

LEATHER

a play by Eric Presland

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CAST

Phil Stewart	- Middle-class, nervous, meticulous, 40s.
Gordon Bainbridge	- Geordie, quiet, small, long hair, suppressed hatred, 20s.
Clive	- Barrister. Breezily self-assured.
Terry	- Doctor, very gentle manner, early 30s.
Alan	- Serious, donnish, Marxist
Police constable	
Man on the Heath	
Hugo	
Mr. Justice Newton	
Buckley	

The last six parts can be played by one actor.

SET

Two rooms of Phil's flat - living room and bedroom. Bedroom austere and functional, one print over the bed, bedside table with alarm clock and lamp. Desk in the living room, filing cabinet in the corner with lots of papers falling out. Cushions on the floor for guests, a large comfortable armchair for Phil. A forestage area for all other seems.

TIME

1985-86

ACT ONE

Scene One

THE FLAT. OCTOBER 5TH.

[GORDON and PHIL are heard offstage. They are laughing and a bit drunk. PHIL opens the door with a flourish.]

PHIL: *[Fanfare]* Da-da!

GORDON: Is that all?

PHIL: What? Do you want me to carry you over the threshold?

GORDON: You couldn't.

PHIL: I can be very butch when I want to.

GORDON: Promises!

PHIL: I can.

GORDON: Sure. *[They are still in the doorway upstage.]*

PHIL: I'll prove it.

[He goes to pick GORDON up. They both laugh. GORDON is fighting back.]

GORDON: OK, OK. I believe you. *[GORDON's resistance is suddenly in earnest.]* I believe you. No, Phil. Stop it. Stop.

[There is panic in his voice. PHIL stops. Embarrassed pause.]

PHIL: I'm sorry. It was only a joke.

[He pulls GORDON into the room, puts his arms round him. GORDON ignores him.]

It was only a joke.

GORDON: I know. I know, love. I'm sorry.

PHIL: What is it, Gordon?

GORDON: I'm sorry.

PHIL: It was only a joke.

GORDON: I'd better go.

PHIL: Please...

GORDON: I'm sorry.

PHIL: Stop saying you're bloody sorry. Just tell me what's up. Please.

GORDON: I can't.

PHIL: Why not? Don't you trust me?

GORDON: It's not that. I'd better go. *[He turns at the door]* I'm sorry.

PHIL: It's OK, honest. Perhaps another time...

GORDON: Yeah... sure...

PHIL: It's funny to think we've been living so close, and never realised it.

GORDON: Yeah.

PHIL: I haven't seen you around at all.

GORDON: I haven't been going out much.

PHIL: Not even in ASDA.

GORDON: I don't shop much.

PHIL: I wasn't going to go to the Open Day. When councils lay these things on it's usually a stage-managed job. They listen to the local lesgays, explain why they can't have what they want, blame it on cuts, and then go ahead and do exactly what they always intended in the first place.

GORDON: Yeah. It was a bit like that.

PHIL: Good disco, though.

GORDON: Good music.

PHIL: Jo's an old mate of mine. That's the DJ.

GORDON: I know. You introduced me, remember?

PHIL: So I did. I should lay off the Export.

GORDON: It was cheap. *[Pause]*

PHIL: Maybe see you in "The Ship" some time?

GORDON: Maybe.

PHIL: I usually go in on a Friday.

GORDON: Right... Well - goodbye. And sorry.

[He realises he is apologising again, smiles and rushes out.]

PHIL: Shit!

[He looks at the bedroom doorway. Then kicks a scatter cushion savagely. Lights fade to -]

BLACKOUT

Scene Two

THE FLAT. OCTOBER 17TH.

[A meeting has been in progress, and is now breaking up. PHIL has been chairing it and is the practical focus of attention, talking to ALAN. CLIVE hovers plaintively in the doorway, wrapping himself in an enormous overcoat. GORDON is relaxing inconspicuously on a cushion, an outsider. TERRY picks up coffee mugs, which he takes to the kitchen, then returns. He is wondering how to approach GORDON, to bring him into the conversation.]

CLIVE: How much longer, Alan? I thirst after a gin and tonic as our opponents after righteousness.

ALAN: Won't be a moment, Clive.

TERRY: Where did you get that absurd coat?

CLIVE: It is not absurd. It is highly sensible. Much more useful than your silly leather. The evenings are getting quite chilly, and my mother always told me to wrap up well against fogs. I have a delicate constitution.

TERRY: The only delicate thing about you is your bank balance.

PHIL: Have you got enough photocopy paper?

ALAN: Sure.

PHIL: I'd like to get the leaflets into the pubs by Saturday if possible.

ALAN: No problem.

PHIL: After all, it's not every day the Council sets up a lesbian and gay working party. We want a good turnout for the elections.

CLIVE: The pubs will be shut. I shall be lost in a desert of Chinese takeaways and all-night laundrettes.

ALAN: It's only twenty to eleven.

- CLIVE: Only! Only, he says. The sands of drinking time are running out, my oesophagus is as blotting paper. Anyway, it's quarter to eleven. I shall dehydrate.
- ALAN: I'm coming. *[To PHIL:]* See you.
- TERRY: *[To GORDON:]* You were quiet tonight.
- PHIL: He's not been in London long. All this politics is very new to him. Nothing like this in Sunderland.
- GORDON: Nothing to say.
- TERRY: Unlike some others... Clive likes the sound of his own voice.
- CLIVE: *[Turning back from the exit]* Quite right too. It is extremely mellifluous.
- ALAN: I thought you said you wanted a drink.
- CLIVE: Bien sur.
- ALAN: Then what are you standing around nattering for?
- CLIVE: I come, Greymalkin. *[To PHIL]* Goodnight, my dear. Don't catch anything I wouldn't catch.
- ALAN: Out. *[Pushes CLIVE out.]* Night, all.
- PHIL: Coffee?
- TERRY: No, I'll be pushing off, ta. I'm on early shift tomorrow. *[To GORDON]* Could you pass my helmet, please?
- [GORDON reaches for the crash helmet. He weighs it in his hand, almost lovingly.]*
- PHIL: Shall I see you before the meeting?
- TERRY: Probably not. I'm not even sure I'll make that, to be honest. Depends on rotas. Well - *[Kisses PHIL casually]* - see you, love. *[Takes the crash helmet from GORDON]* Goodnight – Gordon, isn't it? Take care of yourselves.

[TERRY exits. Pause.]

GORDON: He's nice, isn't he?

PHIL: Who? Terry?

GORDON: Nice hands. Strong and gentle.

PHIL: Doctor's hands.

GORDON: Can't stand the other one.

PHIL: Don't tell me, let me guess.

GORDON: Pompous middle-class wanker.

PHIL: It's only manner. Clive likes to wind people up. His heart's in the right place.

GORDON: It needs a stake through it. He was eyeing me up all evening.

PHIL: I doubt it. His affections lie elsewhere. Mainly with people of a darker skin.

GORDON: What's he doing here?

PHIL: It's a local group. He's local. Well, he was. Came along with an Arab student he was having a relationship with. They split up, but somehow he stayed. Sort of washed up on the shore. I suppose we must make a good audience.

GORDON: He's a waste of space.

PHIL: Do you think you'll come again?

GORDON: Sure. Why not?

PHIL: Good. I'd like you to. *[Pause]* I haven't seen you in "The Ship".

GORDON: No.

PHIL: I looked out for you.

GORDON: I remembered the meeting tonight.

PHIL: Yes. I'm glad.

[Pause. GORDON makes to get up.]

GORDON: Well, I'd better be off too.

PHIL: You don't mean that.

GORDON: No I don't.

[Pause]

Phil... About last time...

PHIL: Oh, forget it.

GORDON: I didn't mean to –

PHIL: It was my fault. Playing stupid games.

GORDON: It weren't that.

PHIL: You just weren't in the mood.

GORDON: I was.

PHIL: OK, so your mood changed. Let's just forget it, huh?

[He goes close and takes GORDON in his arms. Kisses him.]

GORDON: Love...

PHIL: That's better, isn't it?

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: Do you want a coffee, or do you want to crash?

GORDON: I don't like coffee and - yes, I'd like to crash.

PHIL: *[Disengaging himself]* I'll just clear up from the meeting.

GORDON: Won't it wait?

PHIL: I hate looking at it in the morning. Sends me off to work all tense.

GORDON: Serves you right for working.

[PHIL packs papers carefully into folders and puts them away in the desk]

PHIL: I use the system. I rob the rich and give to the poor.

GORDON: What do you do?

PHIL: I'm a tax inspector.

GORDON: Pul-lease. Robin fucking Hood.

PHIL: I work on corporation tax. If a Multinational has to fork out a few extra million, that's something. It pays for a new school or –

GORDON: Another missile, or a new batch of riot shields. It's a con.

PHIL: So, it's a con. But I've got to think I'm doing something with my life or I'd go mad.

GORDON: I don't know how you stand it. Working with straights too.

PHIL: Some of them are quite nice, actually. Almost human.

GORDON: I don't believe it.

PHIL: It's just that most of them are very ignorant.

GORDON: And you believe in educating them.

PHIL: I just do what I can when I can. What else would you do – shoot them?

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: Well, I don't believe in violence because we can't win with violence. They're better at it than we are. Anyway, I don't like violence because it hurts.

GORDON: You going to be all night doing that?

PHIL: Hang on a moment. It's true that sometimes we're forced to fight, and sometimes we even win. But who wants to behave like their oppressors?

GORDON: Let's drop it, please.

PHIL: One of the creepiest things is the way people ape their oppressors. I remember standing in a leather bar once, listening to these two guys dressed as cops comparing notes. Turned out one was a real South African policeman.

GORDON: I said, drop it.

PHIL: Sorry. All done. *[He returns to GORDON]* Let's get down to more serious matters, shall we? *[They kiss]* You're very tense.

GORDON: Sorry. *[They kiss again.]*

PHIL: Something bothering you? You're kissing like a piece of sand paper.

GORDON: It's not working.

PHIL: Would you like to change your mind? Have a cup of tea?

GORDON: No. *[He gets up.]* I'm sorry if I led you on.

PHIL: What are you talking about?

GORDON: I thought I wanted to stay, but I don't after all.

PHIL: Maybe you just don't fancy me after all.

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GORDON: Maybe I don't.

PHIL: Thanks a lot.

GORDON: No, I do, but –

PHIL: These things happen. If you ever change your mind...?

GORDON: Yes...

PHIL: You can doss on the cushions here, if you want. I don't mind.

GORDON: No, I need the walk. It'll clear my head. *[His hardness melts]* Oh, I feel such a bloody fool.

[Exits angrily.]

PHIL: Gordon...

[Sound of outer door slamming, then silence. PHIL stands motionless a long time, then picks up a mug and throws it at the wall, smashing it.]

BLACKOUT

Scene Three

THE FLAT. OCTOBER 23RD.

[GORDON and PHIL are finishing off a takeaway Chinese meal. There is a bottle of wine, nearly empty. They eat off the floor.]

GORDON: Pheew! That was - not bad.

PHIL: Not bad? That's the best sweet and sour in Streatham, and don't you forget it.

GORDON: A Meeting is like bashing your head against a wall. It's wonderful when it stops.

PHIL: Good turnout, though. Looks like we're getting things moving. We'll get that report in by the end of the month. It's the recommendations on education we're going to have most problems with, I know. But they can't say we're not representative. Not with those numbers.

GORDON: All those dead trees. I hate it. When we going to get some real action?

PHIL: You were very good. You really tore into that bloke from the SDP.

GORDON: Well, he got my goat. "Maybe we are rushing things too much. Don't want to upset the boat. Education is a controversial area, perhaps better to stick to something safer, like employment... blah, blah."

PHIL: I thought you didn't believe in education.

GORDON: Not for queerbashers. Not for fascists. But for kids... It's the only way to save them from turning into their parents.

PHIL: You haven't got much time for parents, have you?

GORDON: I hate them. Fathers... I was in hospital three weeks. Four broken ribs. I still get nightmares.

PHIL: I'm sorry.

GORDON: You learn to live with it.

PHIL: Do you want to talk about it?

GORDON: Not really. Talking doesn't help.

[They pause and consider this.]

PHIL: I'm really sorry.

GORDON: Not half as sorry as I was. I didn't mean that. Look - let's forget it, OK?

PHIL: OK. *[Another pause. PHIL yawns.]* Look, I'm going to have to crash soon. I've got to be up at seven.

GORDON: Sure. I'll be off then...

PHIL: You don't have to go if you don't want - I mean, I'd be really pleased if you'd stay. If you want to.

GORDON: I'd like that.

PHIL: Are you sure?

GORDON: Third time lucky?

PHIL: Gordon - don't let me push you into anything.

GORDON: I want to stay tonight.

PHIL: Thanks.

[They kiss]

GORDON: That thing.... You know – what happened before – I couldn't help it, honest. I wanted to stay, I really did. It just – happens sometimes. I can't help it. I can't explain.

PHIL: It's all right.

GORDON: Just – be careful, please.

PHIL: I've got a lot of patience.

GORDON: Oh. Love... *[He nestles into PHIL's shoulder.]* You can carry me over the threshold this time, if you want.

PHIL: I'd throw up all those pork balls. Let's just crash, huh?

[They go through to the bedroom, suddenly brisk.]

PHIL: What time do you have to be up in the morning?

GORDON: I don't.

PHIL: Oh, of course. Lucky for some.

GORDON: Don't sign on till Wednesday.

PHIL: You could type up the minutes of the meeting. I'm going to be really pushed to do it.

GORDON: I don't think my typing's up to it.

PHIL: No point in being a gay activist if you can't type.

GORDON: Are you really stuck?

PHIL: Can't think when I'll do it.

GORDON: OK, then.

[They are now undressed.]

PHIL: Shall I set the alarm for you in the morning?

GORDON: Oh, I suppose so.

PHIL: What time?

GORDON: Ten. No, make it half past. I hate getting up in the morning.

PHIL: So do I. Still have to, though.

GORDON: Why?

PHIL: Because I'm a capitalist lackey, and I've sold out. Come here. *[They cuddle]* Thanks for doing the typing.

GORDON: Don't you ever stop thinking about work?

PHIL: No.

GORDON: Bureaucrat.

PHIL: Slob.

GORDON: Taxpayer.

PHIL: Scrounger. *[He turns the light off.]* I'll try not to wake you up when I go.

GORDON: Stop planning tomorrow. We haven't had tonight yet.

[They kiss. GORDON pulls PHIL on top of him.]

PHIL: Ow.

GORDON: What's up?

PHIL: You caught my arm.

GORDON: Sorry.

PHIL: It's all right now.

[They start to make out. Suddenly GORDON switches the light on. He reaches for his cigarettes, shaking.]

PHIL: What was it? What did I do?

GORDON: I'm sorry.

PHIL: Sod being sorry.

GORDON: I can't...

PHIL: Stop saying you can't. That's all you ever fucking say. Look... Gordon... I really like you. I fancy you a lot. What's more, I don't think I'm fooling myself when I think you fancy me. That doesn't happen too often when you get to forty, believe me. So I'm not going to let it go without a fight.

[GORDON is silent]

I've said I'm patient. I've said I'm gentle. I think I am. I really want to help you. How can I help you if you won't tell me what's going on in your head? I'm not a fucking mind-reader.

[He takes GORDON by the shoulders, half-aggressive, half-tender.]

You've got to help me to understand. This is the third time this has happened now. Anybody else I know would have said "Sod off, I don't want to know." It's not fair. It's not fair to me.

GORDON: I'm sorry...

PHIL: Sorry's no use. Listen... Do you trust me?

GORDON: I don't know... Yes.

PHIL: Do you believe I care for you?

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: Then let me. Please.

[Pause]

GORDON: *[Dragging the words out]* Damaged goods.

PHIL: What?

GORDON: That's what you've got.

PHIL: What sort of language is that? I mean... you don't think that I thought you were a virgin? Too likely...

[He laughs, but freezes at GORDON's lack of response. GORDON reaches in his shoulder bag, fumbles for a piece of paper, which he gives to PHIL.]

PHIL: What is this?

GORDON: Read it.

PHIL: *[Reads]* To the General Surgeon, Alcombe General Hospital, Sunderland. *[To GORDON]* Are you ill, love?

GORDON: Read it.

PHIL: Dear Mr. Chatterton,

I refer to my telephone conversation of this morning. I am sending my patient, Mr. Bainbridge, to you for further examination and treatment.

The patient presented me with a confused history, complaining of severe rectal bleeding and painful defecation. Examination showed extensive erythema and lacerations around the anus. He had not had his bowels open for ten days. I did not do a rectal examination because of bleeding and spasm of the sphincter.

I have not taken bacteriological specimens for gonorrhoea, but have sent a blood specimen for syphilis serology, and for testing for HIV antibodies. There was no fever, but tenderness in the left lower gradient of the abdomen makes me suspicious of peritoneal damage.

I have prescribed Norgesic 50 mg as required...

PHIL: I don't understand. What does it mean?

GORDON: What d'you think it means?

PHIL: I really don't know.

GORDON: It means I was fucking raped. Are you satisfied now?

[Instantly regretting his outburst] I didn't mean to –

PHIL: Raped? But you can't -

GORDON: Men get raped too, you know.

PHIL: I know, but – *[He gives up trying to explain, presses GORDON to him]* Oh, you poor love.

[GORDON starts crying, quietly at first, then his body is shaken by enormous, hysterical, uncontrollable sobs. PHIL is helpless. Eventually the sobs subside.]

GORDON: I hate those bastards.

PHIL: What bastards?

GORDON: Two of them. In leather. At this party. I can't talk about it.

PHIL: You don't have to.

GORDON: They come between us. Every time we - I could kill them.

PHIL: We've got all the time in the world.

GORDON: I keep hoping something will happen. We'll just do it, and suddenly the feeling won't be there. But I keep seeing them...

PHIL: But didn't anybody hear? I mean, you must have screamed...

GORDON: *[Slightly evasive]* The music was loud. Too loud. And honey, when you've got twelve and a half stone sitting on your head and shoulders and a pillow in your mouth, you don't scream.

[Pause]

PHIL: When - when did this happen?

GORDON: Three months ago. Friday, July 12th. Between two-ten and two-twenty am.

PHIL: You don't have to tell me –

GORDON: Will you stop fucking asking me then?

PHIL: Gordon – I love you.

GORDON: Don't. I'm not worth it.

PHIL: I love you.

GORDON: No.

PHIL: *[Grabbing him and smothering him with kisses]* I love you,
I love you, I love you, I love you.

[GORDON struggles, but gradually subsides in PHIL's arms.]

I think you're the best thing since –

GORDON: KY? *[They both laugh. Pause.]*

PHIL: Do you want to go to sleep now?

GORDON: Yeah. Please.

PHIL: Shall I switch the light off?

GORDON: Please.

[PHIL does so. In the darkness –]

PHIL: Feel better?

GORDON: Yeah, much. And thanks again.

PHIL: All part of the service.

GORDON: Thanks anyway. Sleep well.

PHIL: You too.

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[GORDON curls up against PHIL, instantly asleep. PHIL lies staring at the ceiling.]

BLACKOUT

Scene Four

THE FLAT. MARCH 3RD.

[GORDON has moved in. He is lying on the bed, reading a book. Attitude of boredom. He comes alive when PHIL enters the other room. PHIL is dressed in a suit, oddly in contrast with before.]

PHIL: Gordon?

GORDON: I'm in here.

[PHIL goes through. They kiss in a familiar fashion.]

Tea?

PHIL: Please...

[GORDON exits.]

GORDON: *[Off]* Had a good day in the office, dear?

PHIL: Stupid question. I've had a shitty day. Yesterday was a shitty day. Tomorrow's going to be a shitty day. It's going to be a shitty week in a shitty year, because it's a shitty office and a shitty job.

GORDON: Funny. When I met you back in October, you talked like you were Robin Hood.

PHIL: Well, you were attacking me. And I wanted to impress you. Actually it's not the job, it's my superiors. I think sclerosis of the brain is an essential qualification for being a senior Tax Inspector. I hate being so – straight.

GORDON: *[Head back around the door.]* I think it rather suits you.

PHIL: Just because you're into uniforms.

[GORDON freezes a bit.]

Sorry. Actually it wasn't such a bad day. I managed to take

two hundred and fifty grand off those bastards Fairbrothers.
Pulling a fast one over stock relief.

[GORDON doesn't understand and is obviously not interested. Exits again.]

You?

GORDON: I got some bread. And some milk.

PHIL: Good. Great. *[GORDON reappears with tea.]*

PHIL: Ow.

GORDON: Careful. It's hot.

[Pause]

PHIL: Did you get the typing done?

[GORDON is silent.]

Oh for God's sake. The meeting's tomorrow. It's the last
planning meeting before the rally. It's important.

GORDON: I got a migraine.

PHIL: You promised.

GORDON: I was tired.

PHIL: You're always tired.

GORDON: Don't shout, love, please.

PHIL: I feel like shouting.

GORDON: Please –

PHIL: *[With effort]* It's OK. Doesn't matter.

[Holds GORDON]

PHIL: There was a demo went past the office today.

GORDON: Who?

PHIL: Students from the University mainly. Against the death squads in Chile.

GORDON: Any faggots?

PHIL: Not officially.

GORDON: I met a Chilean gay at a party once. He'd had electric shocks through his balls cos someone told the police he was queer. He thought it was his brother.

PHIL: Imagine. Your own brother.

GORDON: My brother'd do the same, given half a chance. He used to hold me down while my Dad took a strap to me. They'd take turns. Thought it'd make me into a real man.

[Pause]

PHIL: We were standing at the window, watching the demo go by. Me and Shaw and Buckley. They shook their scurfy little heads and stuck out their fat bottoms and jingled the change in their pockets, and muttered about wasting tax-payers' money, blocking traffic and bringing back corporal punishment. Buckley even used the words 'mutinous scum'. He's got a dinghy at Burnham and thinks he's Captain Bligh.

GORDON: You should shove a tax form down their whining throats till they choke on it. *[Pause]*

PHIL: Nice tea.

GORDON: Thanks. I'll get the curry on.

PHIL: I'll start the typing.

GORDON: I wish I could make you calm down.

PHIL: I like working. I like worrying. I'm a happy neurotic, OK? Don't try to reform me, for God's sake.

GORDON: OK. *[They kiss. GORDON exits.]*

GORDON: *[off]* Imagine. Five months already.

PHIL: Do you think we should have an anniversary party?

GORDON: Tacky.

[PHIL starts typing. There is a sudden cry of pain offstage. PHIL rushes off. Re-enters with GORDON, whose finger is bleeding.]

GORDON: It's all right.

PHIL: Quick, sit down. I'll find some plasters.

GORDON: It's only a scratch.

PHIL: You've cut the top of your fucking thumb off. Give me that. *[Takes the kitchen knife out of GORDON's hand and throws it away.]* Stick your thumb in your mouth and suck it.

GORDON: I was hoping for something better than a thumb.

PHIL: Shut up and do it.

[He goes to the desk and finds a packet of plasters. Takes GORDON's hand. Blood spurts out.]

GORDON: It's only a cut.

[The door bell rings.]

PHIL: Shit. *[Gives plaster to GORDON]* Hold on to that. Put your thumb back in your mouth.

[GORDON does so. PHIL goes to the door to let CLIVE in.]

CLIVE: I trust I intrude not, my dear.

[He enters without waiting for a reply.]

PPHIL: Of course not.

CLIVE: Aren't you a little old to be sucking your thumb, Gordon? Or is it a rehearsal for some more entertaining enterprise?

PHIL: He cut his thumb while he was chopping the carrots.
[Pointed] We were getting dinner.

CLIVE: Enough for three, I hope?

[GORDON laughs. The action opens the cut again.]

GORDON: You're outrageous, Clive.

PHIL: Now look what you've done. You've made the cut open again. Here.

[He takes the plasters and very quickly puts one on.]

PHIL: There. *[He puts the plasters back in the desk, brisk.]* Now, what can we do for you, Clive?

CLIVE: Me? I came purely for the pleasure of your company, and Gordon's sweet face.

[GORDON blows him a kiss.]

PHIL: Come off it. You only ever come round if you want something.

CLIVE: I've hardly been here two minutes and he starts insulting me.

PHIL: I can't think what kept me so long.

GORDON: Fifteen - love.

PHIL: Now come clean, Clive. Is it money?

CLIVE: Alas, yes. I find myself temporarily embarrassed. Purely temporary, I assure you.

PHIL: Of course.

GORDON: Who is it this time?

CLIVE: Have I no privacy, even in my lusts? You are however right, Gordon. Spring is in the air, and the sap is rising. At least, this sap is. If you must know, its name is Wesley, and it is currently playing a Faun who is Tired of Life in that ridiculous troupe visiting the Space. Rarely have I seen a pair of flesh-coloured tights filled to such advantage.

GORDON: Not another actor!

CLIVE: A dancer. Not Nijinsky, I grant you, but then I'm no Diaghilev. The boy is lonely, I am sure, lost in a strange city. He needs comfort and solace, and a companion who will show him the bright lights, introduce him to interesting people, who will soothe his aching muscles and wipe away his tears of homesickness. Not to mention fuck him silly.

PHIL: Is that what he said?

CLIVE: We haven't actually spoken...

PHIL: Pining from afar?

CLIVE: From the third row of the stalls, to be exact. Eight times. And I must say that love know no greater sacrifice than sitting through "The Savage Seasons". It's unspeakably boring – apart from my little bit of heaven, of course. It goes on for ever. Generations are born and die during the course of one performance. I kid you not. Babies born to expectant mothers in the Circle in 'Spring' get the last rites in the orchestra pit by the end of 'Winter'. There's a priest on hand to perform marriages, christenings and funerals, I swear. Fortunately the theatre barman mixes an excellent gin sling, so I amuse myself adequately for the first two acts while awaiting the arrival of my beloved. He is a veritable god, shining in the splendour of his panti-hose. You will meet him shortly, I trust. *[The others are laughing.]* Thirty pounds?

PHIL: Twenty.

CLIVE: Oh. I thought that little performance merited at least thirty.

GORDON: What are you going to do about him?

CLIVE: I shall send a single blood-red rose, courtesy of Interflora, together with an intriguing invitation to dinner at a little restaurant I know off the Bayswater Road totally lacking in charm.

GORDON: Will it work?

CLIVE: It usually does. *[To PHIL:]* Are you sure you can't make it thirty? With the extra tenner I will be able to afford a litre of the nauseating house-wine, which is delivered to your table in what look like oversized specimen jars. The contents do nothing to dispel the impression. However, it has its uses as a lubricant.

PHIL: I'm sure you'll manage without. I've never known your mouth to fail you.

CLIVE: Don't be crude. Wesley is - different. This time it's the real thing.

GORDON: And Shashi? And Faisal? And that nice little Malay student?

CLIVE: Mere infatuations. I knew this was the one from the moment he awakened from his slumbers in his bower with a gesture of despair. I could have raped him on the spot.

[There is a huge embarrassed silence.]

GORDON: Get out.

CLIVE: My dear? Have I said aught to offend?

GORDON: Just get out. Fuck off out of it.

PHIL: You'd better go, Clive.

CLIVE: But all I said was...

PHIL: Don't explain, just go. I'll give you a ring, OK?

CLIVE: All right. I just don't understand why you're so sensitive –

GORDON: Get him out of here, Phil. Please...

PHIL: Clive...

CLIVE: I gather my skirts and flee. I hope we meet again under more auspicious circumstances. *[Turns at the door]* Oh, that money... I do need it. He is so ravishable.

GORDON: I'll kill him.

[GORDON leaps from the chair. PHIL fends him off, hastily fumbling in his pocket for the money. He takes GORDON in one arm, throws the money on the floor, then holds GORDON, who is trembling in a blind rage, in both arms.]

PHIL: Gordon, Gordon... It's over now. It's all over. I love you. I love you.

[CLIVE scrambles on the floor for the money.]

CLIVE: I'll see you soon, Phil. I'm sorry, Gordon –

PHIL: Just go, for God's sake.

CLIVE: Yes... Of course... Bonsoir.

[PHIL gradually soothes GORDON like a frightened horse. CLIVE exits.]

PHIL: There... there... it's all over... Gently does it. He's gone now. He won't come back. Shh... I love you... I love you so much... *[Anger has subsided into tears]* It's all over... Don't worry... It'll go away... You've got me... We've got each other...

[A slow fade.]

BLACKOUT

Scene Five

THE FLAT. MARCH 6TH

[GORDON is sitting on the bedroom floor with a needle and cotton in front of him, and a candle. PHILIP and TERRY are bundling up leaflets in the other room.]

PHIL: I'm worried.

TERRY: You're always worried.

PHIL: Have we done enough publicity?

TERRY: There's a big piece in "Capital Gay". Anyway, nothing more you can do now. There comes a point where you just have to sit back and let it happen.

PHIL: Whatever "it" may be.... You can be sure Parents Power will be out in force.

TERRY: Nasty bunch of bigots. Did you see that leaflet they put out? Bloody disgrace.

PHIL: Only to be expected. The Council has only to dip a toe into Positive Images of lesbians and gays, and the loonies are out in force.

TERRY: These aren't loonies. They're dangerous. They say there's money from the Moonies behind them. Some nasty fascist connections too. I thought Clive was coming round.

PHIL: He had a row with Gordon. These leaflets are terrible. Look at those smudges.

TERRY: What sort of row?

PHIL: That's the last time I go to Community Print. Their press must have been installed by Caxton.

TERRY: Stop trying to avoid the subject.

PHIL: I don't want to talk about it, if you don't mind.

TERRY: Sounds serious.

PHIL: Clive's got a hide like a rhinoceros, but Gordon – Gordon finds it hard to forgive. Or forget.

TERRY: Gordon's coming, I hope.

PHIL: Oh yes. He wouldn't miss this one.

TERRY: What's happened about the banner?

PHIL: Gordon made one. It's around somewhere.

TERRY: You know, we're amazingly well organised. It's good to have a bureaucrat around sometimes.

PHIL: Method, my dear Watson. Even anarchists need method. Actually, it's all I'm good for.

TERRY: Don't knock it. Sometimes I think I'll give my heart to the first person who can get through a meeting in under an hour. You'd better watch out - you almost managed it tonight. So efficient it was frightening.

PHIL: Not too efficient, I hope. I mean, I did let people speak, didn't I? I was fair?

TERRY: Course you were.

[GORDON comes back into the bedroom with kettle, some salt and a cup. Pours out a cup of hot water, adds salt. Stirs it.]

TERRY: That the lot?

PHIL: Mmm. Think so. Cup of tea?

TERRY: Thanks.

[PHIL goes to kitchen, then into bedroom]

PHIL: *[To GORDON:]* Have you finished with the kettle?

GORDON: Sure.

PHIL: What on earth are you doing?

GORDON: Piercing my ear.

PHIL: Why?

GORDON: Because I want to. I think it looks nice. Look at Terry's. I'd like a stud like that.

PHIL: You can't do it on your own.

GORDON: I may need a bit of help with the needle.

PHIL: Christ! How can you?

GORDON: You don't object to Terry's.

PHIL: He had it done properly.

GORDON: I can't afford it.

PHIL: If that's all that's worrying you, I'll pay for it.

GORDON: No. You pay for too much around here.

PHIL: It'll hurt. And what if it gets infected? It's dangerous.

GORDON: I'll sterilise the needle. Look - salt - a candle. It's quite safe.

PHIL: How can you do this to yourself?

GORDON: It's my ear, I'll do what I like to it.

PHIL: Go and have it done properly. Please.

[He puts a hand on GORDON's shoulder. GORDON gently moves away.]

GORDON: Why don't you go and make tea, huh?

PHIL: *[Sighing]* OK.

[He goes into the kitchen. GORDON lights the candle and runs the needle through it. He takes his time. TERRY sits watching.]

TERRY: You're well prepared?

GORDON: I've been working myself up. Do you think it's going to be heavy?

TERRY: I wasn't talking about the demo, I was talking about your piercing. Rather you than me. I couldn't do it myself. Still, it's your ear

GORDON: That's what I said.

TERRY: It's only pain.

GORDON: If I do it myself, I can stop if I want to. But if it's out of Control... *[Pause]* When I was raped, I was in a state of shock for days. The bleeding didn't stop for nearly a week. I couldn't shit for a fortnight - every time I tried I just opened up the scabs again. It made me so scared I forced myself to go to a doctor - and I hate those bastards. He sent me to a consultant who gave me the most painful bloody enema you can imagine. And that was that. The scars healed in time. But inside... that's different.

TERRY: But it's over now, right?

GORDON: Yes. Mostly. Thanks to Phil.

TERRY: And you're happy?

GORDON: Yes...

TERRY: Anything up?

GORDON: Well, it seems so selfish. It's just that at times I feel –

TERRY: Stifled?

GORDON: I'm in his pocket. His flat. His things.

TERRY: Well, a sitting room can be a bedroom too. Just need to move a chair or two. Get a mattress. Record player. You need a bit of room to breathe. A place to be on your own.

GORDON: I'm on my own all day.

TERRY: Maybe you should get out more. Do more. For your own self-respect.

[Re-enter PHIL with tea.]

TERRY: I was just saying Gordon should get out more.

PHIL: I keep telling him, but he just doesn't seem to have the energy. It's the dole mentality. The less you do, the less you want to do.

[GORDON puts the needle to the flame again, and then into the water.]

TERRY: Yet there's no point in going out just for the sake of it.

PHIL: Why not? It's better than sitting at home brooding.

GORDON: Just talk about me among yourselves.

TERRY: I'm sorry, Gordon. You're right. It's not fair.

PHIL: But it's true. I just wish I could find something for you.

GORDON: That's a nice jacket, Terry. Where d'you get it?

[He washes his ear carefully with salt water.]

TERRY: Down the Kings Road. Tiny place. RUSM.

[Pause. PHIL looks worried at GORDON, who carries on oblivious.]

PHIL: I loathe violence. I don't understand how people can inflict it on each other voluntarily.

TERRY: Don't you feel your own violence?

PHIL: Sometimes. But you control it.

TERRY: It still comes out somewhere. Nobody knows what they're truly capable of. Isn't it better to use it in play-acting than keep it under some hatch which is bound to blow anyway one day?

PHIL: There's nothing liberating about hitting people and being hit.

TERRY: It doesn't have to be that. It doesn't have to be physical at all.

PHIL: Who needs games like that anyway?

TERRY: But that's the whole point. It's a game.

[GORDON has the needle halfway through his ear. He stops and turns it round several times. Then dabs it with salt water again. Takes another needle, sterilises it, and tries to add it to the same hole, to enlarge it.]

PHIL: OK, so where do fantasies come from? From the real power structures around us. If society makes us feel powerless we fantasise about being powerful. We make it less real. It's a form of self-oppression.

GORDON: Could you give me a hand?

PHIL: What's up?

GORDON: I can't find the hole.

PHIL: Here.

[He takes the needle, tries to put it through. GORDON flinches.]

I'm sorry. Look, I can't do this. I told you should have had it done properly.

TERRY: Here. I'll have a go.

[He takes the needle and quickly and smoothly puts it in. GORDON starts at the pain.]

Easy. Relax. I'm a doctor, remember? That's it.

[He takes the needle out and swabs the ear.]

Hold that for a moment.

[He takes the stud out of his own ear, quickly cleans it, and puts it into GORDON's.]

There. That's it.

[GORDON relaxes and drinks tea.]

PHIL: Does it hurt?

GORDON: Nothing serious. *[To TERRY:]* Thanks, love.

TERRY: Phil was saying that SMers internalise power structures.

GORDON: Perhaps they just like it.

PHIL: Ah, but why?

GORDON: Why not? No skin off your nose.

[TERRY giggles at the phrase.]

TERRY: I think you're frightened of it.

PHIL: Of course I'm not.

TERRY: I am. Fear's very close to lust behaviourally. It's the fear that makes SM sex so powerful. I went to a leather bar in San Francisco once. There was a sort of torture chamber. A woman was being crucified. Quite literally. Nails through her hands and feet. When I left, somebody was in the middle of nailing her right breast to the wall. I don't know if she was enjoying it, or even if enjoy's the right word. But she chose to be there.

PHIL: You call that choice? I call that being driven by some demon of self-torment. Look, Terry, even our choices are learnt.

TERRY: So why should I have to defend what I do in bed and not you?

PHIL: Because pain hurts. It seems to me, in the strictest sense, unnatural.

GORDON: Don't worry about him, he's just a prude.

PHIL: I am not.

GORDON: You are too.

TERRY: Where's the banner?

GORDON: In the kitchen.

TERRY: Can I look?

GORDON: Sure. Help yourself. *[TERRY exits]*

PHIL: Are you OK?

GORDON: Sure. Why not?

PHIL: All that talk.

GORDON: I don't need protecting.

PHIL: Good. Here, give us a cuddle.

[He takes GORDON in his arms, GORDON not really wanting this. TERRY re-enters with the Banner, which has Positive Images in silver lame on pink. He unfolds it dramatically. The effect is stunning.]

TERRY: Wow!

PHIL: Smarter than your average banner, what?

TERRY: Who's a clever little fairy, then? Dazzles you just to look at it.

[TERRY accidentally treads on GORDON's foot.]

GORDON: Ow.

TERRY: I hope you're not wearing those sandals tomorrow. One tread from a steel-capped DM and you'll have three broken toes.

GORDON: They're the only shoes I've got.

TERRY: Pity. They're the only toes you've got too.

PHIL: I'll buy you some heavy boots in the morning.

GORDON: I'm fed up with you buying me things.

PHIL: I like buying you things. What else should I spend my money on?

GORDON: Give it to charity.

PHIL: What do you think I'm doing?

[He goes into the bedroom in a huff.]

GORDON: See what I mean? We've got problems.

TERRY: You do need a pair of boots.

GORDON: I need money. I need self respect.

TERRY: Hey, shouldn't you go in and talk to him?

GORDON: He'll be alright. He does that sometimes.

TERRY: All the same, I don't think I should be here. *[He gathers his stuff up.]* I'll see you at the Town Hall at six. *[Picks up leaflets]* I'll take these on the bike. Well, Goodnight. Love the banner.

[He gives GORDON the regulation kiss, which GORDON lengthens, putting his arms round TERRY. He digs his knuckles into TERRY's back. TERRY grunts with surprise, then surrenders to it.]

TERRY: Well. Now we know.

GORDON: Yes. Now you know.

TERRY: Not that I'm surprised. Another time, maybe. Good luck with Phil.

[He leaves almost brusquely. GORDON fingers his new stud gingerly. Holds the banner out to admire it Then he takes his belt off and puts it round his neck like a dog collar. Stands looking at himself in the mirror as the lights fade to –]

BLACKOUT

Scene Six

MARCH 7TH.

[A Radio Interview on tape.]

INTERVIEWER: So what you're saying is, they're too young?

PARENT: Exactly. Children of six or seven don't have the intellectual development to understand concepts of sexuality. And yet here's the council planning to teach them homosexuality. For heaven's sake, why? Childhood's short enough as it is. Let them keep their innocence while they can. That's all Parents Power is saying. Parents would be failing in their responsibility if they didn't encourage a healthy respect for the family in their children. The family is the foundation of our society, after all. Parents Power has nothing against homosexuals. What they do in private is their own business. For heaven's sake, we all know such things exist, but do we really need to parade them?

[The noise of a demonstration gets louder and louder on tape as the lights fade.]

BLACKOUT

Scene Seven

THE FLAT. MARCH 7TH.

[The flat is empty. It is evening. TERRY comes in, runs to the telephone. Dials a number.]

TERRY: Come on, come on. Hello? Clive? Terry here. Yes... sure... great... Clive, shut up for a minute, for God's sake. Phil's been arrested. At the Town Hall lobby. There was some NF trouble. No, they got away. Phil was lying on the ground so the police arrested him. I don't know. Causing an obstruction, I suppose. Kennington. Could you run down there and bail him out? I know the difference between a solicitor and a barrister, Clive. Sod the Law Society, you're supposed to be his friend. Anyway, anyone can stand bail, can't they? Right. I'm at Phil's flat. I've got the spare key. Look, I'll tell you all about it later. Just hurry, will you? Thanks. Bye.

[He puts the phone down. As he does so, GORDON rushes in. He has the banner in his hands, now torn.]

TERRY: What's up?

GORDON: I've been followed. Group of kids.

TERRY: How many?

GORDON: I didn't stop to count them.

TERRY: Where'd you meet them?

GORDON: I was coming away from the lobby. They came out of a side alley. It was the banner, I suppose. I've been all round the houses. Don't know if I've managed to lose them.

TERRY: Phil's been arrested...

[There is a battering at the door. GORDON and TERRY freeze. Then TERRY goes into the hall.]

TERRY: Who is it?

[Shouting off, a very large group.]

1st VO: Oi. Queers.

2nd VO: We're coming to get you.

1st VO: Gonna kick your heads in.

2nd VO: National Front... National Front...

1st VO: We know you're in there. You can't escape.

TERRY: *[Best 'irate householder' voice]* What are you doing, disturbing people like this?

[Sound of the door being hammered.]

I don't know what you think you're playing at, but if you don't go away I shall call the police immediately.

1st VO: The only good queer is a dead queer.

2nd VO: Got AIDS yet?

1st VO: Fight AIDS, stamp out queers.

TERRY: *[Loud, firm]* Gordon, get on the phone immediately. Dial 999.

2nd VO: Gordon! Hello, Gordon, ducky.

1st VO: Fucking benders.

2nd VO: Do you take it up the arse, Gordon darling?

1st VO: Rip his bollocks off.

2nd VO: Do you want me to give it you. Gordon? I bet you want my cock...

[GORDON is stood in a terrified trance. A window smashes. A banger is thrown in. It goes off. TERRY produces an anti-rape whistle, sets it off, yelling at the top of his voice. The whistle rends the air for about thirty seconds, then stops. There is sudden, total silence. GORDON starts shaking.]

TERRY: Good whistle, that. I'll have to get a refill now, though. Did you phone the police? *[No reaction]* Good. I hate calling them in. You can stop that now, they won't be back. Sit down, I'll make a cup of tea. I said sit down.

[He playfully pushes GORDON into a seat and exits. Fade to:-]

BLACKOUT

Scene Eight

THE POLICE STATION. MARCH 7TH.

[A Counter. PHIL and CLIVE on one side, CONSTABLE on the other. The PC is itemising the contents of PHIL's pockets as he hands them back.]

PC: One handkerchief... set of keys, five... One comb... one wallet... two ten pound notes, one five, two one pound notes... small change, 47p... One pair of shoelaces.

PHIL: Why do they take those? It's pure humiliation.

CLIVE: Nonsense. *[Ironic]* They take your shoelaces so that you can't hang yourself when you are overcome with remorse. I'm sure that humiliation is the last thing intended. Isn't that right, Constable?

PC: I wouldn't know, sir.

CLIVE: That appears to be all. *[To PHIL:]* If you'll just sign Here... Oh, and the bail form... *[To CONSTABLE:]* You have my banker's reference. Coutts – it's the Queen's branch, you know. Charge sheet...

[The CONSTABLE hands it over]

Thank you. And if there's nothing else we can do for you, we'll wish you goodnight.

[They leave. PHIL kneels to put his shoelaces back in. He has some difficulty bending down.]

PHIL: *[Surprised]* You're good.

CLIVE: I am. Very good. Do not be put off by my surface brilliance. Contrary to popular opinion, all that glitters is not dross. How are you feeling?

PHIL: I can hardly move. Look I'd better be getting home. Gordon will be worried.

CLIVE: You will do nothing of the sort. You are going to come back

with me. Wesley will mix you a large gin and tonic while I phone Doctor Mike. He's only just round the corner. Very camp and very sweet. Thank God for homosexuals – the NHS would fall apart without them. He can give you a going over, and make whatever report is necessary. Meanwhile, I will take some lurid snaps of your injuries on my box brownie. Then I shall don some drag for my best Florence Nightingale impersonation, put you in a hot bath, and then tuck you up in the spare bed.

PHIL: But -

CLIVE: No buts, I insist. If you are worried about Gordon, you can phone from the flat, though heaven knows she's old enough to take care of herself. Besides, I want you to write out everything you remember. If you leave it till tomorrow you'll have forgotten the half of it.

PHIL: OK.

CLIVE: You didn't make a statement, I hope?

PHIL: I'm not stupid.

CLIVE: Good.

PHIL: They tried to make me. This inspector kept saying, "You might as well own up, son. It'll look better in court."

CLIVE: Son! At your age you should find that flattering. [*Reads charge sheet.*] Malicious wounding, assault, causing an affray. ABH. I think we can handle that little lot. I know a competent little solicitor who does wonders by fluttering her eyelashes at the bench.

PHIL: How can a man as fundamentally nice as you say such terrible things?

CLIVE: Because it is what I learnt as a callow youth. I'm too old to change now. It would take too much effort, and there are more important Everests to scale than me. I come of a piece. Take me or leave me.

Leather by Eric Presland

PHIL: What am I going to get?

CLIVE: Get?

PHIL: The sentence.

CLIVE: Why, nothing, of course. You're not guilty. Taxi!

[PHIL protests feebly.]

No, I insist. You're in no condition to walk. Taxi! Er – you couldn't lend me the money for the fare, could you?

BLACKOUT

Scene Nine

THE FLAT. THE SAME EVENING.

[GORDON and TERRY sit in semi-darkness. They are tense, waiting.]

TERRY: Another cup of tea?

GORDON: It's coming out of me ears.

TERRY: Another joint then?

GORDON: I don't think I should.

TERRY: Worrying won't help. You're as bad as Phil.

GORDON: I can't help it.

TERRY: I like your boots.

GORDON: I just wish I could have paid for them myself. Phil got them this morning. Insisted.

[The phone rings. They both start for it, then back away, smiling.]

GORDON: No. You.

TERRY: Sure? *[He answers it.]* Hello? Phil? Thank god for that. Where are you? Good. Gordon's here. No, he's fine. Do you want to talk to him? I'll put him on.

[GORDON has been hovering. He takes the phone.]

GORDON: Love? Are you OK? I've been so worried... Oh, that's good. Does it hurt? Sure. Oh, I'm fine. Bit freaked out, but that's over now. There was a bit of trouble...

[TERRY signals frantically]

Hang on a mo, love. *[To TERRY:]* What?

TERRY: Don't mention what happened here. He's got enough to worry about. We'll get the window mended first thing, he

won't notice.

GORDON: *[To PHIL:]* Sorry love. Trouble? No, I meant the drama. When are you going to be back? Oh sure. I understand. Don't worry, I'll be fine. We'll talk in the morning. Take care of yourself, love. Thanks for ringing. Bye. *[He puts the phone down.]* He's staying over at Clive's.

TERRY: You don't sound too pleased.

GORDON: I don't fancy staying here on me own.

TERRY: There's no danger.

GORDON: I won't sleep.

TERRY: Neither will I.

[GORDON goes to take his boots off.]

TERRY: No. Leave them on.

GORDON: Why?

TERRY: Because I like them. Please.

GORDON: OK. *[Pause]* What do we do now?

TERRY: What do you want to do?

GORDON: Nothing in particular. Why do people always have to do things?

TERRY: No reason.

GORDON: Do you want some music?

TERRY: That'd be nice.

[GORDON goes over to the record player. Puts on the slow movement of Mozart's 23rd piano concerto.]

GORDON: Not really my style, but it's very soothing.

TERRY: Don't you have any records?

GORDON: All still in Sunderland. I wish I had the bread. There's lots I'd like to get.

TERRY: Peddle your arse round the Dilly. You'd need a haircut. of course. And you'd have to shave off the beard. Tidy yourself up a bit - you couldn't work looking like a slob. But you're quite presentable underneath that lot, except your bum's a bit big. Bit old, of course. But a lot of punters aren't that fussy.

GORDON: Bastard.

[During TERRY's speech GORDON has been kicking TERRY playfully. He aims a hard kick. Pause.]

Will you stay tonight?

TERRY: What are you offering?

GORDON: What do you want?

TERRY: Make me stay.

[He takes GORDON's boot and rubs it against his cheek.]

BLACKOUT

Scene Ten

THE SAME EVENING

[PHIL, GORDON and TERRY in separate spots. TERRY kneels facing upstage. PHIL is dictating to CLIVE, who is unseen.]

PHIL: I don't know. It's a bit confused really. We were on one side of the Town Hall steps. Parents Power was on the other side. The Police were in the middle. It got quite heated. Somebody started chucking bottles at us.

* * *

GORDON: Who am I?

TERRY: Who am I?

GORDON: Rapist.

TERRY: Skinhead

GORDON: Dad.

TERRY: Fascist

GORDON: What am I?

TERRY: You are strong.

GORDON: You are weak.

TERRY: I am strong.

* * *

PHIL: I was standing on a wall holding onto the railings. There was a lot of milling about. Then about twenty skinheads appeared out of a pub on the other side of the road. The Four Feathers, do you know it? Some of them had British Movement tattoos. A couple of them had sticks, and I think I saw one with a kitchen knife. There were a couple of older men standing in the doorway, giving directions.

* * *

GORDON: Years I've been waiting. Gonna wipe that smile off your face, Dad.

TERRY: You won't get me. Not like you got the others.

GORDON: You tried to strangle me. Choke me. Clean sheets. Soap powder.

TERRY: Voices shouting

GORDON: Voices whispering in my ear.

TERRY: Noise

GORDON: Stop the voices

TERRY: You can't shout me down.

GORDON: I'll teach you a lesson

TERRY: You can't tame me

GORDON: Nothing's going to make you stop except me

TERRY: Boot. Fist. You'll never get me.

* * *

PHIL: The police weren't expecting anything. So they just charged into us. I didn't have a chance to warn anybody. There was too much noise. They started hitting all around them. I saw a couple of guys - sixteen, seventeen - dragging this woman out of the crowd by her hair. She was screaming at the top of her voice, but nobody noticed. One of them had a lump of wood with a four-inch nail in it. He was hitting her on the back and shoulders. You could see the blood spreading in little pools on her jersey every time he struck. I didn't think what I was doing or anything.

* * *

TERRY: Tell me

GORDON: You kept laughing

TERRY: You can't break me

GORDON: You couldn't hear me screaming, Dad.

TERRY: Go on. Do it again.

GORDON: You couldn't hear me screaming, Dennis.

TERRY: Again. I can take it.

GORDON: Dennis and John. Dennis. Dad.

TERRY: Do it again. I defy you.

GORDON: You're breaking my arm, Dad.

TERRY: No power.

GORDON: Please God, stop it. I'll believe in you if you make them stop it.

TERRY: Muscle. Bone. But no power.

GORDON: No, Dennis. I think I'm going to split. I can't take it.

TERRY: I can take it.

GORDON: The bone's cracking, I can feel it, it's giving, Dad, no please.

TERRY: Slobs, morons. I hate you. I despise you.

* * *

PHIL: I charged into the guy with a stick and knocked him over. The woman broke free, I think. I managed to get hold of the stick, but then I was tripped from behind. I was surrounded by these people kicking shit out of me. I must have passed out then.

* * *

GORDON: Fingers. Forcing. One. Two. Three.

TERRY: You can't win. Hate. Punish.

GORDON: No, I can't take it. I'm too small.

TERRY: You can't punish. I am strong.

GORDON: Pick on someone your own size, Dad.

TERRY: I can take anything you throw at me

* * *

PHIL: When I came round, they were dragging me off to the wagon. I tried to put up a fight, but I wasn't in much of a state. I noticed one of the pigs had the stick - they showed it to me at the station. It had bloodstains and bits of wool and hair on it.

* * *

GORDON: You big bullies both of you no you can't my inside's going it's filling me it's coming out my chest

TERRY: I am strong me, me, yes me no tears for me

GORDON: You've killed me, Dad.

TERRY: I am pure undefiled

GORDON: Fist stop there please fist beautiful fist don't stop

TERRY: Don't stop

* * *

PHIL: Sure I'd recognise them. Six foot. Well built. Tattoos. Braces. Shaved heads. Somebody's wet dream.

* * *

TERRY: I am cleansed by pain

GORDON: I'll show you you killed me all of you there I'll pay you all of you

TERRY: I am pure

GORDON: Pulp

TERRY: Strong

GORDON: Kill

TERRY: Sticks

GORDON: Smash

TERRY: Studs

GORDON: Crush

TERRY: Whips

TERRY: Hands Fist

GORDON: All of you

TERRY: Give never

GORDON: Won't ever again

TERRY: Give back

GORDON: Not ever ever ever

TERRY: To lash the sin pure from me.

[GORDON collapses into TERRY's arms.]

* * *

PHIL: You know, in one way I'm glad this happened. It's like some

barrier was broken. For the first time since I was a kid, I did something without thinking about it. Maybe it wasn't the right thing - but I did it. I let myself go.

* * *

[Mozart plays in the background. TERRY slowly sits up and kisses GORDON's boot. They embrace. GORDON strips off TERRY's leather jacket, and puts it on himself.]

GORDON: Fuck me. Please.

A SLOW FADE TO BLACKOUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene One

THE FLAT. APRIL 2ND.

[The room has been rearranged. The bedroom has become GORDON's. The living room is PHIL's. It is early evening. GORDON is in his room, reading. The record player is on in PHIL's room, loud so GORDON can hear it. PHIL enters from work, a couple of letters in his hand. He opens one and reads it.]

GORDON: *[calling]* Hi.

[PHIL doesn't answer; he reaches over to turn the record-player down automatically. He sits down to read, seriously absorbed.]

GORDON: Hey, I was listening to that. *[He comes through to the other room]* What's up?

PHIL: It's come.

GORDON: Summons?

PHIL: Yeah.

GORDON: When?

PHIL: June 15th. Ten weeks. Plenty of time.

GORDON: Worried?

PHIL: Yes. No. Bored, more like. And tired. It was worth it in the heat of the moment. Now it's just another bloody hassle. Sod the fine, these defence committee meetings are punishment enough. Interviews, press releases, getting hold of witnesses. I'm fed up with it.

GORDON: Work still getting you down?

[He massages PHIL's shoulders.]

- PHIL: Yeah. I must be the only forty year old junior tax inspector in the country. I'm sure it's Buckley blocking any promotion. I'd have thought he'd be glad to get rid of me. Do you know, he's just acquired an electric organ? One of those ghastly things with an automatic rhythm section. He's learning "With These Hands" in the lunch hour. It's driving me crazy.
- GORDON: So change your job.
- PHIL: What to?
- GORDON: I dunno. Bookshop. Printing. Community work.
- PHIL: Which is exhausting and time consuming as well. The community is a lousy employer.
- GORDON: At least you'd be exhausted in a good cause.
- PHIL: At least now I get home on the dot of half past five; leaving the evenings free for an endless round of boring bloody meetings. Hey, what's that smell, as if I didn't know.
- GORDON: Want a toque?
- PHIL: Not before food. I didn't know you had any.
- GORDON: *[Tense]* Terry came round. He's on night-call this week.
- PHIL: Oh, that's nice. How is he? I haven't seen him for nearly a month - since the demo, in fact.
- GORDON: That's cos of nights. He's OK. Sent his love. You coming to the meeting tonight?
- PHIL: *[Yawns]* I suppose so. You?
- GORDON: Sure. We've got all those donations to sort out.
- PHIL: You know, I feel a bit embarrassed being involved in a defence committee designed to defend me. Like taking round your own collection plate.

GORDON: You could give it a miss tonight. We could manage without you.

PHIL: Nothing else to do.

GORDON: Your trouble, you think the world will stop if you're not in charge.

PHIL: Rubbish. Anybody could do what I do.

GORDON: Then let them.

PHIL: Hey, couldn't we both give this evening a miss? We haven't had an evening together for ages. I mean, just us. I could take you to a movie or something.

GORDON: I don't want to be taken to a movie. You go.

PHIL: It's no fun on my own. Couldn't you skip, just this once?

GORDON: I promised.

[PHIL puts his arm round GORDON, who winces. PHIL is instantly concerned. GORDON makes a decision. He takes PHIL by the hand and draws him to the bedroom - his room.]

PHIL: You're always bloody promising these days.

GORDON: Oh great! A month ago you were moaning cos I don't do anything. Now I am doing something, you don't like it. I just can't win.

PHIL: We're drifting. I'm frightened.

GORDON: Oh, love. *[Comes and takes his hand]* Don't let's quarrel.

PHIL: What's up?

GORDON: Nothing.

PHIL: You can't fool me. What is it?

GORDON: Hey, you look really tasty in your suit.

[He kisses PHIL, but is careful not to press against him.]

Let's go to bed, huh?

PHIL: But you've got to -

GORDON: There's plenty of time. It's not yet six. Come on. There's something I want to tell you.

PHIL: What?

GORDON: I'll tell you in bed.

PHIL: We haven't done this for ages.

GORDON: We did it last night.

PHIL: I mean, been to bed when I got home from work. It feels rather sinful. Very pleasant.

[They are undressing. GORDON goes to turn off the light.]

PHIL: No. Leave it on. I want to look at you.

GORDON: You sure?

PHIL: Quite sure.

GORDON: *[Sighs]* OK. *[Pause]* Hey, remember that time we went to - where was it? That castle?

PHIL: Conway.

GORDON: That's it. Our dirty weekend. Rhyll out of season. All the shops shut up and drizzle all the time. But the castle was fun.

PHIL: Yes.

GORDON: We stood up on the battlements and you could see all the fields green and brown along the coast, and Anglesey across the bay. The rain was blowing in from the sea, and

the wind was unbelievable. Took your breath away. You pulled me into an - a

PHIL: An embrasure.

GORDON: More like a cottage. Somebody's pissed in the corner, and all the graffiti. And you sucked me off so beautifully. The spray in my face, your tongue warm and wet on my cock.

[GORDON takes a deep breath, takes off his jersey. His back is covered in welts and bruises. PHIL is completely non-plussed as to how to react. He folds his clothes carefully to gain time, but his voice trembles.]

PHIL: Terry?

GORDON: You had to know some time. I wanted to take you to bed. Tell you with my arms around you. I love you, Phil. I still want you.

PHIL: Did you - enjoy it?

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: Do you love him?

GORDON: He's very - exciting.

PHIL: How nice for you.

GORDON: Oh, love. Don't worry... I wouldn't do anything to hurt you.

PHIL: I'm just a bit... phased... by Terry's – special interests. Yours too?

GORDON: At the moment, yes. Sometimes.

PHIL: I don't know what to do.

GORDON: There's nothing to do. Nothing's changed.

PHIL: *[Forcing interest]* What are they, those marks?

GORDON: I can't see.

PHIL: What did you use?

GORDON: Terry's belt.

PHIL: Oh.

GORDON: And his track shoes. But that's mostly on my arse.

PHIL: There are little blue-yellow marks on your shoulders here. They look a bit like cigarette burns.

GORDON: They're not.

PHIL: I suppose it must be the studs. On the belt.

GORDON: Yeah. Must be. Oh dearest. I do love you so much.

[He puts his arms round PHIL. PHIL grabs him almost desperately. The movement makes GORDON wince again.]

PHIL: *[Almost in tears]* I don't know how to hold you any more.

GORDON: Don't...

PHIL: Don't what? Don't hold you? Don't take any notice of the way you shy a way every time I touch you? I literally don't know what to do.

GORDON: Bruises go away.

PHIL: Great. Terrific. So we stop having sex till you can bear to be touched again? Then what happens? Do I get a look-in then before you go and see Terry again, or do you go back to Terry straight away for some more while I wait till you're in the mood and undamaged?

GORDON: I'm going to have a bath.

PHIL: Yes, do that. It'll bring out the bruises quicker.

GORDON: I'm sorry you're taking it like this.

PHIL: Well, what did you expect? I'm randy after you've worked me up, I'm disappointed, I'm scared - all right, I'm jealous. And after all I've done for you -

GORDON: You don't fucking own me. Much though you'd like to.

PHIL: What's that meant to mean?

GORDON: Like buying me everything. Like trying to keep me tied to everything you do.

PHIL: Gordon -

GORDON: I'm not your fucking wife.

PHIL: Gordon, I want to talk about -

GORDON: Now get out of my fucking room.

[They stare at each other. PHIL slams out of the room and out of the front door.]

BLACKOUT

Scene Two.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH. APRIL 2ND.

[It's later the same evening. PHIL is walking in a state of nervous agitation. He paces up and down. He is slightly drunk, talking to himself.]

PHIL: "My room"... "Get out of my room"... Fucking hell, that was part of my flat two weeks ago. He doesn't even pay rent. Who does he think he is?

Course, it serves you right. Another of your lame ducks. Well, he's found his feet now, all right. Next thing you won't be able to imagine what you saw in him. That's OK, that's the best bit, when you don't feel anything more. But he's certainly got the whip hand right now.

[He realises what he's said and laughs. A man crosses near him. Turns and looks hard at PHIL. PHIL only glances, not really interested.]

PHIL: You ought to be proud of yourself. Gordon's your creation. You fall for him because he's vulnerable, so you make him less vulnerable, and when you've done that he tells you to piss off. Success!

[He laughs. The man has returned. They pass again. PHIL sidesteps, oblivious.]

MAN: You talk to yourself, did you know that?

PHIL: It's the only way to have an intelligent conversation.

MAN: *[Laughs]* You've got a point. Been here long?

PHIL: I don't know. What's the time?

MAN: About ten o'clock

PHIL: Doesn't time fly when you're enjoying yourself?

[They both laugh]

MAN: There's some bushes over there.

PHIL: So there are. How convenient

MAN: Well?

PHIL: OK. Sure. You come here a lot?

MAN: Only in the summer. You?

PHIL: First time.

MAN: Really?

PHIL: Yes. I think it's creepy, to be honest. People who never speak, faces you never see. It's the quiet. I don't think I could just - plunge in.

MAN: You get used to it.

[The lights fade]

BLACKOUT

.

Scene Three

THE FLAT. APRIL 2ND, LATER.

[GORDON is asleep in his room. Front door opens and closes. Very slowly PHIL comes in. He is almost in a state of trance. He stops centre stage. He keeps muttering to himself. Voice Over on tape - his voice.]

V.O.: I'm sorry, but I can't go through with this. I've changed my mind. I know that's not very nice for you, mucking you around, but - I can't. I shouldn't have come up here in the first place. I was trying to prove something - but I don't want to any more. I can't. It was stupid. I can't. I want to go home. I can't. No, please - I can't. Put that knife away. I can't. Let me go. I can't. I can't. I can't.

PHIL: *[Onstage, scarcely audible.]* You can't rape nothing. I - am - nothing. You can't rape nothing.

[He goes to GORDON's door, looks in, as if to wake him. Changes his mind, shuts the door softly. Goes to the phone and dials.]

PHIL: Clive? No, I don't. *[Looks at his watch]* Is it? I'm sorry, I had no idea. Look, can I come round and see you? Yes, now. I know it's late, but it's important. Please, Clive. I've done something stupid...

FADE TO BLACKOUT

Scene Four

THE FLAT. JUNE 5TH.

[CLIVE and PHIL are going through papers.]

PHIL: What time are they coming?

CLIVE: Officially, about ten minutes ago.

PHIL: Typical. Endless bloody meetings that never even start on time. I'm fed up with it.

CLIVE: It's Faggot Local Time. They'll be here.

PHIL: Including Gordon?

CLIVE: Probably not.

PHIL: You're not sure?

CLIVE: I was rather banking on his sensitivity to the situation. I hinted as much.

PHIL: Fat chance. The only hint he'd understand is half a brick. Selfish little bastard.

CLIVE: Mmm. Well, we've got three witnesses. Unfortunately the skinheads still elude the law.

PHIL: It's serious, isn't it? This case, I mean.

CLIVE: My dear, they are throwing the book at you, plus index, appendices and supplements.

PHIL: I'm scared.

CLIVE: You have no reason to be. A vindictive judge could conceivably give you five years. But the point is, you are innocent. We have witnesses.

PHIL: I hope you're right.

- CLIVE: I'm always right. Now enough of this nonsense. Let's talk about something more interesting.
- PHIL: How's Wesley?
- CLIVE: You touch a delicate spot. Wesley was last seen at Heaven villainously cross-gartered in white leather. The effect, I am told, was akin to a somewhat overcooked hot cross bun. I grieve, I pine.
- PHIL: Maybe it's what he wants; he's just finding his feet.
- CLIVE: I am pained that he doesn't want me. And what he has found is other people's feet. Oh Phil, when is this wretched fashion for dressing up in dead cows going to pass? I loathe it. It's a disease. Somebody seems to succumb to it every other week. Only on Tuesday, a very sedate stockbroker of my acquaintance, feeling the pinch of middle years, confided that he had suddenly acquired the urge to appoint himself in a stetson, boots and chaps. No wonder the stock market's falling.
- PHIL: Where is everyone?
- CLIVE: All in its own sweet time. I'm grateful for the chance of a quiet chat with you. We talk personally only too rarely.
- PHIL: True. *[Pause]* So, what now, apres-Wesley? Forward once more to the Covent Garden crush bar, dear friends?
- CLIVE: Not yet a while. I feel suddenly old this time. I was looking in the mirror this morning for the first time in years. I didn't recognise the face. I could see the features of someone I knew underneath it, features that were young, smooth, confident, not unattractive, rather sensitive. Only they have blurred with food and drink and experience. The sensitive mouth is hardened against pain, the eyes dare you to reject them. In short, I am middle-aged.
- PHIL: Get thee to a Health Spa.
- CLIVE: Not any more. For many years my skin has been trying to crawl back up my cheekbones to its original position

beneath the eyes. I have exhorted it, pushed it, pulled it, nourished it with vitamins and cossetted it with creams, egging it on in its heroic ascent against time and gravity. But now my skin has finally said, "What the heck!" And so do I. Got any gin?

PHIL: You're in luck. A new bottle.

CLIVE: In that case I suggest we boost our joint morale before the hordes arrive.

PHIL: What, all three of them?

CLIVE: It's as good an excuse as any.

PHIL: True. *[He gets up to pour the drinks.]*

CLIVE: Let us rise above the turgid confines of the flesh.

PHIL: *[Pouring]* Thanks, Clive.

CLIVE: For what?

PHIL: Oh - everything. This last two months. You've been very good.

CLIVE: I have merely been in the right place at the right time.

PHIL: Well, what I needed I got. And I'm very grateful. *[Pause]* "Damaged goods," that's what Gordon called it. That's exactly it. Of course, in many ways it was my own fault –

CLIVE: We've been over all that, and it's arrant nonsense as you well know.

PHIL: It's as if at a crucial moment I ceased to exist –

CLIVE: How are "things", as they say, with Gordon?

PHIL: Oh, not as bad as they might be. He's over at Terry's. When they're together they stop over there. I prefer it that way. *[Pause]* Oh, we've tried being 'civilised' about it. I had Terry over for dinner one Saturday. It was awful. I spent the

whole evening wondering which of us was going to end up in bed with Gordon. I kept shaking with fright. I knew the answer all along, of course. I lay in here, listening to them in there. God knows what they were doing to each other, but it was quite - noisy. Anyway, after you've been raped, all love making sounds like rape. I kept getting flashbacks to the Heath. I rushed out into the street screaming. Quite literally. In my knickers. I sat on a wall by the park nearly naked, and howled. When I came back in, they'd stopped, thankfully. So I asked them not to come here for a bit. I couldn't tell them the real reason, but they were quite good about it. Another drink?

CLIVE: Thanks.

PHIL: I'm sorry to bore you. It's ridiculous, really. I can't stop talking about it, thinking about it. And them. It's there all the time, even when we're doing something like this. Little pictures. Earth in the mouth. Screams. My screams. Gordon's screams. Oh, hell. I've told you all this before.

CLIVE: At least a dozen times, my dear. One more or less won't make any difference. You're still seeing Gordon?

PHIL: Yes.

CLIVE: And you're still having sex with him?

PHIL: Sort of.

CLIVE: Sort of?

PHIL: Well, we arrange to meet, and we meet, and we have a drink, and Gordon looks like he's got indigestion, and says he can't cope with the demands that Terry and I are both making, by which he means the demands that I'm making – he seems quite happy with Terry's demands. And at the end of the evening we agree it's better to have talked, and I say, "Do you want to come back?", and he says 'yes', sometimes, but mainly 'no'. And when he says no, I go all cold inside, and I try to ignore it and arrange to meet again. And when he says yes, I get frightened of what I might be expected to do. So he comes back and the conversation

goes all stilted, and eventually I say, "Shall we go to bed?", and then he lies there staring at the ceiling, all tense, and then I can see him making the decision that he's going to please me, and he steels himself to do so. And afterwards I feel like I've had a rather inexperienced rent boy, and then we go to sleep, in silence.

CLIVE: I see.

PHIL: Oh Clive, what am I going to do? Two months I've had to put up with it.

CLIVE: I'd say find someone else fast. Find several people.

PHIL: But I want Gordon.

CLIVE: But you need friends.

[The bell rings. CLIVE answers it. Enter ALAN.]

ALAN: Have I missed the fun?

CLIVE: What fun?

ALAN: What? You mean you haven't overthrown capitalism yet?

CLIVE: We were waiting for you to do it.

ALAN: Hi, Phil. Sorry I'm late. Caucus meeting

CLIVE: How you cope with those grimy heterosexual socialists is beyond me. Or why. I could never feel totally at ease with people who rolled their own cigarettes.

ALAN: Gordon rolls his own.

CLIVE: But Gordon compensates by using a cigarette holder, so we excuse him his one proletarian affectation.

PHIL: Will you please stop talking about Gordon?

[The bell rings. ALAN answers it. Laughter in the hall. GORDON and TERRY enter, very much 'together'.]

TERRY: Sorry we're late. Gordon took hours tarding himself up.

GORDON: And Terry's bike wouldn't start. As usual.

TERRY: It doesn't like the weight of Gordon's fat arse.

GORDON: Baggage!

[They laugh and punch each other playfully.]

CLIVE: I'd like to call this meeting to order.

PHIL: *[Cold]* Hello.

GORDON: Hello, love.

[He separates himself almost guiltily from TERRY. They sit down, very proper.]

ALAN: I've got apologies from Sue and Howard. They're at a conference in Sheffield.

PHIL: How convenient.

CLIVE: That's quite enough of that.

PHIL: Sorry.

CLIVE: Now, Phil's decided he wants to defend himself.

ALAN: Is that wise?

PHIL: I know what I'm doing. I hate lawyers. Loud porty voices. Present company excepted, of course... I'll make my own mistakes, thank you.

ALAN: That's what worries me. Why take the risk?

PHIL: It's my neck.

CLIVE: Phil feels that if he conducts his own defence, he'll be more in control.

TERRY: It's been done before. Remember the Oz trial.

GORDON: That dates you.

TERRY: You said you liked mature men.

GORDON: Not moth-eaten. *[A laugh and a push.]*

TERRY: Eat shit, pus-head.

GORDON: What? Here?

PHIL: *[Slightly hysterical]* Can we stick to the point?

ALAN: Do we know who the judge is?

CLIVE: Mr. Justice Newton, I believe. Not noted for his broadness of mind, but usually fair if not rubbed the wrong way.

TERRY: Didn't he hear John Burgess's case? The one who got done for manslaughter. Some guy had a heart attack on him in his pleasure chamber. Got off with a conditional discharge, surprisingly enough.

GORDON: Maybe the judge is into S and M.

PHIL: *[More upset]* Please...

CLIVE: Quite right. The point is, we've got a very good chance, and there really is no case to answer.

PHIL: The police are trying to whitewash their handling of the demonstration. The prosecution is a diversion. They haven't caught one of those skinheads.

GORDON: *[Whispers to TERRY]* If they do, I hope they save one for me.

PHIL: *[Rising in fury]* I'm sorry, but I can't possibly carry on with this. If you can't keep the meeting in order, Clive, I don't want to know. Bunch of wankers, wasting my time. *[As he*

goes, to TERRY and GORDON:] Kindly confine your sadism to the bedroom where it belongs.

[PHIL Exits. CLIVE hesitates, wondering whether to follow him. Then –]

CLIVE: Now. Behaviour outside the court. I believe you wanted to say something, Alan...

FADE TO BLACKOUT

Scene Five

A SEX SHOP. JUNE 10TH.

[HUGO, an athletic blond, is behind the counter, reading a mag. Enter TERRY and GORDON. GORDON is a bit nervous.]

TERRY: Oh, come on. They won't rape you.

GORDON: I know. I just feel like a dirty old man.

TERRY: They don't stock them.

[GORDON laughs.]

TERRY: Stop being so coy. We don't have to buy anything if we don't want to. They're very nice and helpful.

[He sees HUGO and is a bit shocked.]

GORDON: *[Seeing HUGO]* Oh, I'll have that one.

TERRY: Not for sale. Little slut.

[Slaps GORDON's wrist. GORDON holds it out for more.]

HUGO: Can I help you, sir?

GORDON: Any time...

TERRY: Hello, Hugo. This is Gordon.

HUGO: Hi

GORDON: *[To TERRY]* What lovely people you know.

TERRY: Hugo and I are old friends. Aren't we, Hugo?

HUGO: *[Awkwardly]* Yes.

TERRY: Gordon's pretty new.

GORDON: You make me sound like a virgin.

TERRY: I thought I'd show him around. That OK with you?

HUGO: Sure. Help yourself. Are you interested in anything in particular?

GORDON: Er - I don't know yet.

TERRY: I've got a few odds and ends at home.

HUGO: I know.

TERRY: Of course you do. Anyway, I thought it better if he had some things of his own. Then he's not tied to me.

GORDON: In a manner of speaking. *[HUGO laughs]*

TERRY: He's only got a bit to spend, but it's his birthday next week, so I thought I'd get him something too.

HUGO: I see. Well, look around. And if you need a hand, I'll tell you anything you need to know.

GORDON: I will.

[HUGO sits back with his magazine. GORDON surveys the shop.]

I don't know where to start.

TERRY: Well, basically it depends whether you want to dress up, or whether you want things which have some kind of – effect. A lot of this stuff is pure Hardy Amies.

GORDON: *[Looking at a price tag]* Jesus!

TERRY: What's that?

GORDON: £19.95 for a crummy bit of leather.

TERRY: This stuff comes expensive. If people want it, they'll pay for it.

GORDON: It's a rip-off.

TERRY: They're all individually made. It takes a certain amount of time and skill. Think of it as craftwork.

GORDON: What's this for?

TERRY: Known as an L-piece, which is silly, cos it's more of a T than an L.

GORDON: But what do you do with it?

TERRY: Oh, come on. Use a bit of nous.

GORDON: Does it go round your cock?

TERRY: Oh, well done! You see that stem of the T goes round between your balls, and the crosspiece goes round the base of your prick.

GORDON: I see. *[Pause]* What about that lot?

TERRY: Harnesses of various kinds. Master/slave stuff.

GORDON: Interesting...

TERRY: Do you want to look?

GORDON: Mmm.

TERRY: Hugo, can we have one down?

HUGO: Sure. *[Comes over]* What do you want?

GORDON: Oh, a harness, maybe...

HUGO: Well, there are master-harnesses, open-back with cock harness, £47-95, but to be honest, they're not much use. Just tinsel on the Christmas tree. Still, they look quite good at parties and so on. Slave harnesses are rather better - simple collars, £19.95; closed back with cockring, £49-95, or there are light slave harnesses at £24-95. Quite effective,

those, for hanging people up and so on. Do you want to try it on?

GORDON: Er - can I?

HUGO: Sure. There's a trying-out room through there. Anything else?

TERRY: Didn't you say something about handcuffs?

HUGO: There's lots to choose from. Leg irons, thumbcuffs, handcuffs with or without bars.

GORDON: I hardly need to try those on. *[To TERRY:]* This place is outrageous.

TERRY: Forget the handcuffs.

HUGO: You're quite right. You can do much better things with a home-made board and some rope.

GORDON: You're not trying to sell very hard, are you?

HUGO: I know. I'm not very good at this job, to be honest. What about some chain? You don't want this stuff – open link, no strength. But that stuff's welded solid. Impossible to break. Nice.

TERRY: And you can get it an any good ironmongers at a quarter of the price. *[He makes a face at HUGO.]*

GORDON: *[To HUGO]* Well, you tried...

HUGO: Look, I think you should go for costume. If you look good, you'll meet guys who've got the other gear. Then later you'll have an idea of what you like, and you'll have more money to play with. *[To TERRY:]* What do you think?

TERRY: Sounds fair.

HUGO: What are your measurements?

GORDON: Here. *[Produces paper from pocket]* We measured up before we came out. *[Giggles.]*

HUGO: *[To TERRY:]* Spoilsport. *[Looks at list]* OK. Right.

[HUGO disappears.]

TERRY: Still nervous?

GORDON: What's nervous? *[Reads another label]* "Gates of Hell". Well, I know what they do.

TERRY: Absolute agony. Lovely. Worth getting. Only £7.95, and you can't really improvise a home-made substitute. It's just not the same with curtain rings.

GORDON: The names! *[Looks]* "Meat Tenderiser"...

TERRY: If you get one, make sure you don't get the sort with round studs. Can't feel them. Useless.

GORDON: Let's see what Hugo comes up with.

TERRY: Sure.

[GORDON impulsively grabs TERRY by the balls and pulls him to him. They kiss. HUGO re-enters with an armful of leather jackets, trousers, etc.]

HUGO: Here. I think these should do you. Luckily you're a fairly standard size.

TERRY: Fat arse.

HUGO: Don't listen to him. You've got boots, haven't you? Good. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. If they all fit you, and you like the effect, we'll say £220 the lot, OK? I'll probably get the sack because that's at cost.

TERRY: And I'll go halves with you for your birthday. Hugo's being very generous.

GORDON: I know. Thanks.

Leather by Eric Presland

HUGO: Well, go in there and change. Off you go.

[He shoos GORDON off. To TERRY:]

HUGO: This should be interesting.

TERRY: I'm looking forward to it.

[There is some discomfort between them on their own.]

HUGO: Do you want anything?

TERRY: I'd better get some more poppers.

HUGO: We've got some new stuff direct from New York. £8 a bottle.

TERRY: Eight quid. What a con! No, I'll stick to British. Half the price and you know what you're getting.

HUGO: I like your friend.

TERRY: The feeling's mutual, I believe.

[Pause]

HUGO: Lover?

TERRY: Sort of.

HUGO: How long?

TERRY: Oh, a couple of months. He's got another lover south of the river.

HUGO: You?

TERRY: You know me. Same as ever.... *[Pause]*

HUGO: You haven't phoned for a long time.

TERRY: I know. Sorry.

HUGO: But then, neither have I.

TERRY: That's the way it goes.

HUGO: You forget...

TERRY: Not me. *[Pause.]*

HUGO: I enjoyed our sessions.

TERRY: So did I.

HUGO: Mark died.

TERRY: I'm sorry.

[Pause]

HUGO: I'd like to get together again.

TERRY: That could be good.

HUGO: Your friend too. Gordon?

TERRY: Yes, Gordon.

HUGO: I like him

TERRY: You said. Oh come here, Hugo. Don't be so scared.

[He runs his hand down Hugo's chest. stops at the nipples.]

Oh, you've had your tits pierced.

HUGO: Yes.

TERRY: I must get around to it some time.

HUGO: Yes. Come round. The two of you. I've got some videos you might enjoy.

TERRY: I'll ask him. Or you ask him...

[GORDON re-enters. He is dressed in leather jacket, trousers and boots. His long hair is swept back under a cap. He has a stud belt. The jacket is open, and he has a collar/harness on. The effect is magical; he is a different person, powerful and magnetic. The chrysalis has turned into a butterfly. TERRY and HUGO stare as if hypnotised as GORDON walks slowly forward. Hurriedly HUGO produces a rhino whip which he places in GORDON's hand. TERRY flicks off his cap and puts on a mask, almost as if crowning him. GORDON enjoys the sensation he is creating.]

TERRY: [To HUGO] He'll take it.

BLACKOUT

Scene Six

THE COURT. JUNE 15TH.

[PHIL in the dock, CLIVE behind him. Opposite, MR JUSTICE NEWTON.]

PHIL: So I submit that the Crown has totally failed to prove that there is any case to answer. We have only police evidence...

NEWTON: Only police evidence, Mr - erm - Stewart? Do you wish to suggest that the officers involved in this trial are committing perjury?

PHIL: Too bloody right I do.

CLIVE: Shut up, you fool.

PHIL: We have heard from three witnesses that I was acting to save someone from serious injury. Bloody hell, you ought to give me a medal.

NEWTON: Kindly moderate your language in my court.

[Lights fade down and then up.]

NEWTON: ... according to Constable Whicker, the accused was seen brandishing the offensive weapon, an extremely ugly weapon. This is confirmed by his fingerprints. Police witnesses further testify that the accused upon arrest kicked and screamed, hurled abuse and threatened violence. And then there are the discrepancies between the defence witnesses' accounts... You have seen the defendant's behaviour in court, and may conclude that he is a man of somewhat violent and intemperate character...

[Lights fade down and up. CLIVE and PHIL collecting papers.]

PHIL: Shit! Two and a half grand!

CLIVE: There was always that possibility. Juries don't like tax inspectors.

PHIL: I blew it

CLIVE: Frankly, you did. You shouldn't have lost control.

PHIL: I don't know what came over me.

CLIVE: You are tired, you are worried, you are sick with fear of losing Gordon. You shouldn't have defended yourself, but you wouldn't be told.

PHIL: I don't need "I told you so".

CLIVE: My dear, don't turn on your true friends. *[Pause]* There was a good turnout. Outside.

PHIL: Was Gordon there?

CLIVE: Yes.

PHIL: Oh Clive, I think I'm going out of my head. What am I going to do?

CLIVE: Do? There is nothing to do. I'm afraid it happens all the time.

FADE TO BLACKOUT

Scene Seven

THE FLAT. JUNE 15TH.

[The same evening. Darkness. PHIL is sitting brooding. Doorbell rings. PHIL goes and opens it, switching on the light as he goes. Brings in GORDON, who wears his jacket and boots. They meet as strangers.]

PHIL: Thanks for coming. It was good of you.

GORDON: I heard the verdict.

PHIL: Well, sit down. Coffee?

GORDON: Thanks.

[PHIL exits. GORDON looks round, goes to the bedroom; it is as if it was somebody else's room, somebody he doesn't know. PHIL re-enters.]

PHIL: Kettle's on.

GORDON: Great. *[Pause]* It's cold in here.

PHIL: It's some time since you stayed. Unlived-in.

GORDON: Do use it if you need to. I don't mind.

PHIL: I have once or twice. Oh, by the way -

[He dives into a corner, comes up with a parcel.]

PHIL: Happy Birthday. Sorry it's a bit late. I was hoping to see you sooner... Anyway...

GORDON: Thanks.

[He unwraps it. PHIL talks to cover his nervousness.]

PHIL: I didn't know what to get you. But I thought you might have a use for it – I mean, you're not exactly well off for clothes, are you?

[GORDON has taken out a large fluffy cashmere sweater. It is very obviously not what he wants. PHIL watches carefully for his reaction.]

GORDON: It's very nice.

PHIL: It'll be very warm when the winter comes.

GORDON: Yes... I like the colour.

PHIL: You said you did. That's why I got it. We saw them in Camden Lock, remember?

GORDON: That seems ages ago.

PHIL: It is ages ago.

GORDON: Thank you

[He puts it down carefully. PHIL expects a kiss.]

PHIL: *[After a pause]* It's set me back a bit. The verdict. I was just beginning to get used to – things – and then this. I was so confident we'd win.

GORDON: I know. *[Pause]* I'm glad to be here.

PHIL: Thanks.

GORDON: I want to help.

PHIL: Do you want to go out for a drink or something?

GORDON: The kettle's on for coffee.

PHIL: Oh, right. Should be boiled by now. *[Exits]*

[GORDON makes a gesture of despair. PHIL re-enters with two mugs.]

PHIL: Two sugars, yes? I got it right this time.

GORDON: Phil, I'm meant to live here, remember?

PHIL: Meant to. Sometimes I forget...

GORDON: For God's sake, sit down. Calm down.

[He takes hold of PHIL. PHIL tenses at his touch, then relaxes into it. GORDON strokes his hair.]

GORDON: Thanks for the present.

PHIL: I wish I'd got you something you wanted more. I didn't know...

GORDON: I like it. Honest

PHIL: These last two months have been – awful.

GORDON: I'm sorry. I didn't want to cut you out. I tried – I am trying – to keep both things going. Oh maybe I should just give it all up. It's such a mess.

PHIL: Isn't it just?

GORDON: You don't help.

PHIL: How could I help?

GORDON: You could relax a bit.

PHIL: I can't help it. I watch you slipping away. It's been a fortnight since I saw you. And I haven't hassled, I haven't made a scene. Time, that's all I ask. Time to get back to the way it was. The house is cold. I feel like a lover-in-waiting. I feel humiliated.

GORDON: Why can't we just do something nice, instead of just fucking talking? I'm fed up with feeling a shit. Do you wonder I put off coming to see you?

PHIL: I've got to talk...

GORDON: If I go away, I can come back again. If I want to. If you make me want to.

PHIL: I miss you dreadfully.

GORDON: I know...

PHIL: Do you love Terry?

GORDON: I don't know.

PHIL: Do you?

GORDON: It's a stupid question.

PHIL: Why?

GORDON: What's it mean?

PHIL: Let me make it easy for you. Does time seem to go faster when you're with him - suddenly you look at a clock and you find a whole day's gone without noticing it? And does it seem like his jokes are funnier than anyone else's, and sometimes you get a hard-on just thinking about him during the day, which you do quite a lot in little unexpected moments; and does it seem like you've known him all your life, and you can't remember the time before, when you didn't know him? And does sex with him seem more exciting, more keen and more fun than it does with anyone else? Is that what it feels like?

GORDON: *[Slowly]* Yes.

PHIL: You love him.

GORDON: I suppose I must.

PHIL: I felt like that about you.

GORDON: I still love you as well.

PHIL: But not as much.

GORDON: It's different.

PHIL: How?

GORDON: Just different.

[Pause]

PHIL: What have you been doing?

GORDON: Got a job.

PHIL: Great. Where?

GORDON: Nothing special. A wine bar. Just part time. I'm still signing on.

PHIL: You deserve better than that. With your brains.

GORDON: It's what I want right now. I like working. I never thought I would.

PHIL: You've found your niche, then.

GORDON: If you like.

PHIL: With Terry.

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: And where do I fit in

GORDON: I don't know yet. I really don't. I need time too

PHIL: I'll give you time, all the time you want. Anything. Only, come back, please. Don't leave me like this. I beg you. I don't think I can cope. I –

GORDON: Your coffee's getting cold.

[They sit in silence.]

PHIL: What's so special about it? You know...

GORDON: I can't put it into words.

PHIL: I want to know.

GORDON: It's exciting. It's treading a tightrope. It's pushing at the limits. The tension in a good session's incredible.

PHIL: Is it? *[A moment of decision]* Do you think I'd like it?

GORDON: You?

PHIL: Why not?

[He goes on his knees and kisses GORDON's boot. Embarrassed, GORDON raises him gently.]

GORDON: There are places you can go -

PHIL: I didn't mean that. I meant with you.

GORDON: I don't think it would work.

PHIL: How can you say that? You don't know till you've tried. Show me, please.

GORDON: I couldn't.

PHIL: Please.

GORDON: It's not part of us.

PHIL: I've got to find out. I want to share it with you. Please. Please.

GORDON: Is it that important?

PHIL: Yes.

GORDON: Don't be disappointed if it doesn't work.

PHIL: I won't. Oh, thank you. Thank you.

GORDON: What do you want to do?

PHIL: What do you want? I'll do anything .••

GORDON: This is for you.

PHIL: I don't know where to start.

GORDON: What do you think about doing?

PHIL: Well, I've always had a thing about being tied up.

GORDON: You never told me.

PHIL: I couldn't.

GORDON: Tight or loose?

PHIL: What?

GORDON: How tight do you want to be tied?

PHIL: Oh, tight. Very tight. Then I've always imagined being whipped, then screwed by someone very big and strong.

GORDON: Oh, legs apart then.

PHIL: I suppose so.

GORDON: If you don't have your legs apart, how can I screw you? What have you got?

PHIL: Got?

GORDON: If I'm going to tie you up, I need something to tie you with.

PHIL: There's the washing line in the kitchen. Under the sink, remember?

GORDON: That'll do.

[He goes to find it.]

PHIL: Oh God, what am I doing?

GORDON: *[Off]* Go through and get undressed.

PHIL: Right.

[PHIL goes through to the bedroom, and gets undressed to his underpants. Hugs himself as if cold. GORDON returns with a rope, a broom handle and some string.]

GORDON: It's not very strong, but it'll do.

PHIL: Does it need to be?

GORDON: We'll see. Do you want me to strip?

PHIL: Of course.

[PHIL makes to start undressing him. Roughly GORDON pushes him onto the bed, undressed himself. He is acting tough, getting into character for PHIL's fantasy. PHIL watches him, fascinated and frightened.]

PHIL: Don't we even get to kiss?

GORDON: If you're good. Maybe. Give me your hands.

[PHIL does so. Expertly GORDON ties his wrists.]

PHIL: Quite a knack, isn't it?

GORDON: Turn over.

[He pushes PHIL roughly onto his stomach. Pulls down his pants. Runs his hand over PHIL's buttocks.]

PHIL: That's nice. *[GORDON smacks him hard.]* Ow.

GORDON: Over.

[PHIL turns onto his back with difficulty. GORDON takes the string, and ties PHIL's knees apart with the broom handle. PHIL is getting very nervous.]

PHIL: It's a strange feeling, being helpless. Not unpleasant, just odd.

GORDON: Shut up.

[Pause]

PHIL: I hope you know what you're doing.

GORDON: Don't be nervous.

PHIL: Me, nervous? Curious, more like. I trust you.

GORDON: Do you?

PHIL: I want to see you.

GORDON: Right.

[GORDON picks up his jeans, takes the belt off them, and slowly moves to the side of the bed. He stands over PHIL.]

GORDON: There's one thing I want to make clear. The moment you say stop, I stop. Understood?

PHIL: Understood.

GORDON: Now you see me.

PHIL: Aren't you going to start?

GORDON: Do you see me?

PHIL: Yes.

GORDON: What do you see?

[Lights change. From this point on, GORDON turns away from PHIL, and focusses on the front of the stage, as if PHIL is in front of him. PHIL reacts as if he has been genuinely hit, but the two are dislocated. He brings up the belt, carefully chooses a place, then strikes. PHIL gasps, closes his eyes.]

PHIL: I see strength.

GORDON: What do you see?

[He chooses another place, strikes again. He does this several times, getting harder. He does one across the back of PHIL's legs, and PHIL winces, almost

calls out. GORDON registers his near-protest and returns to work on his back. He gets harder and faster. Over this, the dialogue:]

GORDON: What do you see?

PHIL: I see power.

GORDON: Do you like what you see?

PHIL: Yes. *[A hit]* I like what I see.

GORDON: What do you see?

PHIL: I see male.

GORDON: What do you feel?

PHIL: I feel Surrender.

GORDON: What do you feel?

PHIL: I feel Pure.

GORDON: Do you like what you feel?

PHIL: I like what I feel.

GORDON: What do you feel?

PHIL: I feel Energy.

GORDON: What do you feel?

PHIL: I feel Light.

GORDON: What do you feel?

PHIL: I feel Sharp – I feel Fear – I feel Pain – I feel Loss – I feel Men – I feel Dark – I feel – I feel –

[Suddenly PHIL starts sobbing, tears streaming down his face. Immediately GORDON stops. He returns to the real PHIL. The sobs grow uncontrollably.

Leather by Eric Presland

Suddenly PHIL opens his eyes as if scared out of his wits. He screams deafeningly, a very long time. GORDON slowly unties him.]

GORDON: I told you it wouldn't work. *[Cradles PHIL's head.]* Oh, love. Don't you understand? It isn't necessary.

PHIL: Isn't it? Isn't it?

FADE TO BLACKOUT

Scene Eight

THE URINAL AT THE TAX OFFICE. JUNE 16TH.

[BUCKLEY standing at a stall, a large confident man of middle years. Enter PHIL, who stands two stalls up. They both stand in silence for a moment.]

BUCKLEY: Interesting little story in the Telegraph this morning. Page thirteen.

PHIL: Really, sir?

BUCKLEY: In the Law Reports. You got off quite lightly.

PHIL: I was innocent.

BUCKLEY: The judge in his wisdom thought not.

PHIL: He's a senile old fascist.

BUCKLEY: Oh? *[Pause]* Look, Stewart. I run a tight ship here. I like to feel I keep my finger to the wind, you know. When you were appointed, you were given a set of the Civil Service rules. Have you read them recently?

PHIL: Not recently, but –

BUCKLEY: You signed a contract agreeing to abide by them.

PHIL: Sir?

BUCKLEY: Bloody hell, Stewart, they're not some kind of joke

PHIL: I realise that.

BUCKLEY: For God's sake, why didn't you tell me, old chap? Come down to the captain's cabin for a chinwag?

PHIL: I did tell you, sir. I asked your permission for the day off. I told you it was for a demonstration.

BUCKLEY: You didn't say what kind of demonstration.

- PHIL: It was in "The Guardian", sir. I didn't think of it as political.
- BUCKLEY: Not political, criminal.
- PHIL: I was innocent.
- BUCKLEY: Dammit, we don't offer you a job in the Tax Office; we offer you a position. An inspector must be respected. I shall have to make a report to M4, you know.
- PHIL: Do what you want.
- BUCKLEY: You're making life very difficult for both of us.
- PHIL: Mr. Buckley, before I joined the Inspectorate, I was quite candid about the scope of my activities, and said that I foresaw a possible conflict of interest.
- BUCKLEY: But I don't think we foresaw –
- PHIL: Let me finish. I was assured that there was unlikely to be a conflict. I have the letter still. On the strength of it I accepted. Since when I have consistently been patronised, cautioned, counselled and oppressed by intellectual inferiors with the moral spine of a bowl of junket.
- BUCKLEY: Really! That's hardly –
- PHIL: Shut up.
- BUCKLEY: Stewart, are you mad?
- PHIL: I said shut up. I now consider myself absolved from a contract which you have already broken. As far as I am concerned, you can take your M4, along with the P1s, P11s, RSOs, R37s and all the other crappy forms you produce from murdered trees, you may add your quarterly SCIs, throw in your silly rubber dinghy in which you pretend you are John Wayne...
- BUCKLEY: I say –
- PHIL: ... and the ghastly Hammond organ which you can't play

and which crucifies the office every lunchtime; then you can stuff the whole grisly mixture down whichever pompous orifice will cause you the maximum discomfort.

[Pause]

BUCKLEY: I hope you're going to apologise for that.

[PHIL exits.]

BUCKLEY: I want you in my office at two o'clock, Stewart. Stewart!
Stewart!

FADE TO BLACKOUT

Scene Nine

THE FLAT. JUNE 16TH.

[It is the same evening. PHIL is going through his papers. He tears things up as he goes, savagely. He is elated and slightly drunk. The bell rings. He answers it. GORDON comes in, almost apologetically.]

PHIL: Come in, come in, come in. Sit down. You're privileged to witness a unique experience. There goes my career, so-called, and my source of income. I said sit down. Well, to what do I owe this unexpected pleasure? I must say after last night I wasn't expecting to see you for at least a month.

GORDON: What's the matter with you?

PHIL: Matter? Nothing's the matter. Everything as they say is hunky-dory. I am footloose and fancy-free. The world is my oyster.

GORDON: You've given up your job?

PHIL: Or it has given me up. Hard to say which really. I jumped before they pushed me.

GORDON: What are you going to do?

PHIL: Do, my dear heartache? I shall do what any self-respecting person would do. I will go out and get blind drunk. Then I shall try and think about it tomorrow while recovering from the hangover. You haven't answered my question. What do you want? You must want something. People only come and see me when they want something.

GORDON: I've come to collect my things.

PHIL: I can't say that's unexpected. I'm only surprised it took so long. Well - why prolong the agony? Help yourself. You know where everything is, of course. Where are you going, if I may be permitted to ask?

GORDON: t's a flat in a house a couple of doors down from Terry. 37b. Fell vacant suddenly.

PHIL: You knew this yesterday, didn't you?

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: And you didn't tell me

GORDON: It was a bad time –

PHIL: It's always a bad time. You just didn't want to face up to telling the truth. As usual.

GORDON: It came so suddenly.

PHIL: Terry must be tired of you getting under his feet. I knew it wouldn't last.

GORDON: Phil. Please don't. You don't have to be like this.

PHIL: Like what? I think I've been a model of civilisation. My lover leaves me and I laugh. I crack jokes. I frisk and gambol like a lamb. I'll help you pack. I'll even open a bottle of champagne if you like.

GORDON: I still want to see you.

PHIL: Oh no, thank you. I know what that means. It means dinner once a month in an Indian restaurant with red flock wallpaper, which I will pay for, and stilted conversation about old times. I don't think so. Thanks for the offer, though.

GORDON: Do you want me to hate you?

PHIL: It might help.

GORDON: You're going the right way about it.

[GORDON exits into the bedroom with a rucksack. starts to pack. PHIL drops his manner and falls into a chair. After a second he notices GORDON's other

bag beside him. There is a bit of wire sticking out of it. Curious, he pulls it out. Pulls until it won't come any further. Opens zip. Pulls out a small pulley. Looks through the bag. Pulls out a length of plastic piping, a couple of clips with weights attached, a smooth round pebble, two bolts. PHIL looks at them curiously.]

GORDON: *[From the other room]* Have you still got my towel?

PHIL: It's in the bathroom.

[GORDON crosses through towards the bathroom.]

PHIL: What are you doing? Setting up as an ironmonger?

GORDON: What are you doing, going through my things?

PHIL: Guilty secret, eh?

GORDON: Mind your own business.

PHIL: Tell me.

GORDON: You won't like it.

PHIL: Tell.

GORDON: *[To hurt]* Nipple clips, OK? You can put different weights on them. Rope for tying, pulley for hanging someone up. The pebble's for hide-and-seek. You can have great fun finding it, depending on where you hide it. The piping is to stick down your cock. The bolt similarly. My do-it-yourself kit. Or part of it.

[PHIL drops them, GORDON retrieves them.]

PHIL: You've come a long way, haven't you?

GORDON: I suppose so.

PHIL: You bloody little fool. Don't you realise you'll hurt yourself.

GORDON: That is the object of the exercise.

- PHIL: I don't believe I'm hearing this. Do you remember what you were like just nine months ago? Do you? Eight months ago you couldn't bear to be penetrated. Never, never would you let me screw you from behind. And I did everything you wanted. Oh, so carefully. All that gentleness, remember? I made you. I rebuilt you.
- GORDON: Yes. And I'm grateful
- PHIL: Grateful?
- GORDON: Why not? You put me together. And now I've turned into what I always wanted to be. What does that make you, Frankenstein?
- PHIL: Always wanted?
- GORDON: Oh yes. Ever since I can remember. When we played cowboys and indians, I was always the one who got tied up.
- PHIL: You never told me.
- GORDON: It was there all along.
- PHIL: You never told me anything.
- GORDON: Where do you think I was, the night I got raped?
- PHIL: I don't know.
- GORDON: In John Burgess's bedroom. You know, the one whose trade died on him. The one who was done for manslaughter. He's still inside. *[Pause]* I'd been to the Princess. The leather pub. First thing I did when I hitched to London. I knew exactly what I wanted. Met a couple of men, who invited me to a party. Then I freaked out. I couldn't handle it. Not at the time. I just clammed up completely. And do you know what really freaked me out, more than the pain, more than the humiliation, more than anything? What really freaked me out was the fact that somewhere, deep inside, a small part of me, a secret part of me, enjoyed it.
- PHIL: What a waste. What a pointless fucking waste. You bastard.

[He hits GORDON across the face.]

GORDON: *[Looking at him steadily]* Better?

[PHIL goes berserk. Something snaps in him. He pushes GORDON over on the floor against the wall, leaps on him, pins his shoulders with his legs. Belatedly GORDON realises that PHIL is serious, but PHIL has him trapped. He smashes GORDON's head repeatedly against the floor.]

PHIL: This is what you want, is it? OK, then. We'll give you what you want. Nobody tells me I've wasted nine months of my life. Nobody. Least of all you, Sonny Jim. I got raped for you, you little shit.

[GORDON is unconscious. PHIL picks him up. Lights change and music.]

PHIL: Months of letting you screw me. I wanted you to screw me, oh yes, don't get me wrong. I loved taking you, loved feeling you inside me. But oh, how I longed to do the same for you. Kept hoping. Waiting for the day.

[He lays GORDON tenderly on the bed. Whispers in his ear.]

PHIL: But you can now. We'll see what you can take now. So I never turned you on like Terry turns you on, eh?

[He remembers GORDON's bag in the other room, goes and fetches rope and a couple of candles.]

PHIL: Now we get down to it. Rock bottom. All the things you lied to me about. "Couldn't handle it." There's too much you couldn't handle, my lad, that's your trouble.

[He ceremonially lights the candles, places them at the corners of the bed. He ties GORDON's wrists to the bed, then the feet, which face towards the audience.]

PHIL: Sorry it's not as tight as you might like, but I haven't had the practice you've had. Have to do, though, won't it? And tie off. Lucky I was in the Boy Scouts. Never knew knots would come in so handy.

[Goes into the kitchen. Comes back with a cup of water, and a knife. Splashes water over GORDON. Slaps his face.]

Come on, come on. Wake up. I want you awake for this.

[GORDON comes round]

PHIL: That's better. I want you to know what's happening.

[A brief fade, and then lights up again. PHIL has a large sheet of black material, and a long red ballroom glove. He covers GORDON's body with the black material, faces front. Until the next lights change, GORDON's voice is heard on tape.]

GORDON: What are you doing?

PHIL: What you been wanting all these years. I don't know what made me overlook it for so long. Well, we shall now rectify *[He giggles.]* the omission.

GORDON: No. You're bloody mad. Phil – please –

PHIL: Relax, baby. That's what you told me.

[He holds the knife by GORDON's head.]

Don't tell me Terry is so fucking wonderful. Is Terry wonderful? Is he?

GORDON: No.

PHIL: That's a good boy. And sex with me was good, wasn't it? What do you say?

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: Again.

GORDON: Yes.

PHIL: What? What was it?

GORDON: Marvellous. Bloody wonderful.

PHIL: Are you enjoying yourself? I am hugely. Are you? Are you?

GORDON: Yes.

[PHIL turns away from GORDON, takes the glove, and very slowly puts it on, taking his time doing up all the buttons to the elbow. In the theatre the lights go down on GORDON, who now lies rigid with terror, during the early part of the next speech. A solo spotlight on PHIL.]

PHIL: Listen, boy. I want to leave you just the way I found you. Fucked up to hell. I'm going to mess your mind up the way you messed me up. I hope it hurts. I hope it hurts like fuck. I want you to have nightmares like you used to. I'm going to burn them into your brain. And this time I want you to see me when you wake up screaming. Because I'm going to tear you apart. We'll see what you can take, my old dutch. If you're into stretching your limits, we'll stretch your limits for you. And that's what it's all about, isn't it? Do your own thing, and I'll do your thing. And now I'm just making up for lost time. This is what I so signally failed to provide. Are you ready for this?

[The glove is on. PHIL makes a fist, and very slowly punches from low to high. Over that:]

In, in. Search. Reach. Push. Push. Higher. Harder. In, up, up, to the core, to the centre. Reaching far, far into the heart of darkness. Explode.

[From his hand comes a spurt of blood]

ALTERNATIVE ENDINGS

1. FROM THE ORIGINAL 1990 SCRIPT

[The door bell rings. Lights change. PHIL realises what he has been doing. He whips the cover off GORDON, takes the glove off.]

Nothing. You can't rape nothing.

[He goes to the door, opens it in a trance.]

You can't rape nothing. Nothing. You can't rape nothing.

[TERRY comes in, talking nervously.]

TERRY: Hope I haven't caught you on the hop. Is Gordon here? He said he might need a hand - what's up? What the hell have you been doing?

PHIL: You can't rape nothing.

GORDON: Terry?

[TERRY rushes through to the other room.]

TERRY: Gordon? *[Sees him lying there.]* Gordon, love... *[Unties him, cradles him in his arms.]* Don't worry, love. It's all over. Gordon, sweet. Don't cry. It's all over. Sh. It'll go. It's only pain. There, there.

[TERRY rocks GORDON. PHIL reappears in the doorway. To PHIL:]

Get out of here.

PHIL: I just –

TERRY: Don't say anything. Just go.

[Silently PHIL nods, tears in his eyes.]

GORDON: He was trying to - It's all my fault.

TERRY: I can see what he was trying to do. Don't talk. Just relax.

GORDON: It hurts.

TERRY: It'll pass. I'll get some water and clean you up.

[PHIL is still standing dazed in the middle of the room.]

TERRY: I thought I told you to get out.

[PHIL turns and flees.]

FADE TO BLACKOUT

Scene Ten

A LARGE ROUNDABOUT. JULY 29TH.

[Cars are hooting and flashing by. Enter PHIL and CLIVE. CLIVE carries PHIL's hold-all.]

CLIVE: Is this wise, I ask myself? The juggernauts will barely have time to see you, let alone brake.

PHIL: There's a layby just there. I've never had problems here before.

CLIVE: And how long is it since you hitch-hiked?

PHIL: I don't know. Fifteen years?

CLIVE: And just think, you could be travelling in the luxury of British Rail, eating one of their delicious breakfasts. I'll loan you the money if necessary.

PHIL: Since when have you had any money? It's not a matter of cash anyway. I wanted to.

CLIVE: A gentleman of the road?

PHIL: Exactly. Freedom. No responsibilities. No timetables.

CLIVE: You almost make me wish I was coming with you.

PHIL: I need time on my own.

CLIVE: I know, my dear. I know. And I can't really envisage a sod for my pillow. Not in that sense. *[Pause]*

PHIL: Have you heard anything of Gordon?

CLIVE: Terry says he's better. In fact he seems to be in rather better shape than you are.

PHIL: A month's rest. That's all I needed. I'm off the tranqs now. I'll sort myself out. I shall sit on hillsides and give myself a

good talking to. I will learn to be happy on my own. I sent him a bunch of roses.

CLIVE: Gordon?

PHIL: Yes. No reply, of course. But there will be...

CLIVE: Young Gordon has a vindictive streak, and in this case I can hardly blame him. No number of roses can make up for...

PHIL: He'll forgive. Eventually.

CLIVE: Is it important?

PHIL: Oh, yes. Yes. Hey, I'll never get a lift standing chatting to you like this. Cars'll never stop if they see you.

CLIVE: I'm a perfectly respectable barrister.

PHIL: Exactly. Whoever heard of a hitcher in a three-piece suit?

CLIVE: You have a point. Therefore I shall take my leave without further ado.

PHIL: Cheers.

[He impulsively kisses CLIVE, who is embarrassed.]

You've been wonderful.

CLIVE: If you need anything...

PHIL: Scoot!

CLIVE: Au revoir, my dear.

[He exits. PHIL sticks his thumb out and starts hitching, as the lights slowly fade.]

BLACKOUT

THE END

ALTERNATIVE ENDING 2: ZOOM VERSION

[On the word 'EXPLODE', in Sc 9, and the blood on the hand, the spotlight goes out on PHIL, so both players are in darkness. In the darkness, music [Part 'Fratres for String Orchestra' or similar] quietly in the background. PHIL's heavy breathing, possibly post-coital, possibly sheer exhaustion. GORDON starts sobbing gently, growing in volume. Cutting across this, a doorbell ringing. Very loudly and urgently.]

THE END

ALTERNATIVE ENDING 3: 2021 THEATRE VERSION

[After the blood in Sc 9... Lights come up on GORDON on the bed. PHIL returns into the scene. He is exhausted, spent. He sits on the bed, facing upstage towards GORDON, rests his hand lightly on the top of GORDON's leg, so it is smeared with blood. GORDON flinches away. He is sobbing.]

PHIL: *[Softly]* Don't worry, love, it's all over. All gone. Ssh! Don't cry. Everything will be better now, you'll see. It can all go back to the way it was before. Everything will be all right. Just as it used to be. Remember? Remember?

[At the memory of what he thinks used to be, he too starts sobbing. He collapses on top of GORDON, his left arm over GORDON's shoulder. A slow fade. Over the fade, music comes up. In the blackout, a doorbell rings violently, urgently, cutting off the music.]

TERRY: *[off]* Hello? Hello? Phil? Are you there, Gordon? Anybody there?

THE END