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Albert Finney Doesn't Live Here Anymore
By John Chambers

Characters:

Cath Leonard – mid forties
Steve Leonard – mid forties
Arthur "Lud" Leonard – 17

They will play themselves at various ages.

Setting:

Specific areas to be represented are:

The Leonard family sitting room – the essential piece of furniture being a small bookshelf lined with '60s Penguin paperbacks and LPs, tapes, videos.

Maternity ward

Luddy's bedroom

Grandfather's flat

Factory gates

Entrance to a posh hotel

Action moves freely between these areas which can be delineated by lighting.
The play is set in Salford and Manchester over the last 18 or so years.

Music is suggested and all rights / licenses will need to be acquired as appropriate.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

MUSIC: "WORKING CLASS HERO" - JOHN LENNON.
THE LEONARD HOUSE.

IN SITTING ROOM, STEVE - IN HIS FORTIES - DRESSED TO GO TO A FUNERAL, BUT HE'S NOT YET PUT ON HIS BLACK TIE. HE SITS GAZING AHEAD.

IN LUDDY'S BEDROOM, STEVE'S SON, LUD (ARTHUR), 17, MOOCHES AROUND, BORED, IN JUST HIS UNDERPANTS AND A GROTTY WHITE T-SHIRT.

CATH, IN WORK'S OVERALL, ENTERS SITTING ROOM. SHE'LL PUT ON A DARK COAT DURING THE FOLLOWING.

CATH: (TO STEVE) Ten minutes before they're due...

STEVE: Is 'e ready?

CATH: I'll give him a shout.

CATH: (GOING OUT. CALLS) Are you ready, Luddy?

CATH EXITS. LUD IGNORES HER.

CATH: (OFF. CALLS) Come on, Arthur - we'll be late for church.

LUD: (TO HIMSELF) Twattin' church.

HE FLOPS DOWN AND BROWSES THROUGH A SMALL STACK OF CDs.

STEVE FINDS HIS BLACK TIE. HE NOTICES SOMETHING ON IT.

STEVE: Mildew. (CALLS) Mildew. It's got bloody mildew. (RUBS AT IT)

CATH: (OFF) What's up?

STEVE: This tie. Bloody mildew or summat.

CATH: (OFF) Rub it.

STEVE: (CALLS) I am. (RUBS HARDER. THEN TO HIMSELF) Oh bollocks to it.

CATH ENTERS.

CATH: Has it come off? (EXAMINES TIE) It's mildew.

STEVE: I know.

CATH: Have you got another one?

STEVE: Who's got two black ties?

CATH: You could borrow your dad's.

STEVE: (NODS) He won't be needing it.

CATH: Sorry.

STEVE: It's up at his flat... This'll do.

CATH: You'll have to clear it, the flat.

STEVE: (RUEFUL) That won't take long. (BEAT) Is our bloody Luddy ready?

CATH: I heard his records playin'.

STEVE: The whole road can hear... half the time he's asleep when that thing's playin'.

GOES TO DOOR AND SHOUTS UP.

STEVE: Arthur - are you ready?

NO REPLY.

STEVE: Come on.

NO REPLY.

STEVE: Arthur... (GIVES UP) He's a bone-idle basket.

CATH: Don't get worked up.

STEVE: I'm not. (BAWLS UP) Arthur - gerrup, you lazy sod, it's your bloody granddad's friggin' funeral.

NO REPLY.

CATH: He's p'raps in the bathroom. (CALLS) Come on, Luddy.

STEVE: I hope he's havin' a wash.

CATH: Course he will. (BEAT. CALLS UP) Make sure you have a wash.

STEVE: He won't unclog the plug hole if he does his hair.

CATH: I bet you'll be glad when it's over.

STEVE: He doesn't even flush the bog.

STEVE PACES.

CATH: Try not to get worked up.

STEVE: I'm not. (BEAT) The zip on these keks is goin'.

CATH: I'll do it.

STEVE: It'll be alright. (BEAT) I'll be glad when it's all over.

CATH: D'you think we should have invited people back.

STEVE: Why? - no-one liked him. No one went near. (BEAT) The miserable get.

CATH: Not today, Steve.

STEVE: Where the bloody 'ell is 'e. (BAWLS UPSTAIRS) Are you up yet?

IN HIS BEDROOM, LUD HALF REACTS, THEN IGNORES HIM. STEVE CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING BETTER TO DO SO HE SITS, OCCASIONALLY RUBBING HIS TIE. CATH GOES TO THE MIRROR TO CHECK HER HAIR, WHILE...

LUD: (MUSING) When I'm twenty-five, I'm going to frizbee all my CDs. No, I'll see if CDs are scratch proof - I'll stick 'em on a train line. An' I'll get the plastic boxes and set fire to 'em. Watch 'em melt. Smell the stinkin' smoke and watch globs of red hot plastic drop and set on the ground. After a day or two some house-proud Hoover-jockey'll come out with a shovel and try to scrape it up. "Well I don't know what this is, but it's set like bloody rock." There'd be nowt left. Just a smear that'd get trampled on... (GLANCES TOWARDS SITTING ROOM) I don't want me sounds

to be stuck in a corner when I'm forty and me an old get, sayin' "they don't make 'em like that any more". (BEAT) It can take a bit for stains to go. Like when I sprayed on that wall when I was twelve... "Barlow is a twat". It's still there... They painted over it. They used solvents (LAUGHS). Don't we all... It's still there. So's Barlow, the twat. (THINKS & STANDS) I wonder if they're fryin' me grandad... (FINDS SOME TROUSERS & PULLS THEM ON) Dust to dust, ashes to ashes... I 'opec so, it's freezing out... (HE PUTS HIS SHOES ON)

LIVING ROOM.

CATH: It's as well no-one's coming back - I should just make me shift if the vicar doesn't go on.

STEVE: There's nothing to go on about - here lies an old scrote who couldn't wait to be out of it - here stand a handful who wouldn't 'ave stood in 'is way...

CATH: Don't... (MORE POSITIVE) I was thinking before - it's the first time we've done anything as a family since... I can't remember the last time...

STEVE: I can - when he (INDICATES LUD) had to go to the cop shop to be cautioned...

CATH: Oh yes... I wanted to tell the Inspector he wasn't a bad lad. 'e'd 'ave known if 'e'd seen 'im when 'e was little...

CATH PUTS A BLACK SCARF ROUND HER NECK (TO COVER HER WORKING CLOTHES) WHICH PEEPS OUT AT THE TOP OF HER DARK COAT.

CATH: I feel guilty having to wear me work togs.

STEVE: The old feller's not going to notice. (STANDS, RE LUD) What the fuck's he doing...

CATH: I'll put a record on...

STEVE: I'm alright...

CATH PUTS ON LP - "OUT OF TIME" BY THE ROLLING STONES.

STEVE: He'll be late for his own bloody funeral...

LUD REACTS WHEN HE HEARS RECORD. HE KNOCKS HIS PILE OF CDs OVER.

LUD: When I'm twenty-five - cremate the lot - definite. (TAKES OFF WHITE T-SHIRT & PUTS ON A BLACK ONE WITH LOGO)

STEVE: (CONTINUES) He's that bloody apathetic, he probably won't bother turnin' up for that.

LUD ENTERS SITTING ROOM.

STEVE: You're not ready.

LUD: Course I am.

STEVE: You can't go like that.

LUD: (TO CATH) Is me Red 'ot Chilli Peppers T-shirt washed?

STEVE: You can't wear a T-shirt.

LUD: I've got nowt else.

CATH: Your school shirt's in the top of the wardrobe.

LUD: Me school shirt!

CATH: I kept it.

LUD: Me friggin' school shirt.

CATH: You always looked nice in it.

LUD: I'm not wearin' me school shirt... I didn't wear it when I was at school... I'd look like the Incredible Hulk after someone made him angry.

STEVE: I know how he felt.

LUD: Me bleedin' school shirt.

STEVE: You can't wear that get up to a funeral.

CATH: (READS T SHIRT) 'Megadeth'.

LUD: It could've been made for the job.
STEVE SIGHS.

CATH: Have a bit of respect, Luddy.

LUD: Yeh, well. I've got nowt else.

STEVE: Turn it inside out then.

LUD: Yer what?

CATH: That's right - turn it inside out... at least it'll be black.

LUD: The label'll show.

STEVE: It's better than that.
LUD TUTS AND CHANGES HIS SHIRT ROUND.

LUD: I feel a right daft prat.

CATH: He'd be pleased you're coming to the funeral...
STEVE COUGHS.

LUD: Oh aye - 'e'd be singin' and leapfroggin' the gravestones.

STEVE: Leave it... It's hard enough.

LUD: You didn't like 'im.

STEVE: 'e was me father.

LUD: I know 'ow you feel.

STEVE: Don't bother comin'.

LUD: Suits me.

STEVE: What a waste of time you are.

LUD: I wonder who I take after.

CATH: Not today - either of you.

STEVE: Well, there's no point 'im comin'. If he can't show some respect.

LUD: I won't come - I'm not mithered.

STEVE SHAKES HIS HEAD.

LUD: You just said not to come.

STEVE DOESN'T ANSWER.

CATH: (FIRM) You're coming...

LUD: 'e said not to come.

CATH: (TO STEVE) We should be a family... today...

LUD: Make your mind up then.

CATH: (CRACKS. TO LUD) I said you're bleedin' coming!

STEVE: He needn't bother.

CATH: Shut it - he's coming.

STEVE & LUD BACK OFF - EACH MOOCHES AROUND, AVOIDING THE OTHER'S EYES. CATH TRYING TO REGAIN HER COMPOSURE, TITIVATES THE ROOM IN A ROUTINE WAY BEFORE THEY LEAVE.

CATH: (GRUMBLES) I'm like the bloody United Nations in this house – and about as much use.

LUD: I'll get you a blue tin 'at.

CATH: Or mebbe I'm more like them women you see on the news - 'ead scarves an' wailin' - mourning some feller they've fed up and flag waved off to war. Cryin'. Someone you screamed into the world... or the one who held your hand at the birth.

LX CHANGE.

A MATERNITY WARD.

CATH SITS & CRADLES LUD WHO BECOMES A SLEEPING BABY. STEVE PACES, DIMPS A FAG.

CATH: Had your smoke?

STEVE: I'm goin' to pack it in... Is the baby asleep? (LOOKS AT BABY)

CATH: (NODS) Are you sure you want to call him Arthur?

STEVE: Why not?

CATH: It's old fashioned.

STEVE: (JOKES) We could call him Donnie.

CATH: Luke Skywalker?

STEVE: J.R.?

CATH: We could call him after your dad.

STEVE: "Miserable tosser"'s not much of a name, it doesn't give you much of a start in life...

THEY LAUGH.

CATH: I'm happy.

STEVE: Me an' all...

CATH: And knackered.

STEVE: (INDICATES TV HIGH ON WARD WALL) Don't they mind the telly bein' on this time of night...

CATH: (SHAKES HEAD) So long as the sound's turned down.

STEVE: Look at his little hands...

CATH: I know. Beautiful... You could cry, couldn't you.

STEVE: It's frightening... it's all down to us. (BEAT) This is what politics is all about.

SHE GIVES HIM A WARNING LOOK.

STEVE: It is though. Giving kids a proper life. (INDICATES THE TELE) It's not them gobshites mouthing off on the box. (MOVES ROUND HER 'BED') How many women went through what you did tonight... All over the world - how many? Some in mud huts or down back alleys... others in carpetted clinics with nannies in nurseries, waitin'

in the wings. But you'd hear 'em squawk their first cry and you'd not tell one from another. Where'll they all be when they're grown ups - if they make it that far. What chance 've some of them got. That's what politics is for - freein' them from that.

CATH: Your politics.

STEVE LOOKS.

CATH: My politics are makin' sure he's alright.

STEVE: (SMILES & PUTS HIS ARM ROUND HER) That'll do for now.

CATH: (CLOCKS TV) Look.

STEVE MOVES AWAY, CRADLING BABY LUD, THEN STANDS WATCHING AN UNSEEN T.V.

STEVE: Fuck me!

CATH: (SELF CONSCIOUS) Steve - all the nurses are lookin' at you.

STEVE: Thatcher's in luck. She is. She's in. Look. (BEAT) We're all fucked.

LUD THE BABY CRIES.

LX CHANGE.
BACK IN PRESENT.

LUD: Can you lend us a fiver?

STEVE: No.

CATH: There's one in my purse.

STEVE: What does he want it for - the collection?

LUD LOOKS IN HANDBAG.

STEVE: I think I'll go an' get his flat cleared after the funeral.

LUD CLOCKS THIS.

CATH: It can wait.

STEVE: I'll get it done with.

LUD: I'll give you a lift.

BOTH SURPRISED.

LUD: What's up?

CATH: Nothin'. That's great, luv... in't it, Steve?

STEVE: Aye...

CATH: (PLEASED) An' I'll meet you up there after work... (TO LUD) D'you find that fiver?

LUD: (LEAVES IT) I'll manage...

STEVE: (LOOKS OUT OF WINDOW) Where's that bone wagon?

CATH: It shouldn't be long.

STEVE FINDS A BOOK LEFT BY CHAIR.

CATH: (TO LUD) Find summat to read - one of your dad's books.

LUD GIVES HER AN OVER INCREDULOUS LOOK. CATH NODS 'JUST FOR ME'. LUD DRIFTS OVER TO SHELVES. CATH, RELIEVED AT SEMBLANCE OF NORMALITY, GOES OUT.

LUD: I don't know about clearin' the crap out of me granddad's flat. You should start 'ere.

STEVE LOOKS, THEN DECIDES TO IGNORE HIM.

LUD: You should start with (READS TITLE) "A Kind of Loving", then (READS TITLE) "Billy Liar", (READS TITLE) "A Taste of Honey". (RATTLES OFF) "Room at the Top", "The Life and Death of William Posters", "Lucky Jim", "Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner"... And to cap it all the sad bastard's got 'em on video an' all. (GOES & LOOKS AT THE BOOK STEVE'S READING) "Saturday friggin' Night and Sunday snoring boring Morning". It's all I got when I was a kid...

LX CHANGE.
10 YEARS EARLIER. LUD, BRIGHT AS A BUTTON, PLAYS ON THE FLOOR. STEVE READS THE SAME BOOK.

LUD: What you readin', dad?

STEVE: Should I read you some?

LUD (7) KEEN.

LUD: What's it called?

STEVE SHOWS HIM THE COVER.

LUD: (READS) Sat - ur - day Night and Sun - day Morn - ing.

STEVE: Good lad.

LUD: Sunday morning comes after Saturday night.

STEVE: That's right.

LUD: Is that what it's about?

STEVE: It's about what people do - a boy...

LUD: Like me?

STEVE: Well, a young man really.

LUD: What's he called?

STEVE: Arthur.

LUD LAUGHS.

LUD: I'm called Arthur.

STEVE: That's where we got it from.

LUD: Arthur Leonard. Everyone calls me Luddy though, don't they dad.

STEVE: That's cos you couldn't say Leonard when you were little. You said "Arfur Lud".

LUD LAUGHS.

STEVE: Luddy the Luddite.

LUD: That's what you say when I blow up me Lego. (MAKES EXPLOSION NOISE) Is 'e like me - Arthur - in the book?

STEVE: Not really.

LUD: Is 'e from Salford?

STEVE: Not really. Nottingham – the actor who played him in the film was from round here though.

LUD: Does he still live round here?

STEVE: London I should think.

LUD: 'as 'e got Lego?

STEVE: I don't think so.

LUD: Do you like him?

STEVE: You know when you see someone - on telly or something - and you want to be like them.

LUD: Like Zebedee. Boing... Boing...

STEVE: Yeh, like Zebedee... Well, I first saw Arthur in a film - even before I read this book... This self same book.

LUD: You haven't drawn on it or nothin'...

STEVE: And I wanted to be like him.

LUD: Did you, dad?

STEVE: You know why... cos he didn't give a toss.

LUD: Din't 'e, dad.

STEVE: He didn't give a tupny toss.

LUD: Do you give a tupny toss?

STEVE: Yeh... About you and your mam I do.

LX CHANGE.

STEVE & LUD STILL AWARE OF THE MEMORY.

CATH BACK IN, OPENING A LETTER THAT'S JUST ARRIVED.

CATH: Post.

LUD: It's not for me, is it?

CATH: No.

LUD: I thought it might be a giro.

STEVE: You've had a giro.

LUD: They might have sent another by mistake...

STEVE SHAKES HIS HEAD.

LUD: (POINTED) You've 'ad yours an' all...

DRIFTS TO WINDOW, DISINTERESTED.

CATH: (CUTS IN) It's for me - from work... typical waste - they could've given it me when I got in. (OPENS LETTER. (SKIM READS) Dear Mrs Leonard, We are writing to you as a valued employee. We at Silitex UK face exciting opportunities in the global economy. We are sure you will want to be part of this new era. To this end, we will soon be offering you a new employment package, based round our progressive flexi-work contract.

STEVE: Bastards.

CATH: Yours sincerely... Head of Human Resources.

STEVE: Bastard.

CATH: Silitex UK.

STEVE: Bastards.

CATH: What does it mean?

STEVE: You work for a bunch of bastards.

LUD: (SUDDENLY) Whoa - look at that. It'll be like goin' to the Oscars.

THEY LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW.

LUD: The limo they've sent. (BEAT) Look at the curtains twitchin'.

STEVE: It's the funeral car.

STEVE STANDS & CATH STRAIGHTENS HER COAT.

LUD: Can we go past the precinct?

STEVE: What?

LUD: So me mates can see me in that motor... I wish I 'ad some shades.
I'd look cool.

HE HURRIES OUT. CATH & STEVE LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER,
THEN FOLLOW.

END OF SCENE ONE.

SCENE TWO

MUSIC: "GOD'S COMIC" - ELVIS COSTELLO (2ND VERSE & CHORUS)

GRANDAD'S FLAT, LATER THAT DAY.

LUD: Me granddad's flat stinks.

STEVE GETS ON CLEARING HIS DAD'S BELONGINGS FROM THE SHELTERED FLAT. LUDDY IS INSTANTLY BORED. THEY HAVE COME FROM THE FUNERAL. STEVE FINDS A BLACK TIE & STICKS IT IN HIS POCKET.

LUD: What d'you want that for?

STEVE: (TAKING OFF HIS TIE) This's got mildew... d'you want it?

LUD: What do I want with a black tie - any tie?

STEVE: You'll need a black tie someday.

LUD: When you joss it?

STEVE: Don't worry - I don't expect you to turn up - I know you'd sooner kick a cider can round outside McDonalds.

A MOMENT, THEN STEVE GOES BACK TO SORTING.

LUD: They can sling me on the tip when I go. I don't want some sky pilot who didn't know me sayin' what a great bloke I was.

STEVE: There's no danger of that.

LUD: It's a waste of money.

STEVE: It didn't cost you.

LUD: Who paid for it?

STEVE: The union.

LUD: Is that who the feller with the hat was?

STEVE: (NODS) 'e'd divvied up when he used to work.

LUD: It's about all they're good for.

STEVE: You'd know... (CHANGES TACK) Come on, the Warden wants this lot moving.

LUD: Needle nosed twat - I don't know why she went to the funeral. She kept lookin' at me.

STEVE: Must've thought how smart you looked.

LUD TURNS HIS T-SHIRT THE RIGHT WAY ROUND.

STEVE: We'll take 'is clobber to the Charity shop.

LUD: Who'd want suits wi' one leg cut off and sewn up. An' his bloody shoes are useless - one of each pair. About as much use as a one-legged man...

STEVE: (ABSENTLY) ...at an arse kickin' contest.

LUD: Yeh, well...

STEVE: There's mebbe a decent shirt that'd fit you.

LUD: I've got shirts.

STEVE: Seventy odd years - not much to show.

LUD: Don't make no difference - he can't tek it with him.

STEVE: Just this and the smell of dettol and piss. (BEAT) When I was a kid you could tell what day it was by the smell at tea-time. You're gran always had it ready for 'im - 'cept Fridays when 'e'd pick it up from the chippy. A treat. I used to wait on the corner for him coming back home. I'd carry 'is bag - this one, while he shouldered me along. He'd ask if I'd bin a good lad. I said, "course". He'd get me toffees from Hulme's - a Penny Arrow or Sherbet Dip. Me mam was in the kitchen when we got back - she always was. (CONTS) She'd say I shouldn't 'ave me sweets 'til after me dinner but me dad laughed, 'Too late was the cry.' Me mam laughed. We all did. Then he'd talk with his trapful of dinner - the Evenin' News spread out on the table - makin' pronouncements. Me mam'd say, 'Look, our Steven's not eaten 'is dinner thru' you.' But it wasn't the Penny Arrows - I was gob-smacked - open mouthed - listenin' to 'im. I didn't know how anyone could know so much.

LX CHANGE. THIRTEEN YEARS AGO.
LUD IS FOUR & HYPERACTIVE. HE CAN CLIMB ON STEVE.

LUD: You know everything, dad, don't you, dad, everythin'. You know why smoke comes out of chimneys, why I've got to go to school, why birdies sing, what I've to eat to be big and strong, where the sun goes at bed time, how to fix Scalextric, 'ow to mend a puncture, why Thatcher's a bastard. And you can swear even when me mam says "not in front of Arthur". From your shoulders I can see over next door's fence, and on your shoulders I can touch your hair. I'm 'igh up but still I'm not frightened. And when we go to granddad's you take my toys so I don't get fidgets and he won't get narky.

STEVE SITS HIM DOWN.

LUD: (CONTS) But you get narky with him and I ask why he's only got one leg. But that's one thing you don't know... I wonder if grandad knows where his leg is. Dad, do you think granddad knows where his leg is? Does he know where it's gone? (TO GRANDDAD) Do you know where your leg went, granddad? Why's granddad ignorin' me? Is it cos he's a miserable bugger? Why are you puttin' me toys in that plastic bag? Why are we goin' home? Ta ra, granddad...

LX CHANGE.
THE PRESENT.
A MOMENT.

STEVE: And then I'm stood lookin' into that grave and I couldn't cry. I wanted to - even if it was only to show that warden of these sheltered flats that I did bother about him.

ALMOST BREAKS DOWN. LUD EMBARRASSED.

LUD: Losin' 'is leg made him miserable...

STEVE: Not something to jump for joy about.

LUD: I bet 'e was hoppin' mad.

STEVE: If it'd just been that - it'd been easy. Crippled workin' then paid off. He'd a right to be miserable... but it was a while before that.

LUD: When you got too heavy to ride on his shoulders.

STEVE SURPRISED, THEN NODS.

STEVE: You can get off if you want.

LUD: Me mam wants me to stay an' 'elp.

STEVE: I'll tell her.

LUD: I'll hang on.

STEVE NODS. A MOMENT. STEVE PUTS THE BAG DOWN & GOES TO LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW, HIS BACK TO LUD. LUD REALISES HE'S UPSET & COULD ALMOST GO AND PUT HIS HAND ON HIS SHOULDER - BUT CAN'T. HE BUSIES HIMSELF LOOKING IN AN GAS MASK BAG. CATH ENTERS FROM WORK, PLEASED TO SEE LUD HELPING.

CATH: Sorry I'm late. (JOLLYING, TO LUD) You're gettin' stuck in.

LUD: I'm lookin' for money.

CATH: You'll 'ave a long look.

SHE'S AWARE STEVE'S PREOCCUPIED.

CATH: Shouldn't take us long.

STEVE: I've said he needn't stay.

LUD IRRITATED, GETS A WAD OF PHOTOS OUT OF BAG.

CATH: Be quicker if we all help.

STEVE CONTINUES TO WINDOW GAZE.

CATH: They gave us the new contract... at work. They gave us new contracts so that's alright.

SHE FISHES CONTRACT OUT OF HER POCKET & HANDS IT TO STEVE.

STEVE: (SCANS) No fixed hours, no guaranteed hours, clock on at the bench, holiday purchase scheme, individually tailored conditions of service... You can't sign this sheet of shite.

CATH: Why?

STEVE: It's shite. You're no more than casual labour.

CATH: It's only short term.

STEVE: Aye - as soon as your face doesn't fit, you're out, with no comeback.

CATH: We 'ad a bit of a meeting.

STEVE: (SARC) ...a bit of a meeting.

CATH: Alright, so we've not got a union.

STEVE: You're not allowed one. The government minister who opened that place, who'd given 'em grants, and let 'em build on the last bit of green belt, was full of it. A new era. An end of strife. A partnership. An' you all went rushing in, grateful.

CATH: It was a job, Steve.

STEVE: Mebbe you deserve all you get then.

LUD: It did you a lot of good didn't it. All that union bollocks, you were a shop steward an' all.

STEVE: You mean you actually took it in, took notice of somethin' I used to spend 'alf me life doin'.

LUD: Yeh, cos the other 'alf you kept tellin' me about it.

CATH: (PEACEMAKING) You can get off if you like, Lud. Me and your dad'll manage.

LUD: Will you quit tryin' to get shut of me.

STEVE TAKES THE PHOTOS FROM THE BAG OFF HIM. HE HAS A QUICK LOOK, THEN GOES TO THROW THEM IN BIN.

LUD: Let's 'ave a decko at them pictures.

STEVE: No.

LUD: Why?

STEVE: Cos you'll take the piss.

LUD: Will I 'eck - it's my heritage.

STEVE: You're doing it now – extracting the urine.

LUD: "You should be proud of your past".

CATH: (TAKES PICTURES OFF STEVE) Don't bin them. (SHE LOOKS)
There's some nice ones.

LUD: (LOOKS AT THEM) Me dad looks a right miserable swine...

CATH: It was his surly stage.

STEVE: I knew he'd start.

LUD: Oh yeh... He used to go on that 'e'd been a "teenage rebel". He'd put that record on when you'd be up at the shops. He'd be swingin' his arm round singin' "I hope I die before I get old", and I thought I hope I do if that window cleaner comes.

STEVE: Just put 'em in the jumble box.

CATH: We'll take 'em home.

STEVE: I knew he'd take the piss.

CATH: You used to 'ave some right ding dongs with your dad.

STEVE: I didn't take the piss.

CATH: You did.

STEVE: At least when I had a go at the old feller I was kickin' against the old order.

LUD: You are the old order...

STEVE: You've got freedom cos of us. We couldn't even 'ave 'air touchin' our collars or the tops of our ears.

LUD: Wild.

STEVE: Then we did.

LUD: What's so great about a friggin' Beatle 'aircut.

STEVE: It was the thin end of the wedge, that's what. He couldn't understand.

LUD: I'm not surprised.

STEVE: They'd always wanted to be like their own dads. They couldn't wait to be 14 - get big cloth caps, serge suits, an' 10 Woodbines in their skyrockets. Tug your fore lock, grey grindin' work, know your place, banned books, borin' toffee nosed telly, filthy rich and filthy poor. They'd brought us to a whisker of ending it all over Cuba. And we started asking questions... Didn't that head teacher at your school ever tell you?

LUD: That soft bitch...

STEVE: She'd come up through the 'sixties. She'd bin to Marakesh. Miss Browning had.

LUD: She should've stayed there.

STEVE: Hitched it, bummed around.

CATH: How do you know?

STEVE: She told me, that time when I got called in over 'im - when he spray canned that I.T. teacher's name all over the side of the gym.

LUD: That twat, Barlow.

CATH: She was very good over that, Miss Browning. Very understanding... More understanding than you.

STEVE: What d'you mean?

LUD: You threatened to break my back.

STEVE: Well, it was a stupid trick.

LUD: 'ead Mistress weren't impressed.

CATH: Neither was Mr. Barlow.

LUD: No, she wasn't impressed when I told her.

CATH: Told her what?

LUD: That he threatened to cripple me.

CATH: You didn't tell her that.

LUD: She asked... (CLASPS HIS HANDS SOCIAL WORK FASHION)
She asked if I'd got any problems... at home. I said, not really,
miss... apart from me dad... threatenin' to... sever me spinal
column... She nearly put me on a register.

STEVE: I'm surprised you were on any register at that school - you hardly
went.

LUD: The Child at Risk register.

STEVE: You what!

CATH: You didn't?

STEVE: You little bastard. I never hit you.

LUD: (IGNORES HIM) She always smiled at me after that. And made
allowances. I could do no wrong. Soft bitch.

STEVE GETS ON WITH SOME SORTING.

CATH: (TRYING TO LIGHTEN THINGS) Shall I make a brew?

LUD: I don't want any tea me grandad's left. You don't know what he died
of.

STEVE: Don't be so bloody stupid.

CATH: I'll make one then.

STEVE: I'm not bothered.

CATH DECIDES NOT TO EITHER. THEY GET ON SORTING.

CATH: Least 'e'd got his insurance.

LUD: (LOOKS) Are we sharin' it out?

STEVE: No.

LUD: You're like a pair of bleedin' vultures.

CATH: With that an' what 'e'd paid to the Union there was just enough to
cover buryin' 'im.

LUD: A few barrowloads of muck did that.

CATH: (TO STEVE) D'you think he had anything else - savings?

LUD LOOKS.

STEVE: Na. He did have for a bit... After he got the compensation when the weakest link in a chain broke and dropped a German lathe on his leg. He reckoned 'e was a capitalist - 'til he met that "financial advisor", the "investment consultant", the cash cowboy from Cheshire. The striped shirted, smooth talking, swivel eyed get who mugged him by consent. And not just the old feller saw their rainy day savings go down the drain.

CATH: At least he got caught and went to prison.

STEVE: He did 18 months in an open nick. They even let him keep his mobile phone so he could stay on the fiddle. And chat to his wife who kept their villa smelling sweet in the Algarve... But me dad... did he change... did he fuck - he blamed the blacks. An' the Tories still took 'im out to vote... The only time 'e went out...

CATH: You'd think he'd got something left from his pension. I mean, he was as tight as a gnat's backside...

STEVE: Let's just get this lot finished,

CATH: Give us a lift with the beddin'.

CATH & STEVE MOVE OUT OF THE ROOM. LUD GOES TO AN ARMCHAIR, LIFTS OFF CUSHION, UNZIPS BACK, STICKS HIS HAND IN, AND PULLS OUT AN OLD USED ENVELOPE. HE'S ABOUT TO DITCH IT, BUT FEELING THERE'S SOMETHING IN IT, LOOKS IN.

LUD: Bingo!

IT'S A WAD OF CASH. STEVE & CATH IN, EACH CARRYING BEDDING. BUT LUDDY'S GOT THE MONEY UP HIS T-SHIRT.

CATH: Do you think I should sign that contract?

STEVE: No.

CATH: I'll get the sack.

LUD: Ey, then we can all sign on together, make a day of it, take a flask.

STEVE: They can't sack you all.

CATH: Some are talkin' about not signin'. I mean, it's not just about money an' that, is it. Some of 'em were sayin' we'll be alright if we all stick together.

STEVE: (RAISES A CLENCHED FIST, IRONIC) Solidarity.

LUD STANDS, MAKES SURE HIS WAD IS SAFE IN HIS T-SHIRT.

CATH: What's up with you?

LUD: I've got a stitch.

STEVE: Must be all that hard work.

LUD: See yer.

HE GOES. CATH & STEVE LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

CATH/STEVE: (BOTH IRONIC) Solidarity.

THEY HALF LAUGH.

END OF SCENE TWO.

SCENE THREE

MUSIC: "I DON'T LIKE MONDAYS" - THE BOOMTOWN RATS.
A FEW DAYS LATER.
SITTING ROOM / LUD'S BEDROOM / FACTORY GATE.

1984. SITTING ROOM / LUD'S ROOM IN DARKNESS.
LIGHTS UP IN SITTING ROOM. STEVE & LUD WHO ARRIVE
HOME. LUD IS 5. STEVE WEARS A BADGE BEDECKED PARKA.

LUD: That was brilliant, dad, us all fightin' them pigs.

STEVE: We showed 'em. 'ere, let me warm your hands.

LUD HOLDS HIS HANDS OUT & STEVE RUBS THEM, WHILE...

LUD: Were you frightened, dad?

STEVE: A bit.

CATH ENTERS, PLEASED TO SEE THEM. SHE TAKES
OVER RUBBING HIS HANDS.

CATH: Thank heavens you're home safe.

LUD: It was brilliant.

CATH; (TO STEVE) Why on earth did you take him?

STEVE: We kept out of the road.

CATH; It was on telly.

LUD: It was on telly, dad. Did you see them coppers, mam? They looked like Darth Vaders men... they banged their sheilds... were they glass them sheilds?

STEVE: Some sort of plastic.

LUD: They din't break, did they, when the miners cobbed them bricks.

STEVE SHAKES HIS HEAD.

LUD: They were in trouble for cobbin' them bricks, weren't they. The coppers give 'em a batterin' din't they... But the miners weren't bothered, were they...

STEVE: They were fightin' for their jobs...

LUD: Did the coppers want their jobs?

STEVE: The coppers'll be the only one with jobs at this rate.

LUD: Don't you like coppers?

CATH: They're just doin' their job.

LUD: They should be catchin' robbers.

STEVE: (NODS) Everyone's frightened of losin' their jobs – even them.

LUD: So they 'ave to do everythin' the boss says.

STEVE: Yeh...

LUD MARCHES ROUND ROOM WITH IMPROVISED SHEILD
MAKING GUTTERAL SOUNDS.

CATH: What you doing?

LUD: I'm a copper but I'm goin' to give the bosses a batterin'.

STEVE LAUGHS.

CATH: Don't encourage him.

LUD: (HOLDS HIS HAND OUT) Dig deep for the miners.

CATH: What?

LUD: Dig deep for the miners - they'll dig deep for you.
We've all got to stick together, 'aven't we dad. You know where
we'll be if we don't, mam - up shit creek - dad says - without a
paddle.

A MOMENT BETWEEN THEM.

CATH: Give us your coat.

LX CHANGE.

LUD TO HIS BEDROOM.

STEVE EXITS. CATH PUTS ON STEVE'S PARKA AND MOVES AWAY FROM SITTING ROOM. NOW SHE IS PICKETING.

SFX. A CAR ROARS PAST, HORN BLARING. SHE GIVES IT A V-SIGN. CATH STANDS ALONE, PICKETING. SHE'S COLD. THE HOOD OF HER PARKA IS UP. HER PLACARD READS "WE MAKE THE CHIPS – THEY GET THE GRAVY".

CATH: (TO DEPARTING CAR) Same to you, you smug sod, with your jacket hangin' in the back of your motor... (SUDDENLY SELF-CONSCIOUS, GRUMBLES TO HERSELF) Arsehole on company wheels. Come an' stand 'ere with a frozen dew drop on the end of your nose. Come an' stand 'ere while a want-to-be from some free rag, tryin' to make a name for herself, asks (MIMICS) "Wouldn't a lot of people be grateful for a job." (AS HERSELF) She should be. I mean, who is she - cos me and the others - we're definitely someone - the Daily Excretia - that's what Steve's always called it - says so... I'm a subversive, a dinosaur, a wrecker, a red - holding the country to ransom. Me - Cath Leonard. Who'd've thought it... (BEAT) What's happening to us...

LX CHANGE.

LUD'S BEDROOM.

THE PRESENT. IT'S BEEN TRANSFORMED, LIT BY AN IMPRESSIVE NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM - WITH SPEAKERS, MODEM, THE LOT. HE'S PLEASED WITH IT - HIGH AS A KITE.

LUD: I am on the Net! A cyber traveller - surfing the system!! Yeh!!!

HE GOES OUT, GETS A GLASS OF WATER. PUTS IT DOWN. FROM INSIDE HIS SOCK HE TAKES A TABLET. HE SAVOURS THE MOMENT. HE PICKS UP THE GLASS & RAISES IT SKYWARDS.

LUD: Cheers, Long John. I bet you're not smiling now if you're clockin' me. You'll be spinnin' like a top. (HE LAUGHS. RAISES TABLET SKYWARDS) E - by gum.

LAUGHS. TAKES THE TABLET WITH A DRINK. HE ADMIRES THE SYSTEM.

LUD: Paid cash, on the nail, to the Persil shirt in Dick'eadsons. Stuck the gelt up 'is black'ead decorated snotter. I wonder if he could smell the dettol, piss and mothballs. 'e 'ad to call me sir and 'e 'ad to smile. I dropped the dosh so he had to pick it up. 'is ears went red. As red as the boils on 'is neck. 'e still smiled. An' I puffed and sighed, impatient while 'e counted it. 'an I'd given 'im twenty too much, an' 'e gave it me back. (MIMICS NASAL CREEP) Do you want to take it with you - sir? (AS HIMSELF) I'm not carrying the fucker on the bus. (MIMICS NASAL CREEP) I could book you a taxi - sir. (AS HIMSELF) You can pay for it then. He said he would, then tried to flog me five years guarantee. Five years! I might not last five more minutes.

CATH ENTERS THE SITTING ROOM, BACK FROM PICKETING, HER PARKA HOOD UP. SHE'S EXPECTING TO FIND STEVE, BUT REALISES HE'S OUT.

CATH: (CALLS UP) Are you in, Lud?

HE GRUNTS. SHE DOESN'T HEAR. SHE GOES TO HIS ROOM & GOES IN.

LUD: It's Uncle Bulgaria.

CATH: I've bin picketing.

LUD'S NOT INTERESTED.

CATH: Where's your dad?

LUD SHRUGS.

CATH: What's that? (COMPUTER)

LUD: Computer.

CATH: It's new.

LUD: I swapped it. The old one was crap.

CATH: You can't just've swapped it.

LUD: With a feller in the pub.

CATH: It's never stolen is it.

LUD: I've got the receipt - it's guaranteed - one year on-site service with telephone helpline.

CATH: Off a feller in the pub?

LUD: He was goin' to get sent down tomorrow... he said he was fucked if anyone was havin' this back.

CATH: Don't talk like that.

LUD: That's what he said... He said he was f...

CATH: Alright! So long as it's not stolen...

LUD: (CHANGING SUBJECT) 'ow's that strike goin'?

CATH: (SHRUGS) Telly were down today.

LUD: (UNIMPRESSED) Brilliant.

CATH: We need to get our case over.

LUD: Everyone thinks you're chiselers.

CATH: Do you?

LUD: (LIES) No.

CATH: Just those mates of yours who hang round the precinct all day, drinking lager.

LUD: You sound like 'im.

CATH: This is me talkin'...

SHE HEARS STEVE COME IN. HE ENTERS SITTING ROOM WITH THE RECYCLED PLASTIC BAGS FULL OF SHOPPING. HE PICKS UP A NEWLY ARRIVED WINDOW ENVELOPE FROM MAT. CATH HESITATES - SHE WANTS TO QUIZ LUD ABOUT COMPUTER BUT DECIDES SHE BETTER GET TO STEVE FIRST - SHE GOES TO SITTING ROOM. LUD'S UNCONCERNED.

STEVE: I got everythin' but the rice - I had to put it back, not enough cash...

CATH: I've nothin'...

STEVE: I wasn't gettin' at you...

CATH: Lud's not tipped up yet.

STEVE: 'e gets sod all, then you end up givin' it 'im back.

CATH LOOKS.

STEVE: I've said - I'm not gettin' at you.

SEES LETTER IN STEVE'S HAND.

CATH: Not another bill?

STEVE: Phone company.

CATH: They've only just sent the red one. (OPENS LETTER, THEN LAUGHS) It's a cock up.

STEVE: What's it say?

CATH: They're coming round to install the new line next week.

STEVE: What new line?

CATH: It's a cock up. (HANDS LETTER TO STEVE)

STEVE: 'e's applied for a phone!

CATH: Who?

STEVE: Him. (INDICATES UPSTAIRS)

CATH: Don't be daft.

STEVE: It says Mr Arthur Leonard.

CATH: 'e uses our phone.

STEVE: What's 'e wastin' people's time for.

CATH: It must be a mistake... a computer error... (BEAT) Oh shite...

CATH LOOKS TOWARDS LUD'S ROOM.

LUD PLAYS A ZAP 'EM VIDEO GAME. HE MOVES ROUND WITH THE JOYSTICK, USING IT AS A WEAPON. ELECTRONIC MUSIC & EXAGGERATED SOUNDS (BLASTS/GRUNTS) BUILDING TO A CRESCENDO. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER WE SEE WHAT'S ON THE SCREEN. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER WE SEE A SCREEN.

LUD: (PUNCTUATING ACTION) Got yer. Got yer. Got yer. Got yer. Got yer. Got yer. Got yer. Twatted you. Got yer. Got yer. Got yer, yer twat. Got yer, yer twat... Yesss - Level 9.

MUSIC BECOMES PEACEFUL - THE MACHINE WAITS FOR HIM TO GO TO NEXT LEVEL.

LUD: (MUSING) Why are the ones you zap all big brainless bozos with muscles in their bollocks. Why aren't they the real scum of the earth - the turds who work in "electrical retail outlets"... (NASAL) I can't deliver it for 7 days. (BEAT) Or I.T. teachers who brain-dead you. (BEAT) an' old fellers who...

STEVE MAD, ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY CATH.

STEVE: What the fuck's going on?

LUD FIRES THE JOYSTICK AT STEVE.

LUD: Phtang... Shit - I thought it might vapourize you.

STEVE'S SHOCKED - THE NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM.

STEVE: What's that?

LUD: It's an eight fifty Mega Byte, Quad CD Rom. 256 K Cache. IMB PCI Video with Dual Boot Win option - oh yeh, incorporating a Silitex Modem.

CATH: I make them! I always wondered what they were for.

LUD: An' before you state the obvious, it's not nicked.

CATH: (LAME) He's got a warranty.

STEVE: You've gone an' got it on tick, 'aven't you. They want prosecutin' - lettin' people like 'im 'ave stuff on the never never... (SUDDENLY WORRIED) You've not put me down as guarantor?

CATH: He got it off a bloke in the pub...

STEVE: I s'pose the same feller's puttin' in your personal phone line.
(WAVES LETTER)

LUD: (PLEASED) When they comin'?

CATH: I thought it might have been a computer error.

LUD: I need a line.

STEVE: Oh yeh, course you do.

THERE'S A BEEPING. IT'S A MOBILE PHONE. CATH & STEVE LOOK AROUND, PUZZLED. LUD GETS A MOBILE FROM HIS POCKET. CATH & STEVE STAGGERED.

LUD: (TURNS HIS BACK ON THEM & ANSWERS THE PHONE) Hiya Ali - yeh - it's alright innit - cool - I'll see you later - see yer.
(CLICKS PHONE OFF. TO CATH & STEVE) I got him to ring to check it was workin'.

LUDDY DOESN'T WANT TO TURN & FACE THEM. HE DECIDES THE BEST WAY OUT IS TO MAKE A PHONE CALL. HE PUNCHES SOME NUMBERS OUT.

LUD: (TO HIMSELF) Beam me up, Scotty.

STEVE GRABS THE PHONE.

STEVE: I s'pose you got that off the same bloke in the pub.

LUD: Dick'eadsons actually.

STEVE: What with?

LUD: I saved up for it... (HOLDS HAND OUT) Can I have it?

STEVE HESITATES.

CATH: We don't want you getting in trouble, Luddy.

LUD: D'you want to see the receipt?

CATH: No...

STEVE: Yes.

LUD GETS THE RECEIPT FROM AMONGST OTHERS IN HIS POCKET & SHOWS IT, TRIUMPHANT. STEVE HANDS MOBILE BACK.

CATH: You'll have to pay rental.

LUDDY SHRUGS.

CATH: And why've you gone an' ordered another phone line...

LUD: For me modem... you know... so I can be on the Net...

THEY LOOK.

LUD: The Internet.

CATH: What?

LUD: The Internet - everyone's on it. It's the future.

STEVE: (CRACKS) It's the latest way they've found of fillin' heads with shite. Phone lines to the Tower of Babel. Pictures an' jargon that offer the world. But it's not the world. Not even a virtual world. It's a phoney world. Push button Playschool for wankers stuck in bedrooms. Only wankin's better cos at least you use your imagination.

LUD: You'd know.

STEVE: The only button we talked about was THE button.

LUD: What - your belly button.

STEVE: The button that could've destroyed the world.

LUD: That'd be better than bein' nostalgered to death.

STEVE: Wonderin' who had their finger on it. Whether they'd press it. Now every bleeder's got their fingers on buttons - press, press, press. Watched this for 10 seconds - press. Need a ticket - press. Go to the bank - press. Play a game - press. Buy this - press. Wind down the window - press. Talk to someone - press. Where are people in all this?

CATH: (ANGRY. TO STEVE) Can you hear yourself.

LUD: Mummy to the rescue.

STEVE: (TO CATH) You're not lettin' him get away with it.

CATH: You are! I'm not interested in the politics. I want to make sure our son's not getting into bother. I want this sorted.

LUD: The voice of reason.

CATH: (TO LUD) So tell me - honest - where d'you get this computer from.

LUD KNOWS HE'S ON THE SPOT.

STEVE: You're wastin' your time.

CATH: (NARKED) Thanks.

STEVE LEAVES, GOES TO THE LOUNGE AND SITS, PREOCCUPIED.

LUD: (ASIDE) Nifty.

CATH TURNS TO LUD. HE GRINS.

CATH: I could kill you...

HOUSE PHONE RINGS.

LUD: (ALL INNOCENT) What...

CATH: Get the phone, Steve.

HE DOESN'T. CATH, FRUSTRATED, GOES TO GET PHONE. LUD IS AGITATED, CONFUSED, UNEASY. THEN QUITE CONSCIOUSLY, HE SWITCHES ON THE MACHINE & IS SOON ENGROSSED IN THE IMAGES & MASSAGED BY THE MUSIC. CATH JUST LISTENS ON THE PHONE - THEN PUTS IT DOWN.

CATH: (TO STEVE) It was the Warden from your dad's flat.

STEVE: We've cleared the place.

CATH: She thought she better check we'd found it.

STEVE: What?

CATH: The money.

STEVE: What money?

CATH: Your dad's. He didn't want anyone to get their paws on it... He had a wad - two grand or more...

STEVE: Where is it then?

CATH: Gone.

STEVE: 'e 'ad no money.

CATH: She said 'e did.

STEVE: She must've 'ad it then...

CATH: She wouldn't 'ave rung.

A MOMENT. THEY BOTH LOOK TOWARDS LUD.

LX CHANGE.
LUD'S BEDROOM. COMPUTER GAME BUILDS TO A CRESCENDO, FILLING THE PLACE WITH LIGHT & SOUND. STEVE & CATH ARRIVE AT THE DOOR. AS THE GAME STOPS ABRUPTLY, LUD SEES THEM.

LUD: Game over.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

MUSIC: "SOME MIGHT SAY" - OASIS.
SITTING ROOM. CATH IS DRESSED TO GO PICKETING.

CATH: (CALLS) I'll get the bus with you if you're sharp.

NO REPLY. SHE CARRIES ON PUTTING HER COAT ON.

CATH: (CALLS) You don't want to be late on your first day, Steve.

STEVE: (OFF) The friggin' zip's gone on these keks they've give me.

CATH: (CALLS) What do you do with them? I'll find a safety pin.

CATH FINDS A SAFETY PIN AS STEVE ENTERS. HE WEARS AN ORNATE HOTEL COMMISSIONAIRES RIG OUT. VERY ELABORATE. HE'S SELF-CONSCIOUS.

STEVE: Don't laugh.

CATH: (LYING) You look very smart.

STEVE: I feel a right tater.

CATH: It's a job.

STEVE: Some job - standin' on a city centre street, dressed like Idi Amin.

CATH: Folks never notice.

STEVE: (GRUMBLES ON) I do. I think – “why are they done up in togs that'd do a Tsar or Rear Admiral credit”. Just to carry bags for the conference jolly brigade, expenses paid, plastic badges in case they forget their names.

CATH KNEELS IN FRONT OF HIM.

CATH: You should try an' think positive.

STEVE: (JOKES, HALF HEARTED) We've not got time for a blow job.

CATH: When have we...

UNEASY SILENCE. CATH PINNING TROUSERS.

CATH: (POSITIVE) Mebbe things'll get better - you're working, and this strike can't go on for ever.

STEVE: (SARC) And the chick's flown the nest.

CATH: D'you think he'll be alright?

STEVE: He had to go.

CATH: (UNSURE) I know.

STEVE: He robbed us.

CATH: We could've done with that money.

STEVE: Stuff the money - he lied to us.

CATH: He can't think much of us to do that...

STEVE: (CONTS) When we had him I was determined he wasn't goin' to be brainwashed and ground down like we were. I wanted him to 'ave choices and think for himself.

CATH: He's gone an' done that, 'asn't 'e.

STEVE: Yeh, but the deal was - if we respect him enough to give him his head, he respects us.

CATH: I can't help worryin'.

STEVE: We worried when he was here - never knowin' what stroke he was goin' to pull next.

CATH: At least he's got his friends.

STEVE LAUGHS.

CATH: What?

STEVE: He's got all his mates alright - a right bleedin' shower - the crew he stands with behind me in the Post Office - taking the piss.

CATH FINISHES SAFETY PINNING HIS TROUSERS. STANDS.

CATH: That should hold.

STEVE: (WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM) Let's hit the streets.

LX CHANGE.

LIGHTS DOWN ON SITTING ROOM.

CATH & STEVE SEPERATE - HE TAKES UP HIS POSITION OUTSIDE A SWISH HOTEL. SHE IS PICKETING. SHE SETS UP A PLACARD & TAKES A WADGE OF LEAFLETS FROM HER POCKET. LUD ENTERS (THROUGH AUDITORIUM?). HE'S HUNCHED UP & COLD. FROM A WAY OFF, HE BAWLS AT STEVE.

LUD: (CALLS) 'ey Adolf, show us your medals.

STEVE DOESN'T RECOGNISE HIM. HE STRUGGLES TO STRIKE A DIGNIFIED POSE. LUD APPROACHES CATH. SHE'S SURPRISED TO SEE HIM.

LUD: You're not letting the bastards grind you down then.

CATH: Luddy...

LUD: I thought I'd come and see how you're doing.

CATH: You've not come to join the picket line then?

LUD: (LYING) Why not?

CATH: You look rough.

LUD: You still look like a Womble.

UNEASY LAUGHS.

CATH: How you doin'?

LUD: Great.

CATH: Good... Where're you stayin'?

LUD: (LIES) With mates.

CATH: We thought you would be... it's good of them.

LUD: Anyone'd do it for a mate.

CATH: Anyway, I'm glad you've got somewhere.

LUD: (HALF JOKES) Some people don't think I'm a waste of space.

CATH: Mebbe you don't pinch off them.

LUD: I used to be able to talk to you.

CATH: Only cos I let you get away with murder. Anything to keep the peace.

LUD: And I thought you cared.

CATH: And I thought you did... Well, I didn't, but behind that scowl, the surly look, the couldn't give a monkeys, I thought - our little lad's still there. Just a flicker of that smile... You askin' questions, singin' out loud to yourself, chucklin', chatterin'... Lookin' up an' smiling when I came in the room with your tea.

 BEAT. AN UNEASY DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM. LUD
 GLANCES AT THE LEAFLETS FOR A BIT.

LUD: (NOT DIRECT) Drip, drip, drip. The bloody past - even I'm piggin' 'istory now. Written down so it can't be changed. Like a friggin' fairy story - long gone, no one believes in it any more. A bedtime story - a myth, that lad - like the ones his dad used to tell 'im. About a magic land - listenin' with eyes like gobstoppers, big enough to fill 'is open gob, as he mouthed the words, knew them by heart, as the father filled the bedroom with kind animals and funny people, where baddies were stupid an' never won out and the furry friends mended things an' put it right. They lived in the wallpaper patterns and behind curtains pulled against the night. They keep the boy safe. And he promises me all the kids in the world will be happy. (BEAT) The lad's gone the way of snuggle up, tuck me in, hope the bugs don't bite, cosy jim-jams and friendly wallpaper.

CATH: I'd listen at the door to his stories.

LUD: What stories? I can't remember stories.

CATH: And I was like a kid next door, peepin' through the fence, wantin' to join in.

LUD: 'e told me stories alright - everyone's full of stories. (CHANGES SUBJECT) You want to get a fire goin' 'ere - it's freezin'.

CATH: I wish we could sort it all out.

LUD: Be too late if they shut the factory.

CATH: Not this - us - be a proper family.

LUD DOESN'T REPLY.

CATH: It really hurt your dad, me an' all, you takin' that money.

LUD: I needed it.

CATH: 'aven't you got any conscience. I mean, it's us - your mum and dad - you've never gone short if we've had it - we would've shared it.

A MOMENT.

LUD: (LYING) Alright - I know I was out of order. Not 'avin' a job it does your 'ead in.

CATH: If you explained to him, apologised...

LUD: (LYING) Yeh...

CATH: Do you mean it?

LUD: We'll get it sorted...

CATH: Come back with me when I've finished 'ere, you can 'ave some dinner.

LUD: Yeh...

CATH: I'm that pleased...

LUD: Yeh...

CATH: Your dad'll be impressed - you picketin' with me.

LUD: Yeh...

CATH: Did you know 'e's got a job.

LUD: 'e's lucky.

CATH: It's something... a fresh start all round...

LUD: Yeh... (BEAT) Can you lend u ten quid?

CATH LAUGHS.

LUD: I'll give you it back, when I get me giro.

CATH: You aren't jokin' are you.

LUD: I'll give it you back.

CATH: I've not got it...

LUD: You always 'ave money in your purse.

CATH: Oh that's right. 10p for sweets; couple of quid to get yourself a model to make; summat for a T-shirt; a fiver to treat your mates. What did I get out of it?

LUD: You could've said no.

CATH: I'm sayin' it now.

LUD: I've got nowt.

CATH: Me an' all.

LUD: Me old feller's workin'.

CATH: So?

LUD: You said.

CATH: 'e's got to work a week in 'and.

LUD: (MIFFED) Fair enough.

CATH: When you come back we'll see you alright for grub an' that.

LUD TUTS. BEAT.

CATH: Can I say something?

HE SHRUGS.

CATH: If I did 'ave some money I wouldn't give it you.

HE LOOKS.

CATH: Not yet. Not like that.

LUD: Don't bother then.

CATH: Don't you want to know why.

LUD: I'm not mithered.

CATH: You don't appreciate it.

LUD SIGHS.

CATH: It's not doin' you any favours.

LUD: Please yourself.

LUD IS BRIEFLY HURT, PERPLEXED, THEN MOVES OFF, DELIBERATELY DISMISSIVE.

CATH: (AFTER HIM) You can still come back for your tea...

HE IGNORES HER & GOES & SITS, HUNCHED UP, SOMEWHERE NEAR WHERE STEVE PATROLS THE HOTEL. LUD KEEPS HIS HEAD DOWN. THERE'S A CARDBOARD SIGN NEAR HIM - "HOMELESS & JOBLESS", AND A PAPER CUP.

LX. LIGHTS UP ON STEVE. LUD IS IN THE GLOOM. CATH REMAINS PICKETING, BUT TOTALLY SEPERATE.

MUSIC: THE WHO, "ANYWAY, ANYWHERE, ANYHOW". LOUD, THEN FADE UNDER...

STEVE: Walked along this road. Parka, baseball boots, red sweatshirt. Oasis Club and Twisted Wheel and The Who blew my mind - their amps had scars where they'd smashed 'em. We were goin' to smash it all down. The old feller said I looked like a jessie, an' not to take purple hearts, and that I didn't know what a proper day's work was. Din't I? (MUSIC ENDS)It seemed like a proper

days work to me - apprentice, at Roberts-Arundel, Stockport, four quid a week, two minutes late an' they docked 15. An' your work mates - ha - greased your bollocks to pass the time of day. Still - I was like Albert Finney. (SINGS A FEW NOTES OF THE THEME OF FILM "SATURDAY NIGHT & SUNDAY MORNING") Out on the town an' free... Saturday nights... that's what it's all about... shaggin' yourself rotten... I never did, but Albert did. We all wanted to... I did. I wanted to meet Julie Christie bouncin' along a Manchester street... like she did in "Billy Liar"... And Billy came in this very 'otel to see a comedian. (SINGS A COUPLE OF LINES FROM THE "AMBROSIA" CHORUS AT END OF "BILLY LIAR". THEN STOPS, SELF-CONSCIOUS) The comedian didn't want to know. The laugh was on Billy... Me... Nostalgia... like a warm scarf that throttles you... Across there, Central Library, looks like the Albert Hall been left out in the rain... proof somebody once 'ad the notion we could improve ourselves. Mind, what good did it do me... when I was in their gobblin' up the words - history, politics, sociology - makin' sense of it all. Me old feller said I was wastin' me time. He'd be proud of me now - stood 'ere, clemmed, doin' an impression of the Captain of the fucking Titanic. (BEAT) I wonder if that theatre's still under the Library. We took him every Christmas.

LX CHANGE.

LUD & CATH JOIN HIM. LUD IS A KID OF SEVENISH. THEY HOLD HANDS. HE'S EXCITED.

LUD: (SINGS) A pig, a pig, a pig, a pig...

CATH: Did you like it, Arthur?

LUD: Brill.

STEVE: (TO LUD) How did that song go?

LUD: (SINGS) A pig, a pig...

CATH/STEVE: (JOIN IN) A pig, a pig...

THEY LAUGH.

LUD: (SUDDENLY POINTS) There's Daddy Christmas.

STEVE & CATH LOOK.

LUD: Daddy Christmas gone all grey.

STEVE LAUGHS.

CATH: (QUIET TO LUD) 'e's not Daddy Christmas.

LUD: 'e is... 'is beard's long, 'is 'air's long, 'is coat's long... it's not red though.

CATH: 'e's a tramp.

LUD: 'e looks like Daddy Christmas, 'e might be 'is bruvver...

STEVE: 'e's a pauper.

LUD: The pauper's a boy in that play.

STEVE: 'e's an old pauper.

LUD: Why's 'e a pauper?

STEVE: Mebbe 'e can't find a job.

LUD: (THINKS, CONSPIRATORIAL) He might be a prince... in disguise... like the boy...

STEVE: King of the road...

CATH: (QUIET) 'e might well think 'e's a king...

LUD: Should I go an' ask 'im?

STEVE: Best not...

A HAPPY FAMILY - THEN BACK TO THEIR POSITIONS. CATH PICKETING. STEVE OUTSIDE THE HOTEL. LUD SITS HUNCHED UP IN THE GLOOM, HAT PULLED DOWN OR HOOD PULLED UP. A CARD, 'HOMELESS & JOBLESS'.

STEVE: The trouble is with Arthur Seaton, Billy Liar and the rest - they don't tell you what happens... to them. They don't say you'll be standin' here outside a posh hotel dressed like a middle-aged prick, with no chance of Julie bouncing up. All you get now are the drifters, dozens of 'em, young, what a bleedin' state of affairs. An' I get the bum's rush if I don't move 'em along... what a bleedin' state of affairs....

GOES OVER TO LUD, WHO'LL REMAIN HUNCHED - THE ANONYMOUS TRAMP.

STEVE: Can you move on, please...

NO MOVEMENT.

STEVE: Come on, pal, I know it's tough... just round the corner'll do.

NO MOVEMENT.

STEVE: We all know it's down to them bastards in London, right... bastards... look at me... Still move along, eh?

HE STILL DOESN'T MOVE.

STEVE: (CRACKS. GRABS LUD, YANKS HIM UP, BUT STILL DOESN'T SEE HIS FACE. SHOUTS) I said, move, fuck off, I don't want to hear hard luck stories, sling your hook, shift. At least I'm trying, doing me job, makin' an effort. You're changin' nothin'. Except mekin' passers-by feel self-righteous in one way or another. What would your mother and father think?

LUD LOOKS HIM IN THE FACE. STEVE GOBSMACKED.

LUD: You look a twat in that hat...

STEVE SHAKEN.

BLACKOUT.

STEVE & CATH EXIT.

LIGHTS UP IN SITTING ROOM / LUD'S ROOM.

LUD ENTERS THE HOUSE. HE'S CAUTIOUS, HE'S VIRTUALLY BROKEN IN. HE SWITCHES ON A LIGHT THEN TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

LUD: I'd forgotten how it smells... it's norra bad smell... polish an' that, an' onions or summat comin' from the kitchen... (LOOKS AT STEVE'S BOOKS & TAPES) This lot's still 'ere, not touched...

HE PULLS OUT A BOOK, FLICKS THROUGH IT. HE PUTS ON A TAPE, NOT TOO LOUD. "GIMME SOME TRUTH" - JOHN LENNON. HE LOOKS TOWARDS HIS ROOM.

LUD: It's all still 'ere, like nothing's happened. My room'll be cleared, me stuff boxed, bagged or flogged like me grandad's. The couldn't wait to get rid so they could get on with their tidy tight-arsed little lives.

WITHOUT THINKING HE STICKS THE BOOK IN HIS POCKET & GOES TO HIS ROOM, HESITATES, THEN GOES IN, SEES NOTHING'S CHANGED.

LUD: Not touched, nothin'... only she's tecken me washin', made me bed, emptied the ashtray - an' the bin. She's opened the window, hoovered the carpet, put me socks in pairs, folded me snot rags, ironed me jeans - I told 'er about ironin' me jeans. You don't iron jeans. Who irons jeans? Who irons fucking jeans...

GOES TO COMPUTER, SWITCHES IT ON. PICKS UP THE MOUSE, WANDERS, CLICKING AT AN IMAGINERY GAME HE'S CREATED.

LUD: They should make a game - "Curse of the fucking jean ironers". A seventeen level game - starts easy - it 'as to cos you start off small - an' you get strength from the aliens you zap. The do-and-don't-do-doers, towerin' over you. Blast the suckers - before they suffocate you with their tut tut machines an' worst of all their hurt looks. Level two. Death to all children's tele presenters. Not a bad tooth between 'em. Twatty jumpers an' twatty smiles. Tryin' to be cool by sayin' "cool". A thousand quid a week for grinnin' out of the box - I'd wipe the grins off their fizzogs - zap, zap. Level two clear, Level three. Flat capped twats fartin' about for change at checkouts or leanin' on gate posts. You survived the 'last lot' but you won't survive this. Zap, zap. "I fought for little bleeders like you." You didn't fight for me, pal - you fought so you could spend the rest of your lives glued to the tele, worried what a pair of gets in a Soap who can't act are goin' to get up to. That's what you fought for. Well fuck you. Zap, zap. Level Four... fathers...

HE QUICKLY PUTS MOUSE DOWN & GOES TO LEAVE HIS BEDROOM.

LUD: (TO COMPUTER) I'll be back for you.

GOES TO SITTING ROOM AREA, SYSTEMATICALLY SLINGS STEVE'S BOOKS, TAPES, RECORDS AROUND THE ROOM.

END OF SCENE ONE.

SFX: FADE UP "GIMME SOME TRUTH".

SCENE TWO

SITTING ROOM. A DAY LATER. STEVE'S BOOKS AND TAPES ARE STACKED IN PILES ON THE FLOOR. THE COMPUTER IS NO LONGER IN LUD'S ROOM. STEVE ENTERS WITH A COUPLE OF BIN BAGS. HE GOES TO THE TAPES & BOOKS & PICKS A TAPE OUT. HE STICKS IT IN THE MACHINE & TURNS IT ON. 'GIMME SOME TRUTH' - JOHN LENNON. HE THEN DELIBERATELY DROPS THE CASSETTE BOX IN A BIN BAG. THEN THE TAPES IN ONES & TWOS. THEN RECORDS & VIDEOS. WITH NO ENTHUSIASM HE DOES THE SAME WITH THE BOOKS. HE MIGHT SENSE ONE OF THE BOOKS IS MISSING, BUT HE CARRIES ON. THE SONG ENDS. HE GETS THE TAPE OUT OF THE MACHINE, UNRAVELS IT, THEN DROPS IT IN THE BAG. HE HEARS CATH ENTER, AND SITS AS SHE GETS IN. SHE'S DRESSED IN HER PICKETING GEAR.

CATH: Sorry I'm late.

STEVE: It'll be burnt.

CATH: Sorry.

STEVE: It was only McCartney pies.

CATH: (HESITATES) I've been to the cop shop.

STEVE: (REACTS) Christ - what d'you have to go an' do that for? It's bad enough we know we can't handle our own son. That he hates us that much he'll trash our own home. Friggin' brilliant. I can't wait to see it, spread all over the free rag they shove through every door in the street. Anyway, it might not've been him.

CATH: I know.

STEVE: (RUEFUL) Course it bloody was... Why didn't you say - discuss it with me?

CATH: We don't discuss things.

STEVE: Every other bugger round 'ere will now.

CATH: It wasn't about Lud.

STEVE LOOKS.

CATH: ...why I went to the station. (BEAT) They pulled me in.

STEVE: Yer what?

CATH: Arrested me.

STEVE: (LAUGHS) You.

CATH: (INDIGNANT) Yes - while you were sitting on your arse feeling sorry for yourself.

STEVE: Straight up - you got arrested?

CATH: (NODS) They've bussed scabs in.

STEVE: I saw it on the news...

CATH: (SARC) What - while you were waiting for 'Emmerdale'?
(CALMER) I made a statement. Some of us said nothing and were warned they 'ad no right to silence. It could be construed as an admission of guilt. Me - I spilt the beans - I've started so I'll finish - on and on - out it came - every detail - in me own words - at least I'd got someone who'd listen - even if it was a big hairy arsed rozzer - her name was Sheila. That bus had to be stopped. It was a tank, a bomber, a battleship, an alien spaceship - taking our jobs, our homes, our town - ridin' rough shod over our lives. Would you stand for it? Course not; it had to be stopped. We didn't have missiles, mines or mortars - we had insults, spit, boots, bricks, sticks, and lots of bodies. No, I don't deny it. You should be pinning a VC on me - not a riotous assembly rap. (TURNS TO STEVE) I ran out of steam.

STEVE: What did she do?

CATH: Book me.

STEVE: Fuck me.

BEAT.

CATH: She knew our Arthur.

STEVE LOOKS.

CATH: Had reason to move him on and caution him on more than one occasion. (BEAT) I felt less heroic all of a sudden.

STEVE: (CHANGING SUBJECT) I'll see to them pies.

CATH: What?

STEVE: Leave the burnt bits.

CATH: (BECOMING ANGRY) You've had a full day, haven't you, planning the evening meal, then there was the wine to choose.

STEVE: Give us a break.

CATH: You've not even put your stuff back.

STEVE: I've sorted it.

CATH: Why in't it on the shelves?

STEVE: I'm ditchin' it.

CATH LOOKS.

STEVE: Binning it.

CATH: Don't be stupid. You don't bin anything - you even wash milk bottle tops to take to the foil bank.

STEVE: Well, I don't give a shit anymore.

CATH: You've had that stuff years.

STEVE: Too long.

CATH: Don't send it to the tip.

STEVE: I've decided.

CATH: No - I meant someone... might have a use for it. (BEAT) Some sad old fart. (SHE LAUGHS, GETTING HYSTERICAL)

STEVE: That's right - extract it when I try an' make a fresh start.

CATH: That isn't a fresh start.

STEVE: Oh aye.

CATH: It's cos they remind you of what you were.

STEVE: What's that then?

CATH: Someone with ideas - a bit of oomph. (BEAT) Someone who would've been proud of me for standin' up for meself today.

STEVE: How many times did you picket with me? How many demonstrations? Where were you at Grovesnor Square; Anti Nazi League; March for Jobs; Kill the Bill...

CATH: (KNOWS THE LIST) Free the Birmingham Six; The Shrewsbury Pickets; Troops Out; End Apartheid...

STEVE LOOKS.

CATH: I did your butties and stuffed envelopes.
I even 'ad a favourite slogan - 'If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem'.
We've changed places.

A MOMENT, THEN STEVE PICKS UP THE BIN BAGS TO TAKE OUT.

CATH: (CONCILIATORY) I think it was my fault he came back... I din't say... he wanted to borrow some money...

STEVE: I s'pose you gave it him.

CATH: (SHAKES HER HEAD) That's why he came, he was mad at me.

STEVE: So.

CATH: No harm done.

STEVE: Stop stickin' up for him.

CATH: (ANGRY) It's not my fault that job didn't work out.

STEVE: Where's that come from?

CATH: I know you were upset over it.

STEVE: You know why I jacked it?

CATH: I'm not a mind-reader.

STEVE: No, well, you've been so full of life on the front line, personing the barricades, fighting your cause like it's the first time anyone's stood up for themsel's. (STANDS) I jacked it cos I refused to shift dossers from outside. I told 'em to stick their job where the sun dun't shine. I told 'em I'd got principles...

CATH: If you could say to them, why couldn't you say to me?

STEVE TAKES THE BAGS OUT. CATH, RESIGNED, BEGINS TO TAKE OFF HER COAT AS SHE GOES OUT.

LX CHANGE.

LUD WEARS AN OVERALL AND A STERILE CAP. HE'S WORKING, ELECTRICAL ASSEMBLY IN A HI TECH FACTORY. MUZAK PLAYS.

LUD: Woah - Arthur Leonard - Working Man - even if I am done up like a pox doctor. Still, no pox 'ere. Not a germ - not even a flake of dandruff, in sight. Piece of piss. Comfy chair, box of chips, solderin' iron. The only down side is gettin' up in the morning, and the poxy sounds they play. Still, it could be worse, could be One FM... Good money too - three seventy five an hour... eight hours a day... I wonder if we get paid over dinner... What time is dinner... I'm starvin'... (CHECKS WATCH) 25 past nine... 25 past nine... shit, I thought it was later... 25 minutes... How much is that worth... nearly 2 quid... (BLINKS AT WHAT HE'S SOLDERING) You need eyes like a shit 'ouse rat to do this... Still I'm a dab 'and at solderin' - me old feller used to say...

LX CHANGE. SOMETHING MORE MELLOW.

SFX: MUZAK ENDS.

LUD IS 6-ISH. HE'S SOLDERING, FASCINATED BY THE BLOBS OF SOLDER. STEVE ENTERS, HOLDING TWO BITS OF MODEL RAILWAY TRACK & SOME GLASS PAPER.

STEVE: Careful, mind your eyes.

LUD: It's dead 'ot, dad.

STEVE: So it melts the solder.

LUD: Then it goes cold an' unmelts.

STEVE: Then we sand it smooth.

LUD: Then the trains won't bump off and crash.

STEVE: That's right.

LUD: Can't they crash sometimes?

STEVE: (SMILES) Mebbe once or twice.

LUD: But no one'll get hurt.

STEVE: No...

LUD: This is goin' to be the best train railway ever. You're goin' to make 'ills, an' bridges, an' little lights in the houses, aren't you, dad. Where will it be?

STEVE: It'll be an island...

LUD: With 'ills and bridges an' lights in little houses. An' little teeny weeny plastic people and dogs an' cows an' little teeny weeny, teeny weeny weeny weeny cats - an' they'll wave at the train an' go on 'olidays... An' everyone will share everythin', even their last blinkin' Rolo...

STEVE: That'd be the place to live...

CATH ENTERS.

CATH: Is 'e alright with that solderin' iron.

LUD: I'm a dab 'and, mam!

CATH: You'd better be goin' for your meeting...

STEVE: Yeh...

LUD: What meeting?

STEVE: To help the miners.

LUD: Thatcher's a bastard.

STEVE LAUGHS.

CATH: You shouldn't encourage him. You'll be late.

STEVE: I'll give it a miss...

CATH: That's a first.

STEVE: They aren't going to win.

LUD: We can build a coal mine.

THEY LOOK.

LUD: Out of lolly sticks... like we saw... an' put wheels on top...

STEVE: We could, couldn't we...

LUD: ...an' the miners could dig up coal to put in our O-4-O tank engine...
an' we won't call 'im Thomas we'll call 'im Arthur... King Arthur...

THEY LAUGH. CATH & STEVE BOTH KISS LUD ON THE HEAD,
THEN STEVE PUTS HIS ARM ROUND HER AND THEY EXIT.

LX CHANGE. MUZAK PLAYS. LUD WORKING IN FACTORY, IN
SOME SORT OF RHYTHM. LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.

LUD: Five minutes to go... that friggin' music... I know I'll be bloody singin'
it when I go home... when I get out... wouldn't surprise me if it's got
a subliminal message... (DALEK LIKE) You will work like a twat...
You will work like a twat... (LOOKS ABOUT) What a bunch of
bleeders we've got workin' 'ere... A thin faced woman - four kids an'
wants cash in hand cos her boyfriend's robbed 'er books... a bloke
who talks like a retired Brigadier. 'is collar's frayed... A bull-necked
bleeder with swastikas on 'is neck... An' best of all - that get from
Dick'eadsons... Cracked on he didn't know me, said 'e wanted a
career change - manufacturing was the thing to be in -
Dick'eadsons must 'ave seen sense an' give 'im his cards... all full
of it first thing... now they've gone quiet... it's nearly knockin' off
time... time to catch the bus... look at 'em all, look at me... The first
time I do somethin' in me life - and it's be a scab!

LIGHTS DOWN.

END OF SCENE TWO.

MUSIC: THE STRANGLERS - "NO MORE HEROES"

SCENE THREE

A WEEK LATER. GRANDDAD'S FLAT.
THE FLAT HAS BEEN CLEARED. THE ONLY ITEMS IN IT ARE A BLANKET ON THE FLOOR AND LUD'S NEW COMPUTER, PLUGGED IN, BUT NOT ON. EMPTY FAG PACKETS, BEER CANS & TAKE AWAY CARTONS ARE STREWN ROUND. IT'S LIT BY AN UNSHADED LIGHT BULB. IT'S NIGHT TIME.

LUD SITS ON THE FLOOR, HUNCHED UP. THERE'S A BOOK & HIS WALKMAN BY HIM. SUDDENLY THERE'S A LOUD BANG & FLASH OUTSIDE. THEN WHINES & MORE FLASHES. IT'S BONFIRE NIGHT. LUD GOES TO LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW.

LUD: (PLEASED) Whoa, Bonfire night...

HE WATCHES FOR A MINUTE, THEN TURNS BACK IN, NO LONGER THRILLED.

LUD: How could I forget Guy Fawkes... it was the only thing that got me from the Summer holidays to Christmas... (SINGS STANDARD FIREWORKS JINGLE) "Light up the sky with Standard Fireworks. Light up the sky with Standard Fireworks..."

HE LAPSES INTO THOUGHT. HE PULLS A PHOTO OUT OF HIS POCKET & LOOKS AT IT. ANOTHER LOUD FIREWORK & HE LOOKS OUT AGAIN. THEN HE SEES SOMEONE COMING.

LUD: Oh shite... all good things come to an end.

HE HURRIES TO SWITCH OFF THE LIGHT, THEN SITS ON THE FLOOR, PULLS THE BLANKET OVER HIM & PUTS ON HIS HEADPHONES. THE FIREWORKS STILL FLASH, CRACK & SQUEAL OUTSIDE, BUT QUIETER. THERE'S A THUMPING ON THE DOOR. HE DOESN'T MOVE. AND ANOTHER.

CATH: (OFF) Are you there, Luddy?

HE DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR.

STEVE: (OFF) Arthur - open the door you little shitehawk!

CATH: (OFF) Quiet, Steve.

THE DOOR IS UNLOCKED FROM OUTSIDE. CATH & STEVE ENTER. THEY ADJUST TO THE DARK, THEN CATH SWITCHES ON THE LIGHT. A MOMENT WHILE THEY COMPREHEND THAT

LUD IS PRESENT. HE KEEPS HIS EYES CLOSED & LISTENS TO HIS SOUNDS. WE SENSE HE KNOWS THEY'RE THERE.

CATH: What's goin' on?

HE IGNORES THEM.

CATH: (LOUDER) Luddy.

NO RESPONSE. SHE SNATCHES THE HEADPHONES OFF HIM.

CATH: I said, what the bloody hell's going on.

LUD: Leave us alone.

CATH: I thought that Warden had gone mad when she phoned.

LUD: She is mad.

CATH: It's not her...

LUD: I've got a key...

STEVE: (WEARY) We've not come to play games - just get your stuff and let's go.

LUD: Where am I s'posed to take it to?

CATH: You told me you were stayin' with mates.

STEVE: Where did you get the key from?

LUD: Me grandad give it me yonks ago.

CATH SIGHS, IMPATIENT.

LUD: Ask the Warden. Ask her... ask her whether I used to come round. Ask her if he din't sit an' talk to me. Ask her if she minded. Ask her if she thought I was unhappy at home. Course you know that's right cos no one's happy at home.

STEVE: When did you come?

LUD: When I felt like it... when I was bunkin' off... all sorts of times.

CATH: 'ow long 'ave you been stayin' here.

LUD: (SHRUGS) A week.

CATH: And the Warden's let you stay...

LUD: (SARC) I'm a tragic case. (BEAT) 'e knows where I was livin' before... (TO STEVE) Don't you!

STEVE LOOKS AWAY.

LUD: On the streets...

CATH: Did you know?

STEVE DOESN'T ANSWER.

CATH: You can't stay here.

LUD: I'll go - right! Just leave me alone.

CATH: You won't get dole if you've no address.

LUD: So.

CATH ABOUT TO EXPLODE.

LUD: I've got a job.

CATH: (SARC) Yeh, course you 'ave.

LUD PULLS OUT A PAYSLIP FROM HIS POCKET & HANDS IT TO CATH.

CATH: (GLANCES AT IT) This is mine - one of me old wage packets. You took it when you wrecked the place.

NOT LOOKING AT IT SHE PASSES THE PAYSLIP TO STEVE.

CATH: You don't know what the truth is anymore.

STEVE: (CUTS IN) It's got his name on it.

SHE LOOKS TO SEE HE'S HOLDING PAYSLIP.

STEVE: Arthur Leonard... last week's date... Silitex UK.

LUD: (GETS UP, ANIMATED) Congratulations - Mr and Mrs Leonard, your son Arthur is not only an accomplished fibber, Pork Pie merchant extraordinaire; not only did he single-handedly put

Bollockshill Comprehensive School bottom of the Vauxhall Conference of School League Tables; not only did they offer 'im a gold watch at the Dole Office; not only did 'e total your home; but Mr and Mrs Leonard - this lad, this product of your coupling, this rotten fruit of your womb, scabby apple of your loins, this professor of appalling language; this Duke of dope smokers; prince of piss 'eads; this uniquely ungrateful gobshite; this... betraying little bastard... is... a blackleg...

BEAT.

CATH: What, while I was picketin' outside... bein' charged with causing an affray... you were inside that factory?

LUD NODS.

STEVE: (PREOCCUPIED) What did he say to you - me dad - your granddad?

CATH: What's that got to do with anything. He - our son - he was on them buses, crouched on the floor, frightened of showin' his face. A scab.

STEVE: (IGNORES HER) Did he mention me...

LUD: 'e talked about times bein' hard, they never 'ad tele, they never 'ad central 'eatin', they never 'ad two bob to rub together, 'e 'ad mates though, good mates, in the war especially, beltin' mates.

STEVE: 'e must've mentioned me.

LUD: He wanted it better for you.

STEVE: He reckoned I'd let him down, din't 'e.

LUD: 'e was talkin' about himself, on an' on. 'ed bin shat on.

STEVE: By me...

LUD: (MARKED) 'e wasn't talkin' about you! 'e was a loser. The only time 'e 'ad summat it was like a lottery win - only in 'is case it was 'is leg - or lack of it. A dear ticket. Cost an arm and a... 'e couldn't even hang on to that. 'e was shat on - useless - no one'd listen - just me an' I was only there to keep out of the way of the wag-man and the cold... 'e taught me summat though.

CATH: Oh I bet. I bet you said to yourself - I'm not going to end up like that - I'm going to go for it - I, I, I, bugger the rest...

LUD: (SHRUGS) 'im and me dad were the same.

STEVE: We were total opposites.

LUD: (SHAKES HIS HEAD) You both had someone to fight - that's all you both talked about. Me granddad 'ad the Gerries, you 'ad the bosses... the system...

STEVE: (RUEFUL) Difference is, 'e got a result.

CATH: Course, you're a fightin' man too, aren't you, Lud. You've bin on active service since before your voice broke. We're the number one enemy - then there's old people you've made prisoners, in places like this; an' girls who daren't catch a late bus; and anyone a bit different. The trouble is everyone's different. And for all your effin' and blindin', an' posin' and struttin', you end up on your lonesome.

LUD: (SUDDENLY TO STEVE) I've bin on me lonesome since I was twelve...

LX CHANGE.

SIX OR SEVEN YEARS AGO.

STEVE & LUD WATCH TELE. CATH GIVES LUD A BOWL OF CEREAL.

CATH: Done your homework?

LUD: Yeh... He gave me a merit mark last time.

CATH: Good lad. That's good in it, Steve... A merit mark.

STEVE: It's good that.

CATH: Did you have any joy down the job centre?

STEVE: They're 'opeless.

LUD: It's not fair you not havin' a job, is it, Dad.

CATH: You work hard at school - you'll get into College. Get a good job.

LUD: Not if they keep lettin' niggers in - they take our jobs.

STEVE: (COLD) What did you say?

LUD: (APPREHENSIVE) Blacks take our jobs...

STEVE: Who's told you that?

LUD: Everyone... it's obvious.

STEVE GOES FOR LUD WHO'S PETRIFIED, GRABS HIS JUMPER.

STEVE: "Obvious". What's obvious to a little squirt like you.

LUD: Everyone says... Granddad...

CATH: He didn't mean anything, Steve.

STEVE: What chance is there... what chance...if I can't even get through to him...

CATH: Let him go.

LUD: Don't blame me if you're on the dole.

STEVE COULD ALMOST HIT HIM, THEN DROPS HIM TO THE FLOOR.

LX CHANGE.

THE PRESENT.

FIREWORKS OUTSIDE.

THEY KEEP THEIR POSITIONS, AND ARE STILL PART IN THE PAST.

CATH: You're not thick. We've always taught you colour doesn't matter. .

LUD: It was just words.

STEVE: And look where those kind of words end up - townships, wars, gas chambers...

LUD: (ALMOST DESPAIRING) I know the fucking lecture. An' I thought... well, inside I... inside... (ALMOST BREAKING DOWN) Why's the feller who's carried me on 'is shoulders, who's told me stories, who's made me laugh, who's kept me safe - why does my dad hate me, is it cos I'm not just like 'im...

STEVE: I'm sorry.

CATH: For Christ's sake - he lost 'is temper once. It's no excuse for the way you've carried on - you've got your own back alright... (TO STEVE) He's stringin' you along. He wants out of this. He doesn't think past the moment.

LUD STANDS & SWITCHES ON THE COMPUTER.

CATH: That's right - play with that bloody thing. (LEAVING) Come on - the Warden'll have to have him evicted.

STEVE: I said I'm bloody sorry.

LUD WANTS TO ASK HER TO STAY, BUT CAN'T. HE PUNCHES KEYBOARD.

STEVE: (CLOCKS SCREEN) Look, Cath...

SHE HESITATES.

STEVE: Look.

CATH RELUCTANTLY COMES BACK & LOOKS AT THE SCREEN.

STEVE: (READS FROM SCREEN) Silitex UK. Memorandum to the Financial Sector. Brussels. It has been concluded that the advantages of moving production to Portugal; with substantial EEC grants, or Rajkot...

LUD: That's in India.

CATH: (READS) ...with low unit labour costs are immediately apparent. There will be considerable tax write off facilities available when... we close the Salford plant. (TO LUD) What is it?

LUD: I hacked into their system.

CATH: They're closin' the factory...
LUD PRESSES THE KEYS.

STEVE: (READS) Message from General Lud. (LOOKS AT LUD)

LUD: That's me...

STEVE: (READS) Don't buy Silitex goods. Silitex screw British workers - you could be next.

CATH: That's one of our strike leaflets.

LUD: I scanned it.

CATH: Very clever.

LUD: It's on the Net.

CATH: What?

LUD: The Internet.

STEVE: Fuck me.

LUD PRESSES KEYS.

CATH: What's that?

LUD: Gujarati. Ali - a lad I buy dope off, translated it. I thought someone might see it if they decide to move to Rajkot. I'm still working on the Portuguese - there's a web site, but I've not found it yet.

CATH: An' you've sent that leaflet all round the world...

LUD: Yeh...

CATH: Don't you have to pay for it?

LUD: Phone's in me grandad's name - they'll 'ave a job suing him.

STEVE LAUGHS.

CATH: Why?

LUD: It's a laugh... (BEAT) When I was working...

CATH: Black leggin'.

LUD: (CONTS.) All the people there - they were frightened. Scared of their own shadows.

CATH: Good.

LUD: It weren't just the pickets outside. They were... desperate... like bleedin' slaves... I was at it too - wonderin' if I could make a couple of quid 'ere - wanglin' an extra hour there. I was even nice to the

suits who came round sayin' what a wonderful job we were doin'. I could see meself - I was just like the rest of 'em. After a bleedin' week.

PRESSES KEY. PICTURE ON SCREEN CHANGES.

STEVE: What's that?

CATH: It's like that photo your gran took.

LUD: That's the one - Bonfire Night.

STEVE: The three of us.

CATH: How d'you get it on that?

STEVE: You're supposed to make these things.

CATH: Just a single chip - thousands a day - I don't know what they do.

STEVE: Look at us - three silhouettes - our Lud in the middle...

LUD: It's that big one they had on the rec. I was 'appy then. I can still feel the warm from that fire. Feelin' safe, holdin' your hands.

STEVE: It's the best time - when the bonfire's glowin' red - after all the excitement.

LUD: Yeh, but you know it's goin' out - you know when you come on the rec. in the mornin' there'll be a big black stain and a pile of ashes. Still just about smokin' in the middle. The only thing left to do with your mates is piss on it and get the last spit, sizzle and cloud of steam out of it.

STEVE: Did you do that an' all?

THEY LAUGH. A FIREWORK BANGS LOUD OUTSIDE.

STEVE: (TO LUD) What do you reckon?

LUD: I'll wipe it if you like.

STEVE: I'm not mithered about the photo. What d'you reckon? What d'you think?

LUD LAUGHS.

STEVE: Don't tell me you've not tried to make some sense of it - all this mess.

LUD: I'm laughin' cos I can't remember when you last asked me what I thought. (BEAT) Remember that twat of a teacher.

CATH/STEVE: (TOGETHER) Mr. Barlow.

LUD: Information Technology. He tried teachin' me for years. Hours an' hours. I took in one phrase. "It's all about connections."

SEES THEY DON'T FOLLOW.

LUD: Computers - it's all about connections - makin' sense out of bits of information. So I'm sittin' in this flat - with that plugged in to a dead man's phone - and the screen fillin' up with 99.999 per cent crap from all over the planet... I thought - I'm missin' somethin' 'ere.

CATH: I think I am.

LUD: That's it - you've not connected. That was what was up with me. I wasn't connected. Well, I was but wrong. Faulty... (BEAT) I sound like a fuckin' maniac, don't I.

STEVE: Go on.

LUD: I was takin' stuff - like everyone had wired me up - like for all me life - I was gettin' these messages from tele, teachers, politicians - parents...

STEVE: We all do.

LUD: But you'd give me something else. Another chip. I didn't know what it was for - it confused me.

STEVE: What sort of chip?

LUD: A Think For Yourself chip. Trouble is you'd forget it was there too.

CATH: Have you fixed it then? (BEAT) God, what am I like. Are you alright now?

LUD: I looked at those frightened misfits in the factory then the photo of us. Things started to connect.

LUD: What does 'e say - Arthur Seaton, in that book - "Saturday Night..."

STEVE: "Don't let the bastards grind you down."

CATH: "Forget the rest, it's all propaganda."

LUD: "I'm a dynamite dealer waiting to blow the factory to Kingdom come."

A MOMENT.

MUSIC, FADING UP SLOWLY: "HELLO" - OASIS.

THEY MOVE, BACKS TO THE AUDIENCE, LUDDY IN THE MIDDLE. THEY ARE SILHOUETTED AGAINST LEAPING FLAMES. THEY TAKE LUDDY'S HANDS. FIREWORKS EXPLODE. FLAMES BEGIN TO RISE.

CATH/STEVE/LUD: Oooh!

CATH: Look at the corporate logo burning brighter than a snow storm.

CATH/STEVE/LUD: Wheee!

LUD: The chips have caught. Great globs of stinkin' plastic.

CATH/STEVE/LUD: Ahhh!

STEVE: Stains on the ground to remind people.

CATH, LUD & STEVE, STILL SILHOUETED, WATCH THE BONFIRE. AN IMAGE OF A SILITEX SIGN DISSOLVES.

LUD: (TURNS HIS HEAD) So hot they'll feel it round the world.

MUSIC LOUD.

THE END

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