

ONE

A street. Mark and Jan.

Jan Dead?

Mark Yeah.

Jan What, dead?

Mark Yeah

Jan Like dead, dead

Mark Yes

Jan proper dead, not living dead?

Mark Not living dead, yes.

Jan Are you sure?

Mark Yes.

Jan I mean there's no

Mark No.

Jan mistake or

Mark No mistake.

Jan it's not a joke.

Mark It's not a joke.

Jan Cos it's not funny.

Mark It's not funny because it's not a joke, if it was a
joke it would be funny.

Jan Not hiding?

Mark Not hiding, dead.

Jan Not

Mark dead.

Jan Oh.

Mark Yes.

Jan God.

Mark Yes.

Jan God.

Mark Exactly.

Pause.

Jan What are we going to do?

A field. Lea and Phil, Phil eating an ice cream.

Lea What are you thinking?

No answer.

No, don't tell me, sorry, that's a stupid, that's such a stupid –

You can tell me, you know. You can talk to me. I won't judge you, whatever it is. Whatever you're, you know, I won't, I won't . . .

Is it me?

Not that I'm –

I mean, it wouldn't matter if you weren't or were, actually, so –

Are you thinking about me?

No answer.

What good things? Phil? Or . . .

I mean, is it a negative, are you thinking a negative thing about –

Not that I'm bothered. I'm not bothered, Phil, I'm not, it doesn't, I don't care. You know. I don't . . .

What, like I talk too much? Is that it? That I talk too much, you, sitting there in absolute silence thinking, 'Lea talks too much, I wish she'd shut up once in a while,' is that it? Is that what you're, because don't, you know, judge, you know, because alright, I do. There, I'm admitting, I am admitting, I talk too much, so shoot me. So kill me, Phil, call the police, lock me

up, rip out my teeth with a pair of rusty pliers, I talk too much, what a crime, what a sin, what an absolute catastrophe, stupid, evil, ridiculous, because you're not perfect actually, Phil. Okay? There. I've said it, you're not . . .

You're a bit . . .

You're . . .

Pause. She sits.

Do I disgust you? I do. No, I do. No don't, because, it's alright, it's fine, I'm not gonna, you know, or whatever, you know it's not the collapse of my, because I do have, I could walk out of here, there are friends, I've got, I've got friends, I mean alright, I haven't got friends, not exactly, I haven't, but I could, if I wanted, if I wanted, given the right, given the perfect, you know, circumstances. So don't, because you haven't either, I mean it's not like you're, you know, Mr, you know, Popular, you know, you haven't, you know, you haven't, you know, you haven't, but that's, that's different, isn't it? I mean it is, it is, don't say it isn't, really, don't, you'll just embarrass us both because it is different, it's different because it doesn't matter to you.

Does it. Sitting there. Sitting there, all . . . all . . .

You're not scared. Nothing scares, there, I've said it; scared. Scared, Phil. I'm scared, they scare me, this place, everyone, the fear, the fear that everyone here, and I'm not the only one, I'm not the only one, Phil, I'm just the only one saying it, the fear that everyone here lives in, the brutal terror, it scares me, okay, I've said it and I am not ashamed. Yes, I am ashamed but I'm not ashamed of my shame, Phil, give me that much credit at least, thank you.

Everyone's scared.

Not just me.

Pause.

We've got each other.
We need each other.
So don't give it all . . .
You need me as much as . . .
Don't give it all the . . .

Beat.

What are you thinking?

Jan and Mark enter.

Pause.

Mark We need to talk to you.

Lea Oh, shit.

A wood. Lou, John Tate and Danny.

Lou It's fucked.

John Tate No, no, it's not, no, Lou, it's not

Lou We're fucked.

John Tate No, Lou, we're not . . . it's not . . . we're not . . .
nothing's . . .

Lou It is.

John Tate No, no, no, look, there, I have to, I really have
to, you're going to have to listen to me on this one,
and you are going to have to believe me. Everything is,
everything's fine.

Lou Fine?

John Tate Not Fine, no

Danny Fine?

John Tate not fine exactly, alright, fair enough, I mean
things are bad, things are a little, alright, yes, I'm not
trying to hide the, this is tricky, it's a tricky

Lou Tricky?

John situation, but it's not, because actually what you
are saying is very negative, and that's . . .

Look, haven't I looked after things before?

Lou This is different.

John Tate Lou, are you scared of anyone in this school?

Lou You?

John Tate Apart from me.

Lou No.

John Tate Exactly

Lou Richard, maybe

John Tate exactly, that's exactly, that's what I'm saying –

Richard, you're scared of, are you . . . ? I mean, you
can walk down any corridor in this – I don't think
Richard's – any corridor in this school and you know,
no one bothers you and if you want something it's
yours and no one bothers you and everyone respects
you and everyone's scared of you and who made that,
I mean I'm not boasting, but who made that happen?

Lou You.

John Tate Thank you, so are things really that bad?

Lou Yes.

John Tate Richard? I mean are you really?

Danny I can't get mixed up in this. I gonna be a dentist.

Lou This is different, John. This is

John Tate Alright, it's a little bit

Lou This is really serious.

Danny Dentists don't get mixed up in things. I've got a
plan. I've got a plan, John, I've made plans, and this is
not . . .

John Tate It's a bit serious, but let's not, I mean come on,
let's not overplay the, the, the

Lou He's dead.

John Tate the gravity of . . . Well, yes, okay, fair enough,
but

Danny This is not part of the plan. Dental college is part of the plan, A levels are part of the plan, dead people are not part of the plan, this is not dental college.

Lou He's dead, John.

John Tate Alright, I'm not denying, am I denying? No, I'm

Lou He's dead.

John Tate Well, don't keep saying it.

Danny This is the opposite of dental college.

Lou But he is dead.

John Tate Well you just, you're saying it again, didn't I just -

Lou Because he's dead, John, he's dead, dead is what he is, so we have to use that word to -

John Tate Alright. New rule: that word is banned.

Beat.

Lou What, 'dead'?

John Tate Yes.

Danny Banned?

John Tate Yes. Banned. Sorry.

Lou You can't ban a word.

John Tate and if anyone says it I'm going to have to, you know, bite their face. Or something.

Danny How can you ban a word?

John Tate Well, just say it then.

Pause.

Say it and see what happens.

They say nothing.

Look, we have to keep together. We have to trust each other and believe in each other. I'm trying to help. I'm trying to keep things together.

Richard enters, with Cathy and Brian, Cathy grinning, Brian crying.

Pause.

Richard He's dead.

John Tate Right, that's . . . now I really am getting a little bit cross, do not use that word.

Richard What?

John Tate No one says that word, okay? No one.

Richard What word?

Cathy This is mad, eh?

John Tate You know.

Cathy Talk about mad. I mean, it's quite exciting as well, though, isn't it?

Richard What, 'dead'?

John Tate Don't say it again, Richard, or I'm gonna

Cathy Better than ordinary life.

Richard What?

John Tate I'm gonna

Richard What?

John Tate I'm gonna

I'm gonna hurt you, actually.

Beat.

Richard You're going to hurt me?

John Tate Yes.

Richard Me?

John Tate Yes. If you use that word.

Cathy I mean, I'm not saying it's a good thing, but in a way it is.

Danny Shut up, Cathy.

Cathy You shut up.

John Tate I am trying to keep everyone together. Ever since I came to this school haven't I been trying to keep everyone together? Aren't things better? For us? I mean not for them, not out there, but for us? Doesn't everyone want to be us, come here in the woods? Isn't that worth keeping hold of?

They say nothing. Richard steps forward, a little hesitantly.

Richard You shouldn't threaten me, John.

John Tate I beg your pardon?

Richard I'm just saying. I'm just saying, I've just walked in here. I've been with these two. I've walked all the way from school with these two, with him crying and with her being weird, and I've just walked in here and I've got you threatening me. You shouldn't threaten me, you shouldn't threaten me, John.

Pause.

John Tate Or what?

Richard What?

John Tate No, I mean, you know, or what?

Richard Well . . .

John Tate Because I'm interested.

Danny He's just saying, John.

John Tate Are you on his side, Danny?

Danny No, I'm just saying that he's just saying.

Cathy Shut up, Danny.

Danny You shut up.

John Tate Don't tell Cathy to shut up, Danny, that's really not . . .

Danny I'm not telling her to -

Cathy He's on Richard's side.

Danny I'm not!

John Tate Are you, Danny? Are you on Richard's side?

Danny No -

Cathy He is.

Richard What do you mean by 'my side', there is no -

John Tate Have you got a side now, Richard?

Richard No, no, there's no -

John Tate because that's a bit, is that what you've got?

Danny John, I'm not on -

John Tate Because if you've got a side that means you're not on my side and if you're not on my side that means you're setting yourself up against me and I thought we'd got over all that silliness.

Richard We have, we -

John Tate I thought we were mates now.

Richard We are, we are mates now, we -

John Tate So if me and Richard are mates now, which we are and all that silliness is over, which it is, and you're on someone's side, Danny, then you're on your own side, which is very, well, to be honest, very silly and dangerous.

Danny No, you've got it wrong, that's not -

John Tate Are you on my side?

Danny Yes, I'm on your side!

John Tate Which means you want . . . ?

Danny I want to keep calm, I want to say nothing, just like you, you're right, you're right, John.

John Tate So what the fuck are you on about, Cathy?

Cathy I'm -

John Tate Are you on my side? With Richard and Danny? Are you on our side, Cathy?

Cathy Yes.

John Tate Good. Lou?

Lou Yes.

John Tate You're on our side, Lou?

Lou Yes, John.

John Tate You sure?

Lou Yeah, I'm -

John Tate That just leaves you, Brian. You crying little piece of filth.

Beat. Brian stops crying. Looks up.

Brian I think we should tell someone.

John Tate begins to walk towards Brian.

Mark and Jan enter with Lea and Phil, Phil drinking a Coke. John Tate stops. Goes back to where he was.

John Tate I'm finding this all quite stressful. You know that? I'm under a lot of stress. You lot shouldn't put me under so much stress.

Lea walks forward.

Lea Can I just say, John, that we haven't done anything. First I want to say that, but if we have, John, but if we have done a thing, which we haven't, but if we have then we did it together. Whatever we did, we did, me and Phil, it wasn't just Phil, if that's what you're thinking, if you're thinking it might just have been him, on his own, without me, well that's not, we are completely, I am responsible as much as he, as much as Phil, but we didn't because -

John Tate places a finger on her lips. She is silent.

John Tate Have you told them?

Mark No.

John Tate Brilliant. Is there one thing that I do not have to do?

Beat.

Jan So you want us to tell them?

John Tate Yes! Please.

He takes his finger away from Lea's lips.

Mark It's Adam. He's . . .

I mean we were just having a laugh, weren't we, we were all, you know . . .

You know Adam, you know what he's like, so we were sort of, well, alright, taking the piss, sort of. You know what he's like, he was, sort of hanging around

Jan Trying to be part of

Mark Yeah, trying to be part of, yeah, yeah, so we're having a laugh

Jan with him

Mark yeah, with him, I mean he's laughing as well, see how far he'll go . . . We got him to eat some leaves.

Jan Great big ones, dirty leaves off the floor, he ate them, just like that

Mark Just like that, we were all

Jan stitches

Mark We were in stitches, weren't we

Jan Adam too, he was

Mark Oh yeah, Adam was, he was laughing harder than anyone.

Jan Nutter.

Mark Nutter.

Jan complete

Mark complete nutter

Jan Big fistfuls of leaves, eh John

Mark laughing his head off, eh John

Jan He burnt his own socks!

Mark Yeah, yeah, he did, that's right he, he set them alight

Jan anything, he'd do, just a laugh

Mark we got him to nick some vodka

Jan you could tell he was scared

Mark oh, he was terrified, he was completely, but like you know, pretending, you know, pretending he's done it before, big man, pretending he's

Jan You know what he's like, he's

Mark Do anything. And you're thinking 'Will he do anything? What won't he do?'

Jan Let us punch him.

Mark he was laughing

Jan In the face.

Ma He was laughing.

Jan at first

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Mark Yeah, at first he was, I mean we took it a bit far,
 alright, half-hour, forty minutes
 Jan I mean, he was still joking all the way, but
 Mark you could tell
 Jan He weren't really
 Mark fear
 Jan well
 Mark you don't want to admit, you know what he's like,
 Phil . . .
 Jan Stubbed out cigarettes on him.
 Mark joking, we were
 Jan Arms, hands, face
 Mark having a laugh, really, he was laughing
 Jan and crying, soles of his feet
 Mark or crying, sort of, a bit of both
 Jan Made him run across the motorway
 Mark you're thinking, what is this nutter, and with the
 vodka making you feel a bit, you know, you're having
 a laugh, together, what is this nutter gonna do next,
 we can make him do, we can make him do
 Jan That's when I went home
 Mark anything, yeah, only because you had to
 Jan I wasn't there when -
 Mark Only because you had to, you would've been there
 otherwise, you did all the . . .

Beat.

We went up the grille. You know, that shaft up there on
 the hill. Just a big hole really, hole with a grille over it,
 covering, just to see if he'd climb the fence, really, and
 he did, and we thought, you know, he's climbed the
 fence, which we didn't think he'd do, so walk, you
 know, walk on the grille, Adam, walk on the, and he
 did, he's walked on, you know, wobbling and that but
 he's walking on the grille and we're all laughing and

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

he's scared because if you slip, I mean it's just blackness
 under you, I mean it's only about fifteen foot wide so,
 but it might be hundreds of feet into blackness, I dunno,
 but he's doing it, he's walked on the grille. He's on the
 grille. He is.

And someone's pegged a stone at him.

Not to hit him, just for the laugh.

And you shoulda seen his face, I mean the fear, the, it
 was so, you had to laugh, the expression, the fear . . .
 So we're all peggin' them. Laughing. And his face,
 it's just making you laugh harder and harder, and
 they're getting nearer and nearer. And one hits his
 head. And the shock on his face is so . . . funny. And
 we're all just . . .

just . . .

really chucking these stones into him, really hard and
 laughing and he slips.

And he drops.

Into . . .

Into the er . . .

So he's . . .

So he's . . .

So he's -

John Tate Dead. He's dead.

Cathy says you're clever.

So. What do we do?

Pause. They all stare at Lea and Phil.

Lea goes to say something, but nothing comes out.

Silence.

More silence.

Phil puts his Coke carefully on the ground.

They all stare at him.

Phil Cathy, Danny, Mark, you go to Adam's house, you
 wait until his mum's out, you break in

DENNIS KELLY

Danny What?
 Phil through an upstairs window so it's out of the way,
 make sure no one sees you. Get in, go to his bedroom,
 find a pair of his shoes and an item of his clothing, a
 jumper or something, don't touch the jumper, that's
 very important, do not touch the jumper, but you have
 to get it in the plastic bag without touching it
 Cathy What plastic bag?
 Phil The refuse sacks that you are going to buy on the
 way. Do not use the first one on the roll, use the third
 or forth, do not be tempted to use a bin liner you have
 knocking around the house as that will be a DNA
 nightmare.
 Richard, you take Brian to the Head, tell him that you
 found Brian crying in the toilets, asked him what was
 wrong and when he told you, you brought him here.
 Richard Me? But I hate him!
 Phil Brian, you cry
 Richard Me with Brian?
 Phil and you tell them a man showed you his willy in the
 woods.
 Brian Wha . . . what?
 Phil By the bridge, last week, a fat Caucasian male, five
 foot nine inches, say, with thinning hair and a
 postman's uniform, sad eyes, softly spoken.
 Danny Who's that?
 Phil The man who showed Brian his willy in the woods,
 please keep up, I'm making this up as I go along
 Danny What were his teeth like?
 Phil Bad, very bad.
 Danny Thought so.
 Phil Cathy, Mark and Jan, you take the shoes, Cathy,
 you put them on, and you enter the woods from the
 south entrance
 Cathy Which one's south?
 Mark By the Asda.

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Phil Mark, you enter from the east entrance with Jan on
 your back.
 Mark Is he taking the piss?
 Phil the two of you combined should equal that of a fat
 postman with bad teeth, you make your way into the
 woods, do not put her down unless it's on concrete or
 a tree trunk, never when you're walking on mud. You
 meet Cathy near the bridge, you move around a bit,
 you exit from the south,
 Mark By the Asda.
 Phil Lou and Danny, you meet them there, but on the
 way you find a quiet street, you wait until it's just you
 and a man, you walk ahead of him and when you're
 far ahead you drop the jumper. The man picks it up,
 runs after you covering it in DNA and then gives it back,
 make sure you let him drop it in the bag, say you're
 taking it to a charity shop. Take it to the south entrance,
 tear it a little, chuck it in a hedge, all go home and
 wait a day or two until Adam's declared missing, and
 then John Tate comes forward and says he thinks he
 saw Adam with a fat man in a uniform by Asda's but
 he can't be sure. They'll think he's been abducted,
 there'll be inquiries, police, mourning, a service and if
 everyone keeps their mouths shut we should be fine.
 Any questions?
They stare at him open-mouthed.
He bends down. Picks up his Coke.
Starts to drink his Coke.

A Field. Lea and Phil sitting.
Pause.
 Lea Apparently bonobos are our nearest relative. For
 years people thought they were chimpanzees, but

they're not, they are completely different. Chimps are evil. They murder each other, did you know that? They kill and sometimes torture each other to find a better position within the social structure. A chimp'll just find itself on the outside of a group and before he knows what's happening it's being hounded to death by the others, sometimes for months. For years we've thought that chimps were our closest living relative, but now they saying it's the bonobos. Bonobos are the complete opposite of chimps. When a stranger bonobo approaches the pack, the other bonobos all come out and go, 'Hello, mate. What you doing round here? Come and meet the family, we can eat some ants.' And if a bonobo damages its hand, whereas the chimps'll probably cast it out or bite its hand off, the bonobos will come over and look after it, and they'll all look sad because there's a bonobo feeling pain. I saw it on a programme. Such sadness in those intelligent eyes. Empathy. That's what bonobos have. Amazing really, I mean they're exactly like chimps, but the tiniest change in their DNA . . . The woman was saying that if we'd discovered bonobos before chimps our understanding of ourselves would be very different.

Pause. Phil pulls out a bag of crisps.

You don't care, do you. I could be talking Chinese for all you care. How do you do it? You're amazing. You're unreal. I sometimes think you're not human. I sometimes think I wonder what you would do if I killed myself, right here in front of you. What would you do? What you do, Phil?

No answer.

Phil, what would you do? Phil?

Still no answer.

Suddenly Lea grabs her own throat.

I'm gonna do it!

She squeezes.

I mean it! I'm gonna do it . . .

No answer. She strangles herself, her face turning red.

She falls to her knees with the exertion.

Phil looks on.

Lea is in considerable pain. Grits her teeth and squeezes.

She strangles until she is lying prone on the floor.

(Gasping.) Phil! This is it . . .

She stops.

Lies there, panting.

Phil opens his crisps and begins to eat them.

Lea gets up, sits next to Phil.

Phil eats on.

Course, they fuck a lot. Bonobos. Always at it. Sex mad. Sex, sex, sex, sex, sex, sex, sex, sex, sex, constant sex, randy, in the bonobo world having it off is like saying I like your shoes. Partner-swapping, men and women, women and men, women and women, men on men, fathers, mothers, children, oral sex, group masturbation, sub-dom, interracial, bestiality, the lot, it was like an orgy, when bonobos get going, it was fairly disgusting, actually.

Pause.

But that's bonobos for you.

Pause.

We're in trouble now.

DENNIS KELLY

We're in trouble now, Phil. Don't know how this'll pan out.
Trouble now.

TWO

*A street. Jan and Mark.
Pause.*

Jan What?
Mark He's not going.
Jan What do you mean, he's not going?
Mark He's not going.
Jan He's not going?
Mark Yes.
Jan That's what he said?
Mark Yes.
Jan He said he's not going?
Mark Yeah, he said he's not, he's not . . .
Jan What?
Mark Going.

Beat.

Jan Is he off his head?
Mark I know.
Jan Is he insane?
Mark I know.
Jan Is he joking?
Mark I know, I know.
Jan No, that's a question.
Mark He's not joking, he's not going, he's said he's not going, I said you've gotta go, he said he's not going, 'I'm not going,' he said.
Jan That's what he said?
Mark That's what he said, I'm saying that's what he said.

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Jan Fuck.
Mark Exactly.

Beat.

Jan What are we going to do?

A field. Phil and Lea, Phil slowly eating a pack of Starburst.

Lea has a Tupperware container on her lap.

Lea Are you happy?
No, don't answer that, Jesus, sorry, what's wrong with me, sorry --
Are you?
No, I'm just wondering. I mean what is happy, what's happy all about, who says you're supposed to be happy? Like we're all supposed to be happy, happy is our natural, and any deviation from that state is seen as a failure, which in itself makes you more unhappy so you have to pretend to be even happier which doesn't work because people can see that you're pretending which makes them awkward and you can see that they can see that you're pretending to be happy and their awkwardness is making you even more unhappy so you have to pretend to be even happier, it's a nightmare. It's like nuclear waste or global warming.

Beat.

Isn't it, Phil? Phil? Isn't it, like nuclear . . .

Phil doesn't answer.

Yeah, you know, you know it is, you know more than I do, I can't tell you any, you know. People getting all

upset about polluting the natural order? When this planet is churning molten lava with a thin layer of crust on top with a few kilometres of atmosphere clinging to it? I mean, please, don't gimme all that, carbon dioxide? Carbon dioxide, Phil? And look at the rest of the universe. Venus, Phil, there's a, look at Venus, what about Venus, hot enough to melt lead or Titan with oceans of liquid nitrogen, I mean stars, Phil, a billion nuclear reactions a second, I mean to be honest it's all either red hot or ice cold, so, so, so . . . No. It's life that upsets the natural order. It's us that's the anomaly.

But that's the beauty, isn't it, Phil? I couldn't say this to anyone else, they'd say, 'That's a pretty fucking grim view of the world, Lea,' but you can see the beauty, which is why I can talk to you, because you can see the incredibly precious beauty and fragility of reality, and it's the same for happiness, you can apply the same theory to happiness, so don't start, Phil, don't come here giving it all the, you know, all the, all the . . .

Beat.

Can you remember the happiest moment in your life?

Beat. Phil eats another Starburst.

I know mine. I know my happiest moment. Week last Tuesday. That sunset. You remember that sunset? Do you? You don't, do you? Oh my God, you don't.

He says nothing.

She opens the Tupperware container.

Shows it to Phil.

It's Jerry. I killed him. I took him out of his cage, I put the point of a screwdriver on his head and I hit it with a hammer. Why do you think I did that?

Phil shrugs.

No. No, me neither.

She closes the lid.

Everything's much better, though. I mean really, it is.

Everyone's working together. They're a lot happier.

Remember last month, Dan threatened to kill Cathy?

Well, yesterday I saw him showing her his phone, like they were old friends. Last week Richard invited Mark to his party, bring a friend, anyone you like, can you believe that? Richard and Mark? Yep. Everyone's happier. It's pouring into the school, grief, grief is making them happy.

They say John Tate's lost it though, won't come out of his room. Bit odd. Maybe that's what's making people happier. Maybe it's just having something to work towards. Together. Do you think that's what it is? Are we really that simple?

Where will it stop? Only been four days but everything's changed.

Pause.

Adam's parents were on the telly again last night.

Phil looks up.

Yeah. Another appeal.

To the fat postman with bad teeth.

What have we done, Phil?

Mark and Jan enter.

Jan We need to talk.

DENNIS KELLY

*Woods. Phil and Lea, Lou and Danny. Phil has a muffin.
Pause.*

Lea What?
 Danny They've found . . .
 They . . .
 Well they've found -
 Lou The man.
 Danny Yeah, they've found the man.
 Lea They've found the man?
 Danny Yeah.
 Lea They've found the man?
 Danny Yes.
 Lea Oh my God.
 Lou Exactly.
 Lea Oh my God.
 Lou That's what we thought, we thought that, didn't we,
 Danny?
 Danny Yeah, we did.
 Lea Are you sure? I mean are you . . .
 Danny Definitely. He's in custody now. They're
 questioning him.
 Lea But how, I mean who, how, who, who is, who is,
 how?
 Lou Dunno.
 Lea Who is he?
 Lou He's the man who kidnapped Adam.
 Lea Right. No.
 Lou Yes.
 Lea No.
 Danny Yes.
 Lea No, no, yeah, no, actually, because that man, the
 man who, he doesn't actually, I mean I'm not being
 fussy or anything, but the man who kidnapped Adam
 doesn't actually exist, does he? Well, does he?
 Lou No. But they've got him.

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Danny I heard his teeth are awful.
 Lea You know, I mean he doesn't, he doesn't . . . Phil?
 Any . . . any thoughts? Any words, any comments,
 any . . . ideas, any, any, any . . . thing? At all?
 I mean this is, this is, isn't it, this is, is it?
 Shit. Oh shit.
 Danny He answers the description. Fat postman,
 thinning hair, his teeth are terrible, apparently.
 Lea But that's just
 Lou Yeah. That's what we thought.
 Lea we just, didn't we, Phil, we just, we just, I mean you
 just . . .
 Danny What are we gonna do?
 Lou We're fucked.
 Lea We're not . . .
 Lou We're -
 Lea No, no, sorry, no we're not, are we, Phil? I mean
 we're, no we're alright.
 Danny They're looking for Brian.
 Lea Why?
 Danny Because he can identify him.
 Lea No he can't.
 Lou Because he saw him in the woods.
 Lea He didn't
 Lou He did, he -
 Lea No he didn't, because that wasn't the man in the
 woods because there wasn't a man in the woods.
 Where's Brian?
 Danny Hiding. Jan and Mark have gone to find him.
 Lou He's shitting it.
 Lea I mean what, they just picked this bloke up, they just
 saw him and said, 'You look dodgy, you're a murderer
 because you've got a postman's uniform?'
 Danny Well, there's the teeth as well.
 Lea You can't go to prison for bad teeth.
 Lou What if he goes to prison?

Lea He won't go to prison.

Lou You just said -

Lea He won't get done for it because he hasn't . . .

Danny This sort of stuff sticks, you know.

Lea Look, everyone, everyone calm, okay? Isn't that right, Phil? Phil, isn't that, I mean things are, everything is, well, better and isn't everyone more, you know, and cheerful and stuff, so let's, please, let's -

Danny How am I gonna get references?

Lou We're fucked.

Lea We are not -

Danny You need three references for dental college, how am I gonna get references?

Richard enters with Cathy.

Richard We just came from the police station. It's full of reporters.

Cathy It was great.

Richard It was shit. Phil, have you heard?

Lea We heard.

Cathy They wanted to interview me.

Richard You've heard? You know?

Cathy Didn't have time, but I'm gonna go back.

Richard So you know they've caught him?

Cathy get on the telly

Lea How can they have caught someone who doesn't exist?

Richard I don't know, Lea.

Lea Because that's impossible.

Richard Why don't you tell them that? Why don't you pop down the station and say, 'Excuse me, but that fat postman with the bad teeth doesn't actually exist, so why don't you let him go'?

Lea sarcasm, that's the lowest

Cathy they might even give me money for it, do you think I should ask for money?

Lou He's gonna go to prison.

Lea Lou, they are not going to send him to prison because he answers a description, they need more than that, they need fibres, they need samples, they need evidence.

Richard DNA evidence.

Lea Exactly, they need DNA -

Richard No, they've got DNA evidence.

Beat.

Lea What?

Richard He answers the description, but they've got DNA evidence linking him to the crime.

Lea DN . . . What are you talking about?

Richard We spoke to a reporter. They matched up the DNA evidence they found on the jumper to a police database and they came up with this man, this man who answers the description perfectly.

Lea That's impossible.

Richard Well, it's what happened.

Lea No, because, we made that description up and they got DNA from a random -

Beat. She turns to Cathy.

Cathy?

Pause. They all stare at Cathy.

Cathy You told us to get DNA evidence. We got DNA evidence. We did what you said.

Lea Right.

Okay.

Hang on.

Where did you get the DNA evidence?

Cathy From a man, like you said.

Beat.

A man down at the sorting office.

DENNIS KELLY

They stare at her.

Lea What?

Cathy Well, we thought, you know, I mean, you'd given a description so we thought, well, I thought, you know, show initiative, we'll look for a fat balding postman with bad teeth.

They stare at her.

There were quite a few.

Danny Oh my God.

Cathy What?

Lou Oh my God.

Cathy We showed . . . initiative, we -

Lea And who asked you to do that?

Cathy Richard, we showed initiative.

Richard That is the most stupid -

Danny Oh, Jesus.

Cathy Why?

Lea Why? Because there is now a man in prison who is linked to a non-existent crime, answering a description that Brian gave.

Lou Oh, Jesus Christ.

Cathy But isn't that . . .

Lea No, Cathy, it is not what we wanted.

Richard What we wanted was to cover up what had happened, not to frame someone else.

Lou We're fucked.

Lea Yes. We might actually be . . . This is a nightmare.

Danny We can't let them think it's him. I mean, I really can't be mixed up in something like that, it wouldn't be right.

Lou What if he goes to prison?

Richard What if we go to prison?

Lea Yes, I think now, we might just actually be a little bit, well, fucked.

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

Jan and Mark enter with Brian. Brian is crying.

Brian I'm not going in.

Richard You dick, Mark.

Mark It was her idea!

Lou Mark, you dick.

Brian I'm not going to the police station.

Jan He has to. They're looking for him.

Brian I can't go in. It was bad enough talking to them before, saying what I said, but I can't do it again.

Jan They're searching everywhere for him. They want him to identify the man.

Brian I can't identify him, I can't go in there, don't make me go in there, I'm not going in there.

Danny This is terrible.

Brian I can't face it. They look at me. They look at me like I'm lying and it makes me cry. I can't stand the way they look at me. And then, because I cry, they think I'm telling the truth, but I'm crying because I'm lying and I feel terrible inside.

Lou We're going to have to tell them.

Lea Maybe we could do nothing?

Danny We can't do nothing, they want Brian.

Brian I'm not going in.

Lea Phil?

No answer.

Phil?

Pause. Phil walks over to Brian and lays a hand on his shoulder.

Phil This is a bad situation. We didn't want this situation. But we've got this situation. It wasn't supposed to be like this. But it is like this.

Beat.

You're going in.

Brian No.

Phil Yes.

Brian No, Phil –

Phil Yes, yes, shhhh, yes. Sorry. You have to go in. Or we'll take you up the grille.

Pause.

We'll throw you in.

Richard Er, Phil.

Danny Is he serious?

Lea He's always serious.

Phil We'll take you up the grille now. We'll get you by the arms. By the legs. And we'll swing you onto the grille. We'll throw rocks at you until you drop through. You'll drop through. You'll fall into the cold. Into the dark. You'll land on Adam's corpse and you'll rot together.

Beat.

We're in trouble now. We need your help. If you don't help us we'll kill you. Are you going to help us?

Pause.

Brian nods.

Okay. You go in there. Richard'll take you

Richard Not me again.

Phil Richard'll take you. You take a look at that man and you say it's him. You say it's the man in the woods. That's what you do. Okay?

Slowly, Brian nods.

Everyone else stays calm. Keep your mouths shut. Tell no one or we'll all go to prison. Just get on with things.

He starts to eat his pie. They stare at him.

A field. Phil and Lea, Phil picking his teeth.

Silence.

Suddenly Lea jumps up, shocked.

Lea Woah! Woah, woah, woah . . .

No reaction from Phil.

I just had déjà vu, but really strong, I just . . . and you were . . .

I was . . .

I mean we were just here and, and . . .

I was sitting like that and . . .

Woah. I've been here before, Phil. Phil?

Phil carries on picking his teeth.

Lea watches, then explodes.

That's exactly what you did when I said 'Phil'! I knew you were going to do that, I said 'Phil' and you picked your teeth, Phil, you just carried on picking your teeth! Oh my God. This might be the real thing. Maybe I have been here before. Maybe this has all happened before. Phil? Do you think this has happened before? I know what you're gonna do next. I can see, I know, I know, you're gonna . . . you're gonna . . . you're gonna . . . do nothing!

Phil does nothing.

Yes! Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! You see? This is amazing, this is, the world has just changed, reality is not what we think, Phil maybe, this isn't real, maybe we're caught in some sort of . . . hang on, hang on, a bird is going to . . . a starling, a starling is going to land by that stone . . . now!

Nothing happens.

Now!

DENNIS KELLY

Still nothing happens.

Any minute . . . now!

Again, nothing happens.

Lea sags. She sits back with Phil.

Look at that sky.

Have you ever seen a sky like that? I've never seen a sky quite like that. Strange time we've been born in. No other time quite like this one.

Pause.

Do you think it's possible to change things? I know, I know, but I feel like this time . . . I dunno, this time . . . I feel like this is an important time. Do you think people always feel like that? D'you think we're doomed to behave like people before us did?

Phil?

No answer.

Phil?

Phil?

Phil?

Phil?

Phil?

Phil?

Phil?

Phil?

Phil?

Pause.

PHIL!

Slowly Phil turns to her.

If you change one thing, you can change the world. Do you believe that?

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

Phil No.

Lea Right.

Well I do.

I do, Phil.

Beat.

Phil?

THREE

A street. Jan and Mark.

Jan Okay. Okay. Okay.

Beat.

Okay.

No.

Mark Yes.

Jan No, no

Mark yes

Jan no. No way, that's

Mark I know

Jan that's

Mark I know, I know

Jan And are you . . . is this . . .

I mean are you . . . there's no mistake or . . .

Mark No.

Jan Because this is

Mark That's what I'm saying

Jan this is really

Mark Yeah, yes, yeah.

Jan really, really

Mark Exactly.

Jan Are you sure?

Mark Yes.

DENNIS KELLY

Jan Where?
Mark In the woods.
Jan In the woods?
Mark In the woods, Cathy found him in the woods
Jan Cathy?
Mark Yes.
Jan Cathy found him . . . ?
Mark Yes, she
Jan in the woods?
Mark Yes.

Beat.

Jan Cathy found him in the woods?
Mark Yes.
Jan Oh.
Mark I know.
Jan I don't . . .
Mark I know, I know.
Jan This is . . .
Mark Yeah.
Jan Does anyone know?
Mark You and me. And Cathy. For the moment.
Jan Right.
Right.

Pause.

Right.

*A field. Phil sits with a bag.
Takes out a paper plate.
Places a waffle on it.
Takes out a pack of butter and a jar of jam.
Takes out a knife.*

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

*Lea turns up. She is carrying a suitcase.
He stares at her.*

Lea I'm going. I'm out of here, I'm gone, I'm, I'm, this is it. I'm running away, Phil.

Phil says nothing.

Where'm I going? I dunno. Wherever the universe decides that I should be. It's a big world, Phil, a lot bigger than you, it's a lot bigger than you and me, a lot bigger than all this, these people, sitting here, a lot bigger, a lot lot bigger.

Pause. Phil starts to butter his waffle.

Don't. No words. There's no point, so . . . What's the point? 'Why are you going? Is it me, is it us, is it what we've done, is it what we're becoming, why, Lea, why, is it me, is it the impossibility of ever saying exactly what you mean?' There's no point, Phil. So don't even try. I'm outta here. I'm gone. I am part of history, I'm on a jet plane, I'm moving, I'm discovering, I'm, I'm, sayonara baby, sayonara Phil and hello discovery and, yeah, don't try and stop me, because, because, exit stage left Lea, right now. Right now.

Phil stops buttering the waffle.

Opens the jam.

Starts putting a thin layer of jam on the waffle.

Right now. Right now, Phil, right, fucking . . . I mean it! I really, really . . .

Pause. Phil continues with his waffle.

You're not going to stop me, are you? You're not even thinking of stopping me. You're not even thinking of thinking of stopping me. The only thing in your brain at the moment is that waffle. Your brain is entirely

waffle, single-mindedly waffle and maybe a bit of jam,
I don't know how you do it. I admire you so much.

Phil decides that the waffle needs more jam.

Lea sags. She drops her suitcase and sits with Phil.

Did you see Jan at Adam's memorial? Floods of tears. It was wonderful, everyone felt wonderful, I felt terrible of course, but everyone felt wonderful. It's incredible. The change. This place. You're a miracle-worker. Everyone's happy. You know that? You notice that? Cathy was on the telly. Used that clip on every channel. She's like a celebrity, there are second years asking for her autograph. Suddenly Adam's everyone's best friend. Richard's named his dog Adam. Mark's mum says if her baby's a boy she's going to call him Adam. Funny thing is they're all actually behaving better as well. I saw Jan helping a new kid find the gym. Mark's been doing charity work, for Christ's sake. Maybe being seen as heroes is making them behave like heroes.

Phil considers his waffle. Decides it needs more jam.

Yeah, everyone happy. Well, it's not all roses, you know. Brian's on medication, did you know that? John Tate hasn't been seen in weeks, and the postman's facing the rest of his life in prison, but, you know, omelettes and eggs, as long as you've your waffle, who cares? How do you feel?

Phil turns to her.

Considers . . .

For a long time.

Opens his mouth to answer . . .

Stops.

Shrugs and goes back to his waffle.

Lea stares at him.

I admire you so much.

The waffle is ready. Phil looks pleased.

Jan and Mark enter.

Jan You better come with us.

Mark You really better come with us.

Lea What is it?

Beat.

Jan You really, really better come with us.

Lea goes with Jan and Mark.

Phil looks at his waffle, looks after Jan, Mark and Lea, then back at the waffle. Irritated, he puts it carefully away.

A wood. Cathy, Brian, Lea, Mark and Jan.

They stand around a boy who looks like a tramp. His clothes are torn and dirty and his hair is matted with dried blood from an old gash on his forehead that has not been cleaned up. He stands there, twitchily, staring at them as though they were aliens, and it looks as though he might run off at any moment.

Finally Phil speaks.

Phil Hello, Adam.

Adam Alright.

Pause.

Cathy We found him up there, up the hill

Brian I found him

Cathy living in a hedge

Brian a hedge, I found him, I found him, I found Adam
living in a hedge, I found him

DENNIS KELLY

Cathy It's like this hedge complex he's made, you have to crawl to get in
 Brian I crawled, I love crawling, I love crawling, Lea
 Cathy Like a warren in this hedge and he's dragged bits of cardboard and rags to make it better, more waterproof
 Brian I loved it, Lea, it was like a hideout.
 Cathy He's been living in there.
 Brian Living, she was shouting at me to get off the ground, but I love the ground, don't you like the ground?
 Cathy He was hiding away at the back.
 Brian D'you ever feel like the trees are watching you?
 Cathy Terrified.
 Adam No I wasn't.
 Brian D'you ever want to rub your face against the earth?
 Jan No.
 Brian He wouldn't speak to us. I don't think he knew his name.
 Adam Adam, my name's, I've got a name, it's . . .
 Brian Shall we do that? Shall we rub our faces against the earth? What do you think, shall we rub our faces against the earth?
 Cathy I think his head's hurt.
 Mark Who, Brian's or Adam's?
 Brian Don't they eat earth somewhere? Shall we eat the earth? I wonder what earth tastes like? What do you think it, do you think it tastes earthy, or, or . . .
He bends down to eat a handful of earth.
 Cathy I think he's been up there for weeks. Hiding. I don't think he's very well.
 Brian (*spitting the earth out*) That's disgusting!
He suddenly starts giggling as he scrapes the earth from his mouth.

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

Cathy I dunno how he's survived, what he's eaten.
 Brian (*like it's hilarious*) He's probably been eating earth!
He bursts into laughter.
 Cathy It took me half an hour to get him to come out.
 Brian D'you feel how wonderful this day is?
 Cathy I used violence.
 Brian She did.
 Cathy I threatened to gouge one of his eyes out.
 Brian She was gonna do it. She loves violence now. Can you feel the day licking our skin?
 Cathy He's a mess.
 Mark Which one?
 Brian Shall we hold hands? Come on, let's hold, let's hold, let's hold hands, come on, let's -
Suddenly Cathy slaps him.
For a second he looks as if he might cry, but instead he just giggles.
 Lea Okay. Right. Okay.
 Adam.
 Adam Huh?
 Lea Hello, Adam. How are you?
 Adam . . .
 Lea Yeah. Great. Phil?
Phil says nothing.
 Because this is a bit . . . isn't it? I mean this is really, talk about a bolt from the, yeah, shit. No, not shit, I mean it's good
 Jan How is it good?
 Lea it's, it's good, Adam, that we found, but I mean yes, it does make things a bit
 Lou Fucked?
 Lea tricky, no, not . . . don't say
 Jan What are we gonna do?

DENNIS KELLY

Lea Don't panic.

Mark What are we gonna do?

Lea I said don't panic.

Mark We're not panicking.

Lea Good, because that's the one thing that's . . . So.

Adam. How's . . . how's . . . how's things?

Adam I know my name.

Lea Yes, you do.

Adam Adam, it's Adam, my name's Adam.

Lea Good. Well that's . . .

Brian starts giggling.

No, no, no, Brian, that's, that's not gonna, so shut up.
Please.

Cathy What are we going to do?

Lea Phil?

What are we gonna . . . ?

Phil?

Phil?

Say something, Phil!

Pause. But Phil says nothing.

Lea What happened?

Adam doesn't answer.

Lea goes to him.

What happened?

Adam I . . .

I was in a

dark

walking, crawling in this dark, when you're moving but
with your hands and knees, crawl, crawling in this

dark

place and I don't remember

things

I fell, I fell into, I fell into

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

wake, woke, wake up, I woke up with liquid on my head,
leaves, dead and rotting, I remember leaves, but just
dark maybe a light high, high, high, high, high . . .
above and, I drank the liquid it was blood, there was, it
was mine, so I, it's not wrong because it was my
crawling for a long time, I thought, but that was hard to
tell, tunnels, scared. I felt like the dark was my fear, do
you know what I mean? I was wrapped in it. Like a
soft blanket.

And then I came out.

I saw

this

light, this daylight light, I saw this light and went that
way, towards, and I thought I died because that's what
people

go to the light, you

and there was such a pain in my
head

I thought the light would make it go, but it didn't because
the
light was this.

Beat.

I was confused.

Beat.

Outside.

I was sad, crushed.

I came outside.

I couldn't remember things.

I couldn't remember anything.

I was new.

A new

a new

a new me. And I felt

happy.

DENNIS KELLY

Laughed. It hurt to laugh, but I laughed because I was
new and I'd got rid of the old and I laughed until night
came and then I was
panicked, because dark, again
I ran
scratching there was lots of, scratching my skin
and I found my place where I live, and that's where I live
now, I live there.
And I do know my name so you can shut, you can . . .
I live there. It's
mine, I
live
there.
Adam.
I'm not coming back.

Beat.

It's Adam.
Lea How've you been living?
Adam In the hedge.
Lea No, how?
What have you been eating?
Adam You can eat anything. I eat things.
Nothing dead, I don't
insects, grass, leaves, all good, but nothing, I caught a
rabbit once and ate that, it's fur was soft, warm, but
nothing, I found a dead bird and ate some of that but
it made me sick so nothing, nothing dead, that's the
rule, nothing

Beat.

What?
Jan Jesus Christ.
Mark He's lost it.
Jan He's off his -

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

Lea Okay. Now things are strange. Things are really,
really strange, Phil. I mean with the greatest of respect,
Adam, you are supposed to be dead.
Adam Dead?
Lea And I mean, there's been a service, there's been
appeals, there's been weeping . . . They're naming the
science lab after you, for God's sake.
Adam I'm . . . dead?

Brian starts giggling.

Cathy Shut up.
Adam Am I dead?
Lea I mean now we really have, I don't know how we're
gonna get out of this one because now we really have,
Adam I thought I was dead.
Lou You're not dead.
Cathy (*to Brian*) If you don't shut up you'll be dead.
Brian I love this! This is great! Mates!
Jan What are we going to do?
Mark Yeah, what are we going to do?
Lea We're gonna, right, we're gonna . . . What are we
gonna do?
Phil Adam?
Adam Yes?
Phil Do you want to come back?
Adam What?
Phil With us.
Adam I
Phil Or do you want to stay? Are you happy? Here?
Lea Phil -
Phil Shut up. Do you want to stay?

Pause. Adam thinks. Looks at Phil.

Phil smiles, kindly. Nods.

Brian? Take Adam back to his hedge. Then come back to
us.

Brian This is great!

Brian takes Adam off. They all stare at Phil.

Lea What's going on?

Phil (to Mark and Jan) Go back home. Don't say anything to anybody about this.

Lea Phil . . . ?

Jan Are we going to be in trouble?

Phil If you go now and you say nothing to no one about this, you won't be in trouble.

She thinks. Nods to Mark. They go.

Lea Phil, what are you doing?

What? But he's . . .

Beat.

Phil, he's off his head. He's injured, he's been living off insects for weeks, he's insane, Phil, he needs help.

Phil He's happy.

Lea He's not happy, he's mad.

Phil He doesn't want to come back.

Lea Because he's mad! We can't leave him here, I mean that's not, are you serious? Are you seriously -

Alright, yes, there'll be -

Phil, this is insane. I mean I've never, but this, because, alright, whatever, but this is actually insane. We can't just leave him up here.

Phil I'm in charge. Everyone is happier. What's more important; one person or everyone?

She stares at him.

Lea It's Adam, Phil, Adam! We used to go to birthday parties, he used to have that cheap ice cream and we used to take the piss, remember?

Phil If he comes back our lives are ruined. He can't come back, Cathy.

Lea Oh, great, now you're talking to Cathy, like I'm not, I'm not, because you don't like what I say and now it's Cathy, you sit there and you say nothing for years and suddenly now you're chatting with Cathy.

Phil Cathy?

Lea Let's, come on, lets, it won't be that bad, it'll be, we can explain. We can talk. We can go through the whole thing and make them understand -

Phil (to Cathy) Do you understand?

Lea Understand what?

Cathy Yeah. I do.

Lea Oh great, now you're at it.

Brian comes back, giggling.

(Pointing at Brian.) I mean, I might as well talk to him for all the sense I'm getting. Phil, we can't do this, I mean, what if he comes down next week, next year, in ten years, even?

Phil Take Brian.

Cathy Okay.

Brian We going somewhere?

Lea No, no, wait, you can't, no, this is . . . Cathy?

Phil Make a game of it.

Brian We gonna play a game?

Phil You and Cathy are going to play a game. With Adam.

Brian Brilliant!

Cathy How?

Lea How what? What are you, will you please talk to me as if

Phil Brian?

Brian Who?

Phil Come here.

Brian goes to Phil.

I'm gonna do an experiment with this plastic bag. I want you to stay still while I do this experiment.

DENNIS KELLY

Brian I love experiments! Will there be fire?
Phil (*emptying his carrier bag*) No. No fire.
Stay still.

Phil places the bag over Brian's head.

Brian It's all gone dark.

*He pulls the handles back around his neck and to
opposite corners, making it airtight.*

*Brian is giggling inside, looking around and
breathing the plastic in and out of his mouth.*

Bit stuffy.

Phil looks to Cathy. She nods.

This is great!

Lea Phi . . . Phil?

Phil takes the bag off.

Brian That was great!

Phil You just do what Cathy says.

Brian I am brilliant at doing what people say.

Lea No! Stop, don't, don't, Phil, don't, what are you
doing, what are you . . . ?

Phil He's dead. everyone thinks he's dead. What
difference will it make?

She stares at him.

Lea But he's not dead. He's alive.

Cathy Come on, Brian.

Brian This is brilliant.

Lea No, Cathy, don't, stop, Cathy . . . ?

But she goes, taking Brian with her. Lea turns to Phil.

Phil?

Phil?

DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID

Please!

Please, Phil!

But Phil just walks away.

A field. Phil and Lea, sitting.

Complete silence.

Phil takes out a pack of Starburst.

Opens it.

Has one.

Chews. Thinks.

He offers one to Lea.

She takes it.

She begins to cry quietly.

*Crying, she puts the sweet in her mouth and begins
to chew.*

Phil puts his arm around her.

Suddenly she stops chewing and spits the sweet out.

Gets up, stares at Phil.

Storms off.

Phil Lea?

Lea?

FOUR

A street. Jan and Mark.

Jan Gone?

Mark Yeah.

Jan Gone?

Mark Yeah.

Jan What, she's gone?

Mark Yes.

Beat.

Jan When?

Mark Last week.

Jan Where?

Mark Dunno. No one knows.

Jan No one knows?

Mark Well, not no one, I mean someone must, but no one I know knows.

Jan I mean, she must've gone somewhere.

Mark Moved schools. That's what people are saying.

Jan Moved schools?

Mark Yeah.

Jan Just like that?

Mark Just like that.

Jan Without saying anything?

Mark Without saying a thing

Pause.

Jan Oh.

Mark Yeah.

Jan Oh.

Mark Yeah.

Jan Oh.

Mark I know.

Jan Does Phil know?

A field. Richard sits with Phil.

Phil is not eating. He stares into the distance.

Silence.

Suddenly Richard gets up.

Richard Phil, Phil, watch this! Phil, watch me, watch me, Phil!

He walks on his hands.

See? See what I'm doing? Can you see, Phil?

He collapses. Phil doesn't even look at him.

Richard gets up, brushes himself down, and sits with Phil.

Silence.

When are you going to come back?

No answer.

Come on, Phil. Come back to us. What do you want to sit up here for? In this field? Don't you get bored? Don't you get bored sitting here, every day, doing nothing?

No answer.

Everyone's asking after you. You know that? Everyone's saying, 'Where's Phil?' 'What's Phil up to?' 'When's Phil going to come down from that stupid field?' 'Wasn't it good when Phil was running the show?' What do you think about that? What do you think about everyone asking after you?

No answer.

Aren't you interested? Aren't you interested in what's going on?

No answer.

John Tate's found God. Yeah, Yeah, I know. He's joined the Jesus Army, he runs round the shopping centre singing and trying to give people leaflets. Danny's doing work experience at a dentist's. He hates it. Can't stand the cavities, he says when they open their mouths sometimes it feels like you're going to fall in.

Pause.

Brian's on stronger and stronger medication. They caught him staring at a wall and drooling last week. It's either drooling or giggling. Keeps talking about earth. I think they're going to section him. Cathy doesn't care. She's too busy running things. You wouldn't believe how things have got, Phil. She's insane. She cut some kid's finger off, that's what they say anyway. Doesn't that bother you? Aren't you even bothered?

No answer.

Lou's her best friend, now. Dangerous game. I feel sorry for Lou. And Jan and Mark have taken up shoplifting, they're really good at it, get you anything you want.

Phil?

Phil!

He shakes Phil by the shoulders. Slowly Phil looks at him.

You can't stay here for ever. When are you going to come down?

Phil says nothing. Richard lets go.

Phil goes back to staring at nothing.

Pause.

Nice up here.

As I was coming up here there was this big wind of fluff. You know, this big wind of fluff, like dandelions, but smaller, and tons of them, like fluffs of wool or cotton, it was really weird, I mean it just came out of nowhere, this big wind of fluff, and for a minute I thought I was in a cloud, Phil. Imagine that. Imagine being inside a cloud, but with space inside it as well, for a second, as I was coming up here I felt like I was an alien in a cloud. But really felt it. And in that second, Phil,

I knew that there was life on other planets. I knew we weren't alone in the universe, I didn't just think it or feel it, I knew it, I know it, it was as if the universe was suddenly shifting and giving me a glimpse, this vision that could see everything, just for a fraction of a heartbeat of a second. But I couldn't see who they were or what they were doing or how they were living. How do you think they're living, Phil?
How do you think they're living?

No answer.

There are more stars in the universe than grains of sand on Brighton beach.

Pause.

Come back, Phil.

Phil?

No answer. They sit in silence.

End.

Production Notes

Part of the inspiration for this play came from Dennis Kelly's own schooldays, when he and all his peers went to great lengths to stay in with the in-crowd. In one extreme instance this led to Dennis actually fighting a close friend who had become the victim of the group. The pack instinct is a very strong one. Dennis feels that he could be capable of doing great wrong if conditions seemed to demand it.

The play raises very many considerations – for instance, can morality be taught or must it be learned through experience? Is it right to do a bad thing for (what you believe to be) a good purpose? Can you start to change the world by changing yourself?

Be careful not to demonise Phil. Look at what he does within the context of the play. He makes a decision which he thinks is the easiest way out. He makes a decision for the greater good of everyone – only Adam will suffer. Put yourself in Phil's position. The play looks at the consequences of actions and how the stakes go up. It is about solving one problem but, in doing so, creating another.

The themes and situations are universal. Set the play in whichever part of the country feels right. And you don't have to stick to the suggested gender mix. Concentrate on the similarities in people, not the differences.

Don't play the characters as too ironic or knowing, or the comedy too hard. Humour is very important in this play, but the more truthful and real the characters are played, the funnier it will be.

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A *beat* is intended to be a very short break, often used to indicate a change of thought, gear shift or change of strategy. Often it is more about giving the actors a clue that there is something about the line.

A *pause* is a longer gap between lines, and is often used to indicate a thought or thoughtfulness. A *silence* is temporally the longest, and often happens when nothing can be said.

Dennis Kelly uses very few stage directions in his text because he doesn't want to impose too much upon the director and actors and in doing so close doors.

ONE

At the start of the scene Mark is making Jan understand that Adam is actually dead, and in doing so informing the audience and setting up the key dilemma of the play. Lea's speech sets up a climate of fear and uncertainty. It also establishes Phil's higher status, though this might actually be projection on Lea's part.

Then comes a lengthy section of exposition, revealing the situation, the states of mind of the characters and, finally, Phil's plan, which takes the action to a new level.

Finally back to Lea and Phil. Lea is desperate to get Phil's attention. She tries to kill herself and, in the moment, she might well believe that she is actually going to do it. Dennis believes our motives are not always as clear as we think they are at the time. Often they imbue the scene with a sense of 'stakes' when things are played as if they are meant.

An atmosphere of fear and uncertainty is set up in this scene. The question, 'What can we do to get out of this

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mess?' is posed. A plan of action is suggested. But a current of desperation and fear churns beneath.

TWO

The uncertainty and vagueness of information passed between Mark and Jan will tease the audience and cause them to keep listening and be engaged. The precise information is disseminated at a later stage. The rhythm and the structure of the play is becoming apparent.

When Lea asks Phil if he can remember 'the happiest moment of your life', Phil appears not to remember the sunset which Lea identifies as her 'happiest moment'. This is important to Lea, but Phil can't even remember it.

When Lea produces the dead Jerry, there are two moments to be considered. These are when she killed Jerry and when she showed the body to Phil. Her motives might have been very different for both. The killing of Jerry wasn't necessarily done for effect, but the showing of the body might well have been.

When Lea says, 'What have we done, Phil?' she becomes the moral conscience of the play.

The stakes are cranked up still further with the realisation that the plan has gone awry and a man may be convicted because Cathy showed initiative. This escalation presents the characters with a further dilemma to resolve, while attitudes are hardening and fears are being compounded. The realisation of what Cathy has done is a key moment.

Lea continues to try to engage Phil and to make sense of the situation they now find themselves in. Lea still appears to be the moral voice and also seems to glimpse some hope.

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The scene concludes with another key moment, when Lea asks Phil, 'If you change one thing, you can change the world. Do you believe that?' Phil replies, simply, 'No,' to which Lea responds, 'Well I do. I do, Phil.' Dennis believes this moment might well be the heart of the play.

THREE

Jan and Mark again -- and again very limited information, another audience tease. It is important to keep up the pace of this opening section (see the 'Marking the Line End' exercise later). Also, Mark's observation, 'For the moment,' could be a bit of a bell-toll moment. The scene marks a further rise in Cathy's perceived status.

'I admire you so much.' There are two considerations here: firstly the word 'admire' is used, not 'love' -- what implications does this have on Lea's actions/attitude? Decide if Lea is trying to get Phil's attention again.

Back in the wood, it is revealed that Adam is still alive, escalating the action and suspense still further. Brian is behaving strangely because he is on medication. The situation is growing more difficult and the characters becoming more desperate.

Cathy's violent streak is now more overt, and her status rises as a result. When Phil formulates his new and violent plan to deal with the situation, she is the obvious choice to carry it out.

There is a key moment inherent in the realisation of what is being suggested here. Try out various options to judge where the moment of realisation is best placed.

There is desperation in Lea as she realises exactly what Phil is proposing. She speaks out against the madness,

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but nobody, least of all Phil, listens. She is left alone, defeated, yet she doesn't actually take action to stop it herself, perhaps making her culpable.

Finally, Phil and Lea are sitting as we have seen them so many times before, but this time the ritual is reversed. It is Phil who is pro-active towards Lea. He gives her a Starburst, puts his arm around her and calls her name. But though she tries, she cannot eat the sweet, spitting it out through her tears.

FOUR

Again Mark and Jan are employed as audience 'teasers', discussing Lea's disappearance. Pacing their contribution is very important.

Richard appears to have replaced Lea. Phil is no longer eating. Richard's speech appears as an epilogue, tying up the loose ends of the story.

It seems nothing has changed, yet everything has changed. Richard's final speech hints at the fact that there is hope, there are different possibilities and different directions to go in. Phil seems unable to accept this and, in the end, doesn't move or acknowledge this philosophy. The close of the play has a very Beckett-like feel to it. A sort of inertia appears to have gripped them: no one moves.

EXERCISES

RELEASING THE SUBTEXT I Ask actors to say their lines and accompany every line/phrase with a physical action. The actions may reflect an idea or feeling in the subtext. This is not a staging exercise, but it may be that some of the results may influence staging.

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RELEASING THE SUBTEXT 2 Ask the actors to say a line, then say what the characters are really thinking as an aside. Beware of over-analysing and over-performing. Alternatively, ask another group to provide the spoken subtext.

Ask one person to read out the text in a very neutral fashion; the actor playing the part must then repeat it, acting it out in the context of the scene. The point of this exercise is to free up actors from the script, break the speeches up and help them to learn the lines.

Ask the actors to stand palm to palm as they say their lines, and to push against one another in a physical manifestation of the control they are trying to exert. The more control being to exerted, the harder the push. The antagonist should resist when spoken to if it feels appropriate. This exercise engages the voice with the body. Make sure the actors really push and resist – don't let them be too 'nice'.

MARKING THE LINE END As the actors say a line, ask them to stamp their feet or clap their hands when they come across a punctuation mark. This is particularly important at the end of a line, because it causes the 'energy' of the line to be pushed across to the following actor. It 'throws' the line across, and this has the effect of keeping up both the pace and the energy of a section of dialogue.

SETTING EXERCISE Try running the scenes with specific regard to the setting – in the street (create a street scene), in a field or wood. Take account of the environment: whether it is hot, cold, dark, etc.

DIFFERENT ENERGIES Play scenes with regard to physical energies. Perhaps play a scene as though everyone is very tired, or hyperactive, or tense, or relaxed. Explore the effects of different energies on the same scene.

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STATUS Try playing the same scene changing the perceived status of each character. What effect does that have on the feel of the scene? Does it reveal anything new about any of the characters?

CARE Try running scenes with a different intensity of caring – e.g., varying between ‘we don’t care very much’ to ‘we care a great deal’ about what is happening. Consider whether that throws up any new perspectives on character or situation. Exaggerate the style when reading.

Find the *intentions* of the characters in the subtext. If in doubt, straightforward, honest performances may well get the best results.

*Workshop facilitated by Roxana Silbert
with notes taken by Stephen Downs*

RED SKY

Bryony Lavery

Bryony Lavery's plays include *A Wedding Story*, *Last Easter*, *Her Aching Heart*, *Two Marias*, *Smoke* and the multi-award-winning *Frozen*. Her adaptations for stage and radio include *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, *The Magic Toyshop*, *Wuthering Heights*, *A High Wind in Jamaica* and *Lady Audley's Secret*. She has written four plays for *Connections: More Light*, *Illyria*, *Discontented Winter: House Remix* and *Red Sky*. Her current commissions include *Wise Children* for the National Theatre, London, *Dirt* for Manhattan Theater Club and *The Thing With Feathers* for the McCarter Theater, Princeton, USA.