in the / fanny.

Hench (*looking frantically for **Jennifer**'s return*) Shut up, man!

Bobbie They do! Mind you, your cock's so small she'd hardly feel it. She'd probably think she was having a little poo.

Hench *grabs **Bobbie**'s arm with both hands and twists his wrist in a desperate bid to shut him up.*

Owww! –

Hench DON'T FUCK THIS UP FOR ME!

Bobbie I won't!

Hench *lets go.* **Bobbie** *holds his wrist and barks feebly at **Hench**. Silence.* **Hench** *peers towards the door, looking for **Jennifer**. Then he looks at **Bobbie**.*

Hench Sorry. Bobbie? I'm sorry. Alright?

Bobbie (*sniffs*) Alright.

Hench It's just you do my fucking head in, bruv.

Bobbie I know.

Jennifer *walks back in. She looks really stunning, the dress is tight but fits her well – she looks like a woman. A stunned silence.*

Jennifer Well? Does it look okay?

Beat. She gets worried.

Does it?

Hench Yeah. Yeah.

Jennifer I couldn't see in your little mirror. Is it too tight?

Hench Nah. Nah. It... fits.

Jennifer What d'you reckon, Bobbie?

Beat. Bobbie is transfixed.

Bobbie Yeah.

Jennifer *(laughing a little)* Yeah what?

Bobbie *(sort of coming to a bit – getting very excited)* Yeah, **BABY!** She looks FI – I – IT! She looks HO – O – OT! Doesn't she? Doesn't she, Hench?

Bobbie *gets on top of the bin and wolf-whistles.* **Jennifer** *laughs and does a little spin.*

Hench Yeah yeah yeah –

Bobbie Go get those beers, bruv. It's a party!

Hench What beers?

Bobbie In the fridge.

Hench You get 'em.

Bobbie No you get 'em.

Hench No *you* get 'em.

Bobbie Okay. You find LMFAO then.

Hench Not again!

Bobbie 'Champagne Showers'!

Bobbie *races into the kitchen. Beat.* **Jennifer** *sort of loiters a bit, not totally comfortable with her new style. They look at each other.* **Hench** *avoids her eye.*

Jennifer What's wrong?

Hench What?

Jennifer Haven't you ever seen a girl in a dress before?

Hench Yeah. Course.

He goes to the laptop.

Jennifer What's 'Champagne Showers'?

Hench It's his favourite song. He's listened to it like five hundred times.

'Champagne Showers' by LMFAO comes on.

Jennifer He's so sweet.

Beat.

Hench Yeah.

Bobbie *comes racing in with four cans of premium lager.*

Bobbie OI-OI BEER DELIVERY – One for you, one for you, two for me – nah just jokes. *(Puts one down on the unit.)* Right. Down in one?

Jennifer Oh my God I'll be sick. Can you do it, Hench?

Hench Yeah I reckon.

Bobbie Ha – bollocks.

Hench Go on then. On three.

They all crack their cans.

Jennifer One two three.

They all guzzle their beers. Jennifer gives up first, but Hench and Bobbie keep going, eyeing each other up, and Jennifer watches. Finally Hench can't manage it, and begins to cough, and Bobbie rather than finishing it holds the can aloft and empties it over his head.

Oh my God! You fucking nutter.

Bobbie YESSS! 'Champagne Showers'!

Bobbie *starts dancing, one of LMFAO's dances he's learned off YouTube. He's not at all bad at it. Hench is still coughing. He leaves the room for a bit to clear it, Jennifer looks after him.*

Jen! Dance with me.

Jennifer *smiles at Bobbie's moves. Bobbie grabs her arm and pulls her into him, she laughs and joins in. He begins to gyrate behind her.*

Hench *re-enters. Jennifer goes to him.*

Jennifer Are you okay?

Hench Yeah. Yeah. Just went down the wrong hole.

Bobbie HA! Wasteman Hench!

She rubs Hench's back a little. Jennifer nods over to Bobbie, who is rapping a bit along with the singer. They look at each other, and laugh. They drink what's left of their cans. Bobbie's dance gets more bizarre and he starts a striptease. The tie goes and then the shirt comes off. He starts to dance provocatively and they laugh. Suddenly Jennifer notices the rash on Bobbie's back.

Jennifer Bobbie. Come here.

Bobbie What?

Jennifer Just come here, let me look at your back. *(To Hench.)* Turn that down.

He does.

(To Hench.) Have you seen this?

Hench What? He's just a spotty little fucker.

Jennifer That's psoriasis.

Bobbie Have I got a disease? Is it Aids?

Jennifer Does it hurt?

Bobbie YES. And it itches like a bitch. Told you, Hench. Am I gonna die?

Jennifer No, Bobbie, you're not gonna die. My dad had this.

Hench What do we do about it?

Jennifer You need to get cream for it. Where's your doctor?

Hench We haven't really got one.

Jennifer What if you're sick?

Bobbie We went to Nanny's.

Beat. Jennifer is perplexed.

Jennifer Pass my jacket.

He does. Jennifer gets a small pot of Vaseline out of her pocket. She puts some on her fingers and very gently smooths it onto Bobbie's back. The intimacy is something neither Bobbie nor Hench is familiar with.

Is that a bit better?

Bobbie Yeah. That's nice...

Jennifer *(to Hench)* You've got to get him some proper stuff.

Hench Okay. I will.

Beat. Jennifer continues. Bobbie smiles.

Bobbie Mmm. Turn it up again, bruv.

Bobbie *kneels down in front of Jennifer as she soothes his back. Hench turns the tune up and drinks his can, watching, just out of the picture. The living-room door opens and Maggie slips in; looks around her, amazed. She is just the wrong side of pissed. They do not see her, she surveys what's going on, Jennifer touching Bobbie. Maggie switches the music off.*

Maggie What's going on? What you doing with my son?

Bobbie *jumps up.*

Bobbie Mum!

Jennifer Oh – I was / just... putting some –

Maggie *(to Hench)* Who the fuck is this?

Hench What do you want?

Bobbie Mum, this is Jenny. We're having a party. Here – Mum. *(Grabs the last can.)* Have a can.

Maggie *takes it, cracks it, has a swig.*

Maggie What do I want? What do *I want*, Hench? (*Showing her pissedness now.*) Well, this is my flat. Isn't it? And I come to see my boys. (*To Bobbie.*) Can't a mum come to see her boys when she wants to?

Bobbie Of course you can, Mum. Any time!

Maggie *instinctively pulls Bobbie's arm and puts herself behind him. She suddenly turns to Jennifer.*

Maggie What was you doing with Bobbie? Why is his shirt off?

Jennifer He's got psoriasis.

Maggie He's got what?

Bobbie It's a disease.

Maggie No it isn't. Come here, Bob.

He bounds over to her. She turns him around.

I think I'd know if my son had a disease, thank you.

She looks at it and touches the rash. It hurts a bit but he tries not to show it.

Just a little rash that's all. You're alright, aren't you, Bob?

Bobbie All the better for seeing you!

Maggie Put your shirt on, that's a good boy.

She pats his bum.

Jennifer It's easily treatable with the right stuff. I'm Jenny.

Jennifer *thinks for a moment, then extends her hand. Maggie doesn't take it, but looks Jennifer up and down.*

Maggie You'll get raped if you walk around here like that.

Hench MUM!

Bobbie I'm doing you a fish-finger sandwich, Mum.

Maggie You some sort of doctor, are you?

Jennifer (*still shell-shocked from Maggie's comment*) It's just my dad had the same thing.

Maggie *looks around at the food. Jennifer looks at Hench. Hench looks at the floor.*

Bobbie *gets busy loading up some bread with fish fingers.*

Maggie I don't like this.

Bobbie Salad cream, Mum? –

Maggie This is very fucking cosy...

Hench What's it to you?

Bobbie And the bread wrapped round? –

Jennifer Look, maybe I should go.

Maggie What so this is your girlfriend, is it, Hench?

Hench Stop it –

Maggie She's skin and bones. You suit each other.

Hench Why don't you just GO AWAY?

Bobbie He doesn't mean it, Mum. It's just he wants to fuck Jenny. That's all.

Hench Shut up, Bobbie.

Maggie Jesus, are you even legal?

Jennifer What?? –

Bobbie (*at Maggie's shoulder*) Here we go.

Maggie I DON'T WANT YOUR FUCKING FISH-FINGER SANDWICH!

Bobbie *stumbles back. One fish finger drops out. Silence.*

Oh, Bobbie. I'm sorry! I'm sorry, bubs. Look, come here. (*Softens.*) Mumma's little angel. (*Touches his face.*) Making me a fish-finger sandwich. Do you know, I don't think I've eaten in a week.

Bobbie What about your blood sugar?

Maggie Give us a little bite then.

Bobbie *feeds her a little bite.*

Mmmm. Lovely.

Beat. **Maggie** *straightens herself, tries to sober up a little and make an effort.*

I was coming round to see if you wanted to come home with me. Both of ya.

Hench Yeah right.

Maggie (*snapping*) Yeah but just Bobbie now, I don't want you. (*To Bobbie.*) Alan's come into a bit of money. His uncle died. Isn't that brilliant, Bob?

Bobbie *Brilliant!*

Maggie So we're gonna celebrate tonight. Pizza. Bubbles. What do you say?

Bobbie Stuffed-crust?

Maggie Yep.

Bobbie What about Alan?

Maggie He wants you to.

Bobbie He doesn't.

Maggie He does! He wants to try. He's even got the Wii back off Bailey!

Bobbie Has he got *Just Dance*?

Maggie Yep.

Bobbie *Just Dance 2015?*

Maggie Mmm-hmm, think so.

Bobbie SICK.

Maggie Let's go then, sweetness. We're gonna get a minicab all the way to Alan's.

Bobbie *A minicab???*

Maggie What do you think about that, darlin'?

Bobbie SICK. What about Hench?

Maggie Fuck him. We don't want him, do we, babes? –

Jennifer Why don't you leave him alone!

Beat.

Maggie What d'you say?

Jennifer Nothing, sorry, I just don't see why you have to / be so –

Maggie *sort of lunges towards Jennifer.* **Hench** *immediately gets in the way to protect her.*

Maggie Go on. Go on. Finish that fucking sentence, I dare ya.

Jennifer I'm sorry I just / don't understand why you have to be so –

Maggie Coming into *my* flat telling me how to talk to *my* sons?

Jennifer Look, I didn't mean anything by it, / I just –

Maggie WHO ARE YA? WHO ARE YA?

Hench *grabs Maggie and pushes her towards the door in an unprecedented and instinctive act of chivalry. She falls backwards.*

Bobbie Get off her!

Hench *helps Maggie up and she straightens herself up again.*

Maggie Come on, Bob, let's go.

Bobbie Yeah. Let's go!

He gives Hench the middle finger.

Maggie (*to Jennifer*) Good luck with him. He's horrible.

The front door slams. Some barking from Taliban. Long silence. **Hench** *does not make eye contact with Jennifer, but sits on the floor, picks up the controller and starts a new game. Jennifer hovers for a few moments, watching him playing the game. Then she goes and sits in front of him. She takes the controller from his hands, puts it on the floor – looks into his eyes. Hench, unable to hold her gaze, looks to the floor. Pause.*

Jennifer Would you like to put your head in my lap?

Beat.

Hench What do you mean?

Jennifer Would you like to?

Hench *does not move. Pause. Lights fade.*

Scene Seven

Hench and Bobbie's living room. Cleaner. A week later. Hench stands at the window looking out. It is pissing down with rain. Jennifer sits on the floor, folding clothes and putting them in a rucksack.

Jennifer You sure you don't wanna take anything else?

Hench Nah.

Jennifer Look at this!

Beat. Jennifer holds a bottle up for him to see.

Nicked four Kopparbergs for the journey...

Hench From where?

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Jennifer Home.

Hench Nice one.

Beat.

It's pissing it down.

Jennifer You afraid of getting wet?

Hench No. I like it when it rains. Feels new. When it's done.

Jennifer *continues to pack.*

Jennifer I can't wait to get there.

Hench Me too.

Jennifer It's gonna be sick.

Hench You sound like Bobbie.

Jennifer Are you worried about him?

Hench *scoffs a bit and shakes his head.*

Hench Nah.

Jennifer Weird without him here.

Hench Peaceful.

Jennifer It's good I suppose. That he's with his mum.

Beat.

She's a bit fucking bonkers though.

Hench Yep.

Jennifer She'll look after him, won't she?

Hench *says nothing. Jennifer looks over at him, looking at the rain. It is unclear if he has not heard her or chooses to ignore her.*

And Taliban. He'll be alright if we just drop him off there?

Hench Yeah. Don't know what Minge-Face Alan'll have to say about it though.

Jennifer *(giggling)* Does it really look like a minge?

Hench I'm telling ya, wait and see!

They laugh a bit. She zips up the bag.

Jennifer Done. I'm so fucking excited! Now we just need our tent!

She goes over at Hench. He makes room for her at the window.

I want to get some flowers.

Hench What for?

Jennifer For Dad.

Hench Oh, okay.

Jennifer Irises. And some gypsophila.

Hench Gypsy what?

Jennifer The little white flowers.

Hench Oh... right.

Pause.

Jennifer Hench, what happened with your dad?

Hench What do you mean?

Jennifer Bobbie said I shouldn't mention him in front of you. Said you'd get... vexed?

Beat.

What does he mean?

Beat.

Hench He's dead.

Jennifer Oh no! I'm so sorry, Hench.

Hench 'S okay. I was only little.

Jennifer Was he ill?

Hench No.

Beat. A sudden flush of an idea.

He drowned. Rescuing a little girl. From the pond in the park.

Jennifer That's so sad!

Hench Yeah.

Jennifer He died a hero!

Beat.

So he's not Bobbie's dad too, is he?

Hench No.

Beat.

Bobbie's dad was bad. Treated my mum bad. He – he assaulted her. You know?

Jennifer NO!

Hench Yeah. But she just stayed with him for ages...

Jennifer Sometimes women do.

Hench Don't say anything in front of him.

Jennifer I won't.

Beat.

Are you like him?

Hench Think so. My mum says.

Jennifer We've got a lot in common.

Beat.

Do you visit his grave?

Hench Nah.

Jennifer Why?

Hench *shrugs.*

Hench No point.

Beat. He looks out the window, keen to get off the subject.

It's fucking dark.

Jennifer No it isn't! It never really gets dark here. In Aberthin it gets so dark you can't see your hand in front of your face.

Hench Then how do you know where to walk?

Jennifer *(laughs a little)* You just know.

Beat. Suddenly Jennifer turns to him.

We could stay.

Hench What do you mean?

Jennifer There's nothing stopping us now. We could stay with friends, till we both get jobs. Get a little flat.

Hench Yeah?

Jennifer Yeah!

Hench *(smiles a little)* Yeah. S'pose.

Jennifer *looks back out of the window, and presses back against him, pleased. She takes his arms and wraps them around her body. Hench pulls away and goes to sit on the bed.*

What time's our coach?

Jennifer 8 a.m.

Beat.

Don't you like that?

Hench No... I –

Jennifer You don't like it?

Hench No I do.

She sits down next to him.

Jennifer Then what?

Hench It's silly.

Jennifer What?

Hench I can't say...

He gets up and walks to the side of the room.

Jennifer You can though.

Pause.

Hench I don't know how to touch you.

Beat.

Jennifer Oh. Okay.

Hench I mean I *do* know. I do *know*. But none of it seems right. For you.

Jennifer What do you mean?

Hench I don't know.

Jennifer *stands.*

Jennifer Would you like me to show you?

Beat.

Hench What?

Jennifer How I like to be touched?

Hench (*with a hint of screwface*) Have a lot of boys touched you then?

Jennifer No. Shall I show you how I like to touch myself?

Hench Fucking hell. (*Pause.*) Yeah alright then.

She goes over, takes his hand and kisses each finger. He is embarrassed but she perseveres.

Then she puts his hand on her face. She moves it down to her neck. Then her chest. Then she wraps both his arms around her.

Jen –

Jennifer Yeah?

Beat.

Hench Jen, I –

Jennifer Shhhh...

*She kisses him – it is the first time **Hench** has been kissed. When she pulls away **Hench** makes an indecipherable noise.*

Okay?

Hench Yeah.

Beat.

Do I taste alright?

Jennifer Yeah course.

Hench It's just I had some Space Raiders earlier –

Jennifer Shhhh...

She kisses him again. More fully this time. She pulls away.

How about that?

Hench Mmm-hmm. That was...

Jennifer What?

Beat.

Hench New.

Jennifer You've got tears in your eyes.

Hench (*gently*) Shut up.

He goes in to kiss this time, but they clash noses.

Shit.

Jennifer 'S okay. Wait.

Jennifer *takes her top off, she is wearing a bra. He takes his off, trying not to be embarrassed by his torso. There is an audible intake of breath from Hench.*

Do you want to touch?

Hench Yeah.

Jennifer Go on.

He puts one hand on one breast. And then one on the other.

Alright?

Hench Yeah. Real tits.

She laughs a little.

Jennifer Come here.

She pulls him to her and clutches her chest to his. We see his face over the side of her shoulder. He has never felt anything like this before.

Isn't that nice? Doesn't that feel good?

Hench Yeah. Fuck.

They kiss again. He starts to move away from her because he has a hard-on.

Jennifer Wait, don't. It's okay. It's okay.

She starts stroking the outside of his jeans.

Hench Fuck.

Jennifer Is that for me?

Hench Shit. Yeah. Fuck. Yeah.

Jennifer Give me your hand.

Hench Fuck.

Jennifer This is what I like to do.

She puts his hand between her legs, over her leggings, and moves it around.

Hench Fuck.

Jennifer Like that.

Hench Mmm-hmm.

Jennifer I like that.

Hench I do too.

They kiss and touch each other frenetically. Jennifer pulls away again but continues rubbing him.

Jennifer Paul?

Hench (*kissing her neck*) Oh. Oh, yeah?

Jennifer I've never done it.

Hench Neither have I.

Jennifer I want to do it. With you. Do you want to do it with me?

Hench (*still kissing*) Fuck yeah.

Jennifer But not now. After the Bore. Can we then? In the field?

Hench Mmmm...

Jennifer Under the stars?

Hench (*coming face to face with her*) Yeah yeah. Course we can. Course we can.

He kisses her again.

Jennifer We need to get some condoms.

Hench Yeah? (*Coming back to reality a little.*) Oh yeah okay. I think I might have one. Oh no actually... Bobbie might have put it over his head.

She laughs a bit.

Jennifer Did he?

Hench Yeah.

Jennifer Fucking nutter.

Hench Yeah.

Jennifer I love you.

Hench What?

Jennifer I love you.

Long pause. Hench starts to laugh.

Why are you laughing?

Hench Not sure.

He pulls her to his chest, kissing her on the head. They stand there, holding on to each other.

Lights fade.

Scene Eight

Very early the next morning. They lie in bed together, asleep, Hench spooning Jennifer. Hench starts to murmur in his sleep, and toss and turn a little.

Hench No. NO.

Beat. He stirs a little more.

STOP IT. NO. DON'T!

Jennifer awakes, takes a moment to take everything in.

Jennifer Hench? Hench?

Hench What is it?

Jennifer Hench, wake up.

Hench Is it Mum?

Jennifer No no it's...

She kneels up, covering herself a little.

I'm wet.

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Hench What?

Hench sits up in bed.

Jennifer I'm soaking wet.

Beat.

I think... I think you wet the bed.

Hench No. No I didn't.

Jennifer I think you must have.

Hench sits on the side of the bed, motionless for a moment, trying to get to grips with the situation.

Hench? It's okay, it's really not a big thing. Don't be embarrassed. It's only me.

Hench screws his eyes up tight.

Say something.

Hench Be quiet.

Jennifer What?

Hench Stop talking.

Jennifer Paul?

Hench screws his eyes up tighter. She moves towards him. She touches his shoulder.

Hench Don't touch me.

Hench turns away quickly and walks to the other room.

Jennifer It's okay –

Hench (getting aggravated) Don't be fucking stupid, Jennifer, as if as if I'm gonna wet the bed. What do you take me for, some fucking spastic cunt or something? Some baby?

Jennifer Okay I'm sorry –

Hench AS IF! As if I'd wet the fucking bed.

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Jennifer *puts on her T-shirt quickly.*

Jennifer It's only me, Hench.

Hench Leave me alone.

He turns to her for the first time. She sees the front of his trousers are wet. He spins back around.

Jennifer Please talk to me.

Hench NO.

Jennifer It really doesn't matter.

Hench Shut up. (*Puts his hands over his ears.*) STOP SPEAKING.

Hench *pulls on a T-shirt, keeps his back to Jennifer. Inside he is shaking.*

Jennifer Why are you being like this? There's no need to be / angry with me –

Hench Just get out.

Jennifer What?? Hench, no! It doesn't matter it's not a big / thing.

Hench GO!

Jennifer What about our coach? What about the Bore?

Hench Nah nah, fuck all that!

Jennifer Hench, I don't want to go without / you.

Hench I don't wanna go. I don't wanna go anywhere with you. Fuck you.

Jennifer (*starts to cry*) Please stop being so horrible to me!

Hench Get out.

Jennifer *cries.*

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He picks up her bag and throws it out of the door. She doesn't move.

GET OUT, YOU FUCKING FREAK!

Jennifer *runs out. She slams the front door. Taliban starts to go crazy. Hench starts to breathe heavily. In a fury, he leaves the room. Taliban's barking gets louder and louder. The sound of effort from Hench – kicking. Hench intermittently cries shouts and swears as he kicks the dog. After some time, Taliban stops making noise. Silence descends. Lights fade.*

Scene Nine

Lights up. Hench sits on the edge of the sofa bed, motionless. He has some blood on his chest. It is later that afternoon. Bobbie lets himself in the front door. Bobbie runs in the living room. He does not see the blood. He has a sore red nose and is wearing a lairy Ben Sherman shirt. As soon as he gets in the door he starts to speak at a pace, all the time just managing to hold back tears.

Bobbie Bruvva, I'm back. I'm back, bruvva. I'm back. Alan's a bastard. Shit cunt fucker.

FAGGOT. Mum give me this shirt said I could keep it but then Alan came back with Bailey and went fucking NUTS. Kept saying I nicked it. Nicked it! BASTARD. Mum didn't say nothing.

She didn't say nothing. Mum. Hench? Alan got me in a headlock and gave me this red nose and Bailey just watched and laughed with his horrible manky teeth showing and Mum just lay on the sofa with her eyes rolling all rolling in her head, all fucking... ARRRRRGH (*Kicks the wall.*) I don't like it there, Hench. There is even shitter than here. So I'm home. Yeah, I'm home. I'm home now. I've come home. Bruvva? He's a fucking cunt, Alan is. I might do a shit in his pillowcase.

Beat.

89 I ran all the way from Hounslow. Bruv?

Hench *doesn't look at him but he starts to cry.*

Hench?

Hench *begins to properly sob. Bobbie is completely unnerved and skirts around the outside of the room, looking at him as though he is an unfamiliar animal.*

Shiiiiit. HENCH? What's going on, man?

Beat.

Is it Jenny?

Hench *sobs on. Perhaps it is the first time he has cried properly in his whole life.*

Has she dumped you?

Bobbie *assumes from Hench's reaction that she has.*

Oh FUCK HER, MAN! Don't cry over a bitch, bruv! Let's have a beer. Let's play some COD.

Bros before hos yeah?

Bobbie *goes towards Hench but does not know how to comfort him.*

Umm... I'm gonna get you a drink of water, okay? Stay here.

Bobbie *stands up and goes into the kitchen. Hench continues to sob, then quietens for a moment.*

We hear Bobbie from the hallway looking into Taliban's room.

Oh my days, Taliban!

Hench *glances behind him where Bobbie's voice comes from. He then stands up and runs towards the wall with great determination, smashing his head off it. He drops to the floor, quiet now. Bobbie runs in and crouches beside him.*

Bruv. Bruvva!

Lights up on Jennifer, another part of stage away from them, rucksack on back, looking for her keys in her pocket. She is drunk, swigging from a bottle of Kopparberg.

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Bobbie *stands up, moves away from Hench, in a panic. He spies the dog chain on the floor, he picks it up and winds it around his hand.*

Bruv. Bitch. FUCK.

Bobbie *leaves. He runs the perimeter of the playing space, stopping when he sees Jennifer.*

Lights just on Jennifer and Bobbie. Their eyes meet. Blackout.

Scene Ten

Four-and-a-half months later. Lights fade up. Maggie sits in a very sterile-looking room. She looks strangely smart, tight pencil skirt, court shoes, a blouse that is just a touch tight. There is her jacket hanging on the back of the chair. She glances towards the door uncertainly, then clasps her hands together and closes her eyes. Beat. She opens her eyes, glances towards the door again, and then awkwardly gets down on her knees. She clasps her hands together, screws her eyes shut. She seems to wait for something to come. Nothing does.

She begins to speak the Lord's Prayer under her breath.

Hench *comes in without warning, wearing jeans and a T-shirt. Maggie jumps up. He seems a bit shaken but is surprised to find her on her knees.*

Hench What you doing?

Maggie Nothing.

Hench *looks at her, sceptical.*

I weren't doing nothing, Hench, alright.

Beat.

Did you see anyone?

Hench Nah.

Maggie Didn't see... whassisname... Derek?

Hench Nah.

Maggie Didn't find out how long we're gonna be in here, no?

Hench I just went for a piss.

Maggie Right.

She takes a deep breath, goes to the corner of the room and picks up a suit bag which is over a chair. She smiles at him. It's weird.

Right. Come here then.

Hench What?

Maggie Come here, I got something for ya.

Hench What is it?

Hench *doesn't move.*

Maggie It's for you.

Hench *says nothing.* **Maggie** *snaps.*

It's a fucking suit, Hench, alright. (*Calms herself.*) You can't go in looking like that.

Beat. **Hench** *says nothing.*

You look like a tramp!

Hench What difference does it make?

Maggie Just come here!

Hench Nah.

Maggie I want you to wear it!

Hench Why?

Maggie Because I want my son to look smart. Because I want my son to have a smart suit! (*Beat. Calms herself.*) I want us to look... respectable.

Hench *snorts a bit.* **Maggie** *catches it but chooses to ignore it. Unzips the suit bag.*
What did you think I had in here?

Hench Thought it was something for Minge-Face.

Maggie Oi! His name's Alan.

Maggie *takes the suit out.*

Oh, look, it's lovely innit?

Hench *doesn't respond.*

Feel it – it's really nice material, Hench.

He doesn't feel it.

Hench Did you nick it?

Maggie NO! I bought it. From Debenhams. It's that – that 'John Rocha John Rocha', innit.

Hench What?

Maggie It's designer, that's the name. Got a shirt and tie too.

He looks at her, nonplussed. She holds it out for him to see.

I want you to have it. I want you to wear it.

Hench I don't want it.

Maggie (*breaks a bit*) PLEASE, Hench. (*Straightens herself.*) Please.

Beat.

Hench *sighs.*

Hench Fuck's sake.

He takes it. He puts it down next to him and begins to undo the belt to his jeans.

Turn round then.

She tuts and then turns.

Maggie You came out of me, remember.

Hench Don't remind me.

Maggie Cheeky cunt.

They warm ever so slightly. Hench takes his trainers off, begins to change his trousers. Maggie is restless – twitchy – facing away from him. Beat.

How will we know when to go? Hench?

Hench They'll come and get us.

Maggie Will they?

Hench Yeah.

Beat.

Maggie D'you think they'll let us sit with him?

Hench Course they won't.

Maggie Well, I dunno, do I?

Beat.

D'ya think we'll get a chance to see him, or talk to him before...

Beat. No response.

I mean, they can't stop us. Can they? Can they do that?

Hench They can do whatever they want.

Maggie Oh God.

Beat.

Do they fit?

Hench Yeah.

Maggie Thank fuck for that.

Hench *starts putting the shirt on over his T-shirt. Maggie turns around.*

You can't put it over your T-shirt, you fucking muppet, come here.

She takes the shirt off his shoulders and whisks the T-shirt off him in full mum-mode.

Jesus, are you eating? You could have someone's eye out with one of your shoulder blades.

Hench Shut up.

Maggie Put your arms through then.

He does. She is doing the buttons up. Their proximity is rare and awkward. Hench avoids her eye.

I haven't seen you in a shirt since school.

Hench I wore one for Nanny's sixtieth.

Beat.

Maggie She rang.

Hench *looks up.*

Hench Did she??

Maggie *nods.*

Maggie She read about the case in the paper.

Hench It didn't say our names.

Maggie I know but it had his age and the area. She said she had a psychic feeling.

Hench Where is she?

Maggie Bracknell.

Hench *Bracknell?*

Maggie *nods.*

She went on the run and ended up in Bracknell? She's been gone five months. It's only half-hour down the road.

Maggie I know. (*Giggling.*) It's quite funny really when you think about it.

Hench I hope she comes back.

Maggie She asked after you.

Hench Did she?

Maggie Asked if you were alright.

Hench What did you say?

Maggie I said I didn't know.

Beat.

Are you alright?

Long pause.

Hench Yeah.

Maggie Give us that tie then.

Maggie *puts the tie around his neck. Does it up.*

Fucking hands, shaking, look? I'll go for out a fag in a minute.

Hench Don't.

Maggie Why not?

Beat.

Hench There's people out there.

Maggie What *people*?

Hench Local people. Who've heard about it. That's why they've put us in here.

Maggie Is it?

Hench They might shout things.

Maggie What things?

Hench About Bob.

Maggie Jesus Christ.

Beat. The enormity of the situation hits her. She goes to her bag, gets out a water bottle, has a long swig. Hench has the jacket on, is fully suited and booted now. He sort of hovers. Maggie turns and sees him and is genuinely taken aback.

Fucking hell.

Hench What?

Maggie Look at you.

Beat.

Heartbreaker.

Hench Shut up.

Maggie Do you think this is my fault, Hench?

Long silence.

Can you go through the options again?

Hench *Again?*

Maggie Go on. Then I can text them to Nanny.

Hench If they're lenient, because he's young he might get a YRO.

Maggie A YR-what?

Hench A Youth Rehabilitation Order. And he'd have to go to a unit and have a tag and curfew and stuff but he'd live at home. Or they might put him in a secure children's home.

Maggie *shudders.*

Or a secure training centre. Which is like school and prison for children.

Maggie What about Feltham?

Hench That's a Young Offenders.

Maggie Cos least he'd be local.

Hench He's too young to go there, Mum.

Maggie Right.

Beat.

Will he be on the thingy?

Hench What thingy?

Maggie The Register.

Hench Oh. Yeah.

Maggie (*gasps and raises her hands to her cheeks, like does Bobbie does*) Oh my Bobbles.

Pause.

Are you sure there was nothing she did? She was touching him that day, wasn't she, with his shirt off? Wearing that skimpy dress. Oi, you never fucked her in front of him Hench? –

Hench (*shouts*) NO! God, Mum, I never fucked her! –

Maggie Alright sorry! I'm just saying. It's not too late. If there was anything else, any little thing, it would really *really* help your brother, Hench.

Beat. Hench says nothing.

(*Cold.*) You're very loyal to her, aren't you?

Hench She hates me now, don't she?

Maggie *is now clutching at straws.*

Maggie Why did he do it?

Hench Don't.

Maggie He said he wanted to punish her –

Hench Stop it, Mum.

Maggie Why did you show him those videos?

Pause. Hench can't answer. The question hangs in the air.

Jesus.

Maggie reaches down into her bag and pulls out the water bottle. She takes a swig.

Hench Can I have some of that?

Maggie It's not water.

Beat. He reaches out. She passes him the bottle and he has a swig, grimaces. She looks at him for a moment. She has an impulse.

Hench, do you wanna come and live with me and Alan?

Beat.

Hench What?

Maggie Yeah! Yeah could have your own room.

Hench Are you pissed?

Maggie No I mean it. I fucking do, Hench. And if it goes well today then / Bob can –

Hench Fucking hell.

Maggie What?

Hench You.

Beat.

Maggie Alright! Just come Tuesdays and Fridays then. Cos Al's at darts on Tuesdays and / he's always –

Hench No.

Beat.

Maggie What about today then?

Hench What?

Maggie Let's go Moon Under Water. After: get pissed.

Hench I can't.

Maggie (*sharp, sarcastic*) Got plans, have ya??

Hench says nothing.

Sorry. Sorry. Come on. Have a pint with your mum.

Beat. Nothing from Hench.

Is this it, then?

Hench shrugs.

Long pause.

We better get ready.

Maggie starts getting herself together. **Hench** looks around the room.

Hench Where's the shoes?

Maggie What?

Hench Where are the shoes, for the suit?

Pause.

Maggie Fuck.

Hench You didn't get any shoes?

Maggie Fuck.

Beat.

FUCKING SHOES!

Maggie is devastated. She turns from **Hench**, walks away from him, squats down on the floor – face in hands – and cries. **Hench** is supremely awkward, not knowing what to do. He watches her for a while. Eventually he walks slowly to her, puts his hand on her shoulder, and helps her to her feet. She turns and they look at each other.

All I ever wanted was to be a mummy. Bet you can't believe that, can you, darlin'?

It seems possible they might embrace, but suddenly there's a knock on the door.

Fuck. This is it.

Beat.

Come on then.

She walks towards the door, looks back. Beat. Hench doesn't move.

Come on. Hench! We gotta go.

She walks towards the door. Looks back.

What you doing? Come on! Don't fuck about!

Beat. Hench is stuck to the spot. He looks at her. He does not know what to do. Another knock.

I can't do this on my own, Hench. I need you.

Hench *doesn't move.*

Your brother needs you. Hench?

Hench *follows her to the door, picking up his trainers on the way. Lights fade.*

Scene Eleven

It is Christmas Eve. Three months later. Jennifer sits on Hounslow Heath under a tree. She looks different. She wears jeans and a puffa jacket, her hair slicked back in a high ponytail, a little sharper; a little more like your average teenager. She is using her scarf to sit on. The air is crisp and cold and the heath deserted. She is reading a book. The wind blows a bit and she looks up at the sky. Suddenly, Hench appears. He looks older, more tired. He is dressed in winter clothes too, still scruffy but not quite so much. His hands are wedged deep in his pockets. He stops dead in his tracks. She is smoking and laughing at something in her book. He drinks it in.

Hench You're here.

Jennifer *is startled. She throws her fag, closes her book, jumps up, begins to gather her stuff as quickly as she can.*

Wait! Don't go! –

Jennifer I have to / go –

Hench PLEASE! –

Jennifer I need to –

She goes to walk away and he gets in front of her.

Hench Jenny, please I have to –

Hench *touches her briefly – not meaning to really.*

Jennifer DON'T TOUCH ME!

He backs off immediately, putting both hands up in surrender, clearly shaken at her reaction.

Hench I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry.

Pause. They both breathe deeply.

If I promise to stay here, will you talk to me for a minute? Please? Please?

Beat.

Yen?

Jennifer *Don't call me that –*

Hench Will you stay?

Jennifer I don't want to –

Hench I won't hurt you –

Jennifer It's too late –

Hench I would never never never hurt you. Please?

Jennifer *doesn't move, but looks at the ground. Beat.*

I've been walking here, on the heath, every day for three months. Looking for your tree.

Jennifer Looking for me?

Hench Just to talk. Just to tell you –

Jennifer What? WHAT?

Hench *takes a deep breath.*

Hench You look different.

Jennifer (*quickly*) I am different.

Beat.

Hench I mean your clothes. Where's your dad's jumpers and that?

Jennifer Michelle and my mum took them to the charity shop.

Hench Shit.

Jennifer They thought it was better for me.

Hench (*hoping she will share the joke a little*) Bastards.

Jennifer They've been alright actually. Keith and Michelle. My mum had a nervous breakdown. They were quite good with her. Got us off the estate; in a little flat. And Kayleigh's been nice.

Hench Is it?

Jennifer Yeah.

Hench Is that Kayleigh's jacket?

Jennifer Yeah. (*Coldly.*) Family's important – don't you think?

Beat.

Hench So where you living now then?

Jennifer *looks at him, incredulously.* **Hench** *realises he has asked a stupid question. Pause.*

What you reading?

Jennifer A book.

Jennifer *goes to leave again but Hench stops her with his question.*

Hench Can't you stay?

Jennifer Why?

Hench So we can have a... chat?

Jennifer A chat? A *CHAT?* (*Very angry, incredulous.*) Do you know how much *pain* you have caused me? Do you know how much *pain* you and your family have caused me and my family? DO YOU?

Suddenly she takes a step forward.

Look. (*Points to her mouth.*) Two new teeth. Had to get them replaced because your brother knocked them out with the dog chain. I can't keep my dinner down most days. The only thing I can eat without feeling sick is Twix. HA! Twix! Taliban's favourite. And I feel so ugly inside myself. You know when you have an apple and most of it's okay but one part of it is brown and rotten? So you cut that bit out and then you can eat the rest. Well, that's what I'd like to do. There's a part of my body that's rotten and I want to cut it out but I can't.

She puts her hand between her legs and grips. Then she starts to cry.

And my dreams. My fucking dreams! I dream about Daddy's face, and your face. I dream about your brother wearing my daddy's clothes. I dream Taliban's at my window. I dream I wake up in your bed and I'm covered in blood.

Beat.

I dream about you in that suit.

Hench What suit?

Jennifer From the court. Why wouldn't you look at me?

Hench I couldn't.

Jennifer It made me feel more dirty.

Pause. This hits Hench hardest. He moves towards her but she moves quickly away from him.

She sits on the floor and cries into her hands.

Hench Can I come and sit with you?

Jennifer (*through tears*) No.

Hench You could put your head in my lap.

Jennifer NO!

Pause. Jennifer gets herself together a little.

Hench I wasn't even going to go to the court. I thought you might feel like it meant I was against you or something. I went for my mum. I didn't know what to do. I wish someone had told me what to do.

Jennifer You're very loyal to her, aren't you?

Pause. Hench feels destroyed. He makes small talk; nothing has ever felt so futile.

Hench Where are you going tomorrow?

Jennifer Michelle's mum's in Slough.

Beat.

You?

Hench Home. Just another day, innit? Christmas.

Jennifer Where's home?

Hench (*confused*)The flat.

Jennifer What, with all the windows boarded up?

Hench Just that one window.

Jennifer Someone smashed it. I saw the graffiti too. I thought you'd gone.

Hench Nah.

Jennifer (*unable to hide her concern*)Are you there on your own?

Hench Yeah.

Beat.

Jennifer Aren't you scared?

Hench Nah. Not scared. It's just kids, innit?

They look at each other, realising what he has just said. Pause.

Jennifer Do you go and see him?

Hench No.

Jennifer Will you?

Hench Don't know.

Jennifer They made an example out of him.

Hench He deserved it. I fucking hate him.

Jennifer No you don't.

Beat.

How's Taliban?

Pause.

Hench He's okay. He's good. Well, he misses you I think. Won't come out of his room.

Jennifer You're walking him though, right?

Hench Right.

Jennifer Right. I really need to go now.

Hench Am I ever going to see you again?

Beat.

Jennifer No.

Totally non-aggressively, he stands in her path.

Hench Please can I just tell you something first? It's like a memory I had. From ages ago.

Jennifer Look, Hench, I have to / go –

Hench Please!

Jennifer (*sighs*)Go on.

Hench Well.

Beat.

Thing is... You know how we always play computer loads? Even in the summer when the other kids were out on their bikes, we were in, playing PlayStation. With the curtains drawn, right, cos the sun hits the screen?

Jennifer Right.

Hench This one night I must have played all night. Cos it was just getting dark when I started playing it. I didn't piss. Didn't have a drink... Just was on it, you know?

Jennifer So?

Hench So I got up and lit a fag. And I pulled the curtain back. And – fuck I can't... describe it, Jen. It's like the whole room was – was filled with light. Sunlight.

Jennifer Yes, and?

Hench And then I sat on the sofa and I blew the smoke into the middle of the room, like where all the light was. And... I just watched it making shapes in the light. I couldn't take my eyes off it. What's that called? That word when you can't take your eyes off something?

Jennifer *shrugs*.

Is it memorised?

Jennifer *Mesmerised*.

Hench *(a little embarrassed)* Yeah. Yeah. I think that is it. I just watched.

Beat.

Jennifer *(impatiently)* Then what did you do?

Hench I pulled the curtain over and I carried on playing.

Beat.

Jennifer Why are you telling me this?

Hench *begins to get restless – trying to express himself and failing.*

Hench Because, I felt like that.

Jennifer Like what?

Hench Like, when you walked in it felt like that had happened.

Jennifer Like what had happened?

Hench When you walked in that day.

Jennifer What do you *mean*, Hench???

Beat.

Hench It felt like somebody had opened the curtains.

Beat.

She goes. **Hench** *looks after her.*

Scene Twelve

The same day. Bobbie is sitting at a table in a secure-training-centre visiting room, dressed in a white T-shirt and grey trackie bottoms. There are other young people and visitors present, unseen. On the table are various coloured pastels and chalks spread out. Bobbie is sketching, deep in his own thoughts. Maggie enters, a little flushed, she is late. She is wearing some Christmas-tree earrings. She looks around – uncomfortable in the unfamiliar surroundings.

Maggie Hello, bubs!

Bobbie *looks up.*

Bobbie Hiya.

Bobbie *looks behind Maggie, and then towards the door.*

Maggie Sorry I'm late, sweetness.

Bobbie 'S okay.

Maggie Got a kiss for Mum?

Beat. **Bobbie** *slips out and kisses his mum on the cheek. He sits back down.*

Bobbie Is Hench coming?

Maggie Not today.

She sits down, pats down her hair and face, takes her coat off. Bobbie goes back to his drawing.

Warm in here, isn't it?

Bobbie *nods.*

Toasty.

She looks around, taking it in. It's her first visit.

Ah, it's alright in here, isn't it? Are they gonna let me see your little room?

Bobbie *shrugs.*

It was quite a nice journey on the train. Saw some trees. Had a little gin and tonic in a can.
Bobbie?

Bobbie That's nice.

Pause. Bobbie continues to draw. Maggie is not sure what to say.

Maggie Do you like my earrings, Bob?

Bobbie *looks.*

Bobbie Yep.

Maggie They're Christmas trees.

Bobbie Did Alan buy them for you?

Maggie No. No, darling... That's why I've not been before. I'm glad Nanny came. It's been a really really horrible time. Me and Alan have split. I didn't want you to see me like that. But that's it.

Beat.

That's it! No more Minge-Face Alan!

Beat.

So I'll be here more. Every chance I get. That's good, isn't it?

Bobbie So are you living back at home?

Maggie No, I'm living with Nanny. It's like being a kid again. She tells me off for all the shit telly I watch and we have to share a bed. It's funny, sharing a bed with my mum at my age.

Bobbie Do you like each other again?

Maggie What d'ya mean, bubs?

Bobbie You said Nanny didn't like you.

Maggie Did I?

Bobbie When you were a little girl.

Pause. Maggie is uneasy, doesn't know what to say. Bobbie stops drawing.

Is Hench living with Nanny too?

Maggie Nope, Hench is still back at the flat.

Bobbie Do you think he might come another time?

Maggie He might. He's not allowed to come on his own though, sweetness, cos he's only sixteen. So he'd have to come with me or Nanny.

Bobbie Did you ask him to come?

Maggie Yeah.

Bobbie What did he say?

Maggie He didn't say anything but he probably didn't have any credit.

Bobbie Oh.

Beat.

Can you give him a message for me?

Maggie Yeah, course I can. I could pop round the flat. Yeah course.

Beat.

Bobbie Just say, 'Hi, brother.'

Beat.

Maggie Okay. What you drawing, bubs?

Bobbie All sorts of different things. Do you wanna see?

Maggie Yeah, go on then.

Bobbie *gets up and brings the pile of papers.*

Bobbie That one is the swings on the estate – do you see, with the tower blocks and the wall. And that's me sitting on the wall. That's a self-portrait.

Maggie Bobbie, this is really good.

Bobbie Garfield says I've got talent.

Maggie Who's Garfield?

Bobbie He's my key worker. He says, 'We've got a little Banksy on our hands.'

Maggie Ah. Is he nice?

Bobbie Yeah. He's sick. He's got dreadlocks down to here.

*He shows her – down to his waist. For a moment we see the old **Bobbie** back.*

Maggie Glad you got someone looking out for you.

Bobbie I'm an 'at risk'.

Maggie What do you mean?

Bobbie Because of what I've done. They have to keep a special eye on me because I'm more at risk of being attacked.

Maggie *might cry but she stops herself.*

Maggie But you... haven't?

She looks at him intently. He shakes his head.

Oh, Bobbie.

Bobbie I don't want to be called Bobbie any more.

Maggie No?

Bobbie I want to be called Robert. Like my dad. Do you think you can do that?

Beat.

Maggie I can try.

Maggie *steadies herself. She looks at the next picture.*

Well, this one is very good. Is that me?

Bobbie No.

Maggie Who is it?

Bobbie Just some random woman.

Maggie She looks sad.

Bobbie This one is Taliban but it's not finished yet.

Maggie *sighs.*

Maggie Poor Taliban.

Bobbie *sits back down.*

Bobbie You could meet Garfield.

Maggie Oh right.

Bobbie Only he's gone home for Christmas.

Maggie Oh. What's happened to your arm, bubs? It's all red.

Bobbie I had to go to hospital. They restrained me.

Maggie What did you go to hospital for?

Bobbie My back. The rash.

Maggie Oh, right. Restrained. That don't seem right.

*Beat. **Bobbie** shrugs.*

Is your back alright now?

Bobbie Yeah it's all better now. It's all smooth.

Maggie Is it? I'm glad.

Beat.

What you doing tomorrow then, sweetness?

Bobbie I think we have a bit of Christmas TV, and then a big lunch. Then we're gonna play some kids' party games. Then watch some more TV probably.

Maggie Well, that sounds like fun.

Bobbie What are you gonna do?

Maggie Oh you know. Get pissed on the sofa. Argue with your nan.

Bobbie *smiles at this.*

Then we'll watch a bit of *Only Fools*. They're showing your favourite.

Bobbie Which one?

Maggie Batman and Robin. Will they let you watch that in here?

Bobbie Dunno.

Maggie Ahh. (*Beat. Looks at him and beams.*) Ahh, Bobbles. You'll be nearly a man when you get out of here. You'll be sixteen. Me and Nanny have been talking and we think we're gonna move away somewhere. Then when you come out you'll have a fresh start. Nanny reckons she can swap her council house for somewhere up north or in the countryside. Swap her one-bed for a two- or three-bed. You can have your own room. You'll have your GCSEs by then, won't you? Could go to college. Get a job if you want. Or just hang around with your mum and play PlayStation.

Bobbie Will HENCH move as well?

Maggie I don't know, darlin'. We'll have to ask him.

Bobbie How will you come and see me if you're living far away?

Maggie We'll find a way.

Beat.

But that sounds good, doesn't it? Something to look forward to. And, we're gonna take a holiday. A proper one.

Bobbie With me?

Maggie Course with you.

Bobbie We could go to Jamaica.

Maggie Maybe.

Bobbie That's where Garfield's from. I reckon he'd like it if we visit his nan.

Maggie We'll see.

Long pause. Bobbie puts his pastel down.

Bobbie Mum?

Maggie Yep?

Bobbie You know earlier on when you said you wanted a kiss?

Maggie Yeah?

Bobbie Did you mean it?

Maggie Course I did. Why?

Beat.

Bobbie When Nanny came to visit, she didn't kiss me.

Maggie Didn't she?

Bobbie No. She usually kisses the top of my head and gives me a cuddle. And ruffles my hair. She didn't.

Maggie No?

Bobbie She didn't touch me.

Beat.

Maggie Didn't she?

Bobbie *shakes his head.*

Beat.

Do you want to come and have a cuddle over here with me? (*Pats the chair next to her.*) Share a chair?

Bobbie No.

Maggie Why not?

Bobbie Cos I'll look like a dick.

Maggie *glances around.*

Maggie No one's looking.

Beat. Bobbie shakes his head.

Okay. How about if I moved my chair a little bit closer to you and we had a bit of a hug?
What do you think about that?

Beat.

Bobbie Alright then.

Maggie Alright then, darlin'. Come here then, darlin'.

Maggie moves her chair as close to **Bobbie** as she can, and puts her arms around him, and kisses him on the head. He cuddles her back. She rocks him a little.

There we are. That's right.

Lights fade.

Scene Thirteen

We hear the opening strains of Slade's 'Merry Xmas Everybody'. It is Christmas Day. The living room, the flat. Hench is playing PlayStation. The window is boarded up. He is sitting at the bottom end of the bed on the floor, smoking a fag and drinking a beer. He does not take his eyes off the screen. The sound of things being killed. There is the sound of banging on the door. Hench glances up, but ignores it. Bangs again for longer, he ignores it. A few moments pass, then there is a small noise; the sound of a pebble being thrown up at the window. He goes to the window, looks out, and freezes. It is her. Beat. Hench goes to the door, out of sight, to let her in. Jennifer comes back into the room. Hench follows her. She turns around to face him. They both stand in the middle of the room, looking at each other.

Lights fade.

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Lights fade up on Bobbie's little room. Bobbie sits on his bed wearing a Christmas hat. He has a sketch pad, working on something in pastels, a look of great concentration on his face. He finishes. He holds it up to look at it. From his little bedside drawer he gets some Blu-Tack. He puts the picture up above his bed. It is a drawing of Taliban. He stands back and takes it in. Then quietly...

Bobbie Woof.

Lights fade.

End.