

WHERE THE HEART IS

A FILM SCREENPLAY
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WHERE THE HEART IS

The film is set in South London. The time is now.

Pre-title sequence—Football field—Day

*A football match is in progress on the playing-field of a south London secondary school. Three boys dominate the play: **DANNY** (15/mature/athletic/ good-looking/ Afro-Caribbean), **JEFF** (15/ordinary-looking/Afro-Caribbean), and **BILL** (15/ordinary-looking/Caucasian).*

***BILL** gets the the ball and passes it to **DANNY** who scores an impressive goal.*

***JEFF** rushes up and smothers **DANNY** with mock kisses.*

***BILL** watches with evident emotion.*

Title sequence—Interior—School—Day

The staircases and corridors are deserted and eerily silent, the presence of hundreds of children intimated only by the muffled sound of distant teaching till, as the titles end, the final bell shatters the calm and every classroom door bursts open to release a flood of excited young people, running, shouting, laughing - liberated for the day.

1—Interior—School classroom—Day

***DANNY** and his gang are watching **JEFF** demonstrate his prowess at roller-blading while **BILL** distractedly fiddles with his books and the rest of the class disperses.*

***DANNY** gives **BILL** a puzzled look.*

***BILL** blinks three times but doesn't look up.*

***JEFF** performs a spectacular final flourish and roller-blades backwards out of the classroom door, grinning, making **DANNY** laugh as he follows him out.*

*At the door **DANNY** pauses to wink at **BILL** who sees but doesn't react.*

*Left alone, **BILL** opens his desk, furtively takes out a large photographic envelope and stuffs it into his sports-bag. He slings the bag over his shoulder, goes to the open door, checks that the coast is clear and leaves the room.*

2—Exterior—Playground—Bike shed—Continuous in time

BILL arrives at the bike shed with his sports-bag still slung over his shoulder and crouches down to unpadlock his bike.

JEFF roller-blades to a spectacular stop nearby, still grinning.

JEFF:

Been chatting up Surly Shirley again?!

BILL:

Get lost!

BILL unpadlocks his bike and cycles off.

3—Exterior—Outside Supermarket—Afternoon

DAVE (24/bearded/athletic/striking good looks/Caucasian) is playing a peek-a-boo game with a baby in a push-chair. The baby is dressed in pink.

BERYL (35/smart/respectable/Caucasian) comes out of the supermarket, weighed down with shopping including a spectacular pot-plant. She sees *DAVE* and the baby and stops to watch.

ANNE (25/lively/attractive/Caucasian) comes out of the supermarket, also with shopping, and smiles at *BERYL*.

BERYL:

Is she yours?

ANNE:

For my sins.

BERYL:

Oh I know! They always find you out, don't they?!

BERYL sets the plant and her shopping down to give the baby her full attention.

DAVE withdraws.

BERYL bends over the baby, smiling.

BERYL:

Aren't you a pretty little girl? Yes, you are! Ah! It's made my day meeting a pretty little girl like you! Yes it has!

ANNE and *DAVE* exchange a look and turn away.

BERYL:

Ah, look at her little face! You're the apple of your mummy's eye, aren't you?

BERYL glances at *ANNE* who busies herself stowing shopping under the push-chair.

BERYL glances at *DAVE*.

BERYL:

And your daddy's too, I expect! Aren't you? Yes!

DAVE examines a bud on the pot-plant.

BERYL turns to ANNE.

BERYL:

Oh I do envy you, having a baby girl to take care of!
She's lovely, isn't she?

ANNE:

You envy all the happy hours I spend trapped in my
flat because I can't find a baby-sitter, do you?

BERYL:

Oh, I know! Still we wouldn't part with them, would
we? Not for all the tea in China!

ANNE:

No, you're right, we wouldn't.

BERYL smiles nervously at DAVE.

DAVE winks.

DAVE:

Nice plant. I've got one just like it.

BERYL:

It's a present for my son.

Her face lights up.

BERYL:

My Billy would baby-sit for you!

She rummages in her handbag.

BERYL:

He could do with a part-time job.

She produces a postcard from her handbag.

BERYL:

Look at that!

She displays the postcard. It is a photograph of a spectacular red rose.

BERYL:

He sent it from Southampton.

ANNE looks at the postcard.

DAVE looks at the postcard.

BERYL sighs.

BERYL:

Playing football for his school.

DAVE:

It's an Ena Harkness Hybrid.

BERYL:

A red rose is for love, they say.

She rummages in her handbag again and produces a felt-tip pen.

BERYL:

Potty about plants, my Billy! Potty about football too.

In the first team! Well, you know - *boys...!*

ANNE and DAVE exchange another look.

DAVE:

(Smiling.) Yes.

BERYL turns to ANNE, ready to write.

BERYL:

Are you on the phone, Mrs Erm?

4—Exterior—Bill's House—Late afternoon

BILL arrives home from school on his bike, his sports-bag slung across his shoulder.

He dismounts and wheels the bike down the side of the house.

5—Interior—Beryl's kitchen—Continuous in time

BILL lets himself in the back door and listens intently.

He enters, his sports-bag still slung across his shoulder, creeps silently across the room and listens again at the door to the hall.

6—Interior—Beryl's hall—Continuous in time

BILL enters from the kitchen, creeps to the bottom of the stairs and listens again.

He mounts the stairs cautiously.

As he disappears from view BERYL enters from the front door still struggling with her shopping and the plant. She shouts up the stairs.

BERYL:

It's only me! *Billy...!*

She sighs deeply and heads for the kitchen.

BERYL:

Had to wait twenty minutes for a blinking 53 again!

7—Interior—Bill's bedroom—Continuous in time

BILL has thriving plants on every available shelf and a David Beckham poster on a wall. He enters, dumps his sports-bag on the bed, opens it, gets the photographic envelope out and looks round for somewhere to hide it.

BERYL: (OOV)

Billy!

BILL puts the photographic envelope among his books but it sticks out noticeably. He pulls it out again.

He opens a drawer and discovers his clothes arranged in neat rows.

He musses the clothes up, closes the drawer and opens another.

BERYL: (OOV)

I know you're up there!

BILL musses up the clothes in the second drawer and closes it again.

He pulls the bottom drawer completely out of the chest, lays the photographic envelope underneath and shoves the drawer back in its slot (thereby hiding the envelope), grabs a plant-spray, points it at the nearest plant and presses the trigger.

BERYL walks in. On the opened door is a notice: 'PLEASE KNOCK!!!'

BERYL:

Don't answer me, will you?

BILL:

I didn't hear you knock.

BERYL goes to BILL's sports-bag and rummages.

BILL narrows his eyes and purses his lips.

BERYL:

There's something for you in the kitchen...

BILL:

Mum!

BERYL:

I'm only looking for washing.

BILL:

I don't keep dirty laundry in my sports-bag.

BERYL:

No. You leave it littered all over the house!

BILL bangs the plant-spray down, takes off his blazer and drops it on a chair. It misses and slips to the floor.

BILL:

I'm going out.

BERYL:

That's it - throw everything on the floor!

She picks the blazer up and brushes it with her hands.

BERYL:

Did you hear what I said?

BILL rips off his school tie and ostentatiously drops it on the floor.

BERYL:

Billy! This is your home!

She picks the tie up and hangs it and the blazer in a cupboard.

BILL strips off his school shirt and throws it across the room.

BERYL:

(*Outraged.*) Billy!

BILL opens a drawer and takes out a tee-shirt.

BERYL notices the jumble of clothes in the drawer.

BERYL:

I only tidied that drawer this morning!

BILL looks her straight in the eyes and unzips his school trousers.

BERYL narrows her eyes, purses her lips and marches out of the room, leaving the door open.

BERYL:

I don't know why I bother! Really I don't!

BILL lets his trousers fall to the floor, steps out, selects a pair of jeans and puts them on with the tee-shirt he selected earlier. (How about having: 'I FORGIVE YOU FOR BEING PERFECT!' printed on it?)

He closes the bedroom door with a soft clunk, squats down and silently slides open the drawer where he's hidden the photographic envelope.

BERYL: (*OOV*)

I'm pouring your tea out, Billy!

BILL pulls a face, closes the drawer again, gets up and exits.

8—Interior—Beryl's kitchen—Continuous in time

BERYL has set 'tea for two' with the pot-plant as centre-piece.

BILL enters as she's pouring out two cups of tea.

BILL:

Mum! You got it!

BERYL:

It's more than you deserve, young man.

BILL:

It's great, mum! Thanks!

He hugs her enthusiastically.

BERYL blinks, pleased.

BERYL:

That's it! Muss my hair up before your father sees it!

9—Exterior—Street—Late afternoon

*A multi-racial group of teenage boys are lounging around outside a fast food café. Most are in jeans and trainers but a few are still in school uniform. The group includes **JEFF** on his roller-blades, **DANNY** astride his bike and **SODBURY** (15/surly/overweight/Caucasian).*

***BILL** cycles up and he and **DANNY** cycle off together.*

***SODBURY** and the others look after them.*

SODBURY:

Right sodding pair of sodding bumchums!

***SODBURY**'s gang snigger dutifully.*

***JEFF** pulls a sarcastic face at **SODBURY**'s expense.*

10—Exterior—Pub—Early evening

***BILL** and **DANNY** padlock their bikes outside the pub.*

***BILL** hands his loose change to **DANNY** and they go inside.*

11—Interior—Pub—Continuous in time

***DANNY** goes to the bar where he is served by a barmaid.*

***BILL** finds a table and sits down.*

***DANNY** comes back with two bottles of beer.*

***BILL** smiles wanly as **DANNY** hands him a beer and sits down next to him.*

DANNY:

What's up, mate?

***BILL** stares at his beer.*

BILL:

Nothing.

DANNY:

Leave it out!

***DANNY** takes a swig of his beer, looks round the room and back at **BILL**.*

DANNY:

All right?

BILL:

Sure.

DANNY:

Come on, mate...

*He puts his arm round **BILL**.*

DANNY:

Don't let the fuckers get you down. They're only a bunch of ignorant kids.

He takes his arm away and drinks again.

DANNY:

That Sodbury! Really rates himself! Christ!

He looks at BILL.

DANNY:

Unlike some I could mention.

BILL drinks a mouthful of beer.

DANNY:

But if you don't rate yourself, how can you expect other people to rate you, eh?

BILL struggles but can't manage a reply.

DANNY:

You got a fag?

BILL shakes his head.

DANNY:

Oh yeah, I forgot. Mr Pure!

He looks round for someone to cadge a cigarette off.

BILL:

Danny?

DANNY:

Yeah.

BILL:

You know that photo?

DANNY sniggers.

DANNY:

Jeff's 'Work of Art' and that!

BILL:

Yeah... Do you know why I wanted it?

DANNY:

Haven't a clue.

BILL:

The thing is, Danny, I think I might be... that is I erm...

A group of new customers burst into the pub, including an outrageously-camp man.

DANNY looks at the camp man with delight.

BILL looks at him with horror.

DANNY:

Now that's what you call a fruitcake!

*He registers **BILL**'s expression.*

DANNY:

Yeah, I know. Disgusting, isn't it?

***BILL** shakes his head.*

DANNY:

Anyway, you were saying...?

BILL:

I don't remember.

DANNY:

Out with it!

BILL:

No. It wasn't important.

DANNY:

You're weird sometimes, Bill Johnson. You know that?

*The pub **LANDLORD** appears at their table.*

LANDLORD:

Right you two - *out!*

***DANNY** is outraged.*

DANNY:

What've *we* done?!

LANDLORD:

I'm not losing my licence for the likes of you, Sonny Jim! *Out!*

***BILL** gets up and leaves quietly.*

***DANNY** makes a show of finishing his beer first.*

DANNY:

(Grinning.) Mmmmm! Delicious!

*He follows **BILL** out, pausing at the door.*

DANNY:

(Grinning.) I'd rather be an under-age Sonny Jim than a *Senile Blood-Clot!*

LANDLORD:

(Grinning.) If I catch you in here again, I'll have your black balls for garters!

DANNY:

(Grinning.) At least I've got some!

12—Exterior—Pub—Continuous in time

BILL unpadlocks his bike.

DANNY emerges from the pub still grinning from his skirmish with the landlord.

BILL fiddles with his padlock.

DANNY squats down to unpadlock his bike and punches him affectionately.

DANNY:

Bike trip this weekend.

BILL looks up at him gratefully.

BILL:

Yeah.

13—Interior—Beryl's living-room—Evening

BERYL and GEORGE (40/ordinary working bloke/Caucasian) are having tea. The television is on but with the sound turned down. A third place is set but empty.

GEORGE is absorbed in his evening paper.

BERYL:

Maybe he's being bullied...

GEORGE:

Give it a rest, Beryl.

BERYL:

They said on telly...

GEORGE:

(Interrupting.) He just needs a bit of elbow room,
that's all.

BERYL:

Huh! Mr Know-All! As usual, you don't know what
you're talking about!

GEORGE:

He's my son as much as yours.

BERYL:

You were exactly the same with Eric. You don't even
notice when something's going on *right under your
nose!*

GEORGE lowers his paper.

GEORGE:

All right. You tell me. What is going on 'right under
my nose'?

BERYL:

Never you mind.

GEORGE:

You take the biscuit, Beryl!

He raises his paper again.

BERYL:

Well, if you must know, he's...

GEORGE looks at her over the top of his paper.

GEORGE:

Yeah? He's what?

BERYL looks out of the window, embarrassed.

BERYL:

...relieving himself.

GEORGE:

Do what?

BERYL:

You heard.

GEORGE lowers the paper again.

GEORGE:

And how the hell would you know?

BERYL:

There's no call to start swearing at me, George.
I make his bed every day, don't I?

GEORGE:

Huh! Well, what if he is? It's only natural.

He raises the paper again.

BERYL:

That is typical of you, George Johnson!

GEORGE lifts the paper higher.

GEORGE:

Natural is the one thing it is.

BERYL:

You're an expert I suppose.

GEORGE smirks behind his paper.

GEORGE:

Do know something about it, yeah.

BERYL:

I wish you'd put that blinking thing down when I'm
talking to you about *our* son!

BILL is heard arriving OOV.

GEORGE:

It's better than getting girls into trouble! Even you've got to admit that, Beryl.

*BERYL smashes the paper to the table, knocking over a cup of tea.
They both look shocked.*

BERYL:

Now look what you've made me do!

GEORGE casts his eyes to the heavens.

BILL enters from the kitchen.

GEORGE reassembles his paper.

BERYL mops up the spilt tea.

BERYL:

(to *BILL*) We've already got to dessert!

BILL:

Evening, dad.

GEORGE grunts.

BILL:

I don't want anything. I've got a lot of homework to do.

He exits to the hall and climbs the stairs.

BERYL serves GEORGE a look, meaning: 'What did I tell you!'

GEORGE returns the serve with a look, meaning: 'So what?!'

14—Interior—Bill's bedroom—Evening

BILL is at his computer, surrounded by books. He gets up and silently slides out the drawer where he's hidden the photographic envelope.

BERYL walks in with a dish of pie and custard. She whispers conspiratorially:

BERYL:

Pie and custard! *He* doesn't know.

BILL closes the drawer again.

BERYL:

What are you doing down there?

BILL:

I didn't hear you knock, mum.

BERYL:

Where shall I put it?

BILL goes back to his computer.

BERYL sets the dish down.

BERYL:

There!

She looks over his shoulder at his computer screen.

BERYL:

What is it tonight, Billy?

BILL:

‘The Social Manifestation of Ignorance, Prejudice and Intolerance.’

BERYL:

Oooh er!

BILL waits for her to leave.

BERYL:

Mrs Bradley’s Ethel’s doing ‘Anatomy’...

BILL waits for her to leave.

BERYL:

Listen, Billy, are you still interested in a part-time job?

No reaction from BILL.

BERYL:

Only I’ve met this nice family that needs a baby-sitter.

No reaction from BILL.

BERYL:

They’ve got the sweetest little girl - *a dream child!* - and they’re ever so well-spoken.

No reaction from BILL.

BERYL:

Are you listening to me?

BILL:

Yes.

BERYL:

Well?!

BILL:

How much will they pay?

BERYL is triumphant.

BERYL:

Four pounds an hour, the wife said!

She looks at the new plant which now has pride of place on BILL’s window-sill.

BERYL:

You could buy a lot of fertiliser with that...

BILL:

All right.

BERYL produces the postcard of the rose.

BILL:

Isn't that the card I sent you from Southampton?

BERYL looks defensive.

BERYL:

It was all I had with me. I wrote her number on the back. Mrs Pierce, her name is.

BILL takes the postcard and admires the rose.

BERYL:

Don't say 'Thank you', will you?!

BILL smothers his irritation.

15—Interior—George's garden shed—Evening

The shed is lined with tropical aquaria.

GEORGE is singing to his prize Siamese fighting fish.

GEORGE:

I should've known better with a fish like you... (etc.)

He picks up an empty mug and goes to the door.

GEORGE:

Goodnight, my beauties!

He turns out the main light (leaving the aquaria illuminated) and exits.

15—Interior—Beryl's kitchen—Continuous in time

BERYL is singing to herself as she does the washing up.

BERYL:

Once I had a secret love... that lived within the heart of me... (etc.)

GEORGE enters, drops the empty mug in the washing-up bowl, kisses the nape of her neck, gives her bum an appreciative rub and exits.

BERYL sighs contentedly.

17—Interior—Bill's bedroom—Continuous in time

BILL is at his desk staring at his computer screen. The postcard of the rose is pinned up on his notice-board. The half-eaten dish of pie and custard is on a pile of books. There is a knock at the door.

BILL looks surprised.

BILL:

Come in!

GEORGE sticks his head round the door.

GEORGE:

All right if I have a quick word, Billy?

BILL:

Dad! Come in!

BILL clears a space on the bed for GEORGE to sit down.

GEORGE enters and stands awkwardly playing with his keys, his hands in his pockets.

GEORGE:

Plants look healthy.

BILL grins.

BILL:

They get *almost* as much attention as your fish!

GEORGE:

Look, Billy, the thing is this... you know how your mother gets erm... sort of erm... upset over things?

BILL:

Yes!

GEORGE:

The thing is this, Billy... she knows you're erm... sort of erm... masturbating... and it's upsetting her.

BILL recoils in shock.

BILL:

What?

GEORGE:

She knows you're *wanking*, Billy.

BILL blinks three times.

GEORGE:

Don't get me wrong, Billy. Only natural at your age. But... try to be more... erm... sort of erm... *discreet*, can you?

No reply from BILL.

GEORGE:

Use a tissue and that... you know.

GEORGE looks at BILL's David Beckham poster.

GEORGE:

Still in the first team, are you?

BILL relaxes a little.

BILL:

Yeah.

GEORGE:

Great stuff! Nothing else worrying you, is there, Billy?

BILL looks at the drawer where he's hidden the photographic envelope.

BILL:

No.

GEORGE:

You know you can talk to me about man to man stuff,
Billy, and that, don't you?

BILL:

Yes. No. It doesn't matter.

GEORGE:

I know! *Girls!* And you have to sit next to them all
day! Not like in my day. In their gym slips and that I
shouldn't wonder! Christ! But you've just got to be
patient, Billy.

He goes to the door, opens it, stops and looks back.

GEORGE:

Everything comes to he who waits!

He indicates the door across the landing and grins.

GEORGE:

Know what I mean?!

BILL stares at him.

GEORGE exits, shutting the door after him.

*BILL continues staring at the closed door, then looks at the drawer where he's
hidden the photographic envelope and sighs and shakes his head.*

BERYL: (OOV)

We're off out, Billy! There's a tasty cold meat snack
for you in the fridge. Don't work too hard now! Bye!!!

We hear the front door bang, then car doors and an engine starting OOV.

BILL goes to the window and watches GEORGE and BERYL drive away.

*He goes to the drawer where he's hidden the photographic envelope, gets it out,
takes it to his bed, sits down and slowly draws out a large, glamorous, nude, pin-up
photograph of DANNY.*

18—Interior—School changing-room—Day

*Showers are running OOV. The football team from the opening shot are in various
states of undress and high spirits after a good win.*

DANNY strips off his football kit.

BILL strips off his football kit.

DANNY heads for the showers, stopping as he passes to grin at BILL.

DANNY:
Wicked pass, Bill!

BILL:
That last goal was *brilliant!*

DANNY:
Leave it out! Come on, while it's still hot...

DANNY exits to showers.

Other members of the team look after him admiringly.

On his way to the showers BILL encounters SODBURY, fully clothed, on his way to the main exit unwashed.

SODBURY:
Sodding hogs the sodding ball, doesn't he?!

BILL:
Just as well he does! If it'd been up to you we'd've
lost!

BILL exits to showers.

The same team members look after BILL admiringly.

JEFF darts among the remaining boys, imitating a sports commentator.

JEFF:
And Bill Johnson makes a scorching pass to King
Komp's wicked striker, Danny Williams! And
Williams beats one man! Beats another! Beats the first
one again! And he **SCORES!**

He blocks SODBURY's route to the exit door.

JEFF:
While King's other so-called striker, *Podge Sodbury*,
is *un*marked, *un*wanted, *un*washed - **AS USUAL!**

SODBURY:
This whole sodding team's a bunch of sodding niggers
and poufs!

JEFF strikes a camp pose.

JEFF:
At least we're clean, ducky!

19—Exterior—School changing-room—Day

The football team drifts out of the changing-room and stands about in groups.

SODBURY's (all-Caucasian) gang gathers to one side.

DANNY and BILL come out, get on their bikes and cycle off together.

SODBURY shouts after them in camp mockery.

SODBURY:

Wicked pass, Bill! Brilliant goal, Danny! *Kissy kissy!*

SODBURY's gang snigger dutifully.

JEFF jeers at them.

20—Interior—Mainline station—Day

BILL and DANNY carry their bikes onto a suburban train and settle into window seats facing each other.

21—Interior—Travelling train—Day

The train passes through open countryside on a warm spring day.

BILL has a book open but sneaks glances at DANNY who is sprawled across his seat, asleep, in an alluring pose.

DANNY opens his eyes, grins and winks at BILL then settles to sleep again.

BILL blinks three times and looks out of the window.

22—Exterior—Country field with stream—Sunny day

Their bikes against a tree, BILL and DANNY are larking about in the stream.

They come out together and lay down on their towels to sunbathe.

BILL picks up a book.

DANNY lies back, cradles his head in his arms and shuts his eyes.

BILL looks sideways at him longingly.

DANNY stirs, opens his eyes, leaps up and grabs BILL's book.

DANNY:

That's enough reading, you swat!

BILL:

Here, give it back!

DANNY:

Come and get it!

They wrestle for the book.

BILL gives in and lies still, his arms entwined round DANNY.

DANNY extricates himself, gives the book to BILL, walks over to his saddle-bag, gets a packet of cigarettes and lights one up.

BILL comes to a decision.

BILL:

Danny?

DANNY:

What?

BILL:

I've got something... important to tell you.

DANNY:

Snap!

BILL:

What?

DANNY takes a drag on his cigarette.

DANNY:

Remember those talent scouts, in Southampton, last term?

BILL is nonplussed.

BILL:

Yeah.

DANNY:

Well, I've done it! I've signed up! As an apprentice! I start Monday!

He waves his cigarette.

DANNY:

They say I've got to give up. Christ!

BILL is stunned.

DANNY:

So that was my last day at that dump!

He does a celebratory cartwheel.

DANNY:

Free! At last!

He notices BILL's expression.

DANNY:

Yeah. So I'm afraid this'll be our last bike trip together, mate.

BILL picks up his tee-shirt and turns away.

DANNY:

Well, say something, if it's only 'goodbye'!

BILL puts the tee-shirt over his head.

BILL:

Congratulations, Danny. It's wonderful news.

DANNY:

Wicked, isn't it? I knew you'd be pleased for me.

BILL picks up his jeans.

BILL:

Yes, of course I am, Danny. Does Jacobs know?

DANNY stubs out his cigarette and picks up his jeans.

DANNY:

Course.

BILL puts on his jeans.

BILL:

How long... have *you* known?

DANNY puts on his jeans.

DANNY:

About a week. Remember that funeral I went to?

DANNY picks up his tee-shirt and puts it on, grinning.

DANNY:

I was in Southampton for trials!

BILL picks up a training shoe and stares at it.

BILL:

Why didn't you tell me, Danny?

DANNY:

I'm telling you now. Anyway, I expect I'll be allowed up... on visits.

BILL blinks three times. He puts the training shoe on.

DANNY:

I told Jacobs you should be captain.

He produces his captain's armband and offers it to BILL.

BILL stares at it.

BILL:

I don't want to be captain.

DANNY:

Leave it out! You're the best, after me. Jacobs knows that.

He offers the armband again.

Again *BILL* refuses it.

DANNY:

You don't want fucking Sodbury to be captain, do you?

BILL picks up his other training shoe.

BILL:

I don't care. I only wanted to be in the team because you were in it.

DANNY:
Cut it out, mate!

DANNY offers the armband a third time.

BILL takes the armband, puts it on the ground besides him and puts on his other training shoe.

DANNY:
What's the use, Bill, eh?

He picks up and puts on his own training shoes.

DANNY:
Anyway, that's my news. What's yours?

BILL:
What?

DANNY:
What did you want to tell me?

BILL stuffs the armband into his saddle-bag with his swimming things.

BILL:
Nothing.

DANNY:
Out with it!

BILL:
No. It was nothing.

DANNY:
Have it your own way. Come on, matey. Let's grab a pint before the train leaves... 'cause I'm... seeing my girl-friend this evening, see... saying goodbye and that.

BILL blinks three times.

DANNY:
Look, I'm sorry, Bill.

He offers his hand to BILL.

BILL reaches for it but DANNY raises his hand to his nose instead.

BILL is not amused.

DANNY punches him affectionately.

23—Exterior—Deserted streets—Evening

BILL rides forlornly around deserted streets on his bike.

24—Exterior—Deserted park—Children's play area—Evening

BILL is on a child's swing, desolately staring at the swing next to him. He makes it swing. He swings with it. His bike is on the ground nearby.

25—Exterior—Residential street—Night

BILL cycles up to DANNY's house and turns off his bicycle lights.

A wild party is in progress with dozens of (exclusively Afro-Caribbean) guests - including DANNY and JEFF - conducting a noisy celebration inside.

BILL watches from the other side of the street.

The front door opens and DANNY and a beautiful young Afro-Caribbean woman come out, half-close the door and snog on the porch.

BILL watches, unseen.

JEFF comes out after them.

JEFF:

Listen, girl! He's saying goodbye to us all - not just
you!

He laughingly drags them back inside.

BILL cycles off into the night.

26—Exterior—Bill's house—Night

BILL arrives on his bike, dismounts and looks up at the house which is dark and empty. He wheels his bike down the side passage.

27—Interior—Bill's hall and stairs—Continuous in time

BILL enters from the kitchen, listens at the foot of the stairs and cautiously goes up.

28—Interior—Beryl's bedroom—Continuous in time

BILL enters and sits at his mother's dressing-table.

He stares at himself in the three-way mirror.

He studies a wedding photograph of himself, BERYL, GEORGE and his brother.

He replaces it and opens a drawer. It is full of GEORGE's underwear.

He reaches under it and pulls out a nude girlie magazine.

He flicks through it and puts it back where it was.

He closes the drawer and opens another. It is full of jars and boxes of pills.

He picks up a half-used card of contraceptive pills, studies it and puts it back.

He picks up a jar of Diazapan and reads the label.

He puts it back, closes the drawer and opens another. It is full of make up.

He picks up a lipstick, takes off the cap and screws out the blood red tube of fat.

He stares at himself in the mirror.

He pushes his lips forward as if to apply the lipstick but freezes.

He scrawls: 'I CAN'T BREATHE' on the centre mirror.

He stares at what he's done, shocked.

He re-opens the drawer, takes out the jar of Diazapan and leaves the room with it.

CU of the words on the mirror, closing on the 'I'.

29—Interior—Bill's bedroom—Continuous in time

***BILL** enters, shuts the door, puts the jar of Diazapan on his desk and stares at it.*

He gets the captain's armband from his pocket and sets it down next to the Diazapan.

He opens the jar and pours the pills out in a heap.

He goes to the chest of drawers, opens the bottom drawer and takes out the photographic envelope.

*He returns to his desk with it, sits down, and slowly slides out the pin-up photo of **DANNY**.*

He stares at the photograph, blinks three times and tears it in half, then in half again, and again, and again.

He's stares at what he's done, shocked.

He pushes the torn pieces into a second heap on the other side of the armband.

***BERYL** and **GEORGE** arrive home and make a lot of noise OOV, laughing, banging doors etc.*

***BILL** reacts momentarily, then freezes again.*

***BERYL** calls up the stairs OOV.*

BERYL: (OOV)

It's only us!

She screams with laughter OOV.

BERYL: (OOV)

Get off, you randy bugger! Want some cocoa, Billy?

GEORGE: (OOV)

For god's sake, Beryl! Can't you leave the boy alone for five minutes?

BERYL: (OOV)

I'll just see if he's still up...

GEORGE: (OOV)

All right. I'll make some cocoa and bring it up.

***BERYL** mounts the stairs and goes into her bedroom OOV.*

***BILL** doesn't move.*

***BERYL** bursts in like a cataclysm.*

BERYL:

Billy! Just what is the meaning of...?!

She sees the jar of Diazapan.

BERYL:

Oh my god! What are you doing?!

She approaches BILL gingerly.

BERYL:

Give them to me!

BILL hands her the empty jar.

BERYL:

Have you taken any?

BILL shakes his head.

BERYL scoops the pills up and stuffs them back in the jar.

She finds the cap and screws it on.

She clutches the jar and stares at the pile of photo fragments and the armband.

BERYL:

What's got into you, Billy?!

BILL blinks three times.

BILL:

I wasn't going to take them.

BERYL:

But *why*, Billy?

Tears run down BERYL's cheeks.

BILL scoops up a handful of photo fragments and holds it out to her.

BERYL stares at it.

BERYL:

I don't understand.

GEORGE: (*Shouting OOV*)

Where's the bleeding sugar, Beryl?

BILL closes his hands over the fragments.

BERYL:

What's wrong with you, Billy?!

BILL shakes his head hopelessly.

BILL:

I can't tell you.

BERYL:

Don't be ridiculous! I'm your mother! You can tell me anything.

BILL blinks three times and shakes his head hopelessly again.

BILL:

No I can't. You think I can. But I can't.

BERYL:

No matter what you've done, I'm still your mother!

BILL raises the handful of fragments to his mouth.

BERYL:

Please trust me, Billy!

GEORGE:

For God's sake, Beryl, where's the bleeding sugar?!

BILL:

All right.

He turns his back on her and speaks to the fragments.

BILL:

I'm...

BERYL:

Yes?!

BILL:

...one of those people who...

BERYL stares at him fearfully.

BERYL:

What, Billy, for god's sake?!

BILL:

...who are attracted to their own sex.

BERYL doesn't understand.

BILL:

I'm a homosexual.

BERYL bursts out laughing.

BERYL:

Is that it?! You silly boy! Of course you aren't! You don't even know what the word means! You're only a child!

BILL turns to face her.

BILL:

I'm not a child anymore and I know exactly what it means.

BERYL wags her finger at him.

BERYL:

No! This time you're going too far, Billy! I won't stand for this! I'm warning you!

BILL stares at her, unblinking.

BILL:

You wanted me to tell you. Now you know.

BERYL:

But how could you possibly know such a thing?! At fifteen! It's preposterous!

She remembers something from her past and looks scared. (See Scene 48.)

BERYL:

Oh my god, no! *No! NO!* Let it not be true!

She looks at his David Beckham poster.

BERYL:

Think what you're saying, Billy!

*She looks at the postcard of the rose pinned to **BILL**'s notice-board.*

BERYL:

You're a good boy. You're *normal!* People like *that* are *perverts!* ...only interested in... one thing!

GEORGE stumps up the stairs OOV.

BERYL:

Oh my god, Billy! - and what about *AIDS*?!

BILL shakes his head, turns away, collides with his father as the latter enters and drops the handful of photo fragments.

They scatter to the floor like snowflakes.

GEORGE clips **BILL** round the ear.

GEORGE:

I won't have you upsetting your mother all the time!
Do you hear?

*He cuddles **BERYL**.*

GEORGE:

Come on, love. Whatever this is about, it's not worth getting yourself all worked up again.

BERYL pushes him away impatiently.

BERYL:

He took my Diazapan!

She waves the jar.

GEORGE:

Do what?

BERYL:

From my dressing-table drawer! He was going to do himself in!

GEORGE turns to **BILL**.

GEORGE:

Is this true, young man?

BILL shakes his head hopelessly.

BERYL:

He says he's a 'homosexual'!

GEORGE:

Do what?!

He explodes with rage.

GEORGE:

Do what?! *Do what?! No son of mine's a fucking
fairy!*

He goes to hit BILL again but BERYL stops him and he marches out leaving the door open.

BERYL follows him, pausing at the door.

BERYL:

How *could* you, Billy? How could you ruin
everything?!

She marches out and slams the door.

BILL sinks to the floor surrounded by the debris of the photo of DANNY.

He picks up a fragment and stares at it.

He picks up another.

He fits the two fragments together.

*He gathers more fragments, stumbles to his desk and begins assembling them like a
jig-saw puzzle.*

30—Exterior—Deserted street—Morning

Children are playing in a front garden as a milk float turns into the street.

31—Exterior—Park playground—Children's play area—Morning

*Flowers wave in the breeze as two toddlers, one black one white, play on the swings
where BILL sat the previous evening.*

32—Exterior—Residential street—Morning

*A milk float arrives outside DANNY's house as his mum opens the door with more
empty bottles for the dustbin.*

MILKMAN:

Morning, Glad! What can I get for you this morning?

GLAD:

Two pints of peace and quiet, please, Denis!

They both laugh.

33—Exterior—Bill’s house—Morning

Upbeat pop music is playing inside the house.

34—Interior—Beryl’s kitchen—Continuous in time

CU of the transistor radio which is the source of the music.

GEORGE is cleaning an aquarium filter-pump which he’s dismantled and spread out on a newspaper on the kitchen table.

BERYL enters in a dressing-gown, walks to the radio and turns it off.

GEORGE purses his lips.

BERYL:

I can’t hear myself think with that blinking rubbish
blaring at me!

GEORGE flicks his eyes to the heavens.

BERYL:

It’s Sunday morning, George! I wouldn’t mind if
you’d put something decent on sometimes. Like Radio
2. Proper music. Music you can talk over.

GEORGE centres himself.

BERYL prepares breakfast on a tray.

BERYL:

What are we going to do, George?

GEORGE:

What about?

BERYL clicks her teeth.

BERYL:

You know perfectly well what I mean!

GEORGE:

What can *we* can do?

BERYL:

He’s *our* son. We’re responsible for him.

GEORGE:

Huh. You know what? It makes sense of a few things
that’d been puzzling me.

BERYL:

There must be a way to stop those dreadful people
from finding him.

GEORGE:

What people? What are you on about?

BERYL:

You know perfectly well what I mean, George!
Perverts!

GEORGE:

Pass me the pliers.

BERYL abstractedly passes him a pair of pliers.

BERYL:

I don't care what he says, he isn't like *that*. He's
normal. He plays football! For his school!

GEORGE:

No one forced him to say it. It's his funeral. Let him
get on with it.

BERYL:

That is typical of you, George Johnson! I believe you
really would just sit there and do nothing.

GEORGE:

It's not my fault he's decided he's queer.

BERYL:

Why can't you do messy jobs like that in the shed?!
How many times do I have to ask you?!

She notices her NEWS OF THE WORLD under GEORGE's mess.

BERYL:

Is that *my* Sunday paper, George?!

GEORGE grunts.

BERYL clicks her teeth and fussily retrieves it.

BERYL:

I buy it to *read*, not for you to use as a doily!

She reads the front page.

BERYL:

My god! It says homosexuals are giving AIDS to
school kids!

She hunts through the paper for the story.

BERYL:

You see!

GEORGE:

You're dafter than I thought if you believe the rubbish
in that rag!

BERYL devours the story, shaking her head and clicking her teeth.

GEORGE:

You know a funny thing? *Eric* was the one I used to
wonder about!

BERYL casts her eyes to the heavens.

BERYL:
George!

GEORGE:
Well, all that camping about and that, in those daft
musicals at school.

BERYL:
I never thought this could happen to us! What are we
going to do? What *are* we going to do?

She gathers up the breakfast tray she's prepared.

GEORGE:
There's one of them at the works.

BERYL:
I wonder if Dr. Singh would help?

She heads for the door, balancing the tray.

GEORGE:
I told you about him.

BERYL:
But how could I talk to him about something so
frightful?

She exits with the breakfast tray.

GEORGE:
Queen Vic, his name is. Right little pansy!

GEORGE lets his pliers drop and stares ahead thoughtfully.

35—Interior—Beryl's landing and stairs—Continuous in time

BERYL arrives at BILL's door with the breakfast tray.

BERYL's POV of the 'PLEASE KNOCK!!!' sign.

36—Interior—Bill's bedroom—Morning

*BILL is inspecting the photo of DANNY which he has reassembled after a fashion.
He has been crying.*

A timid knocking is heard OOV.

BILL:
Yes?

BERYL: (OOV)
Can I come in, Billy?

BILL sweeps the reassembled photo into his waste bin.

BILL:

Yes.

BERYL enters nervously, balancing the tray.

BERYL:

Are you all right, darling?

BILL goes to his notice-board and unpins the postcard of the rose.

BILL:

Yes.

BERYL puts the tray down.

BERYL:

I thought you might like breakfast in your room. Just this once, mind!

She approaches him timidly.

BERYL:

Oh, Billy! You're still my favourite.

She pulls him into an embrace and strokes his hair.

BERYL:

Whatever I decide, you know I only want what's best for you, don't you, darling?

BILL doesn't respond.

BERYL releases him and goes to the door.

BERYL:

Now you're not to worry. Do you hear? You're a good boy. You're normal. You're not a pervert. Everything's going to be all right. We'll fight it together.

She exits, shutting the door after her.

BILL stares at the tray of breakfast then at the postcard of the rose.

37—Interior—Bill's hall—Continuous in time

BILL arrives at the bottom of the stairs carrying the postcard of the rose, picks up the telephone and dials the number from it.

GEORGE listens as he reassembles his air-pump.

38—Interior—Beryl's bedroom—Continuous in time

BERYL is at her dressing-table with tears running down her cheeks. She notices lipstick marks on the mirror. She rubs them abstractedly with a tissue.

39—Interior—Beryl's kitchen—Continuous in time

GEORGE's POV of BILL on the telephone.

BILL:

Mrs Pierce? (*Pause.*) Mrs Johnson's son. (*Pause.*) Bill.
(*Pause.*) Yes, I know she does, but I prefer *Bill*.
(*Pause.*) Mum says you want a baby-sitter. (*Pause.*)
Sure. (*Pause.*) Bye.

BILL hangs up and enters the kitchen.

GEORGE:

Morning, *Bill*.

BILL stares at his father.

BILL:

Morning, *dad*.

40—Exterior—Anne's flat—Morning

Vivaldi's 'Stabat Mater' is playing OOV as BILL arrives on his bike, checks the number with the postcard of the rose and rings the door bell.

ANNE opens the door holding a packet of biscuits.

BILL:

Mrs Pierce?

ANNE:

You must be Bill. Come in.

BILL:

Can I bring my bike in? Only it doesn't look safe out here.

ANNE:

Dead right. Course you can.

41—Interior—Anne's hallway—Continuous in time

The Vivaldi continues. BILL wheels his bike into the passage.

ANNE:

Listen, Bill, I'm in the middle of an urgent job. Do you mind if I carry on while we talk?

BILL:

Course not.

ANNE goes back to her living-room table.

BILL stows his bike and follows her.

42—Interior—Anne's living-room—Continuous in time

ANNE is loading home-made biscuits into fancy packets, sticking labels on and sealing them.

BILL watches.

BILL:

Can I help you with that, Mrs Pierce?

ANNE:

Oh, would you?!

She indicates piles of biscuits, empty packets, labels.

ANNE:

There's still millions to do...

She indicates piles of finished packets.

ANNE:

...like those.

She indicates a chair.

ANNE:

You could sit there. And it's *Ms* Pierce, not *Mrs*
but call me 'Anne', Bill, for god's sake!

BILL puts the postcard of the rose down on the table and sets to.

ANNE looks at it.

ANNE:

Oh god, Bill, *your mother!* How in heavens do you
cope with her?

BILL:

Sorry?

ANNE:

No. I'm sorry, Bill. I had no right. Just a minute. I'll
turn the music down.

She does so.

ANNE:

Dave's playing with Robin anyway.

She returns to the table and resumes packing.

ANNE:

So, you're prepared to put up with my brat for a
pittance?

BILL grins.

BILL:

Yes, Anne.

ANNE:

Why, Bill?

BILL:

Mum said you'd pay £4 an hour.

ANNE nods.

BILL:

That isn't a pittance to me.

They continue packing.

BILL:

Besides, I want to get out of the house now that my friend's... now that I can't...

ANNE gives him a quick look.

ANNE:

You've missed the object of the exercise, Bill, if I may say so. The object is to get *me* out of my flat!

BILL nods.

BILL:

Right. Get us both out of our...

They work in silence for a moment.

BILL:

Who makes all these biscuits...?

ANNE looks resigned.

ANNE:

Home-made it says on the packet and home-made they bloody are - this being the home!

BILL looks at her.

ANNE:

Me, in other words! My brother sells them to a wholefood supplier for me. Feel free to eat as many as you want.

BILL picks up a broken piece and eats it.

BILL:

Good.

ANNE:

Thank you kindly, young sir. Now, listen, Bill, you do know how brattish brats can be, don't you?

BILL:

Oh yeah. I've done it loads of times.

ANNE:

Okay. Short test. What do you do if the baby starts crying?

BILL:

Nothing. They usually go back to sleep after a few minutes anyway.

ANNE:

Right, but what if they don't?

BILL:

Well, I'd try some music.

ANNE:

Right! Robin loves Vivaldi, as a matter of fact. Just like me.

BILL:

And if that didn't work I'd pick the baby up and walk around with it; and if that didn't work...

ANNE:

(Interrupting.) You're obviously an expert!

They work in silence for a moment.

ANNE:

Could you manage Thursday evening?

BILL:

Sure.

ANNE:

That's great! There's this movie I've been trying to see since the late middle ages! What if I pay you fifteen quid to watch my telly till I get back?

BILL:

Done.

43—Interior—Anne's nursery—Continuous in time

DAVE and the baby from Scene 3 are playing on the floor. The baby is dressed in blue.

BILL and ANNE appear at the door.

DAVE smiles at BILL.

BILL staggers from the shock of ♥ TRUE LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT ♥ !

ANNE:

Bill, Dave. Dave, Bill.

DAVE:

Hi, Bill.

BILL blinks three times.

DAVE smiles and looks at ANNE.

ANNE:

Bill's going to baby-sit for me.

DAVE winks at BILL.

DAVE:

Good. Then we'll meet again soon.

44—Interior—Anne’s hallway—A few minutes later

ANNE holds the front door open.

BILL wheels his bike through.

ANNE:

Thursday at seven, then.

BILL nods.

ANNE:

And thanks for your help with the packing, Bill.

DAVE emerges from the nursery and smiles at BILL.

BILL stares, gets on his bike and cycles off.

45—Interior—Anne’s living-room—Continuous in time

DAVE is loading finished packets of biscuits into a cardboard packing case.

ANNE enters.

ANNE:

Nice kid, isn’t he?

DAVE:

Oh god! All that teenage angst!

ANNE:

An ancient pot calling a teenage kettle black, don’t you think?

DAVE:

Don’t remind me! Anyway I think the disenchantment was mutual.

ANNE shakes her head.

ANNE:

Oh yeah!?

DAVE:

He took one look at me and fled.

ANNE picks up the postcard of the rose from the table.

ANNE:

Leaving *this* behind!

46—Interior—Beryl’s bedroom—Morning

BERYL is at her dressing-table putting on the face she keeps by the door. She contemplates her handiwork, sighs deeply, gets up and leaves the room.

47—Interior—Doctor's consulting-room—Morning

DR SINGH (well-spoken/friendly/competent/Asian) reads from his computer screen, turns to *BERYL* and smiles encouragingly.

BERYL clutches her handbag.

DR SINGH:

Could you be more... specific, Mrs Johnson? What exactly is wrong with 'your friend's' son?

BERYL:

Oh dear! I knew I shouldn't have mentioned it!

DR SINGH:

On the contrary, Mrs Johnson. I'm a doctor. You can tell me anything.

BERYL:

Oh dear...

DR SINGH:

Is it something to do with sex, Mrs Johnson?

BERYL nods timidly.

DR SINGH:

I see. And how old is your friend's son?

BERYL:

He's only a child, doctor.

DR SINGH flicks his eyes to his computer screen then back to *BERYL*.

DR SINGH:

How old, Mrs Johnson?

BERYL:

Fifteen.

DR SINGH:

The same age as your Billy.

BERYL blinks three times.

DR SINGH:

Though I believe he'll be sixteen soon...?

BERYL nods.

DR SINGH:

Mrs Johnson, everything we say in this room is in the strictest confidence.

BERYL nods.

DR SINGH:

So what is it you want to tell me?

BERYL:

Well... my friend's son says he's a...

She blinks and looks out of the window.

DR SINGH:

Yes. What does he say he is?

BERYL sighs deeply.

BERYL:

A homosexual, doctor.

DR SINGH:

I see.

He flicks his eyes to his computer screen then back to BERYL.

BERYL:

And my friend's afraid it's her fault... that she might have done something wrong... when he was tiny.

DR SINGH:

I doubt that, Mrs Johnson.

He takes a deep breath.

DR SINGH:

You know, the teenage years are very stressful. Their bodies are changing in vital ways to transform them physically, emotionally - *but entirely naturally* - into adults.

BERYL stares at him.

DR SINGH:

Their hormones are raging. Their brains are virtually being rewired – so perhaps it's not surprising if a few of them... go through... a phase... of worrying about some of these changes.

He leans forward.

DR SINGH:

You tell your friend her son's growing up. That's all.

BERYL:

You mean he'll grow out of it?!

DR SINGH sighs.

DR SINGH:

That isn't what I meant. Though, he might. But if he doesn't, he'll need her love and support all the more, won't he?

BERYL blinks three times.

BERYL:

But isn't there anything my friend could do to *help him* grow out of it?

DR SINGH shakes his head.

BERYL:

But what if he doesn't? What if he gets... *stuck*? There are so many of them now, aren't there, doctor? You see them everywhere. On television, in films, in the papers, *everywhere*.

DR SINGH:

What, Mrs Johnson?

BERYL:

Perverts.

DR SINGH looks out of the window.

DR SINGH:

You tell your friend it's most unlikely her son will get 'stuck', Mrs Johnson.

BERYL shakes her head hopelessly.

DR SINGH:

But if he did, it wouldn't be the end of the world, now would it?

BERYL sighs despairingly.

BERYL:

Isn't there *anything* she can do, doctor?

DR SINGH looks at his watch, sighs, writes a note, seals it in an envelope and writes a name and address on the outside.

DR SINGH:

These people... can arrange... for her son... to see a specialist.

He offers the envelope to BERYL.

DR SINGH:

But of course, she and her husband will have to go too.

BERYL takes the envelope.

DR SINGH:

But my advice to her is to let nature take its course.

BERYL reads the address on the envelope.

BERYL:

It's very good of you to take so much trouble, doctor. My friend will be ever so grateful.

DR SINGH writes a prescription.

DR SINGH:

And this is for *you*, Mrs Johnson. They're a little stronger than your usual ones. We can't have you lying awake all night, worrying, can we?

48—Interior—Bill's bedroom—Night

BILL is asleep in bed as a quiet knocking is heard OOV.

BERYL enters and kneels beside him

BILL opens his eyes, startled.

BILL:
Mum?!

BERYL:
Oh, Billy! It's all my fault!

BILL struggles awake.

BERYL bursts into tears.

BILL:
Mum, don't!

BILL puts his arms round her.

BERYL:
It's all my fault! I willed you to be a girl, when I was carrying you!

BILL is embarrassed but fascinated.

BERYL:
I wanted my family to be *perfect*. So naturally after Eric we both wanted a girl. So I *willed you to be one*, right from when I discovered I was pregnant again.

BILL:
Mum, don't!

BERYL:
I was so sure you would be that I bought all these baby girls' clothes.

BILL:
Mum, it's all right...

BERYL:
Then when they told me I'd had another boy, I was so angry I couldn't bear to look at you.

BILL comforts her.

BERYL:
I couldn't even bear to pick you up.

BILL takes a long deep breath, in and out.

BERYL:
But only for the first two days! After that I was really happy. You were so beautiful. Blonde curls you had - just like a girl! Everyone said so. So you see it's all *my* fault! It must have harmed you, somehow. Oh, Billy! Can you forgive me?

BILL:

There's nothing to forgive.

He hugs her and comforts her.

49—Interior—Works canteen—Day

GEORGE is sitting at a table with two or three other men. One is a fat slob with a hairy belly hanging out of his shirt and a cigarette out of his mouth.

VIC (50ish/camp/Caucasian) passes, clearing tables.

FAT SLOB:

Soiling your delicate skin again, duchess! Shame! All your minions died of AIDS, have they?

VIC gives the fat slob a withering look and proceeds to the servery with dignity.

GEORGE looks thoughtfully after him.

50—Interior—Beryl's kitchen—Evening

BERYL is doing the washing up.

BILL is drying.

BERYL:

Where's your football strip, Billy? I spent ages hunting for it this afternoon.

BILL:

In the drawer.

BERYL pulls a face.

BERYL:

Oh, Billy! You've never put dirty stuff back in your clean drawer!

BILL:

I haven't used it. I've left the team.

BERYL spins round in disbelief.

BERYL:

Left the team, Billy! Left the football team!

BILL concentrates on drying a glass.

BERYL:

But you play for the school!

BILL:

Not any more.

BERYL returns to her washing up.

BERYL:

Billy...?

BILL:

What?

BERYL:

You don't want to dress up in frocks, do you?

BILL:

Course not!

BERYL heaves a huge sigh of relief.

BERYL:

Well, thank god for small mercies anyway!

51—Interior—Travelling car—Day

GEORGE is driving. BERYL is in the front passenger seat. BILL is in the back. Everyone is grim-faced.

GEORGE:

You should have bloody well asked!

BERYL:

You'd only've said 'no'.

GEORGE:

Too bloody right! The last thing Bill needs right now is inspecting like a piece of bloody carrion...

BERYL pulls a face.

BERYL:

Language, *George!*

GEORGE:

...by a bunch of toffee-nosed fucking bastards!

BILL stares blankly ahead.

52—Interior—Hospital waiting-room—Day

BERYL, GEORGE and BILL are seated on a bench outside a consulting-room.

BERYL is sorting the contents of her handbag.

GEORGE is fuming silently.

BILL is staring blankly ahead.

53—Interior—Hospital consulting-room—Day

DR FISHER, the Consultant (60s/grey/self-important/Caucasian), occupies the centre of the desk like a judge. He's reading DR SINGH's letter and typing at a laptop computer.

To one side DR SINCLAIR (mid 20s/attractive/Caucasian) waits patiently.

On the other side MS COHEN (30ish/attractive/competent/Semitic) abstractly taps her pencil in suppressed irritation.

Facing them are three empty plastic chairs.

Without looking up, DR FISHER issues a command to DR SINCLAIR.

DR FISHER:

Well, get them in then! We haven't got all day!

DR SINCLAIR gets up and opens the door.

BERYL, GEORGE and BILL all look at him.

A passing nurse winks at DR SINCLAIR who grins briefly before addressing them.

DR SINCLAIR:

Dr Fisher will see you now.

BERYL, GEORGE and BILL troop through the door but stop dead when they see the tribunal awaiting them.

MS COHEN:

Please come and make yourselves comfortable over here, Mr and Mrs Johnson...

BERYL, GEORGE and BILL sit tentatively down in the hot seats with BILL in the middle.

DR SINCLAIR returns to his chair.

BILL looks at his father then at DR FISHER.

BERYL doesn't know where to look.

DR FISHER continues tapping data into his computer long enough to establish who's 'boss' before looking up at BILL.

BILL looks back at him.

DR FISHER:

How often do you masturbate?

GEORGE lets out a snort of rage.

BERYL blushes scarlet.

BILL is used to situations like this at school.

BILL:

Not often.

DR FISHER:

How often?

BILL:

About twice a week.

DR FISHER looks sceptical and taps into his laptop.

BERYL is ready to die of embarrassment.

GEORGE is ready to attack.

DR SINCLAIR:

What makes you think you might be homosexual,
Billy?

BILL:

I don't.

DR SINCLAIR:

Oh!

BERYL and GEORGE are astounded.

DR SINCLAIR glances at DR FISHER who picks up the letter.

DR SINCLAIR:

But your GP says...

BILL:

(Interrupting.) I don't 'think I might be'. I know I am.

DR SINCLAIR and MS COHEN both smile at this reply.

DR FISHER is not amused.

DR SINCLAIR:

I didn't mean I didn't believe you, Billy. Well then,
how long have you *known* you're a homosexual?

BILL:

Since...

He thinks better of what he was going to say.

BILL:

I've always known.

BERYL and GEORGE look at BILL, astonished.

DR SINCLAIR:

Well, for example, did you know when you were
fourteen?

BILL:

Yes.

DR SINCLAIR:

When you were twelve?

BILL:

Yes.

DR SINCLAIR:

Eight?

BILL:

Yes.

DR SINCLAIR smiles.

DR SINCLAIR:

Five?

BILL smiles.

BILL:

I don't remember.

DR FISHER silences DR SINCLAIR with a warning look then turns his attention back to BILL.

DR FISHER:

So young men excite you, do they?

BILL:

Yes.

DR FISHER:

And what do you do with them?

BILL blinks three times.

DR FISHER:

Do you masturbate together?

BILL stares.

DR FISHER:

In the showers, at school?

BILL narrows his eyes

DR FISHER:

Or do you take them home and do it there?

BILL flicks his eyes onto GEORGE who is back in a state of suppressed fury.

DR FISHER:

Perhaps you meet in public lavatories?

He treats everyone to a knowing smile.

DR FISHER:

Like certain pop stars.

GEORGE leaps up.

GEORGE:

Now, look here...!

MS COHEN gives GEORGE a warning but sympathetic shake of the head and he subsides.

DR FISHER sighs and looks at DR SINCLAIR.

DR FISHER:

Does Dr Sinclair excite you?

BILL:

No.

DR FISHER:

Why not? He's a young man.

DR SINCLAIR and MS COHEN purse their lips at this unprofessional conduct.

DR FISHER:

He seems to excite everyone else in this establishment.

He smirks at his own joke.

BILL:

I don't find all men attractive.

He looks pointedly at DR FISHER.

BILL:

I find some repulsive.

GEORGE grins.

54—Interior—Travelling car—Day

GEORGE is driving. BERYL is in the front passenger seat. BILL is in the back. Everyone is grim-faced.

BERYL:

At least, Dr Cohen's the nicest one...

GEORGE shouts at a passing driver.

GEORGE:

You should be driving a fucking *pram*!

BERYL casts her eyes to the heavens.

BILL stares blankly ahead.

55—Interior—Anne's hallway—Evening

BILL's bike is parked in the same place as SCENE 41.

56—Interior—Anne's kitchen—Continuous in time

BILL is watching DAVE make two hot drinks as if it were the most fascinating sight in the world. To him it is.

DAVE:

Robin's out for the count so you shouldn't have any problems.

BILL:

Where's Anne?

DAVE:

Left ages ago. You see she's hooked on Russian epics,
Bill, which tend to be interminable.

*He points at **BILL**'s school-bag.*

DAVE:

That your baby-sitting kit?

***BILL** pulls a face.*

BILL:

Homework.

***DAVE** pulls a face in sympathy as he spoons instant coffee into one mug and
'Barleycup' into the other.*

BILL:

What's that stuff?

DAVE:

Barleycup. It's a cereal drink.

*He smiles at **BILL**.*

DAVE:

I try to avoid conventional stimulants.

***BILL** looks mystified.*

DAVE:

I'm a dangerous radical weirdo, Bill, who thinks
people should take care of their minds *and* their
bodies.

He pours boiling water into the two mugs.

DAVE:

That's why I work for a wholefood collective.

BILL:

Anne said you like plants.

DAVE:

Yeah. I've got a degree in computer programming -
but prefer *gardening*.

***BILL** looks round but there are no plants in sight.*

DAVE:

I don't live *here*, Bill! I live in Clapham. In a radical,
gay, vegan commune.

***BILL**'s jaw drops.*

DAVE:

Sugar and milk?

***BILL** nods.*

***DAVE** adds sugar and milk to **BILL**'s mug.*

DAVE:

Killer number one, killer number two!

DAVE hands BILL his mug.

DAVE:

I use soya milk. Better for me, better for the planet.

BILL opens his mouth but nothing comes out.

DAVE:

Don't look so surprised! There's loads of vegans
around nowadays!

He picks up his mug and heads for the door.

BILL pads after him.

57—Interior—Anne's living-room—Continuous in time

DAVE and BILL enter with their drinks.

DAVE sits on a sofa, takes a sip of his drink and smiles at BILL.

DAVE:

Why don't you sit down, Bill?

BILL stands awkwardly.

BILL:

I thought you lived here, with Anne.

DAVE:

Ha! That's rich! We fight like cat and dog whenever
we're together.

BILL:

But aren't you her husband?

DAVE laughs aloud.

DAVE:

Ha! No, Bill! I'm her *brother*!

BILL blinks three times.

DAVE:

Please sit down, Bill. You're making me nervous.

BILL sits at the far end of the sofa from DAVE.

DAVE:

Anne hasn't got a husband. Robin's father's a little
shit. It's the classic story. She was left holding the
baby. Whatever made you think we were married?

BILL:

My mum, I suppose.

DAVE:

Ah, yes, your mum. Well, no. The truth is, as I said
Bill, I'm gay, happy and free.

BILL sips his drink.

DAVE:

I hope that's not going to be a problem?

BILL:

No.

BILL blinks three times.

BILL:

So am I.

DAVE smiles and offers his mug to be clinked.

DAVE:

Congratulations!

BILL smiles and reciprocates.

BILL:

And I like plants.

DAVE:

So your mum said.

BILL:

But I'm not 'vegan'.

DAVE:

(Grinning.) Give it time!

BILL:

I don't even know what it means.

DAVE:

Ah, well now, my vegan propaganda spiel will have to
wait for another day, Bill. I must get off to work now
that you're here.

BILL's face falls.

DAVE smiles.

DAVE:

I can finish my drink first.

BILL is not used to being understood so well.

DAVE:

Let's check that Robin's all right before I leave, shall
we?

58—Interior—Anne’s nursery—Evening

*DAVE opens the door and he and **BILL** look in.*

The baby is asleep in its cot. It is dressed in green.

*DAVE smiles at **BILL** and gently closes the door again.*

59—Interior—Anne’s living-room—Evening

*DAVE and **BILL** enter together and sit back down on the sofa.*

BILL:

Dave?

DAVE:

Yeah.

***BILL** blinks three times.*

DAVE:

Oh yes - did you realise you left a postcard last time?

Of an Ena Harkness Hybrid?

*DAVE finds the postcard of the rose and hands it to **BILL**.*

DAVE:

Smashing, isn't it?

BILL:

Yes. Thanks. Dave?

*DAVE waits, smiling, but again **BILL** can't find the courage to speak.*

DAVE:

Listen, Bill, would you like to come and have a vegan meal and meet my crazy flatmates?

BILL:

Oooh yeah!

DAVE takes the postcard back and writes an address on it.

DAVE:

We have a house meal every Saturday night. You could come then if you like?

BILL:

Oooh yeah!

*DAVE hands the postcard to **BILL**.*

DAVE:

Right, I must go and earn my keep. Anne'll be back by eleven.

BILL:

Dave?

DAVE:

Yes?

BILL:

You're beautiful.

DAVE:

Why, thank you kindly, young sir!

DAVE goes to the door.

DAVE:

You're not so bad yourself.

DAVE exits.

BILL stares after him, then at the postcard of the rose. He reads aloud what DAVE has written.

BILL: *(Reading.)*

'53 Kingcup Road. The Gay Madhouse. There's
always loud music playing...'

60—Interior—Bill's bedroom—Later the same day

BERYL is in BILL's room reading the postcard.

BILL: *(OOV)*

...so keep ringing till someone hears. See you Saturday.

CU of BILL's mouth.

BILL: *(Reading.)*

'Love.'

CU of BERYL's mouth.

BERYL: *(Reading.)*

'Dave?'

61—Interior—Works canteen—Day

The canteen is empty except for a table near the servery where VIC is holding court with the female canteen staff.

VIC:

...so I said: 'Natural's got nothing to do with it, doll-face. It isn't *natural* to wear clothes, but I don't notice you clocking on in your birthday suit!'

The women laugh appreciatively.

GEORGE shoves his head round a door.

VIC:

Sound the alarm! One of the workers has escaped!

They all look at GEORGE.

VIC:

Zoo's closed, doll-face! Next feeding time at four.

GEORGE:

Could I have a quick word?

VIC and the women exchange looks.

VIC:

Well! I don't get offers like that every day!

GEORGE:

Alone.

VIC:

Better and better!

He makes eyes at the women who exit grinning.

VIC:

Off you go, girls! He'll be perfectly safe with me!

62—Exterior—Ms Cohen's surgery—Day

BILL arrives outside the suburban house where MS COHEN has her surgery. He reads the plaque, hesitates and rings the bell.

63—Interior—Ms Cohen's surgery—Day

MS COHEN is seated in an armchair with a file open on her lap.

BILL is in a nearby armchair.

MS COHEN:

If it's any consolation, Billy, Dr Fisher's just as rude to members of staff.

BILL nods.

MS COHEN:

Is it all right if I call you 'Billy'?

BILL:

I prefer 'Bill' actually.

MS COHEN makes a note on her clip-board.

MS COHEN:

Right, *Bill*. And please call me Rachel. Now, did you really know you were homosexual when you were seven? Or did you just say that to annoy Dr Fisher?

BILL:

No. It's true. I...

MS COHEN:

Go on.

BILL:

I... used to fancy the gym teacher at primary school.

MS COHEN:

Tell me about him.

BILL:

He used to take us for PT wearing dinky red satin shorts and... nothing else. I thought he was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen in my whole life.

MS COHEN smiles.

BILL:

He had long* blonde* hair and a curly* black* beard.

**Use adjectives describing the actor playing DAVE.*

MS COHEN:

Did he ever... approach you?

BILL:

Course not. He didn't know I existed.

MS COHEN:

So is this a painful memory, Bill?

BILL:

No, Rachel. It's the best memory I have! I still sometimes think about him at night.

MS COHEN smiles.

BILL:

I imagine pulling his red satin shorts down... ever so slowly.

64—Interior—Beryl's hall—Afternoon

BERYL is on her hands and knees picking bits of fluff off the stair carpet.

GEORGE enters carrying his tool-bag and evening paper. He looks at what she's doing, shakes his head and walks past her into the kitchen.

BERYL:

I only vacuumed it this morning! I can't think where it all comes from!

65—Interior—Beryl's kitchen—Continuous in time

GEORGE drops his tool-bag in the doorway, his jacket on the floor and gets a can of beer from the fridge (leaving the fridge door open). He flops down on a chair, opens the beer, drops the can-ring, takes a swig, sighs, opens his paper - a few sheets fall to the floor - and starts reading.

BERYL enters and trips over the tool-bag. She stands, hands on hips, surveying the mess he's made.

BERYL:

I don't know why I bother! Really I don't!

She pointedly moves the tool-bag out of the doorway.

BERYL:

You must've all been born in pig-sties!

She pointedly closes the fridge door.

GEORGE:

Is Bill back from that clinic yet?

BERYL pointedly picks GEORGE's jacket up from the floor and drapes it over a chair.

BERYL:

Did you hear what I said?

She pointedly picks up the loose sheets of GEORGE's newspaper and shoves them into his hands.

GEORGE:

Yeah. I heard.

BERYL:

Don't answer me, will you?

GEORGE:

It was like most things you say, Beryl. Rhetorical. Is he back or not?

BERYL:

You can see perfectly well he isn't!

She sits down opposite him with a profound sigh.

BERYL:

Ah! That's the first time I've sat down today! Do you want a cup of tea?

GEORGE:

No. I'm having a beer - as you see.

BERYL:

Why can't you use a glass, George? This is a home, not a blinking camp-site!

She pours herself a cup of tea.

BERYL:

What can they be doing? He's been there all afternoon!

GEORGE looks at her over the top of his paper.

GEORGE:

Why put him through this bleeding pantomime, Beryl?

BERYL:

(*Clicking her teeth.*) Language, George! At least Dr Cohen's polite.

GEORGE:

Polite! I don't believe you, woman! You want the whole fucking world vacuumed like your stair carpet, don't you?! Every tiny bit's got to be *tidy*, hasn't it?! You can't *stand* the bits that just don't fit, can you?

BERYL:

I have no idea what you're talking about, George Johnson.

She gets up and takes his jacket off the chair and out of the room. She re-enters and sits down again.

BERYL:

And I'll thank you not to use that kind of language when you're talking to me!

GEORGE:

The world's a fucking mess, Beryl! And there's nothing you or your sort can do about it! So you might as well get used to it *as it is!*

BERYL:

That shows what a lot you know! Dr Singh said Billy's only going through 'a phase'. He said it was our duty to help him grow out of it.

GEORGE:

What the fuck does *he* know about *our* son?

BERYL:

He said Dr Fisher's clinic specialises in cases like Billy's. He said it's one of the top in the country.

GEORGE:

What a load of bollocks!

He taps the side of his head.

GEORGE:

Think, Beryl, think! What does it *mean?*

BERYL:

At least I'm trying to help him! What are you doing? Nothing!

GEORGE:

At least I go to the horse's mouth for my information!

BILL enters by the back door carrying his cycling gear. He heads for the hall.

BERYL:

(*Shouting.*) **Billy!** Get here this minute!

BILL returns to face her.

BERYL:

Well?! What did she say?!

BILL:

Rachel says it's natural and good to be gay. She wants me to join a gay teenage group. She's given me a list of addresses.

GEORGE:

Hah!

BERYL's jaw drops.

BERYL:

Natural and good! How can it be natural and good to be a *pervert*?! She's supposed to *cure* you, not talk nonsense to you! She's supposed to be a doctor!

BILL:

She says there's nothing wrong with me.

He looks at her with the beginnings of defiance.

66—Interior—Ms Cohen's reception—Day

BERYL approaches the reception desk where ROBERT (20s/facial jewellery) is halfway through a sandwich. He smiles up at her and speaks with his mouth full.

ROBERT:

Good morning. Can I help?

BERYL narrows her eyes and adopts her posh voice.

BERYL:

When you're quite sure you've finished eating your 'lunch', young man, you can inform Dr Cohen that a Mrs Johnson is here to see her.

ROBERT:

Have you got an appointment?

BERYL:

(Posh voice.) She'll see *me*. I'm the mother of one of her patients.

ROBERT opens his appointments book.

ROBERT:

Not without an appointment, she won't.

BERYL:

(Posh voice.) Listen, young man, I cancelled my continental cookery class, postponed my shopping and spent twenty minutes waiting for a 53 to come here, so if you think I'm leaving without seeing Dr Cohen you've got another think coming!

ROBERT consults his book.

ROBERT:

I might be able to fit you in Tuesday...

MS COHEN opens a door behind BERYL, sees her and mimes to ROBERT that she's unavailable.

BERYL catches her at it.

MS COHEN:

Ah! Good afternoon, Mrs Johnson!

BERYL:

(Posh voice.) Good afternoon, Dr Cohen.

MS COHEN:

(To ROBERT.) Buzz me the instant Mrs E. arrives,
Robert. *(To BERYL.)* Come in, Mrs Johnson.

BERYL sweeps into the consulting room with a triumphant look at ROBERT.

MS COHEN mimes to ROBERT that she'd love one coffee.

ROBERT nods and winks at her.

67—Interior—Ms Cohen's consulting-room—Continuous in time

MS COHEN goes to her desk and sits facing BERYL.

MS COHEN:

Mrs Johnson, I have another patient *overdue* so can
you please be brief?

BERYL narrows her eyes.

BERYL:

(Posh voice.) I've got a bone to pick with you.

MS COHEN:

Dear me.

BERYL:

(Posh voice.) Did you tell my son it's 'normal' to be a
pervert?

MS COHEN:

Of I didn't.

BERYL forgets her posh persona.

BERYL:

I *knew* you couldn't have! I said to George: 'She's a
doctor, George. She wouldn't say anything so inane.'

MS COHEN:

I'm not a doctor, Mrs Johnson. I'm a psychiatric social
worker.

BERYL digests this.

MS COHEN:

What I told your son is the truth: that about one in ten people are attracted to their own sex...

BERYL opens her eyes wide.

MS COHEN:

...and that to be *whole* and *happy* he must learn to accept his feelings as worthwhile and good.

BERYL is outraged.

BERYL:

How can it be *good* for two men to have sex?! It's unnatural and disgusting, that's what it is!

She puts on her 'posh' voice again.

BERYL:

And if you're not a doctor you've got no business telling my son anything at all!

MS COHEN consults her notes.

MS COHEN:

According to my notes, your GP referred your son to us - because he thought he needed help...

She looks up at BERYL.

MS COHEN:

...and that's what we're trying to give him - *help*.

BERYL:

Telling him it's natural to have sex with men! You call *that* help!

MS COHEN:

Sex is only a tiny part of Bill's problem, Mrs Johnson.

BERYL:

His name's *William*, if you don't mind! What you're really saying is that you can't cure him, isn't it?

MS COHEN shakes her head.

BERYL:

Because you're not a doctor!

MS COHEN:

Mrs Johnson, even if I agreed that your son needed 'curing' there's nothing I could do about it. Anymore than I could change the colour of his eyes, if you happened not to like those. You must learn to accept him *as he is*.

BERYL:

If I'd known you weren't a doctor I wouldn't have let him come here at all!

MS COHEN:

Bill is free to terminate his sessions anytime he wants.

BERYL:

Typical!

MS COHEN blinks.

BERYL:

Eat your lunch when you want! Make love when you want! What does it matter if you get pregnant! You can always have an abortion *when you want!*

MS COHEN flicks her eyes onto her computer screen.

BERYL:

But what about rules, *Miss* Cohen? What about 'right' and 'wrong'? What have you got to say about that?!

MS COHEN types in a few notes.

MS COHEN:

It's 'Mrs' actually, Mrs Johnson.

BERYL digests this.

MS COHEN turns her attention back to BERYL.

MS COHEN:

Don't you think it's good that Bill decided to tell you the truth about himself?

BERYL:

It *isn't* the truth! Billy *isn't* like that. I'm his mother. I should know.

MS COHEN:

Surely Bill's the best judge of what he's like?

BERYL:

Of course not! He's only a *child!*

MS COHEN types more notes.

BERYL:

And even if he was... one of them - and I don't admit for a second that he is - well even so, he can't just go through life doing what *he* wants. We none of us can.

MS COHEN:

I see. Well now, Mrs Johnson, after only a single session with Bill, it's clear to me that his sexual orientation is one of the few areas of his life he has *no* doubts about. So I'm afraid you're going to have to come to terms with it.

She types more notes.

BERYL:

Before I married I was a display artist.

MS COHEN looks up with interest.

BERYL:

I had prospects in a big department store. They said I could be supervisor if I passed the exams.

She looks pointedly at MS COHEN.

BERYL:

But I gave it up to take care of my family. And I'm proud I did. Because it was my *duty* as a wife and mother.

MS COHEN:

A 'display artist', Mrs Johnson? What's that?

BERYL:

Oh, it's only a fancy name for a window-dresser. That's not the point. The point is: *I gave up what I wanted.* We all have to make sacrifices. We all have to do our duty. We all have to obey the rules. As you'd know, if you were a mother.

MS COHEN:

I am a mother, actually.

BERYL blinks.

MS COHEN types more notes, then returns her attention to BERYL.

MS COHEN:

Would it surprise you to know that the majority of educated people disagree with your views?

BERYL:

It's perfectly obvious to anyone with any common sense!

MS COHEN's intercom buzzes.

MS COHEN:

Thank you, Robert. No, I'll be free in a moment.

BERYL:

What you people don't seem to understand is that if everyone breaks the rules everything falls apart!

MS COHEN considers this.

BERYL:

Anyway, why are you so eager to defend perverts?!
Are you one?!

MS COHEN takes a deep breath.

MS COHEN:

No, Mrs Johnson. I'm simply trying to help you understand Bill's point of view.

BERYL:

No wonder the young don't know how to behave with the likes of you encouraging them to think they're the be-all and end-all of existence!

MS COHEN purses her lips.

BERYL:

'Make love to who you want!' you say - and when you lot say 'love', what you mean is '*sex*', isn't it? *Isn't it?* And just look what you've done to them! Look where you've led them! To *drugs*! And... *AIDS*! And *garage warehouse parties*!

MS COHEN:

Please calm yourself, Mrs Johnson.

BERYL:

In my young day we knew the difference between right and wrong. We knew how to behave and do our duty.

BERYL gets a tissue from her handbag.

BERYL:

I thought I'd done so well with Billy. He's always been a good boy and I've brought him up to be kind and truthful.

MS COHEN nods.

BERYL:

Eric can be a proper little know-all, but Billy's always been *perfect*. My favourite. I've always been so proud of him. And now this happens and it's all my fault!

MS COHEN:

What do you mean, Mrs Johnson? How can it possibly be *your* fault?

BERYL:

Why should I tell you anything?

MS COHEN:

How can it be *your* fault, Mrs Johnson?

BERYL:

I don't have to tell you. You're not a doctor.

MS COHEN:

How is it *your* fault, Mrs Johnson?

BERYL stares at her defiantly, then hangs her head.

BERYL:

I did something awful when he was a tiny baby.

MS COHEN:

(*Gently.*) What?

BERYL:

(Quietly.) I dressed him as a girl.

MS COHEN:

You mean you dressed him in pink clothes?

BERYL bursts into tears.

BERYL:

Yes!

MS COHEN:

I see.

BERYL:

He was such a beautiful baby! He won a contest! How was I to know? I wouldn't have harmed him for the world!

MS COHEN:

Listen carefully, Mrs Johnson. There is no way it can possibly have harmed Bill to dress him in any particular colour when he was a tiny baby.

BERYL wipes her eyes.

BERYL:

Lovely golden curls he had - just like a girl. Everyone said so. People used to stop me in the street. But I never dreamed it could harm him.

BERYL wipes her eyes again.

MS COHEN:

Mrs Johnson, I understand your distress. But, believe me, *you are not to blame*. Bill is simply growing up the way nature intended him to be.

BERYL:

Then why isn't he *normal*?!

MS COHEN:

He *is* normal. It is normal for human beings to be *different from one another*.

BERYL looks at her, wanting to believe.

MS COHEN:

You said Bill's always been kind and truthful. Exactly so. Think how much courage it took for him to tell you the truth!

BERYL looks at her.

MS COHEN:

You see - he's still the son you've always loved. And you're right to be proud of him. He's a fine boy.

BERYL:

I know. Maybe you're right...

MS COHEN sighs and consults her watch.

MS COHEN:

Good. Now... I'd like to respectfully suggest that your duty as a mother has changed, Mrs Johnson.

BERYL narrows her eyes.

MS COHEN:

Now you know that Bill is gay it's your duty to help him cope with the hostility he's going to encounter from a few ignorant, bigoted people.

BERYL leaps up in outrage.

BERYL:

How dare *you* presume to tell me *my* duty?!

MS COHEN is startled.

BERYL:

How dare you presume to call him 'Bill'? You've only known him five minutes! Who do you think you are?

MS COHEN switches back to professional mode.

MS COHEN:

The truth is, Mrs Johnson, that's all you can do now. Either you find a way to transmute your feelings of disappointment into compassion – and so help your son to mature into the marvellous person he really is – or *you lose him*.

BERYL goes to the door.

BERYL:

I see my duty very clearly, thank you very much! It's to stop the likes of you from confusing my *child* with the disgusting notion that *perverts are 'normal'*!

She puts on her posh voice again for her exit line.

BERYL:

It's obvious what sort of a mother *you* are, *Ms Cohen*! Watch me and you'll see how a real mother behaves!

She marches out in high dudgeon.

68—Exterior—Ms Cohen's surgery—Day

As BERYL leaves, a woman passes with a baby in a pushchair. The baby is dressed in a multi-coloured clown outfit.

BERYL watches with evident emotion.

69—Interior—Bill’s bathroom—Evening

BILL is in his boxer shorts, shaving in preparation for his date with DAVE. His manner has changed to calm and purposeful. He dabs aftershave on his cheeks, grins at himself in the mirror, opens his shorts and dabs down there. He grins at himself and leaves the room.

70—Interior—Bill’s bedroom—Evening

BILL tries on tee-shirts, jeans etc. (I suggest a quote from the 80s Levi’s TV ad to ‘What a wonderful world’ by Sam Cook. If the director agrees, then where the young man picks up his girl-friend’s photo, BILL could pick up the postcard of the red rose.) He checks himself in the mirror, takes the postcard and leaves the room.

71—Exterior—Street—Evening

The same teenage boys as in Scene 9 are lounging around outside the same fast food café. The group includes JEFF and SODBURY but not DANNY.

SODBURY:

Like there I am thinking I’ve got it made when she goes ‘Stop!’ I goes ‘What?’

BILL cycles by.

JEFF:

Hey, Bill!

BILL stops and looks at them.

SODBURY:

Packed in the sodding team soon as his bumchum left, didn’t he?!

To the others.

SODBURY:

Couldn’t stand the pace with a *real* captain!

To BILL.

SODBURY:

Mincing off to see your pansy friends, are you, kiddo?

JEFF:

Nah! He’s all dolled up for a night out with Surly Shirley, aren’t you, Bill?

BILL looks from SODBURY to JEFF and back again.

BILL: (To JEFF)

Half right, Jeff. I’m going for a vegan meal with some friends.

SODBURY:

Ooooh la di sodding dah!

SODBURY walks over and shoves his face into BILL’s.

SODBURY:

Bunch of poufs, are they, Johnson?!

BILL looks at him steadily.

BILL:

As a matter of fact they are. And yes, as a matter of fact I am. Which is whole lot better than being a fat boring straight!

He cycles off leaving SODBURY and his gang staring after him.

72—Exterior—Dave’s house—Evening

BILL checks the address with the postcard of the rose, padlocks his bike, goes to the door and listens. Loud rock music is playing inside. He rings the bell. The door is opened by MARTIAN (18/iridescent pink hair/tatooes).

BILL:

Hallo. Dave invited me for supper.

MARTIAN:

Didn’t bother to tell me though, did he? *Typical!*

73—Interior—Dave’s hall—Continuous in time

The hall is full of bikes and agitprop posters. Rock music is thumping away OOV.

BILL enters and looks around.

MARTIAN:

Just because I’m doing a chef’s course!

He shouts up the stairs.

MARTIAN:

Dave!

He grins at BILL.

They both listen to the distant music.

MARTIAN shouts louder.

MARTIAN:

Dave!

He holds out a hand to BILL.

MARTIAN:

Martian.

BILL:

Bill. Did you say ‘Martin’?

MARTIAN:

No: ‘Martian’. As in ‘Alien from outer space’. Dave’s idea, of course!

He opens a door and points.

MARTIAN:

The sitting-room's through there. I must get back to my stuffed mushrooms. Dave'll be down in two ticks.

He exits to kitchen.

BILL examines the posters.

One has the following on it in large letters:

'What Exactly Is Heterosexuality - And What Causes It?'

BILL grins.

DAVE appears at the top of the stairs.

DAVE:

Hi, Bill! Come up...

74—Interior—Dave's room—Continuous in time

DAVE has thriving plants on every available shelf (including one of the type BERYL carried in Scene 3) and a mattress on the floor, littered with cushions. Rock music continues OOV.

DAVE enters and flops down on the mattress.

DAVE:

Come and park yourself over here, Bill.

BILL follows him in, carrying the postcard of the rose and his cycling gear and stands awkwardly, turning the postcard round and round.

DAVE:

Martian insists on doing supper every night at the moment 'cos he's on a chef's course. But it'll be scrumptious for the same reason, I promise you.

He smiles at BILL.

DAVE:

You're making me nervous again, Bill. Why don't you put that down and come and sit down...

He pats the cushions.

BILL:

Sorry.

BILL sits down as far away from DAVE as he can and continues nervously turning the postcard.

DAVE:

So, what've you been up to since I last saw you?

BILL:

Nothing much. I've seen a psychiatric social worker.

DAVE:

Good god! Why?

BILL:

Mum told our GP I was gay. He sent me to the hospital
and they sent me to this social worker.

DAVE casts his eyes to the heavens in mock despair.

DAVE:

The 21st century! Sent to hospital for being gay!

BILL:

It was mum's idea.

DAVE:

I don't doubt it. How did she find out?

BILL:

I told her.

DAVE:

Brave, reckless lad! So anyway, what happened?

BILL:

There was this horrible man – I think he was the head
doctor. He seemed to think I was wanking every five
minutes in public lavatories, in the showers at school,
everywhere.

DAVE:

(Grinning.) I bet he was wearing a tie!

BILL:

(Smiling.) Yes, he was. Why?

DAVE:

Oh, it's a rule of mine. Never trust anyone with a tie!

BILL smiles and touches the postcard to his mouth.

DAVE:

So he thought you were a sex fiend, did he?

BILL:

Yeah.

He looks ruefully at DAVE.

BILL:

I haven't even kissed anyone yet...!

DAVE smiles.

DAVE:

Well, put that thing down, and come over here, and
we'll see what we can do about it!

BILL relaxes and moves nearer.

BILL:

Can I touch your beard?

DAVE offers it, smiling.

BILL reaches out and cautiously strokes DAVE's beard.

BILL:

It's soft! Lovely...

DAVE leans forward and kisses BILL on the mouth.

BILL looks wildly at DAVE and kisses him passionately.

DAVE backs off.

DAVE:

Hey! Steady on, Bill!

BILL blinks.

BILL:

Don't you like me?

DAVE:

Of course I do! You're great, Bill! I wouldn't have invited you if I didn't like you.

BILL blinks three times.

DAVE:

But... well... the fact is, Bill, I like *men* really... and you're still just a boy, aren't you?

BILL withdraws to the far end of the mattress.

BILL:

I knew it couldn't really be going to happen.

DAVE:

Hey! You're sweet! And cute, Bill!

BILL shakes his head forlornly.

DAVE:

(Smiling.) And you're growing up all the time, aren't you?!

BILL tries to smile.

BILL:

Sixteen next month.

DAVE:

You see! You'll just have to be patient with me.

BILL digests this.

DAVE:

Besides, I really don't want to be the first one to hurt you. So let's just be friends for now, eh, Bill? Let's not... complicate things...

BILL:
All right.

DAVE takes BILL's hand.

DAVE:
Hey! It's not the end of a beautiful friendship! It's the beginning!

BILL puts on a brave face.

DAVE:
That's better! Now, give me one of your gorgeous smiles before we go down to face the stuffed mushrooms!

BILL smiles in spite of himself.

75—Interior—Beryl's living-room—Evening

GEORGE is watching football on TV.

BERYL arrives with a 'hostess-trolley', puts a tray across GEORGE's lap and deposits another on her own armchair. She has a martyred air of purpose. She gives GEORGE loaded looks as she lays out full place settings on each tray, including a vase to which she adds two red roses.

GEORGE tries to watch football through all this.

BERYL unveils two plates of food with a flourish and sets one down in front of GEORGE and the other on her own tray.

She pours two glasses of wine, puts one on her tray and interposes the other between GEORGE and the screen.

GEORGE:
Isn't there any beer?

BERYL:
It speaks! No. We're having wine tonight, George.

GEORGE takes the glass of wine, downs it in one and returns to watching television.

BERYL pulls a face, sits down, adjusts the tray on her lap and takes a tiny sip of wine. She looks across at GEORGE and begins delicately eating her food.

GEORGE continues staring at the television.

BERYL looks at him again.

BERYL:
Eat, George!

GEORGE starts eating.

76—Interior—Dave’s kitchen—Evening

BILL and DAVE are eating at a large table with other residents of the house: MARTIAN, KATE (30ish/posh/quiet/professional/Caucasian) and RAF (20ish/Frenchwoman/ascerbic/Caucasian). The meal proceeds throughout the scene.

KATE:

There are only two ways to make money from publishing - cooking and fucking - and I refuse to write about either.

RAF:

On ne manquais que ça!

DAVE:

Says who?

KATE:

My publisher. She was explaining why I’d never be rich.

RAF:

Martian will be millionaire!

KATE:

Ah, but there’s a catch. You have to be good at *writing* about it, not just doing it.

MARTIAN:

You’re referring to my cuisine, of course.

RAF:

Are we shocking you, Bill?

DAVE:

Bill’s the most together person here. He’s already come out to his mum *at 15*, haven’t you, Bill?!

BILL nods.

DAVE looks round the table.

DAVE:

Some of us still haven’t managed it at 30.

RAF:

C’est pas vrai! You have really only 15, Bill? I believe you older.

BILL:

I’ll be 16 next month.

Everyone smiles.

77—Interior—Beryl's living-room—Evening

BERYL finishes her last mouthful and looks at GEORGE who's still munching and watching television.

BERYL:

Don't mention it, George!

GEORGE continues munching blankly.

BERYL:

It's called 'Tortilla de Patata à la Espanola' and it's served with 'Pommes Frites à la Française', seeing as you ask!

GEORGE:

Tastes like omelette and chips to me.

BERYL casts her eyes to the heavens.

BERYL:

The difference being that this took all day to prepare. And that's why we're having wine with it.

GEORGE continues munching and watching television.

BERYL:

All day, Beryl! Yes, George, all day! But you know how I love cooking for you!

GEORGE:

It's okay.

He offers his glass for a refill..

GEORGE:

Where did you get the recipe then?

BERYL:

Well...

She refills his glass.

BERYL:

...we did it in my continental cookery class...

GEORGE:

Oh.

He sips from the second glass.

GEORGE:

Where's Bill?

BERYL:

Round at the Pierce's again.

He goes back to watching TV.

GEORGE:

Oh, yeah?

BERYL:

They're having a vegetarian meal too.

GEORGE:

He must really like that family.

BERYL:

Yes.

She sighs deeply.

BERYL:

Thank goodness! At least they're normal! - exactly the kind of friends I want him to have.

GEORGE:

What, vegetarians?

BERYL:

You know perfectly well what I mean, George. Anyway, it's very fashionable now.

GEORGE:

What is?

BERYL:

Being vegetarian. Prince Charles is!

GEORGE:

Did you see that?! The referee wants his bleeding eyes examined! That was a foul if I ever saw one!

BERYL:

We're doing another one next week.

GEORGE:

Another what?

BERYL:

Vegetarian meal - at my cookery class.

GEORGE:

I can hardly wait.

He plucks the rose from its vase.

GEORGE:

Is this vegetarian salad then?

BERYL:

Oh!! Feeding you lot is like casting peas before swine!

GEORGE:

Pearls, Beryl, pearls.

BERYL:

What?

GEORGE:

Never mind.

78—Interior—Dave's room—Night

BILL and DAVE are flopped out on cushions listening to music. BILL is cuddled up to DAVE and looks completely relaxed for the first time.

DAVE rolls a joint, lights it and offers it to BILL.

BILL:

No, thanks. I don't smoke.

DAVE takes a drag.

DAVE:

Wise man. So tell me more about this PE teacher.

BILL:

Well, he had long* blonde* hair, pale* blue* eyes and a curly* black* beard...

**Use adjectives appropriate for actor playing DAVE.*

BILL:

...and he took us for PE wearing sexy, satin shorts and nothing else.

DAVE smiles.

BILL:

I used to stand in the front row... to get the best view!

DAVE smiles.

DAVE:

When was this?

BILL:

At primary school. I must have been about six.

DAVE nods.

DAVE:

Do you think he knew?

BILL:

Course not. How could he?

DAVE:

Ha! You'd be surprised what people know and won't admit to, Bill.

DAVE takes another drag on his joint.

DAVE:

So what happened?

BILL:

Nothing. *(Pause.)* You remind me of him a bit.

DAVE whistles.

DAVE:

You're amazing, Bill. I can't believe you're really only fifteen.

BILL:

Nearly sixteen... Dave?

DAVE:

Yes.

BILL:

Can I stay the night?

DAVE puffs on his joint.

DAVE:

I don't think that would be a good idea, Bill.

BILL:

Please, Dave.

DAVE blows out some smoke.

DAVE:

I'm afraid you might get too involved, Bill.
And I don't want to hurt you.

He pulls on his joint.

DAVE:

Then there's your mum. From my one encounter with her, I'd say she was a born worrier.

BILL:

I don't mean to *do* anything, Dave. I just mean to sleep near you. I've never slept with anyone in my whole life! Please, Dave! Please. Don't send me away! I'm so lonely in that house, night after night!

DAVE:

I'd enjoy it, Bill. I can't deny it. But do you really want to freak your mother out like that?

BILL knows he's right.

DAVE:

Because you know it would, don't you?

BILL:

I suppose so.

DAVE looks at his watch.

DAVE:

My god! She's probably organised a search party already! Come on! We've got to get you back to Parentsville pronto or we're both in trouble.

DAVE pulls BILL to his feet, then lifts him up in the air and swings him round.

BILL's face shines with delight.

Over his shoulder, DAVE notices the postcard of the rose.

He puts BILL down gently, picks up the postcard and hands it to BILL.

DAVE:

Why are you so determined I should have this?

BILL takes the card, smiles ruefully and goes to the door.

DAVE:

Bill?

BILL looks back.

DAVE:

Don't I get a goodnight kiss then?

They embrace.

79—Exterior—Bill's house—Night

The house is dark and silent as BILL arrives on his bike, dismounts and looks up at his parents' bedroom window before wheeling the bike down the side passage.

80—Interior—Bill's hall and stairs—Continuous in time

BILL enters the dark silent house by the back door and uses his bicycle lamp to find his way up the stairs.

81—Interior—Bill's upstairs landing—Continuous in time

BILL creeps past his parents' closed bedroom door, arrives at his own door and directs his lamp at the sign: 'PLEASE KNOCK!!!'.

He hesitates, enters and turns on the light.

BERYL is standing inside with her hands on her hips.

BERYL:

What time do you call this, young man?!

82—Interior—Bill's room—Continuous in time

BILL enters and puts his bike things away.

BERYL:

It's one o'clock in the morning, Billy! Where on earth have you been? I've been nearly sick with worry.

BILL:

Mum, I've cycled a long way, I'm very tired and I want to go to bed.

BERYL points at the bed.

BERYL:
Get here!

BILL sighs and stays where he is.

BERYL:
Do you realise I would've rung the police if your
father hadn't stopped me?!

BILL sighs again.

BERYL:
But of course you don't care about *my* feelings
anymore! I'm only your mother! What do *I* matter?!

BILL sighs deeply.

BERYL:
Oh, Billy, what's become of the nice, kind, polite little
boy I brought up?

BILL gets the postcard of the rose out of his bag.

BERYL:
Have you been to that... 'gay' house?

BILL:
Yes.

BERYL:
I thought as much! Billy, you're fifteen. You have no
idea how awful those people are! They're *perverts*
who want to corrupt you!

BILL:
You couldn't be more wrong.

BERYL:
I would never have let you go to such a place if I'd
known! You said you were going to the Pierce's for a
vegetarian supper.

BILL:
I have been at Dave Pierce's.

He gets up and pins the postcard of the rose back on his notice-board.

BERYL looks at it.

BILL:
Listen, mum, if I tell you what I've been doing... will
you promise to listen properly and not interrupt or
jump to conclusions and that?

BERYL:
What do you mean?! Oh speak to me how you like, in
my own house! I'm only your mother! What should I
know?!

BILL:

Mum, I'm serious. I'll only tell you if you promise.

BERYL:

Very well, Billy. But this had better be good!

BILL sits down on the bed beside her.

BILL:

Well, for a start, Dave is Anne Pierce's *brother*, not her *husband*... and he invited me to...

BERYL:

(Interrupting.) You mean the one who was with her at the supermarket? The nice-looking one?

BILL digests this and nods.

BILL:

Yes. Well, he invited me to have supper with him and his flatmates...

BERYL:

(Interrupting.) You mean he *isn't* her husband?!

BILL:

No, mum, I told you, he's her *brother*. And he lives with these amazing people who...

BERYL:

(Interrupting.) I knew there was something fishy about that pair the first time I set eyes on them! So, she's an *unmarried mother*, is she?! I might've known!

BILL:

Mum. You promised you wouldn't interrupt.

BERYL:

My god, Billy! Is this 'Dave' a homosexual too?!

BILL:

Yes. And what's wrong with that?

BERYL:

Oh my god! and she leaves that tiny baby with him!

BILL:

He's the baby's *uncle*, mum!

BERYL:

Has he been interfering with you, Billy?!

BILL:

No. Of course not.

He stands up.

BILL:

He's the best thing that ever happened to me in my whole life. I think I might be falling in love with him.

BERYL grabs him.

BERYL:

Right! That settles it! Hand over your keys! Come on!
Come on! You obviously can't be trusted anymore!

BILL defies her.

BILL:

Can't you understand anything?! Didn't you hear a
word I said? I said: 'I'm in love with him!'

BERYL:

You call *that* love! Disgusting is what that is! You
don't know the meaning of the word 'love'!

BILL turns away, finally accepting the unpalatable truth.

BILL:

You don't love me. Your 'nice', 'kind', 'polite',
talking doll has got nothing to do with me!

BERYL:

How dare you talk to me like that?!

GEORGE enters in his pyjamas.

GEORGE:

What the hell is going on now?!

BERYL:

Billy's been seduced by a pervert!

GEORGE:

Do what?!

BILL confronts BERYL and shouts inches from her face.

BILL:

***I'VE NEVER HAD SEX WITH ANYONE IN MY
WHOLE LIFE!*** Can't you get that into your head?!

He collects up his cycling things.

BILL:

Yes, I *wanted* to stay the night with him! I *wanted* to
make love with him! But *he* wouldn't let me. *He*
thinks I'm too young too. You all do! You've all
forgotten what it's like to be my fucking age!

GEORGE:

Hey, young man, watch your language!

BILL goes to the door, pausing to fling back at BERYL:

BILL:

It's you that's disgusting!

He runs out and down the stairs.

A door bangs OOV.

GEORGE takes BERYL in his arms.

GEORGE:

He didn't mean it, love. Come on, buck up. He's growing up, that's all. Remember what we went through with Eric...

BERYL:

You! You have no idea what's going on!

GEORGE:

He isn't a baby anymore, to order about. We've just got to let him go his own way.

BERYL:

Our fifteen-year-old son is about to be *corrupted* by a *pervert* and you propose to 'let him go his own way'!

GEORGE:

Yes. No. It's not as simple as that. I've been thinking about it a lot. He's still *our* son. He's still our Billy. But he's growing up, and we've just got to make the best of it, that's all.

BERYL focuses on the postcard of the rose on the notice-board.

BERYL:

I'm not beaten that easily, George!

She grabs the postcard and runs from the room.

83—Interior—Beryl's hall & stairs—Continuous in time

BERYL is at the telephone.

GEORGE appears at the top of the stairs and looks down at her.

BERYL:

Good evening, officer? (*Pause.*) Yes, it's me again. (*Pause.*) You remember our conversation earlier? (*Pause.*) Well, I'm afraid the worst *has* happened. (*Pause.*) But I've discovered his name... (*reading from the card*) 'Dave Pierce' he's called and he lives at 53 Kingcup Road. (*Pause.*) That's right, officer.

She looks up at GEORGE.

BERYL:

If you're quick enough you'll catch him before he can... (*Pause.*) My son's *fifteen*, officer.

She looks up at GEORGE.

BERYL:

I'm glad the law agrees with me! (*Pause.*) Goodnight, officer.

She hangs up and looks defiantly up at GEORGE.

GEORGE:

My god, woman! What have you done?!

BERYL:

My duty, George. I've done my duty as a mother.

84—Interior—Dave's hall and stairs—Night

MARTIAN opens the front door to reveal BILL standing outside with his bike.

MARTIAN:

(Grinning.) I thought you were upstairs with Dave.

BILL:

That's exactly where I'm going!

85—Interior—Dave's room—Night

DAVE is asleep in bed.

BILL enters and stands looking down at him.

He undresses to his boxer shorts, hesitates, then removes them too.

He pulls the duvet back to reveal DAVE's naked body.

DAVE opens his eyes and smiles.

DAVE:

You again!

BILL:

'Fraid so...

DAVE opens his arms with a smile.

DAVE:

Come on then!

BILL falls into bed with DAVE.

BILL:

Home!

Closing Title sequence—Exterior—Street—Night

A police car tears through deserted streets, siren blaring, lights flashing as we see the closing titles.

MAIN SPEAKING PARTS

in order of appearance

DANNY 15/mature/athletic/striking good looks/Afro-Caribbean

BILL 15/ordinary-looking/Caucasian

DAVE 24/bearded/athletic/striking good looks/Caucasian

BERYL Late 30s/smart/respectable/Caucasian (**BILL**'s mother)

ANNE 25/lively/attractive/Caucasian

GEORGE 40/ordinary working bloke/Caucasian (**BILL**'s father)

MS COHEN 30ish/attractive/competent/smart/Semitic

OTHER SPEAKING PARTS

in order of appearance

Jeff 15/ordinary-looking/Afro-Caribbean

Sodbury 15/surly/overweight/Caucasian

Pub Landlord

Milkman

Glad 40s/Afro-Caribbean (**DANNY**'s mother)

Dr Singh well-spoken/friendly/competent/Asian

Fat Slob any variety

Vic 50ish/camp/Caucasian

Dr Fisher 60s/grey/self-important/Caucasian

Dr Sinclair mid 20s/attractive/Caucasian

Robert 20s/facial jewellery

Martian 18/iridescent pink hair/tatooes

Kate 30ish/posh/quiet/professional/Caucasian

Raf 20ish/French woman/ascerbic/Caucasian