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David Harrower
Blackbird



DAVID HARROWER

Blackbird



FABER & FABER

For Selma

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First Performance

Blackbird

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By David Harrower from Faber

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Acknowledgements

This play was written while I was the Edinburgh International Festival Creative Fellow 2004 at the Institute for the Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Edinburgh University.

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Blackbird was commissioned by the Edinburgh International Festival and was first presented in the King's Theatre, Edinburgh, on 15 August 2005. The production transferred to the Albery Theatre, London, from 7 February 2006, where it was produced by Michael Edwards and Carole Winter for MJE Productions. The cast was as follows:

Una Jodhi May

Ray Roger Allam

Director Peter Stein

Set Designer Ferdinand Wögerbauer

Costume Designer Moidele Bickel

Lighting Designer Japhy Weideman

Composer Arturo Annetchino

Sound Ferdinando Nicci

Associate Director David Salter

Una, late twenties. Coat, dress, gloves; carries a bag. Ray, mid-fifties. Trousers, shirt, tie; a mobile phone clipped to his belt.

In a room in which there's a low table, several chairs, several lockers. The door is closed.

A swing-top bin, full of litter.

On the floor, around the chairs, more abandoned litter – food packaging mostly, with bits of food still visible.

An oblong frosted window through which passing figures can occasionally be seen.

Una Shock.

Ray Of course.

Yes.

Now

Pause.

Una And

Ray Wait.

Pause.

He goes to the closed door, opens it a small way.

Una You were busy.

Ray Yes.

Una They

Ray I still am busy.

I was with one of the
our managers.

We're in the middle of something.

They

So I might
I will be sent for.
I will get called away.
I'm still needed.

Una Don't people have homes?

Ray Homes?

Una Outside.

Ray I don't

Una To go to.
Homes to go to.
They're still working.
It's late.

Ray We're finishing soon.
They'll be going soon.
An order came in delayed and
of course
but we have to process it no matter how late.
And late is
The time's not a consideration.
We have to process the order and then dispatch it.
It's a very quick turnaround.

Una Do they go home when you tell them?

Ray No.
But I, I make sure all is
when the work's done.
I have to make sure.

Una But so what do you actually make here?

Ray It's
Dentistry.

Una Because

Ray Sometimes pharmaceutical.

Una The name on the front.
You can't tell.
Like one of those low buildings you pass
I passed
on the motorway, on the way here.
Low buildings, always one-storey, and you you
Cars parked outside
no clue what's happening *inside*.
Only a digital clock thing on the outside telling what the temperature
is.
This is like that.
The barrier at the gate.

Ray's begun to pick up some of the rubbish.

This is where you eat?

Ray No.
Not in here.
Not me.
The staff do.

Una They shouldn't leave it like this.
The floor.

He takes the rubbish to the bin.

It's too full.

He crams it into the bin.

Where do you eat?

Ray Are you on your own?

Una Yes.
You mean alone?

Ray Yes.
By yourself.

Una Yes.

Ray Can you tell me why you're here?
What've you come here for?

Una Do they get breaks?
Fag breaks?
Will any of them

Ray No.
Too late now.

Una We won't be interrupted?
I don't want people walking in here.

Ray What is there to interrupt?
What are you wanting?
I haven't much time.

Una I saw

Ray And to be honest I

Una What?

Ray I
I don't *have* to be in here with you.
You know that, don't you?
You're aware of that?
I don't have to stay here.
Do I?

Una No.
You're right.

Ray I don't have to listen.
I don't have to say anything.
So
but a few minutes
a couple of minutes and then you will have to go and
because I will be needed back.

He steps on some discarded food in a wrapper, not noticing it.

Una Watch.

They haven't finished that.
Someone's just left it there.
You should say something about that.

He picks it up.

Ray They've been told.
They're constantly being told.

He takes the wrapper to the bin, pushes it in.

A knock at the door.

He walks to the door, opens it a small way to see who's there.

He steps out, closes it behind him.

Una looks around the room, then sits.

Ray re-enters.

He closes the door but not fully; the same width as before.

Why don't we go outside?

Una Where?

Ray Out of here.
Outside.

Una No.

Ray The car park or the

Una I'm fine here.

Ray It's

Una You pushed me in here.

Ray I didn't push

Una Out of sight.

Ray I didn't push you.
I brought you in here.

Una They'll wonder who I am, will they?

Ray They all saw you.
So yes.
I'm sure they will.
They

Una You kept me waiting, Peter.
I was standing there for

Ray What do you want?
Will you

Una Can I close the door?

Ray No.

Una Can *you* close the door?

Ray The door stays open.

Una Why?
I

Ray I don't want it closed.

Una There's a draught.

Ray We're going outside in a minute.

Una I'm here now.
You brought me

Ray I think this is better outside.
We can

Una Close the door.

He doesn't move.

There's a cold draught coming in.
I don't like it.
It's
I'll close it then.

Pause.

She gets up, looks at him, goes to the door.

He takes a step towards her, stops.

She pushes the door shut, suddenly, loudly.

The door's closed.

She looks at some litter near the door.

The people who just
they expect other people to clean up after them.

I asked a man
he dropped an empty can
beer can

and a crisp packet
on the pavement.

Dropped them.

Didn't think about it, just let them fall.

I told him to pick them up.

He laughed.

He thought I was joking.

He was

Ray Will you

He blinks, rubs at his eyes.

Una with a woman.

Bitch, she called me.

Defended him.

He laughed all

Ray How did you find me?

Una In a

It was a photo.

In a magazine.

Ray Where?

What

Una Some

Ray Magazine?

Una Trade magazine.
Promotional.
A glossy magazine thing, a
in a waiting room.
A doctor's waiting room.
You know the thing I'm talking about?

Ray Yes.

Una There was a photo on the back of it.
You and a
with a group of people.
A team.
They called you a team.
You won an award.
Some
Excellence or
performance.

Ray So
What?
You saw a photograph?
You saw this photo

Una You have friends?

Ray And it
You

Una Friends?

Ray Yes.
Of course I have friends, what

Una New friends
or the same old friends?

Pause.

Your eyes are red.

They look like they're stinging.

He laughs briefly to himself, rubbing his eyes again.

Ray What did you feel?

Una Don't rub them.

Ray A photo.
So you drove here?

Una Yes.
You want to see it?

Ray No, I don't want to see it.

Una But you know the photo I'm

Ray Yes

Una Stop rubbing them.

Ray They hurt.

Una Because you're rubbing them.

Ray I rub them *because* they hurt.
It's the only way to stop them hurting.

You drove here?

Una Yes.

Ray How many
how long did it take you?
Where
I don't believe

Una Is it me?
Am I making that happen?
Are you allergic to me?

Pause.

He stares at her.

Are you not going to talk?

Ray We're going to walk outside.

He moves towards her.

On your feet.

Will you get up please?

We're going outside.

We're going to walk through the

Una I wrote you letters.

Ray Letters?

Una They

Ray I never got any letters.

Una They were

Ray When?

Una never sent.

Pause.

Ray What did they say?

When was this?

Una I wasn't *meant* to send them.

They told me, the people who helped me.

The

who

afterwards

to write you a letter

letters

telling you what I thought of you.

What I felt.

Wanted to say to you.

To not let it

let you have

win.

Authority.

And it was

Ray Authority?
What's

Una I wrote
hundreds.
Pull out your eyes.
I wrote that I wanted to pull out your eyes, wrote poke them out, stamp
on them.
The eyes that'd looked at me.
The hands.
To
All kinds of things.
I've still got them.

Ray You kept them?

Una The best ones.
I still read them sometimes.
The fury in them.

Then I had to write about hope.
They got me to write about hope.
What I was able to do.
What I was free to do now.
What the future would be
the promising future
the promise the future held
in spite of you
despite you
regardless of you.

You didn't answer.
New friends?
Or did your old friends stand by you?

Ray What do you think?

Una I think

I think the fact

Ray Six seven hours to drive here.
For what?

Una Because in that photo you're

Ray To make me suffer?

Una I wouldn't call that
your eyes
suffering.
Rub them more then.
Harder.

Ray I didn't need to talk to you.
I could've walked away.
I'm under no

Una So this man

Ray What man?

Una That man who dropped the litter, the
it's not the litter
it wasn't the litter
the dirtying.
It was the man, the person doing that.
Because he hasn't been, been
schooled
educated
civilised enough.
And I thought, and it's
if I walked into his house and dropped litter on his carpet.
But the streets, the pavements, they're not my house, so
I don't care about the streets.
I just thought you are a beast.
No one has ever cared for you properly and you're too stupid
too stupid to even know that or you wouldn't let other people see
just what a
see what you are.

This
You do not even know you exist.

I asked to speak to Peter.
And Ray appeared.

Pause.

Ray This was pointless.
Absolutely pointless.
Can you see that?
Can you not see that?
Who told you to do this?
Whoever advised this was

Una No one.

Ray The people who
who helped you.
Your

Una I stopped seeing them years ago.
They're not there for ever.

Ray The doctor.
A confrontation
What do they call it?
The
Face-to-face.
To
I didn't agree to this.

Una No.

Ray To get what?
You don't have the right to my my my
humiliation.
Where I work.
Where people are.
My colleagues.
Work colleagues.

Walking in, asking for me.
I've nothing to say to you.
I
You're a
some kind of ghost
turning up from nowhere to
Go home.
Please.
Leave me alone.
Go home.

Una You think I still live in the same city?

Ray I don't know.
I don't know where you live.
How would I know that?

Una I do.
I still live there.
We

Ray Out of here and

Una never moved.

Ray Go back there.
Go back.

Una I do feel like a ghost.
I do.
I feel like a ghost.
Everywhere I go.
I wrote that in my letters too.
You made me into a ghost.
People talked about me as if I wasn't there.
Wouldn't let me speak.

Ray Go outside.
Go.
I'm telling you.
Listen to me.

You're
Walk out into the air.
Breathe air.
Get in your car.
Stop being a ghost.
You'll
You will live again.
Because this this this should
should never have happened.
Because are you feeling any better yet?
Is this doing you *good*?

Una Yes.

Ray Then that's
That is
I can't say anything to you.
You
You're beyond
How?
How the hell is it good?
Tell me
except
except but you don't know what you want.
You don't know why you're here.
Tell whoever it was sent you

Una Nobody.
I told you.

Ray Then I don't care.
He makes to go.

Una Where are you going?

Ray No.

Una Don't go.

Ray I don't care.
It's not my responsibility.

Una I'll follow you.

Ray Do what you want.

This is

This is hell.

Stay away from me.

You need help.

He's at the door.

He goes out.

Una Ray.

Don't leave me in here.

He re-enters, closes the door.

Pause.

Ray I have things I have to do.

I have to check things.

And

After.

When I leave.

Tonight.

I have to be places.

People are relying on me.

Una What?

What're you doing?

Ray The thing is

The

I don't even know if it *is* you.

If you're

her.

Una I am.

Of course I am.

Ray I didn't recognise you.

Una Yes you did.

Ray I didn't.

I *don't*.

You.

No.

Una Your face went white.

Ray Not

Una Drained white.

Ray Not not when I saw you.

I didn't know who you were.

There's a woman here to see you.

That's all I was told.

Una When I said

Ray Yes

yes but I know the name.

I remember the name.

Jesus the name's

But you could be a, a friend of hers.

Your hair's a different colour.

A journalist.

A

Una I'm not.

Ray Reporter, I don't know.

I don't know what any of this is meant to be.

Una How many other twelve-year-old girls have you had sex with?

Pause.

Ray None.

Una Do you want to see the birthmark?

You kissed it.

Or what you said to me on the beach.

Pointing across the sea to
to Holland.
Or on the bed in that room in

None?
We change, twelve-year-olds.
We grow up to be older.
So think.

Ray None.

Una Just me.
In that room.

I thought it'd be harder to look at you.
To talk.
I nearly turned back.
But it's not.
It's easy.
And I would've recognised you anywhere.
With my back to you.
I saw your eyes before I even said my name.
I saw you.

You have someone?
You live with someone?
You don't want to tell me.
I know you're with a woman.
The way I was looked at outside.
The way *you* were looked at when you walked towards me.
A good woman?
Does she

Ray I'm not talking about her with

Una Is she expecting you home?

Pause.

Ray D'you want me to say something?
Is there anything you want me to say now?

Una Does she know about me?

Ray I will not say anything about my life.

Who is in my life.

If that's what you wanted to find out and I don't know why you
you would want that
but you're getting nothing.

Do you understand?

Do you understand?

Pause.

Una My dad died.

You didn't know?

It didn't reach you?

He shakes his head.

Six years ago.

Maybe you weren't here.

Maybe you were somewhere else.

Ray I was here.

How?

Una He fell down.

He tripped.

Steps.

And

Deteriorated.

He never got over it.

He

You were a guest in our home.

I was his baby.

He invited you as a guest into his home.

He tried to find you.

Ray He knew where I was the first four years.

Una He wanted to kill you.

Not a second thought.
He said it all the time.
It was
He would've killed you.

Ray is startled, unnerved by her loudness and tone.

Near tears, Una searches through her bag.

Ray watches her, unsettled.

Ray What's in there?

What's in your bag?
What's in it?

Una I need a

Ray Give me it

Una No.
Why?

Ray What're you doing?
Are you

Una What?

Ray Don't.

He grabs the bag from her.

Una You're

Ray Do you want to kill me?

Pause.

He goes through the bag.

He takes out a packet of tissues.

Una I was going to Kleenex you to death.

She holds out her hand.

He gives her the packet.

He takes out a bottle of water.

And that's acid, not water.

He takes out the torn page from the trade magazine.

The photo of him.

A knock on the door.

A voice from behind the door.

voice Peter.

Pause.

They look at each other.

Ray goes to the door.

He opens the door slightly, looks out through the gap.

Ray *(to person outside)* It's fine.

He closes the door.

He still holds the photo.

Una When I saw it I
the photo.
It's not clear.
But I knew it was you.
I tore it out, took it home, kept
kept looking at it.
The name below.
Peter.
Peter?
I couldn't
I'm so slow sometimes.
You changed your name.

Ray Yes.

Una Is that difficult?

Ray No.

No, it was very easy.

Una But I mean, decide.
Decide on a new one.
Choose a new name.
Is it hard?
Do you do you go through
how many before you decide?
Do you make a list?

Ray I chose a name at random.

Una How?

Ray I opened the phone book.

Una Pin the tail on the donkey.

Ray Kind of.

Una What's your full name?
Peter what?
Peter
I can ask outside.

Ray Trevelyan.

Una Peter Trevelyan.

Ray Yes.

Pause. She gives a quick smile, smothers it.

Una Where the hell did that come from?
Peter *Trevelyan*?

Ray Under T.
It was necessary.
It

Una But
Jesus.
Trevelyan.
Did you

God, no
That's
To
To the manor born.
The silver spoon.
It's
from a phone book at *random*?
Were you delirious?
Did
delusions of of grandeur?
Because
Jesus.
The rich sleep
sleep with young girls too.
Under-age girls.
Ruin their lives too.
In fact the rich must have as much sex with young girls as the poor.
They must be neck and neck.
But if it does the job.
If it
Does it?
Command respect?
And help you
Help you

Ray Okay.

Una forget.

Ray Enough.

Una They don't know.
Any of them, outside.
Do they?
And your
The partner?
She
The the lady of the manor.
No one

Ray She knows.

Una She knows?

Ray Yes.

Una How does she know?

Ray I told her.

Una Everything?

Ray The facts.

Una My age?

Ray Yes.

Una Your sentence?

Ray Yes.

Una When?

At the start of the

Ray Yes.

We've been together seven years.

Una What did you tell her?

What?

Tell me what you told her?

Ray That when I was forty I had

I had an illegal relationship.

I had sex with a minor.

Una And she was fine with that?

Ray No.

Of course not.

But I

I told her what my life was like then.

I wasn't in a good way.

I had problems and I didn't

I couldn't handle them.

I gave in.
I broke apart.

Una Did you?

Ray I made the biggest
most most stupid mistake of my life.

Una You told her it was a

Ray A what?

Una A three-month stupid mistake you made.
That you ran away with me.
That too?

Ray And that I
pulled myself up.
I
I got back on track.
I
You laugh.
You don't believe it.
That's fine.
It's fine with me.
I don't need you to.

Una She believed you.
You managed to make her believe

Ray Because she loves me.

Una What's wrong with her?
Must be something wrong with her.

Ray Don't
Do not say that.
Don't talk about her.
She she has helped me.

Una Do you have any children with her?

Ray No.

Una Do you want children?

Ray That's not funny.

Una D'you see me laughing?

No, I think it is.

She laughs briefly.

He turns away.

In that photo there's nothing.

Nothing in your face.

Smiling.

You've forgotten.

You've

Ray Yes.

Yes I have.

Una Ten years later

Eight

eight years

now

you'd be on the register.

Your name would be there.

Ray would be there.

You'd be

You wouldn't be able to forget.

You couldn't

Peter

You'd

No one would let you.

It wouldn't just be me.

People would be outside your

surrounding your house.

Ray I'm living my life.

A new life that I fought for because I lost

Una Did you ever think about me?

Ray I have every right.
I can push it as far away as I

Una What was happening to me?

Ray You think I should relive it every day?
This is my life.
You can't

Una When that judge

Ray You can't come in and

Una Six years.
And when my parents told me.

Ray I am entitled to something.
To live.

Una I did the sentence.
I did your sentence.
For fifteen years.
I lost everything.
I lost more than you ever did.
I lost
because I never had
had time to to to *begin*.
We never moved.
That house in that street.
I was talked about, pointed at, stared at.
I lost all my friends.
I
I *kept* my name.
I had to keep my name.
I
Yes.
I re-live it every day.

Ray If you want me to
whatever it is you want me to
I've taken you seriously.

But if you tell me
You can't think about it every day.

Una I don't have to think.
It's *there*.

Ray Is that wise?
No.
To
To let yourself?
To
Does no one tell you it's
D'you not have friends
people who

Una Of course I have friends.

Ray Who know that you do this?

Una Yes.

Ray And they listen?
They still

Una Yes.

Ray What kind of friends are they?
What kind of

Una Don't talk about

Ray They *allow* this?
They actually
They're waiting to hear from you are they?
How this went?
How
Are they outside?
Did they drive you here?
Are they

Una There's no one with me.
How many times do I have to tell you?

Ray Do you
a partner?
A

Una That's nothing to do with this.

Ray Does anyone care about you at all?

Pause.

I've done the same.
I've brought you in here
Let let you talk.
And I was
and listened and

Una What about the photos?

Ray What do you do?
Do you work?
Are you able to work?
Have you taken time off to

Una The photos.

Ray What photos?

Una The photos you took of me.
In your flat.
Where are they?
They never found them.

Ray I

Una The police never found them.

Ray They

Una I've seen websites.
Hundreds on websites.
Hundreds of nine, ten, eleven, twelve years old.
Younger.
Photographed in

on beds
in bedrooms and
Am I one?
Because these
some of
the photos go back to the seventies
they
you can tell by the room
and people, men *scan* them and put them, they
those kids'll be adults now and not know they're

Ray I burnt them.

Una Did you?

Ray Yes.
Of course I did.
Of course.
No one ever saw them.
I burnt them before we
Before we left.
And they weren't
You were wearing your clothes, jeans
They

Una Sitting on your sofa.
Lying down.
They've the same photos on

Ray Those sites.
That
Those people.
Those sick bastards.
I was never one of them.
I was never that.
You
you've been told I was, I am, I
They called me that.
They

Una makes to go.

What're you doing?

Una I want to leave here.

Ray No.

I was not one of them.

Never.

They

Una Let me out.

Ray Wait.

Una Let me

Ray I need a minute.

Sit down.

Una No.

Ray Sit down.

Una Don't come near me.

Ray Not like this.

Don't

Una I want to get out of here.

Get away from the door.

Ray Listen to me.

Una Move over there.

Ray Listen.

I spent three years in hell.

More.

Una Yes.

Ray What they called me.

Spat on, kicked.

Shit, human shit thrown in my face.

You know I wasn't one of them.

Una How

Ray You know.

Una I don't know you.

I don't know anything about you except that you abused me.

Didn't you?

Didn't you?

Ray Yes.

But

Una There's no but.

Ray Let me

Una There is no but.

Ray Yes.

I did.

But

Una Jesus.

Ray I didn't

I didn't

Una Didn't what?

Ray They said in court I, I

made it sound

made it look

that I'd *selected* you.

I'd chosen

That day.

That day of the barbecue.

At

When we talked for the first time.

I didn't come to

You know.

On his belt, his mobile phone rings.

When I spoke to you for the first time.

I

Wait.

He looks at the phone's screen.

He turns it off.

Pause.

Una Was that her?

Ray Yes.

Can I have some water?

He takes the bottle of water, drinks from it.

I don't know why he invited me, your father.

I said hello to him on the street when I saw him.

I helped him with his car once.

But

I was surprised when he asked me.

I wasn't going to come.

I didn't know anyone there.

Or neighbours who

But I

My windows were open and I could smell the barbecue.

Five doors away.

The smoke.

It wasn't to

because of you

to

I'd seen you in the street.

Around.

But not

Not

Una You were looking at me.

At the barbecue.

Ray No.

Una I saw you

Ray I wasn't.

Una I felt you.

Ray I *looked* at you.
I wasn't *looking*.

Una You said why aren't you happy?
You should be happy.
The first thing you said.

Ray Yes.
You were sitting on your own.
Not talking to anyone.
You weren't very happy.
That's what I was watching.
You
People tried to talk to you and you you gave them nothing.
You'd
You'd fallen out with your best friend.
Hadn't you?

Una I used to think
After.
If we hadn't fallen out.
If she'd been there.
It could've been her.

Ray How many people were there?
How many guests?
Fifteen, twenty.
In your garden.
Your parents' small garden and
You know when you are
A person knows.
I read this
when they're aroused by children

by under-age
people.

Una You read it?

Ray Yes.

Una There's a handbook?

Ray There's

Una A checklist?

Ray Because when you're aroused by children when

Una I read some of those books too.

Ray So have I.

So did I.

As many as I could find

To to

Yes, a checklist.

It was, yes.

To find out

to

to learn the facts.

Una What facts?

Ray The facts.

The patterns.

The the cycle.

Una The cycle?

Ray Of of

Una Abuse.

Ray Yes.

Una Can't you say it?

Ray Abuse.

Abusing.

There's figures

Una Were you abused as a child?

Ray No.

Una You're sure?

Ray Yes.

For God's sake.

Don't

I feel sick.

I think I'd remember that.

The lawyer asked me if I *had* been.

It was better for me if I had been.

Better better for everyone if I had been.

I read those books.

I thought about my life.

To be sure I wasn't one of them, one of

Because four years being told

asked to ask myself

interrogate myself.

Being given no

Because when you are

when kids

when they they do it for

for a person

but they don't want to to admit

they're shocked

horrified that they

they feel like this.

They stay away.

They're a threat and they know it.

They distance themselves.

They

Because they love them but

they love them too much to

to want to show that love because that love is

They want to protect them.
They stay away from wherever children will be.

But if you're aroused.
Do desire.
And want to want to
feed that desire
they find ways
they
they're always looking for ways to be near them.
To lure them.
These people are
very very careful
are very very deceptive.
The greater the deception
the greater the risk
the more they enjoy it.

Una Did you memorise these books?

Ray It was a hot day.
The day of the barbecue.
I
and I had a pair of shorts on.
My *only* pair of shorts.
I only ever own one pair at a time.
I wear one pair until they're old and then buy new ones.
Because I don't

Una What

Ray wear shorts.

Una Are you

Ray I never wear shorts unless it's very hot.

Una *Shorts?*

Ray And they were tight shorts.
It was the style then.

The
Don't smile.
Don't
I'm trying to tell you.
Don't
They laughed in court.
They laughed at that in court.
I remember these shorts.

Una Do you hear yourself?
Your tight shorts?
Do you know how

Ray If I had an erection

If I had an erection.
Aroused.
I was standing beside you.
I would've
I would've walked away from you
or sat down or
because when I had an erection in those shorts it was
You couldn't miss it.
It was obvious.
Any person looking could plainly see
any guest would've seen.
They would've
And it's not
I know it's not the only
indication
but but it is for me.
When I am
when I
turned on I go hard.
I go hard immediately.
But I stayed there.
I stayed there and talked to you.
You were someone's

a neighbour's daughter who
who was annoyed at the world that day.

Not not a
target.

I never

I had a

I was seeing a woman.

And I know they

those people can have relationships
and still do what they do.

But most of them not
don't.

They're loners.

Incapable of having a

Pause.

Una My parents thought you were

Ray What?

Una Shy.

A bit dull.

And a loner.

Why you hadn't brought your girlfriend.

My dad said you could bring her.

Ray She wasn't my girlfriend.

She was

Una You saw a lot of her.

Ray I only saw her for a few months.

I can't even remember her name.

She was dull.

Una She attacked me once.

A couple of years later.

I was with my mother walking on the street.

She came up to me and slapped me on the face.

Pause.

Ray She said you used to glare at her.
That you were, were after me.
You'd hang around on the street beside my car.

Una I made up with my friend.
I told her about you.
About talking to you.
You you looking at me.
Flirting.

Ray That was you, not me.
You
The notes.
You wrote notes.
You put them under the windscreen wipers of my car.
Your girlfriend's ugly.
She has a glass eye.
Always one sentence.
She laughs like a donkey.

Una That's not

Ray And others.
Remember the barbecue.
That was one.
I had to tell you to stop it.
Outside the newsagents.
And you said what was I talking about.
You pretended not to know.

Una I did stop.
I stopped writing them.
I'd have done anything you said.
I wanted you to be my boyfriend.
I wanted to sit beside you in your car and be driven into town.
And for people to see me.
See *us*.
I took a Polaroid of you and

with my friend
we kissed it
we
put it on my pillow and slept beside it.
And I
any excuse.
Brought you biscuits and some cake that my mother made.
Asked you to sponsor me for a sponsored walk.
I
oh I was shameless.
You didn't stop that.
All you had to do was tell my parents.
A stupid girl who had a stupid crush.
But you didn't.
You let it start.

Ray You weren't stupid.

Una Yes I was.

Ray You weren't.

Una If I wasn't stupid I'd have known what was happening.
But I didn't.
I was too young.
Too too in
love.
Too stupid not to have been older
not to have have
the awareness
the experience.
But that's what you wanted.
I didn't ask difficult questions.
I didn't have any questions to ask.
I wanted anything you wanted.

Ray No.

Una Yes.
I said yes and I kept saying yes.

Eager to please.
Desperate to please.

Ray You don't remember yourself.
What you were like.

Una What was I like?

Ray Strong.

Una Strong?
What does that mean?

Ray Headstrong.

Una Don't.

Ray Determined.

Una Don't.

Ray When we started to talk properly.
Alone.
When you told me about yourself.
I discovered
You surprised me.
You made me laugh.

Una Laugh?
Did I
what?
Pull faces?

Ray I

Una *Tickle* you?

Ray You were older than her.
That woman I was seeing.

Una *Older?*

Ray With that stupid laugh.
Yes.

Una How, older?
You're not making any

Ray You knew about love.
You knew more about love than she did.
Than *I* did.
You knew what you wanted.
So so impatient.
You couldn't wait to start menstruating.
You told me that.
You were sick of being treated like a child.
The last thing you wanted was to be told you were a child.

Una Jesus.

Ray You

Una That's what children say.

Ray You weren't like other children.

Una I was a girl.
A virgin.
An untouched body.
A
Having it to yourself.
Being the first.
Teaching me.
Showing me.

Ray No.

Una Coming inside me.
What could I have possibly given you
given you that *wasn't* my twelve-year-old body?
What else could you have wanted?
There was nothing else.

Ray There was.
For me there was.

She walks away from him.

In prison.
The sessions.
Group sessions.
The raking over of of everything.
What went wrong.
What was missing.
My my status
Lack of status.
The anger I had.
Blaming others.
The urge to destroy.
Because that's what they told me I'd done.
Destroyed.
Destroyed you.
Your family.
My parents.
My life.
And what drove me wasn't the love I felt.
Something
something rotten.
Something deeper.
You were on my mind all the time.
I couldn't get you out.
And I gave in.
I gave in to it.
And it
everything
every day was about how I could see you, talk to you.
I left work early.
I, I'd work on my car on the street.
It didn't need work.
I took things apart, put them back together.
Just to
The engine was perfect.
But I'd
Because you'd be there and we could talk and it was fine.
It was in the open and no one thought anything.

Your parents.
The kids that played there.
But it, it wasn't enough, it
I had to be alone with you.

You remember the
the codes
the the signals we had to to meet.
To just speak.
Talk.
To be alone together.
You remember?
I'd phone your parents' house.
One ring.

Una It meant that she wasn't with you.
You were on your own.

Ray And park my car facing right.

Una I forgot that.
And the next day you'd be there to meet me.
In the park.
The public park.

Ray It was the only place we could meet.

Una The first time.
In the park.

I'd be so excited.
Knowing you'd be there.
And I ran.
Because you were mine.
You were sitting on a bench reading a newspaper.
And the first thing you said to me
You told me not to sit down beside you.
I had to walk past you.
And I knew why.

Ray It was ridiculous.
Stupid place to meet.
I hadn't thought about it.
I, I *didn't* think.
I didn't know what was happening to me.
And you

Una I walked into the bushes.

Ray You disappeared.
And started calling out my name.
Ray.
Come here, Ray.
I sat there and
a man
there was a man walking along the path.
You called out again and he looked at me and laughed.
He hadn't seen you.
He didn't *know*.
Only heard your voice.
Ray, come on.
I'm waiting.
And I
I'd been seen but I could still explain it.
Up to that moment I would still be believed.
I could walk away and stop everything.

Una But you didn't.

Ray No.
I couldn't.
Whatever was happening
whatever I was thinking
thought about
was in me
made me believe I loved you.
Made me walk across the grass, the
get on my knees and crawl under the branches.
and hold your hand and

and kiss you.

Una And lay down next to each other.
And open my shirt and touch my
my breasts.
And and unzip yourself.
And take out your prick.

Ray Not the first time.

Una I'm sorry.
You you *gentleman*.
Not the first time.
The second, the third time.
Both of us lying on a blanket you brought.
A blanket.
I thought it was for me but it was

Ray It was.

Una so that twigs and and earth and
wouldn't stick to my clothes.
So no one would suspect.

Ray I didn't want us to get caught.

I've never
loved
Never desired anyone that age again.
Ever.

Una Just me.

Ray Yes.
Just you.
You were the only one.

Pause.

It never came up in the trial.
The park, the bushes.
The blanket.

I always wondered why.

Una I never told them.

Ray Why?

Una I was
I don't know.
You didn't either.

Ray No.
They'd have given me ten years.

Pause.

Una I was only in court for a day.
Behind that screen.
I never knew what was said.
No one told me anything.
I was at a relative's house.
Not allowed to leave.
No television, no newspapers.
No one told me about the trial.
Even now my mother won't
What was the name of the town?
Where we
we went.
There was a beach.
We drove there to get the ferry.
It was dark.
Winter.
The shops were shuttered.
What was its name?

Ray Why?

Una I want to know.
I couldn't find it anywhere.
What was its name?
We walked along the beach.
It was cold.

We held hands.
We could do that because it was dark.
You pointed out to sea.
Across the sea to where we were going.
Can you see it?
There it is.
You got a room at a guest house.
I had to stand behind you as you paid the woman.
Keep my head down and run up the stairs.
Did you know her?
That woman.

Ray No.

Una I always thought you did.
I don't know why.

Ray No.
How would I?
No.
What

Una There were twin beds

Ray Okay.

Una Why not?

Ray I've told you why.
It's
I don't want to hear it.

Una I do.

Ray We both know what happened.

Una I don't.
I don't know everything.
You don't.
You don't know anything.
I want you to know.
What I did for you.

Ray What you did for me?

Una What was the name of the town?

Ray Tynemouth.

Pause.

Una Twin beds.

A TV.

Nothing else.

The window looking out at the sea.

We undressed.

We had sex on one of the beds.

I don't know how long for.

I saw how much pleasure it gave you.

I liked I could do that.

We did it twice, fucked twice.

You turned me round for the second time.

You made so much noise.

We lay in each other's arms afterwards.

I cried a bit.

My parents would be looking for me.

They'd be phoning my friend

maybe at the school asking where I was

why I wasn't home

had anyone seen me?

Pause.

You said you wanted cigarettes.

You were going to look for a shop, a pub.

I wanted to go with you but you said no I was to wait there, wait for
you.

You'd be five minutes.

And you touched me you

kissed me between my legs

your tongue

both of my breasts.

You'd be back in no time.

I lay on the bed.
I listened to your footsteps going downstairs.
I wrapped the sheet around me and went over to the window.
I wanted chocolate
I tried to open it.
Whatever I ate then.
Sweets.
Shout to you.
Chocolate.
But the window wouldn't open.
I saw you down below, opening the front gate.
I knocked on the window but you
you were already walking along the street, the middle of the street.
You didn't hear me.

I fell asleep and when I woke up I didn't know the time.
I was sore between my legs but I felt wonderful.
You hadn't come back yet but I was so happy.
My man would be back soon and he would have chocolate for me.
I didn't need to tell him what I wanted.
You knew and you'd bring it to me.
But you still didn't come.

The room was cold.
I got dressed, looked out the window.
Your car was still there across the road.
I could hear talking downstairs, not clearly.
But voices.
I walked down the stairs.
The front door was closed.
The only sound was a TV coming from a room.
The voices were from the TV.
The door was open a bit.
I knocked on the door.
Nothing happened.
No one was there.
I opened the front door and went out.

There was a shout as I was closing the door.
The woman.
I opened
saw her
what are you or
saw her walking towards me
and I, I shut the door and
ran to the gate and out into the street and ran.

I walked into the centre of town.
It was late.
Ten on the church clock.
The ferry left at midnight.
There wasn't long.
You were nowhere.
A shop was open, lights.
I asked inside if a man had bought some cigarettes.
He told me to get out.
He thought *I* was buying cigarettes.
I tried to describe you but he didn't listen.

Then a pub.
The first pub.
You'd be inside having a drink and a smoke.
But I couldn't go in
I had to
all my courage
wait till two men walked in
follow behind them
and look for you
walking around the pub.
Men making jokes, laughing.
What was I wanting?
You lost, hinny?

I said my dad.
The man behind the bar asked me
We said I'd

in trouble
you were my dad.
Told him what you wearing, what you looked like.
He'd seen you.
You'd been in.
The accent.
Smoked a cigarette, had a drink, then left.
He was concerned, the man.
He asked me my name and I told him.
He wanted to walk with me, help me look.
I said no, no, no, I'm fine, I'm fine.
I kept walking.
Along the main street.
A few people passed me.
I wanted to ask them if they'd seen you but I didn't know what to say.
I went into another pub, another.
Everyone's face turning to look at me, shouting, laughing.

I walked on and on.
The next pub, the next.
People staring, laughing, telling me to get out.
I walked past houses
getting further from the sea.
I walked ten paces, ran ten.
You'd be at the next corner, the next.
Any moment.
And every car was you.
The houses stopped.
I was at the end of the town.
The road carried on.
I looked out into the dark countryside.
I'd gone too far.
I'd walked too far.
I was at the end.
You
I'd missed you.
You were back at the guest house.

Looking for me, wondering where I was.
I'd
I ran.
I ran back.
I thought I was lost and then I wasn't.
I could see the clock above the roofs.
I walked towards it.
It was half-eleven.
We could still make the ferry.
I ran and ran.
I could see the guest house.
But your car had gone.
I checked
ran up and down looking into all the cars but
and my bag was inside your car
with all my clothes
with everything.
And you were gone.
The clothes I'd brought.
But
and
my passport in my pocket and that
I
The room
but it was dark, the window.
I didn't know what to do.
Waited.
I sat on a bench.
I was freezing, hungry.
I wanted to know why you'd gone.
What I had done.
I was crying.
You'd left me.
You'd
Or something terrible had happened.
You'd been killed or drowned or
I couldn't do anything, couldn't go anywhere.

We wouldn't be on the ferry.
We wouldn't be leaving.
I didn't know what to do.
Something had happened.
You wouldn't have left me.
You wouldn't have done that.
I heard midnight.
You weren't coming.
I was alone.
A woman talked to me.
They saw me and crossed the road.
A man and a woman walking their dog.
They asked what I was doing there.
Where did I live?
Who was looking after me?
I went back to their house.
They gave me blankets and phoned my parents.
I lay on their sofa and listened to her talk to my mother.
The police were there with her.
I felt sick.
I wanted to die.
I was never going to see you again.
I'd have to face all of them
everyone
all of them
alone.

I protected you.
Defended you.
Stayed
stayed true.
I told the police you hadn't touched me.
You'd done nothing.
I was a
I was a runaway.
I wanted to escape my parents, my house, my school.
You'd given me a lift in your car.

You helped me escape.
I'd asked you, begged you.
You'd driven me there and left.
You won't know any of this.

They wanted to do tests.
Take samples out of me.
Doctors, police.
I refused.
No one was going to touch me.

I shouted, screamed
You'd done nothing.

You'd

I wanted you to
I wanted you back.

I

They drugged me.
Held me down and and injected me.
Opened my legs and took
took out your come.

Evidence.

They asked me what you'd done to me.

Then told me what you'd done to me when I wouldn't.

You were only after one thing.

That's why you'd disappeared.

You'd got what you wanted.

My my mother screaming at me.

She

The police, the
a woman psychiatrist who spoke
always spoke so quietly.

Adults lie.

They want things from people and they lie to get them and, and don't
they don't even know they're lying.

They do not know themselves.

I couldn't hear her sometimes.

Had to ask

repeat
repeat what she'd said.
Did I know what I'd done?
Did I know that I'd hurt people?
People who loved me.
Did did I want to hurt them?
And
For days.
What had you said?
What did you promise me?
What words
What words did you use?

And in the courtroom I sat behind that screen and I spoke.
I cried.
You heard me.
I cried more than I spoke.
And then I
I said too much, I
The lawyers were furious with me.
It wasn't what they wanted.
I couldn't help it.
It was you.
You were there and I couldn't see you so I had to shout.
I had to let you know.
You left me alone.
Bleeding.
You left me.
You left me in love.

When they came home at the end
into the house.
My parents.
Not home.
The relatives' house.
I was in the bedroom, waiting.
They were silent.

They didn't move.
I sat and waited.
They didn't come through to me.
I thought maybe you'd got off.
You'd been let go.
You'd be coming back to live beside us.
Until my dad
later
told me six years.
And in the night I woke up and my mother was there.
Leaning over me.
Shouting that *they'd* been tried.
She'd been on the stand.
And my dad had to take her out of the room.
Pull her out of the room.
And
The judge.
What he said about me.
You'll remember.
I had
suspicious
suspiciously adult yearnings.
When my mother told me that I didn't know what she meant.

And we never moved house.
They
To, to shame me.
To punish me.
So I'd be pointed at.
And slapped in the street.
Or the psychiatrist told them it was better to stay.
For for continuity or

I hate the life I've had.
You wouldn't know that.
I wanted you to know that.
I knew you'd forget about me.

Ray I wrote you a letter.
After a year in there.
I sent one.
They let me send one.
They had to read them first.
Did you get it?

Una No.
I didn't get any letters.

Ray They'd have told your parents.

Una What did it say?

Ray To forgive me.
Explaining.
Apologising.
What I'd learnt about myself.

Pause.

There was another letter
One they wouldn't let me send.
I thought it would be good for you to read it.

I came back.
I was coming back for you.

Pause.

I bought

Una Coming back?

Ray Yes.
I did buy cigarettes.
I
Listen.

Una Is this what you tell yourself?

Ray It's what happened.
I bought the cigarettes but I went

Una Is this what you use?
To to
For this?
To smile in a photo.

Ray No.
Listen.
There was a pub.
I
Listen.
I had a drink.
I needed time.
I needed to think, to plan.
The ferry, the passports.
How to explain.
What to say.
And I needed a drink.
I needed courage.
It was going to happen.
I walked around for a while.
The streets.
Behind, around.
I knew you were waiting for me.
But I had to
Until I was back there, at the guest house.
Looking up at the window.
The light in the window.
The woman was there.
Stripping the sheets.
She said you'd gone.
You'd ran off.
What was going on?
I left her.
I walked out.
You weren't at the car where I thought you'd be.
Or the beach.
I shouted for you.

I thought you were hiding.
I drove into the town looking for you.
I couldn't find you.
I didn't know where you'd go.
Why you'd gone.
I started to panic.
I thought the police would appear any minute, surround my car.
I parked.
I went back into the pub.
The same pub and ordered another drink.
He didn't move, the man there, the same man who'd served me.
He was staring at me.
He asked me about my daughter.
Had, had I found her?
And I
I looked at him and said yes, yes I had, she was fine.
There was another man beside me.
Asking if I *had* a daughter and what was her name.
I
and I
Another man was getting up from his seat.
The first one leaned over the bar, tried to grab me.
I pulled away, swore at them.
They
Told them
Three, four of them after me.
I ran out.
They chased me.
Two kept chasing me.
I hid
ran somewhere, a
I lost them.
I hid there for, I don't know, an hour.
I heard the clock strike midnight.
I got back to the car and, and drove away and
I didn't know if you'd gone to the police or
if I was leaving you

but I couldn't stay.
I drove to Newcastle.
To where the ferry left from.
If maybe you'd gone somehow, gone there.
Waiting for me there.
I waited till dawn.
Then I knew it was over.

I kept driving.
I didn't know where to go.
I drove west.
I heard the news on the radio.
Safe and well.
Found in Tynemouth by a couple walking their dog.
The police were hunting me.
Hunting my car.
They gave out the licence-plate number.
I drove to the coast.
Kept to small roads.
I left the car behind.
Walked.
The Solway Firth.
Found a phonebox, phoned the police.
Waited there till they came.
I'd never have left you there.

Pause.

Una But there's no difference.
Leaving or coming back.
There's

Ray There is.
For me there is.

Una Better for you.
Easier for you.

Ray It's not easier.
It's

The lawyer

Una Why say it?
Why say it now?

Ray The lawyer said it sounded better if I had left you there
because it showed I knew the seriousness
the awfulness of what I had done.
That I ran from you.
Never to to return.
Because of what it would sound like to a jury
be *made* to sound like
That I was going back for
for *more*.
Because what else would I go back to you for?

When I couldn't find you that night.
I thought something must've happened to you.
I knew you wouldn't leave me.
Someone had taken you.
Someone was
harming you.
Even thought maybe
maybe I should go to the police.

When they found me I was on the floor of the phone box.
Hugging my knees.
Crying my eyes out.
Because I'd lost you.
I, I hadn't protected you.

It does make me feel better.
That I was coming back.
It does.
Whoever I was then.
It makes me feel better.

Una Why didn't you send the letter?

Ray I told you.

They wouldn't let me.

Una There must have been some way.

Ray No.

Pause.

She stares at him.

The lights shut off suddenly, in the room and in the windows.

Una What's happened?

What's happened.

Ray I don't

Una backs against the wall.

Una What's going on?

Ray I have to go and see.

Una Is something wrong?

Ray No.

Wait here.

Una Where are you going?

Ray I have to find out what's

Stay here.

Okay?

Una Yes.

Ray I'll be one minute.

It's probably a power failure or but

Wait here.

He opens the door, goes out.

Una waits, very still.

Outside, distant sound of doors closing.

A minute passes.

Una Ray.
Ray.

She walks to the door, looks out into the darkness, afraid.

She turns back.

The light comes back on in the room but not the windows.

Ray re-enters.

Ray They're unbelievable.

Una Who?

Ray Them.
All of them.
They left.

Una All of them?

Ray Yes.
To go home.

Una Are the doors locked?
Are we

Ray No.
No.
I have keys.
I lock up.

Una Why didn't they tell you?

Ray I don't know.
They
They're stupid bastards.

What's wrong?

One of them must've just
not thinking.
They're

Una You lock up?

Ray I have keys.
I'm usually the last

Una You'll lock up tonight?

Ray Yes.
Why?

Una Are you the

Ray What?

Una The night watchman?
The, the
security?

Ray No.

Una The caretaker, the janitor?
Are you

Ray No.

Una They must think you are to

Ray I'm not.

Una To leave you here.

Ray I am not

Una You haven't finished clearing up.
You'd

Ray In a

Una better start.

Ray In a shirt?

Una Look at all this.

Ray And trousers like these.
And these

Una You've got

Ray shoes?

Una some kind of fixation.

Ray It didn't say my *caretaking* team, the photo.
What d'you mean, fixation?
What?

Una Trousers, shorts.

Ray What're you talking about?
I'm
I have a position here.

Pause.

Una I don't know who I'm looking at.

Ray I worked to get this.
I worked to get here.

Una Do *you* know?

Ray Everything was finished for me.
Closed to me.

Una Does *anyone*?

Ray I slaved.
To *not* be a janitor.
A caretaker.
A drunk.
A
a waste.
To rescue something from the

Una You haven't changed.
You still just talk
talk to get, to
Lie and don't even know you're

Ray Shut up.

Una I don't know what to believe, Ray.
There's so much to choose from.
Do you live in here?

Ray What?

Una Maybe all

Ray What're you talking about?

Una the food is yours.
This is yours.
You live here and you
you never leave.
You never
You don't have anyone.

Ray I have someone.

Una You live here and eat here and

Ray I found someone.
I

Una Does she know
Does she know you were coming back to me?
Did you tell her that?

You haven't told her.
Have you?
You haven't told her anything.

Ray I wanted to.
I wanted to but
I wouldn't
And we have a life.
I've done better than anything anything I could

Una You

Ray could imagine.
From that phone-box.

From that that
Crying on his knees.
I've
My parents.
Family.
When I was inside.
The friends.
Nothing for me.
Refused to do anything.
My flat was repossessed.
I had debts.
I had nothing.
But I found her.
And I am the luckiest

Una Jesus.

Ray most most grateful man.

Una Can I meet her?

Ray Don't be stupid.

Una But I'm not stupid, Ray.
You said I wasn't stupid.
I want to meet her.
This wonderful woman.
Who'd never forgive you if she knew.
Who'd
Describe her.
What does she look like?

Ray Why?

Una C'mon.
What does she look like?

Ray No.

Una Is she pretty?
Attractive?

Ray turns away from her.

Una pursues him, getting closer to him.

Blonde, brunette?

Tall or short?

Smart or stupid?

Ignorant.

You coward.

To live like this.

Ray Why don't you shut your mouth?

Una I would hate to be her.

How old is she?

What's the age difference?

How much

Ray One year.

She's one year older than me.

Una So she's old like you.

She's sixty.

Ray She's not sixty.

Una You're almost sixty.

Ray turns away from her.

Is she still sexy?

Does she still turn you on?

Ray Yes.

Una What does she do to you?

Ray Jesus.

Una What d'you like?

All that sagging skin.

What's she do best?

Ray You're ill.

You have

Una I'm not ill.

Ray Don't come near me.

Una I'm not ill.

She picks up a chair, hurls it at him.

I am not ill.

You are.

She picks up another.

Ray tries to stop her.

They struggle together.

Una falls to the floor, shouts out in pain.

Ray Are you alright?

Una Get away from me.

Pause.

Ray How long did it take you to drive?

Una Why?

Una Have you driven it recently?

Una gives a short laugh.

You have
on your shirt.

It's wet.

Food or

Ray Jesus.

Una What is it?

Ray I don't know.

It's wet.

Jesus.

I have to

He goes to a locker, opens it.

Nothing.

I thought there might be another shirt.

He sits down.

I'm tired.

Una I'm tired as well.

Ray I started at six this morning.

Una Long day.

Ray Double shift.

Una You used to like good clothes.
That jacket you had.

Ray I don't know what happened to that.

Una Your clothes now, they're

Ray I know.
Cheap.
The pay's not great here.
They don't pay me enough for what I do.
I should ask for more.

I like what you're wearing.

Pause.

Una Where's the water?

He picks up the bottle of water, takes it to her.

She drinks.

Pause.

I have a job.

I work.

Before, I travelled for a few years.
Now I work.
I make good money.
Drink in moderation.
No eating condition.
A few friends.
Not many.
My flat could be bigger.
I'm a terrible driver.
But my car runs perfectly.

Ray How's your mother?
Do you see her?

Una I've no choice.
She sees *me*.
She keeps a close watch.
Still still won't trust me.
If she knew.
The colour her face would go.
She laughs suddenly to herself.
My mother.
She began to find me boyfriends.
To ask around.
A few years ago.
Eligible men.
Sons of friends, of neighbours.
She invited them round to the house.
We'd drink tea.
It was like the nineteenth century.
Winning my hand.
Because I
I slept with a lot of men before that.
A lot.
And when I got unhappy.
When I'd had enough
when

when I'd made my parents suffer enough
because I told them
I'd tell them in detail what I did with these men.
I stopped.

Ray How many?

Una You don't think I'd keep count do you?

Ray I don't know.
You might.

Una Eighty-three.

Ray Do you have someone now?

Una Yes.

Ray He doesn't know you're here?

Una No.
I didn't tell him.
I've *never* told him.
I didn't want to.
I liked him too much.
We're apart now.
After three years.
But I love him.
I want to love him again.
If we can.

This water.
I need a drink.
A proper drink.
My mouth's dry.

Ray Beer.

Una Yes.
Is that what you drink?

Ray Sometimes yes.
Wine.

Beer would be good.
Do you want to?

Una Go for a drink?

Ray There's a place not far.

Una A drink?

Ray No.

Una No.

Ray My stomach.
Too much beer.
They've got good beer.

Una European beer?

Ray I don't know where it's from.

Una Holland.

Ray They'll say it's from Holland but it'll be brewed in Newcastle.

They laugh.

Una The ferry from Newcastle doesn't go to Amsterdam.

Ray I know.

They laugh again.

Una It's a pigsty in here.

Ray They're
They'll come back tomorrow and eat in here again *amongst* this
and not
because the janitor
the
who cleans
is the worst.
He does nothing.
He reads.
He has an office and he sits and reads and

Una Where is he?

Ray Gets ill.

Always ill.

Whenever he feels like it.

He touches his shirt again.

This is disgusting.

It is a pigsty.

He runs at the bin and kicks it over.

It falls, rubbish spills out.

He kicks the rubbish.

Una joins in.

They kick together.

The rubbish lies everywhere.

They stop, look at each other.

They start again.

He stops, out of breath, sits.

She goes nearer to him.

Una Are you alright?

Ray I think so.

This feels like a wound.

It's so wet.

I'm going to die at sixty.

I know I will.

I've always

some

I believe it'll happen.

Sixty.

A feeling.

I've only four years left.
Four to go.

I wondered how you'd grow up.
What you'd become.
The kind of person you'd be.
How you'd live.
To see you now.
And you to be unhappy.
And I am the cause of that.
I never wanted to hurt you.

Una You did.

He puts his hand out, strokes her.

Ray You were lonely.
Before you met me.
When you met me.
You were alone.
You were a lonely child.
Your parents left you to yourself.
You never said it but
when I held you in my arms I could feel it.
I see now.
I thought you were strong.
You're not.
Neither am I.

They kiss.

I did think about you.
I do think about you.

Una What do you think?
Do you think about me then?

Ray Yes.
Yes, I do.
It's all I have.

Una In that room?

Ray Yes.
Touching you.
Holding you.

Una Fucking me?

Ray Yes.
Fucking you.

Una Do you masturbate?
Do you come?

Ray Yes.
They kiss.
It gets more intense.
They begin to undress each other.
They lie down.
Ray pulls away.
No.
I can't.
I can't.

Una I want you to.

Ray No.

Una Why not?

Ray I'm sorry.
I can't.

Una Am I too old?

Outside the room, from some distance away, an adult female voice calls out.

Voice Peter?

Ray It's alright.

He seems not to have heard it.

Una Did

Voice Peter?

He stares at the door.

Una Is it her?

Ray Yes.

The voice calls, fainter, further away than before.

Voice Peter, are you here?

Ray She's at the other end of the building.

We can

Una What?

Ray We have to get out.

Pause.

The sound of the door handle turning.

Una moves over to the far wall.

Ray walks towards the lockers.

The door opens and a Girl of twelve enters.

Girl You're here.

Peter.

You're here.

Ray Hello.

The Girl goes to him, puts her arms around him.

What're you doing?

Girl We're looking for you.

Where have you been?

Ray I was here.
I'm changing.

He moves away from her.

I'm busy.

Girl What are you doing?

Ray Look at the mess in here.

Girl I'll help you.

She bends down to pick up the litter.

You eat too much.

She laughs to herself.

Ray No.
Don't, darling.
Don't.

Firmer:

Drop it.

The Girl drops the litter, stares at him.

Go and find your mum.
Tell her I'm coming.
Tell her I'll see both of you at the entrance.
I'll get the car and I'll meet you at the entrance.
Wait there for me.
I'll be a few minutes.
Go.

Girl Come with me.

Ray I can't.

Girl Why?

Ray I can't yet.
I will.

Five minutes.
I have to lock all the doors.

Girl Why can't I stay here with you?

Ray You shouldn't even be here.
You shouldn't be in here.
It's not allowed.
You have to go now.

The Girl sees Una.

Girl Who's she?
Peter?
Why is she there?
Why is she hiding?

Ray She's not hiding.

Una I'm not hiding.

The Girl moves closer to Ray.

Girl Peter, who is she?

Ray A friend.

Girl Does she work here?

Ray No.

Una We were just talking.

Ray And you've interrupted us.

Girl Are you coming with us?

Una No.

Ray Darling

Girl Do you know my mum?

Una No, I don't.

Girl What's her name?

Ray Una.

Una You should go now.

Ray You should.

Girl I want to stay with you.

Ray Darling you can't.
You have to find Mum.

Una Go.
Please.
Go.
You have to.

Una guides the girl out of the door.

Silence.

She's not yours?

Ray No.
Another man.

You're not my my
I don't have to tell you everything.

Una groans.

Don't.

Una Oh Christ

Ray Don't.
What you're thinking.

Una You can't.
Oh God.

Ray No.
I could never.
Believe me.

He moves closer to her.

I take care of her.
I look after her.
I would never.

He takes hold of her, getting more insistent.

I would never do that.
I would never.
Believe me.
You have to believe me.

He stops.

Never.

He embraces her, stroking her face.

He kisses her.

She doesn't respond.

He breaks apart from her.

There's nothing I can say.

They stare at each other.

Pause.

Both of them look at the door.

Ray takes a step towards it.

Una Wait.
You can't.

Ray I have to.

Una No.

Ray I have to go to them.

Una No.

Ray They need me.

She goes to him, holds him.

Una No.
You can't.
You can't go back to them.

Ray Let me.
Let me.

Una No.

Ray Let me go.
Let me.
I have to.

Una You can't.

Ray Get off me.
She's clinging tighter.
He shoves her away.
She comes back at him.

Una Let me come with you.
They have to know.

Ray Get the fuck off me.
He throws her aside.
Una staggers backwards.
Ray exits.

Una Ray.
Una runs out of the room.
The room is empty.
End.

About the Author

David Harrower's plays include *Knives in Hens* (Traverse, 1995), *Kill the Old, Torture Their Young* (Traverse, 1998), *Presence* (Royal Court, 2001), *Dark Earth* (Traverse, 2003). Adaptations/versions include *The Chrysalids* (NT Connections, 1996), *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Young Vic, 2001), *Woyzeck* (Edinburgh Lyceum, 2001), *Ivanov* (National Theatre, 2002), *The Girl on the Sofa* (Edinburgh International Festival/Schaubühne, 2002) and *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (National Theatre, 2003). *Blackbird* was shortlisted for the Saltire Society Book of the Year Award, 2005.

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KILL THE OLD, TORTURE THEIR YOUNG

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