

# CUCKOO

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND FULL-LENGTH PLAY

by

Charlotte Lowri Morris

Thesis submitted to  
The University of Birmingham  
for the degree of  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Drama and Theatre Arts  
College of Arts and Law  
The University of Birmingham  
September 2011

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**University of Birmingham Research Archive**

**e-theses repository**

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

## ABSTRACT

*Cuckoo* is set in a bedsit by the sea in Brighton. It opens with a man, Pete, descending the steps and entering his new home and the beginnings of a new life. Or so he hopes. Pete has been housed in the bedsit by Rooftops, a charity which aims to help people who have been homeless and alcoholic. His new life and the future in which he envisages being reconnected with his long lost daughter are intruded upon by the appearance of a stranger. Sammo enters Pete's world and their friendship slowly unravels to reveal Sammo's true motives. It is a play that focuses on our human need to connect and the complexities of such relationships.

In the accompanying thesis I have attempted to analyse the fundamental stages and processes that I proceeded through in order to arrive at the final draft of *Cuckoo*. I discuss the influences both on the course and otherwise that have contributed to the completion of this full-length play and the decisions made along the way.

## CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Themes	2
'Cuckooing'	4
Language & Character	6
Space: The World of the Play	18
Research	22
Conclusion	26
Cuckoo	27
Bibliography	188

## INTRODUCTION

The different aspects of human behaviour, the connectivity (or lack of) in our society and how they interweave creating multifaceted layers of experience and emotion, are in essence what I am most interested in and what I endeavour to explore through my writing. People, the human condition and our short time here in this funny, dark, and at times, perverse world are all aspects that make for inexhaustible material in plays. It's safe to say that during our lifetime each and every one of us will have experienced, in varying degrees, some form of love, fear and loss; making sense of all of this is what I tend to wrestle with in my plays and especially, I would say, in my most recent and complete play *Cuckoo*.

## THEMES

The recurring themes, which I am conscious of throughout all of my work, are of loneliness; people on the periphery of society and of an underlying menace or threat of violence that pervades these dislocated lives. Although *Cuckoo* is very far from being autobiographical, in fact the idea came from an article I read last year in the *Guardian* which had the heading, 'Vulnerable tenants targeted by drug gang 'cuckoos'' (Doward. 03.10.10), I have, to some degree, drawn upon personal experiences in order to navigate my way into the internal world of each of the characters. Being able to connect with them and what I am expressing through them, in turn allows for the audience to recognise certain nuances of behaviour and feeling which will, if the play captures the essence of experience and truth, evoke some sort of an emotional response in the audience.

Connecting ideas and exploring the intangible complexity of human emotions through drama is something we have been compelled to do since the beginning of civilised Man and it is this that I have attempted to do in *Cuckoo*. As Martin Esslin remarks in *The Field of Drama*:

Drama has become one of the principal vehicles of information, one of the prevailing methods of 'thinking' about life and its situations.

(Esslin.1988. p.13)

In previous plays such as *Host* (Morris. 2008), *Savannah* (Morris. 2007) and *The Ordinary Three* (Morris. 2009) I have been driven to 'think' and then to write about the extraordinary; what can only be deemed as the darker side of the human psyche and to look at characters that represent the outsider.

*Host* takes its name, and was based on, the Host bars that are prevalent in Japan. These bars are places where young professional women, too busy for a real relationship, buy a 'boyfriend'. What interested me was that, unlike with prostitutes or rent boys, the commodity being bought here is not sex but companionship. It is not physical gratification they desire but emotional interaction. What is even more extraordinary is that these women are completely aware that the emotional responses they are receiving from their 'boyfriends' are false but this is enough to quell their basic human instinct for connectivity; in some cases even managing to delude themselves into believing that the 'relationship' has actually become real.

In this respect *Savannah* is also similar. It focuses on a man's 'relationship' with a Real Doll (a life-like sex doll) and came from a documentary detailing the lives of men who choose to partake in 'relationships' with silicon dolls rather than real women. Again, these men seem able to convince themselves that the dolls are in some way real; they take them hand-gliding, have their meals with them sitting at the table and have photo albums full of 'family day out' style photographs. These two plays, as with *Cuckoo*, explore our need to connect, the overriding difference is that in *Cuckoo* what is believed to be

genuine – Pete’s friendship with Sammo and Leila – turns out to be under false pretences. So in essence I have subverted the angle that I had previously explored, where something that is fake is perceived as real.

*The Ordinary Three* took its narrative from a news story that told of the inhuman treatment of a young man by three people; one woman and two men. Over the course of three months they tortured and starved him to death. Although by no means as extreme as this, in *Cuckoo* I have again used power dynamics and the threat of violence as themes that work alongside that of loneliness and our need to connect.

## ‘CUCKOOING’

The initial idea for *Cuckoo* came from an article, as I have already mentioned, that I read in the Guardian back in October 2010. Jamie Doward wrote about a new phenomenon given the label ‘cuckooing’ which, in brief, is when predatory gangs befriend vulnerable ex-homeless individuals, often these people are also ex-addicts, in order to use their homes as a base for storing and selling drugs; the name being derived from the parasitic behaviour of cuckoos in the wild. The idea that people could invade the home, a place that is meant to symbolise safety and security, and the patent manipulation which the gang members employ to gain access to the property, really appealed to my sense of the

dynamics of control and the complexities of the human condition. Mike Nicholas from Thames Reach is quoted in the article as saying, “Often the victims are lonely, isolated and have nothing to do with their time” (Nicholas. 2010). Fundamentally these people are starved of interaction and of the basic human need for companionship, something which most of us take for granted but for which a large proportion of people is absent. Not only are these people cut off from everything that they have known but they are also struggling with their demons to maintain a clean and sober lifestyle.

Having read the article I could immediately envisage the characters of Pete (protagonist) and Sammo (antagonist), I could vividly see the room in which all the action would take place (Pete’s basement flat), and I also felt that I had a situation that contained all the rudiments for a potentially intriguing story. The encouragement to develop this article into a full-length play came early on in the course from the M Phil founder, David Edgar, in a Guest Lecture that he gave on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2010. For the purpose of the class, we students, had been instructed to bring in a newspaper article that we had found that contained a story or plot element that we believed would make interesting material for a play. Having read the ‘cuckooing’ article I believed it contained not only an interesting narrative but also strong suggestions of character, place and was wholly relevant as a comment on a societal malaise that blights the present landscape. My initial instinct about the idea was given credence when David Edgar, having heard the details of the article, agreed with its potential to make the basis of an interesting play.

The angle that I eventually decided to take on this story would not be to create a politically charged piece (as this is not where I believe my strengths lie), but rather to use the situation presented as a tool to get one character inside another's domain and to construct a story that looked at the power dynamics, conflict and complexities of relationships which inevitably occur when people live in close proximity to one another.

Although I do not directly point out the flaws of the current housing system, I did wish to raise the question of whether the act of re-housing individuals with complex issues can really be the only answer; or whether there are other vital questions to be asked about the need for a support network, i.e. human contact, which would fully integrate these individuals back into society. In the words of my tutor Steve Waters, if I managed to maintain a strong hold on the themes of the play, then *Cuckoo* would have the potential of being, '...a profound examination of loneliness and human need' (Waters. 03.05.11).

## LANGUAGE AND CHARACTER

It is through the exchange of words, the dynamics of language and what is actually being communicated surreptitiously through silence, that the ineptitude of speech in expressing true emotion becomes apparent. This inadequacy of language and the obstacles that we are faced with in day-to-day communication,

is something that I first became aware of in the work of Harold Pinter – one of the playwrights I have found to be most influential to me. In his work, as explained in John Russell Brown's book *Theatre Language*, he '...explores such inadequacies of words, the presuppositions of speech and the barriers to comprehension' (Brown. 1972. p. 17). Not only this, he presents complex characters that have all the nuances of behaviour that are identifiable in life, yet also combines this with a slightly surrealistic edge through his use of language. He uses myriad shades of emotional and linguistic colour to create a world in which we are able to glimpse our own existence; albeit from a slightly different angle from which we experience it. The result being that we are invited to look on scenes that are representational of the aspects and emotions that are present in everyday life but that are not wholly visible or explainable.

This incommunicable element of existence is profoundly felt in Pinter's many – but perfectly placed – silences. As I previously remarked in the Dramatic Structure Essay from the first term, in which I discussed Pinter's use of character and dialogue in *Old Times*, 'The subtext lives in the unspoken' (Morris. 2010. p.5). In the essay I then go on to quote Vsevolod Meyerhold:

Every dramatic work contains two levels of dialogue: one is the 'external necessary dialogue,' made up of words that accompany and explain the action; the other is the 'inner dialogue' which the spectator should over-hear, not as words

but as pauses, not as cries but as silences...

(Meyerhold. 1998. p.36)

This insight into the mechanism of the unspoken became invaluable to me as I strove to write a play that would not only have the 'external necessary dialogue' but would also manage, through the silences, to make audible the undercurrents of the character's inner emotional layers. Through examining another's work in detail, I began to apply the same objective analysis with my own work that I had used when studying Pinter. My realisation being that within these silences and ellipses I must attempt to express Pete's struggle with his suppressed inner anxieties and try to make them visible; for them to become tangible so that this character could be seen to be connected with a life beyond the play.

It was highlighted in my first supervision with Steve Waters, that it was crucial to '...elaborate more on Pete, to make clear the life he has led and what lies behind his new situation at the start of the play.' (Waters.30.11.10). It was this remark that led me, in the second draft, to create a scene that presents Pete alone on stage. I realised that more could be conveyed through Pete's silence and his actions when alone than any that are spoken aloud. I began the play with Pete entering the space carrying a cardboard box, '*his whole life in a box*' he turns the radio on:

*Waterloo Sunset by the Kinks plays quietly. It is his favourite*

*song. He turns it up and sings along whilst moving awkwardly to the rhythm.*

*After a moment or two he sits down on the sofa, he fidgets for a few seconds before deciding he'd be more comfortable sitting on his coat on the floor.*

(Act 1. Sc. 1. p. 29).

In this opening scene I introduce Pete not only to the space but also to the audience. As he acquaints himself with his new home we, the audience, are also being acquainted with this character, and through his subtle movements and actions we learn about this person and where he has come from. I signify, through his discomfort at sitting on the sofa that this is a person who is not in an environment he is entirely comfortable with. The subtle visual references that came to be added in later were both the appearance of the Man watching Pete through the window and also the postcard Pete takes out of the box and looks at. The threads of his past – the dead man that Pete is haunted by and his long lost daughter – have been interwoven to enhance the visual image that we are left with when going into the next scene.

By conjuring up images, through language and memory, I was not only attempting to paint, (as vividly as I could) a picture of Pete's past but also to explore a new dimension to his character; therefore imbuing him with more substance and texture. It was after my third supervision with Steve where he expressed the need for me to now push, 'the language and events further' (Waters. 03.05.11) that I looked again at the language of the play. I realised that I could explore this through Pete and the hallucinations he talks about with Sammo.

In Act One, Scene Four Pete is seen, for the first time, divulging information about himself openly with Sammo; we see him talking frankly about his alcohol dependency and as he describes his mental state we see him reliving those hallucinations:

I heard these little voices calling my name. I looked up but couldn't see anyone, I was all alone...that's when I noticed them...out on the windowsill...pansies and marigolds...loads of them there were...all calling my name...they had little mouths...tiny little mouths and no eyes.

(Act 1, Sc. 4, p. 64 - 65)

Through these words I intended to evoke powerful images that are brought to life through language; Pete recalls these memories and as he speaks

the images are brought to the fore in the minds of the audience. The images have a surreal, slightly creepy aspect to them, with Pete describing how on occasion when he had gone too long without a drink he would see, 'the furniture come alive. Out of the corner of my eye I'd see a footstool scuttling along the floor' (Act 1, Sc. 4, p. 63). It was important to me to not only make these visions sinister but also quite beautiful with, 'Rain pouring down from the ceiling' and 'a curtain would come down off its rail and waltz across the room' (Act 1, Sc. 4, pp. 63-64). Pete's capacity for being eloquent and detailed when describing his hallucinations and the enthusiasm he shares them, juxtapose with his previous stilted dialogue when talking with Marilyn in Act One, Scene Two. They are an insight into the inner landscape of Pete's mind.

Before the introduction of these memories *Cuckoo* was in danger of becoming too insular, too trapped within its own perimeters. By bringing forth this new dimension of character I began to find that Pete and Sammo were beginning to form more of an interesting relationship; one that had the potential to move in unexpected directions. My goal was to create a relationship between two people that was as complex and intricate as the ones in life; that we have all experienced. To create a relationship that is not easily defined but that has light and shade, love and fear at its core. Pete isn't just a weak, ex-homeless, alcoholic – he is a man that has dreams, that has travelled and he has a strength and determination. Likewise, Sammo is not just a bullying drug-dealer, set on taking over Pete's flat, his aggression stems from feelings of inadequacy. They are two people haunted by the past and trying to make sense of their place in the

world. As the two get to know each other they begin to connect and Sammo begins to realise that he depends on his relationship with Pete as much as he depended on his relationship with his granddad. I decided quite early on that the depth of the piece and its layers would spring from this core character connection.

From this I started to look at the character of Sammo and how I had portrayed him in the first draft. It was apparent that I would need to tap into his inner more and allow chinks of his past to shine through in order for a more three-dimensional character to develop. My first attempt at this was to have Sammo alone on stage facing the audience with only a spotlight illuminating him and the rest of the stage in darkness. My intention was to create a flashback scene where Sammo is talking to a psychologist about the rape incident for which he spent two years in a Youth Detention Institute. The feedback that I received from Steve was that the scene worked as far as what the character was expressing, but that it did not work in its current state. Steve expressed concern about the sudden introduction of a device previously unseen and rightly identified this as not fitting in with the structure or flow of the piece as a whole.

After considering this I eventually reworked the scene so that Sammo speaks to Pete rather than to an unseen character. This succeeded in revealing more about Sammo's past as well as a way of exploring the vulnerable aspect of his character alongside that of his menacing, unpredictable nature. Sammo talks about the incident with a despondency indicated by the stage directions '*SAMMO*

*looks at the floor. Shuffles his feet. Bites the inside of his mouth'* (Act 2. Sc. 3. p. 135). This then unexpectedly shifts to threatening behaviour towards Pete. Sammo has revealed too much of himself, he feels exposed and he deals with these feelings by turning on Pete:

SAMMO: My name is Pete the pathetic. Watch ladies and gentlemen as I say and do nothing.

(Act 1. Sc. 2. p. 135)

The trap I was very conscious of falling into was of creating a one-dimensional character, the archetypal villain of the piece, so to have these insights into what makes him vulnerable was necessary in order to avoid this.

In my Supervision with Stephanie Dale, she commented that when Sammo first arrives, 'I don't believe in the moment Pete allows him into his home' (Dale. 15.03.11). This was a crucial point and something I admit I had not given due consideration. Steph suggested that Pete would be wary of Sammo and therefore very unlikely to allow him into his house, unless there was a very good reason. The suggestion that Steph made was that Sammo has come to return Pete's wallet that he had left in the café. This worked perfectly in giving a legitimate reason for Pete to immediately trust Sammo. This also tied in well with the moment in Act Two, Scene Six when Leila reveals the truth to Pete about the

wallet and how Sammo used it as a way of manipulating his way into Pete's affections. This is the moment when Pete discovers it was 'all a lie' and their friendship was 'False' (Act 2. Sc.6 p.168). Having established the two main characters, which in Steve's words were now 'powerfully drawn' (21.02.11), I then moved my attention to the two female characters.

The importance of Marilyn and her appearance in Act One, Scene Two, was made clear to me after having several supervisions with Steve. He suggested that it was more '...than the sum of its parts' (30.11.10) and that I should consider expanding on Marilyn's role in the play. I had introduced this character but had only utilised her once in Act One and then again at the very end of the play. Marilyn along with Leila were still a little 'under-cooked' (Waters. 03.05.11) and it was pointed out not only by Steve but also in the workshop session in February that these characters had more of a part to play. Throughout the course of writing *Cuckoo* I can definitively say that it was these two characters that I found the most difficult to flesh out.

The reason for this, I believe, stemmed from my initial desire to construct a play that only dealt with two characters – the characters of Pete and Sammo. Having been inspired by such plays as Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* and Dennis Kelly's *After the End* I found myself wanting to create the claustrophobic and tense atmospheres that exist in such tautly written plays. However, it soon became clear that the action of the piece would struggle to move on if I did not introduce outside characters. What became apparent was that by creating an

awkward but tender scene, one in which the audience begins to get a sense of the tragedy of Pete – his shyness at reaching out to Marilyn, which is then followed by her rejection – the essence of the overall tone of the play would be created. It is necessary to witness Pete's exclusion from the society he is attempting to reconnect with and for his defences against the world to be seen once again going up. It has taken a lot for Pete to build up the courage to ask Marilyn out on a date, there is an awful lot at stake here for him and I knew it was critical that this was witnessed in order for the momentum into the next scene – where he meets Sammo – to be established.

Act One, Scene Two, with its ellipses and pauses, creates a disjointed rhythm, one which enhances all of Pete's social inadequacies, as well as the awkwardness felt by Marilyn at their different social standings. The hierarchical nature of the situation, the difficulties felt by Marilyn to see Pete as an equal rather than just as her client – a person she is helping – contribute in layering the scene with the unspoken social difficulties felt by both characters. Through creating layers of emotion, seen and unseen, and through dialogue and the use of silence, I attempted to write a scene that subtly accessed the inners of two characters which are pivotal to the remainder of the play. Marilyn's business-like tone when going 'through the paperwork' (Act 1. Sc. 3. p. 35) about the tenancy agreement are interjected with a softer tone which shows her true feelings for Pete. She really does care about him and wants the best for him but there are boundaries imposed by society over which she will not step, she is not a woman that will go 'against the rules' (Act 1. Sc. 3. p.39).

In this excerpt Pete interjects before Marilyn can finish her sentence with, 'Yeah, yeah...', he knows what Marilyn is about to say but he does not want to hear the words as they are too painful for him:

MARILYN: Have you thought anymore about looking for your – ?

PETE: Yeah, yeah I have as a matter of fact.

MARILYN: And?

PETE: I think it's about time.

MARILYN: Fabulous.

PETE: It's what I came here to do after all.

(Act 1. Sc. 3. p. 25)

Through their tentative conversation I wanted to delicately drop the information about his long lost daughter into the scene, without it being overtly obvious that it's information the audience needs. In previous drafts this scene had been blatant in its function to reveal Pete's objective and it wasn't until I heard it read aloud at the workshop, I realised that I was in danger of presenting a superficial scene that was obvious in its agenda.

The rewrites that I went away and performed served to create more subtlety in tone, so that later in the scene the audience will gather more of what is being said and realise *who* it is they are talking about with Marilyn's remark, 'You're her dad, you're connected, nothing can change that.' (Act.1.Sc.3. p.34). The scene has ended up being quite long but this became necessary in establishing the characters; they need space and time around them for the

situation to be fully realised. And as Steve remarked in a lecture about re-drafting:

Think about the human rhythm – allowing space for real moments – for the characters to receive information. Think about the rhythm and truth of the scene.

(Waters. 21.03.11)

This 'rhythm and truth' is, for me, one of the most crucial elements in this particular scene; without it then the character's situations aren't believable and the pace or dramatic pressure going into Scene Three is not achieved. One of the many difficulties I experienced when writing *Cuckoo* came from seeing the play as a whole and being unable to think about what the next few scenes would be after the one I was working on. The play grew organically and each scene came just as the last had been finished, in some ways this helped me with the fluidity of the piece but it also hindered the structure of the play.

## SPACE: THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

The fact is that social isolation, the lack of human companionship, death or absence of parents in early childhood, sudden loss of love, and chronic human loneliness are significant contributors to premature death.

(Lynch. 1979. p. 3)

Loneliness, both literal and metaphorical, has been explored symbolically in the use of space in the play. The room – Pete's 'nest' – is represented at first as a place that, although empty and quite bare, nonetheless symbolises hope for the future – Pete's future. It is a place of safety but also of minimal interaction; Pete is secure and yet he is also dislocated from the outside world. My intention in the opening scenes was to establish Pete, his surroundings, what he has to lose should he break any of the rules and also to ascertain for the audience his profound loneliness.

At first the flat is white, sterile and un-homely – Pete gradually puts his own stamp on it, he tries to create a space that has his personality imbued on it by adding bits of furniture he finds '...outside people's houses,' noting that it's '...stuff they're chucking out' (Act 1, Sc. 2. p.31). By setting the play in a basement flat I intended to visually create a space that Pete had to enter from above. We, the audience, watch Pete descend the steps and enter the space; he descends into the unknown, a place that will become the underworld and from

which he might not break free. His journey will be one of self-discovery and will be about facing the past in order to escape and move on with his life – eventually exiting and ascending the steps – moving up into the outside world and into a future life. It has a cyclical structure to it in that at the end of the play Sammo has literally taken Pete's place in the flat.

Similarly, the large window at the back is literally a window onto the outside world, a world that Pete feels excluded from; but it is also a metaphorical representation of fear and of a person incapable of confronting his past. The figure of the Man always appears behind the window; he is someone on the outside looking in. Pete, in essence, is looking back at his own reflection but seeing the ghost of the man he killed, suggesting a mirroring of past and future, of the two entwined with each other and of an inability to see beyond the past and believe in a future. It is only when he allows his suppressed feelings of guilt to flood in (as the sea and beach encroach also), with the help of Leila – his 'fairy godmother' (Act 2, Sc. 6, p. 164) – that he is able to embrace the life he has been too guilt-ridden to live.

I had begun quite early on to hint at this outside world, the world of the sea and beach, with pebbles and shells dotted about the room but it wasn't until Steve suggested in my second Supervision (21.02.11) that if I were to explore this more, it would help give substance to Pete's interior world and the themes of the play. I also had the words of Moira Buffini echoing around my head after a Seminar she gave in which she stated that 'sofas look shit on stage' (Buffini.

28.02.11). This comment made me reassess my own use of space and the confines that I had created for myself. I went away and thought once again about what it was I was trying to achieve with the spatial aspect of the play. These remarks floated around in my mind for some time until suddenly it was like a light had been switched on and the pieces of the play, its symbols and deeper levels, all came together. I already knew that Pete had, at some stage in his life, been a merchant seaman and that coming to live by the sea had many connotations for him – the sea having many widely known and used symbolic meanings to do with freedom, journeys, danger and being alive. It was after this Supervision and the Lecture with Moira Buffini that I began to introduce more references to the sea and Pete's past. I also began to use the added texture of sound to create a sense of place – I brought in the sounds of waves, seagulls and sea shanties – to invoke, in Elinor Fuchs words 'The world of the play' (Fuchs. 2004).

After deciding to incorporate sea shanties into the play, about a week later a strange coincidence occurred – there was a programme on BBC 2 called *Shanties and Sea Songs with Gareth Malone* (14.04.11). It was from watching this programme that I learnt sailors are extremely superstitious. They believe that if you whistle before a voyage you run the risk of whistling up the devil and so jinxing the journey. This influenced my decision to begin Act One, Scene Three with Pete, first of all singing the shanty 'Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest' and then whistling the tune just before he opens the door to Sammo. The connotation being that Pete has unwittingly whistled up the devil and the journey towards his new life has now been jinxed. From the moment Sammo appears Pete's

trajectory will change and the action of the play will be put into motion. Pete's objective – to find his daughter – is now in jeopardy.

Gradually throughout the course of the play Pete's home – his world – takes on the outside elements and by the end of the play it is almost as if they are on a desert island. Pete and Sammo now resemble two shipwrecked souls surrounded by the debris of the sea. They are stranded within their own destructive world. It is not until Leila returns, dressed in a fairy costume and carrying a 'wand' (Act 2, Sc. 6. p.163) that Pete's journey into freedom is realised. Leila represents his beacon, his hope for the future. She connects him with the outside world and helps to anchor him back to reality – something he has slipped away from.

John Russell Brown's remark about Pinter, that for him 'fantasy and reality are inevitably mixed' (Brown. 1972. p. 104) is something which I find, the more I develop as a writer, to be true of my own work (to a much lesser extent). I found that by the time I had reached the end of the final draft of *Cuckoo*, the play which I had begun with had subtly morphed from a very naturalistic piece into one which used the fine line between reality and unreality to link the subconscious and conscious worlds of the characters.

## RESEARCH

To gain a realistic perspective on what the psychological and emotional effects are for a person who has been living on the streets, I spoke at length with a friend who used to work as a housing officer and also with two men that I met, both of which are homeless. Rosie Freeman – ex-housing officer – and I discussed both the positive and negative aspects of being re-housed in relation to cases that she had specifically been involved with during her time working in the sector. We also discussed the ins and outs of different housing schemes available and the steps you have to go through in order to get into a hostel before then being placed in a bedsit.

The idea that Pete has been housed through a charity that specifically deals with alcoholics came from the information I received from her. This allowed me to create the situation of a three-month probationary period – as each charity has their own set of rules which must be adhered to – this meant I was able to create a scenario that had a fixed time structure and worked within the configuration of the play as a whole. This time structure was suggested to me by Steve in my second Supervision, he noted, ‘Marilyn in particular could exert a time frame, which is badly needed at the moment as the play has an overtly episodic quality to it’ (Waters. 21.02.11). Through imposing this time structure I was able to gradually tighten the scenes and construct scenes which led fluidly onto the next.

One case study that Rosie Freeman discussed particularly interested me, as the man in question struck many parallels with Pete in *Cuckoo*. Mick was a long-term homeless person, in and out of hostels throughout his life, as well as sofa surfing along the way – until friends got tired of him – very similar circumstances to Pete. Also, Mick was a man who had been an alcoholic for almost his entire adult life; his addiction had led him to self-imposed exile from his wife and children – again there were striking similarities. In Rosie Freeman's words this long-term homelessness is very different from a homeless person who is new to it, '...it becomes a way of life' (Freeman. 16.05.11). This 'way of life' is habitual, nomadic and the sense of freedom experienced living like that can be very hard to leave. It is an existence that has its own benefits and can be difficult breaking away from; especially if, like Pete, you are used to not having any constraints.

When I first began constructing the character of Pete I had initially thought that his loneliness stemmed from the very fact of his being homeless, not realising that actually it is when he is *housed* that feelings of isolation become apparent and consume him. The results of my discussions with Rosie Freeman and Rafael and David (my two homeless contacts), were to highlight that Pete's conflicts arise from his feelings of being neither completely homeless or completely settled; he's on the cusp – living in a kind of non-existence – neither one or the other. As Rafael pointed out to me, 'On the streets I had my mates, people looking out for me. I wasn't ever alone' (Rafael. 08.04.11). Talking with Rafael about his own experience of living on the streets really helped me to add

texture to the character of Pete. Pete's eagerness in allowing a stranger into his home stems from his innate desire to connect with someone; he does not want to be alone. The necessity of communication is again reiterated in David Lynch's book *The Broken Heart: The Medical Consequences of Loneliness*, 'Dialogue is the essential element of every social interaction, it is the elixir of life' (Lynch. 1979. p. 215), without this necessary component Lynch believes that:

The wasting away of children, the broken hearts of adults, the proportionately higher death rates of single, widowed, and divorced individuals – common to all these situations, I believe, is a breakdown in dialogue.

(Lynch. 1979. p. 215)

To emphasise this theme, in order for it to become the core thread of the play and the catalyst for change, I chose to highlight Pete's lack of connectivity and human stimulus early on. Pete is seen entering the flat alone, a flat that is quite bare and uninviting. To break the silence Pete turns on his 'battered old radio' (Act 1, Sc. 1. p. 29) and sings along to the song '*Waterloo Sunset*.' With Sammo's entrance in Scene Three I wanted to introduce a new element, one that would change the direction and energy of the play. This new introduction served as a way of altering the rhythm of the piece, creating two contradictory dynamics and therefore heightening the possibility for change. Throughout the workshop process, when each of us were given feedback from the Directing and

Dramaturgy and Playwriting groups, the response to Sammo's entrance was that he's a charming young man that conceals an unpleasant side and that they felt he brought a certain foreboding to the piece. Initially I considered how I might alter this to further conceal his true nature, in order that his sudden change in attitude towards Pete would be more keenly felt. I soon realised with the advice and help of the two groups that this would be futile. They commented that inviting a stranger inside your home, a person who appears charming, immediately points to sinister connotations that are inescapable; everyone knows the phrase 'a cuckoo in the nest' for instance and everyone is aware of its menacing connotations.

Gathering these insights from people who have experienced them first hand was instrumental in the construction of the character of Pete. Spending time with people who are affected by homelessness and being given an insight into their day-to-day existence was a real eye-opener. Research of this kind is imperative when writing about issues which are completely alien to you. Something I will admit, though, is that if I had my time again then I would spend much more of my time out and about listening to people's first hand experiences.

## CONCLUSION

At the very beginning of the course Steve asked each of us what it was that we most wanted to achieve from completing the M Phil in Playwriting. My response to this question was that, having written three short plays previously, I knew that they were lacking substance and layers and it was this that I was determined to achieve in the writing of my first full-length play. Having had the time and space to create a play over the course of a whole year has been invaluable for me in being able to connect fully with the characters and in being able to intone my work with a texture that was not visible in my previous work. The support and guidance throughout this year from Steve Waters, Stephanie Dale and all the visiting lecturers has been inspirational. Through learning about the form of playwriting and having the input of established writers at every step of the process I have learnt more about the art of playwriting than I thought possible. I realise that I still have a long way to go, and that really I will never cease to continue learning with each new play that I write, but this has been the grounding in knowledge that I so needed to set me on my path.

Cuckoo

PLAY TEXT

## *CHARACTER LIST*

*PETE – late-forties. Ex-homeless, alcoholic.*

*SAMMO – twenties. Drug dealer.*

*MARILYN – forties. Housing support officer.*

*LEILA – early-twenties. Sammo's girlfriend.*

## *SETTING*

*The play takes place in a basement flat/bedsit in Brighton at the end of August.*

*The action of the play occurs over the course of three months.*

Act One, Scene One.

*Brighton. End of August. Late afternoon. Basement flat/bedsit. A freshly decorated, almost bare room. There is a two-seater sofa in the centre of the room and a single bed to the left of it. There is a door to the left of the bed which leads off to a bathroom. A compact kitchen unit is to the right of the front door. A large window dominates the back wall; steps up to the pavement are visible through the window. The front door is to the right of the window. PETE, late forties, slim, haggard yet handsome and wearing grey suit trousers descends the steps and unlocks the front door. He carries a battered hold-all and a duffle coat which he lays down on the floor in front of the sofa.*

*He looks about the room, a small, barely visible smile creeps onto his face. Remembering something he quickly goes back out of the front door and up the steps, returning with a cardboard box. His entire life in a box, he sets it down gently on the floor next to his hold-all.*

*PETE retrieves a paint-spattered radio from the box. He turns it on, 'Waterloo Sunset' by the Kinks plays quietly. It is his favourite song. He turns it up and sings along whilst moving awkwardly to the rhythm.*

*After a moment or two he sits down on the sofa, he fidgets for a few seconds before deciding he'd be more comfortable sitting on his coat on the floor. He moves to the floor and pulls a bag of fish and chips and a can of dandelion and burdock from inside the cardboard box and sets them down in front of him.*

*He then reaches into the box once again and pulls out a postcard. He holds it out in front of him with both hands and smiles as he gazes at it. It obviously means a great deal to him and he gathers comfort from looking at it. After a moment or two he lays it down on the floor in front of him where he can still see it whilst he eats.*

*As PETE tucks into his food the figure of a MAN quietly descends the steps. He sits down on one of the steps and peers through the window watching as PETE hungrily eats his dinner.*

*The song fades out as lights fade to black.*

Scene Two.

*Afternoon. One week later.*

*The bedsit now looks more homely. There are pictures on the wall, a lamp, an armchair and a rug with a coffee table on it.*

*PETE sits on the sofa with MARILYN (his housing support officer). They drink tea.*

MARILYN: *(eating a biscuit)* You've done a great job Pete. The place is looking really homely.

PETE: Thanks. I get most things from outside people's houses. Stuff they're chucking out.

MARILYN: Unbelievable what some people get rid of isn't it?

PETE: Some of it's practically new.

MARILYN: New? Unbelievable.

*Pause.*

MARILYN: So how's the first week been, you sleeping alright? Settling in O.K? I know it can be a bit strange at first for lots of people, they feel, well, out of place so to speak. Years of sleeping out on the street and then to suddenly have their own place, it can feel claustrophobic.

PETE: Funny you should say that, I do kind of miss certain things but it's silly really.

MARILYN: It's not silly, it's completely understandable. You mustn't worry, you'll adapt back into it in no time.

PETE: (*slightly embarrassed*) I sometimes sleep on the floor. I've got a perfectly good bed over there but sometimes, when I can't sleep, I find myself...

MARILYN: Perfectly natural Pete. You mustn't beat yourself up about these things. Take it one day at a time. You'll get there. I know you will.

PETE: Yeah.

MARILYN: And the meetings are still going well?

*PETE nods.*

That's brilliant Pete. You've come such a long way. I'm so proud of you.

PETE: (*quietly*) Thanks.

MARILYN: (*enthusiastically*) You're an inspiration, you really are.

PETE: Well, I wouldn't say that.

MARILYN: Stop being so modest. Just look at what you've achieved already.

PETE: Well –

MARILYN: You've turned your life around.

PETE: I've still got a long way to go yet though.

MARILYN: You've changed things for the better.

PETE: So they say.

MARILYN: There's no turning back now.

PETE: (*slightly worried*) No, I guess not.

*Slight pause.*

MARILYN: Have you thought anymore about looking for your – ?

PETE: Yeah, yeah I have as a matter of fact.

MARILYN: And?

PETE: I think it's about time.

MARILYN: Fabulous.

PETE: It's what I came here to do after all.

MARILYN: (*genuinely pleased*) Fantastic Pete.

PETE: I don't know how...or what will happen when I do find her but I'll face that when I come to it.

MARILYN: That's the spirit.

PETE: Probably won't want anything to do with me and...well...who could blame her? Certainly not me, that's for sure.

MARILYN: Yes, but you'll never know unless you at least try, will you, eh?

PETE: True enough.

*Slight pause.*

MARILYN: You think of her all the time?

PETE: Every day.

MARILYN: Well, I know you probably won't believe me when I say this but I bet she thinks about you all the time too.

PETE: I very much doubt that Marilyn but it's kind of you to say.

MARILYN: I'm not saying it to be kind Pete.

PETE: (*doubtful*) Really?

MARILYN: It's human nature.

PETE: She may think of me from time to time but I doubt it's with much warmth in her heart.

MARILYN: You're her dad, you're connected, nothing can change that.

PETE: No matter what I did?

MARILYN: Pete, that was a long time ago.

PETE: It was a long time, practically a lifetime ago, but that doesn't change what happened. What I did.

MARILYN: Have you brought it up in your meetings yet?

PETE: Kind of.

MARILYN: It'll help to talk about it, it really will.

*PETE stands. He takes the biscuit plate to the kitchen to top up.*

PETE: It's pretty small this kitchen wouldn't you say? Mind you, I don't reckon I'll be cooking up any Michelin starred food just yet, think I'll stick to my one pan.

MARILYN: Fit for purpose, isn't that what they say?

PETE: Fit for bums like me you mean?

MARILYN: (*sighs*) Pete, that is *not* what I meant and you know it.

PETE: Mmmm?

*PETE takes the now overflowing biscuit plate back to the table and sits down.*

MARILYN: (*notices the biscuits*) Trying to fatten me up?

PETE: They were on offer.

MARILYN: Now if you're quite ready I just need to go through the paperwork for this place with you?

PETE: Okay, okay over to you boss. Let me have it.

MARILYN: (*rifling through her papers*) Right then. So, just to clarify, you've been given a three-month probationary period here in this bedsit by the charitable organisation Rooftops and as such it's required that you adhere to the rules of said organisation.

PETE: So far, so good.

MARILYN: If everything is still working out for you and you complete the three months with no problems to speak of then we will look at extending your contract by anything up to a year, in some cases it's even two years. This, in theory, could be your home for a very long time indeed.

PETE: Great.

MARILYN: Also, it's worth knowing that once you've been a resident here in Brighton for two years you can then look at getting on the housing list for a council flat.

PETE: Really?

MARILYN: Really. You could have your own place, get work, really settle down. All the things you've talked about Pete.

PETE: Wow.

MARILYN: This could be it.

PETE: Fresh start?

MARYLIN: Precisely.

*They smile at each other.*

MARILYN: Now, there's just a few things I'm duty bound to go through with you before I get you to sign, okay?

PETE: Go ahead.

MARILYN: Right, so first things first...under no circumstances are you permitted to have guests to stay during the first three-months.

PETE: Guests? Chance would be a fine thing. All my friends are scattered about out there (*gestures to the outside*).

*MARILYN looks at PETE. Unsure of what to say she carries on.*

MARILYN: Once the probation is up then it's a different matter, the flat would be viewed as your long-term home so then it's up to you if you have visitors.

PETE: There isn't anyone.

MARILYN: (*reassuring*) Maybe not at the moment but things change you know?

*Slight pause.*

PETE: Do they?

MARILYN: Yes, they really do. They'll change for the better. I can feel it in my bones.

PETE: I hate to tell you this but that's called rheumatism.

*MARILYN smiles a 'cheeky bugger' smile at PETE.*

PETE: I'm serious Marilyn.

MARILYN: Anyway, moving swiftly on...part of your particular agreement is that you attend AA meetings.

PETE: Wouldn't miss them for the world. Do you know how many different types of biscuit they offer? It's staggering, it really is.

MARILYN: Glad to hear it.

PETE: It's as though they think if you gorge yourself on biscuits the sugar high will somehow distract you from the fact you'd sell your own granny for a drink.

*Slight pause.*

*MARILYN looks down at her papers.*

MARILYN: One last thing, and this is very important, you're not permitted to bring drink or drugs into the flat. Okay?

PETE: (*joking*) That's not very charitable of you now is it?

MARILYN: (*serious*) Pete.

PETE: I'm just joking. You must know when I'm joking by now?

MARILYN: I'm really serious about this Pete. If we find out that you or anyone else has been drinking or taking drugs in here then you'll be out. There's no leeway on this. None.

PETE: I know Marilyn. It was just a joke.

MARILYN: I just really want this to work out for you.

PETE: Me too.

MARILYN: Right then.

*MARILYN pulls out a contract and a pen. She places them on the table in front of PETE.*

MARILYN: (*pointing*) Now I just need your autograph here and at the bottom here.

*PETE takes the contract and signs.*

MARILYN: Don't you want to read it?

PETE: I trust you.

MARILYN: *(smiles)* I'm glad to hear it. Thanks.

*PETE hands back the contract to MARILYN. They look at each other. PETE holds her gaze.*

*MARILYN breaks away, hurriedly puts the contract back in her file.*

PETE: Hey, I don't suppose, now that I'm a fully-fledged member of society, that you'd accompany me to the cinema? Tonight, tomorrow, whenever? You can choose the date, you can even choose the film.

*Slight pause.*

MARILYN: *(awkward)* Well, I'd love to Pete but it's against the rules, you know that.

PETE: Rules? You don't play by the rules surely?

MARILYN: This may surprise you but yes I do, especially when it comes to my job.

PETE: Yeah but I won't always be on your caseload will I? You must have to let me go at some point, make room for another bum?

MARILYN: Don't call them that.

PETE: Hey, I was one, I can call them/me whatever I want.

*Pause.*

MARILYN: So have you made some friends then?

PETE: I see, changing the subject. *(picks up mugs. Walks to the kitchen)* Well, not exactly, not yet.

MARILYN: It seems like a friendly neighbourhood, I'm sure it won't take long.

PETE: Maybe.

MARILYN: I'm sure of it.

PETE: Well, I'm glad you're so sure.

MARILYN: You just have to make an effort.

PETE: *(pointedly)* I just did.

MARILYN: *(ignores this)* To get out and about.

PETE: Oh is that all?

MARILYN: There's a local community hall not far from here, they offer classes in, well all sorts, pottery, painting, carpentry –

PETE: I get the picture Marilyn.

MARILYN: They have social evenings too, dances with tea and cakes –

PETE: You do know I'm forty-eight, not seventy-eight don't you?

MARILYN: I was just trying to suggest things which didn't involve -

PETE: Alcohol. I know, I know.

*Slightly awkward moment between them.*

MARILYN: (*enthusiastic*) You used to do a bit of carpentry didn't you?

PETE: A long time ago.

MARILYN: There you go then, you could show them a thing or too. It'd be great to be able to hone some skills and you never know it could lead to some work.

PETE: (*with difficulty*) I don't...I haven't...made anything, not since I *left* my...

MARILYN: Your wife and -

PETE: (*quickly*) Yes.

MARILYN: (*understands the significance of this*) I see. Well Pete, it's never too late, that's what they say isn't it?

*PETE is suddenly quite angry.*

PETE: Yes Marilyn, it is too late.

MARILYN: I only –

PETE: For that anyway.

MARILYN: (*perseveres*) There are other classes, they've got a huge choice.

PETE: I know, you've already said.

MARILYN: I just think it might help you to get out into the community a bit more. If you look like your making an effort, getting involved and trying to improve your lot then you're looked on more favourably.

PETE: I get it Marilyn. I need to play by the rules, be part of 'society' and contribute if I don't want to be chucked out on my ear. Isn't that so?

MARILYN: Well, yes, that's one way of putting it but I didn't –

PETE: Mean anything by it. I know.

*Pause.*

PETE: You need to visit more Marilyn.

MARILYN: Why's that then?

PETE: Well, then you'd *know* how I spend my time.

MARILYN: Oh right, sorry I -

PETE: I get out and about don't you worry. The caff down the road is like my second home. I walk along the beach most mornings and evenings.

MARILYN: (*impressed*) Do you now?

PETE: And I'm even thinking of doing some volunteer work.

MARILYN: I am impressed.

PETE: Well, I'm not trying to impress you if that's what you think.

MARILYN: Sorry, I –

PETE: Just getting on with things as best I can, that's all. Wanted to maybe say thanks for your help by taking you to a film or whatever but if that's going to be misconstrued then it's best we leave it.

MARILYN: (*stands*) Look I'm sorry if I've upset you, I really am. And just for the record I'd love to take you up on your kind offer but it's not permitted, silly I know but that's the system, bureaucracy, it's just one of those things.

PETE: So was there anything else before you go?

*Hurt but taking the hint MARILYN puts her coat on. Collects up her bag and papers.*

MARILYN: I don't think so but if I think of anything else I'll give you a ring or if I'm passing I'll pop in.

PETE: Don't put yourself out on my account.

MARILYN: It's no bother Pete.

PETE: Well, maybe we should keep it strictly official, so popping in would be out of the question, don't forget about the red tape Marilyn, wouldn't want people to get the wrong idea now would we?

MARILYN: (*walks to the door*) I don't think people would -

PETE: Either way, I'd prefer to keep it above board so if you don't mind?

MARILYN: (*stops in the doorway*) O.K, if that's what you want?

PETE: It is.

MARILYN: Fine. That's fine Pete.

PETE: Good.

MARILYN: In that case I'll see you in three months for the review.

PETE: Yes. See you then.

*MARILYN lingers in the doorway for a moment.*

MARILYN: I hope I didn't upset you? I really didn't mean to –

PETE: I don't know what you're talking about.

MARILYN: Right.

PETE: Right.

MARILYN: Well I'll be off now, leave you to it.

PETE: Yes.

MARILYN: (*suddenly remembering*) And if I find anything, anything that could help with your daughter I'll get in touch.

PETE: I'm sure I can manage that on my own, thanks anyway.

MARILYN: Right, well you've got my number if you need anything?

PETE: I do but I won't.

MARILYN: *(as she leaves)* Take care Pete.

PETE: Goodbye. *(door closes)* And good riddance.

*PETE dries up the mugs and puts them away in the cupboard. He looks about his flat, unsure of what to do with himself.*

*He walks slowly over to his bed and sits on the edge. He looks up at the pavement, shuts his eyes and listens to the footsteps of people passing by and to the sound of the distant waves.*

*Lights and sound fade out.*

Scene Three.

*Late morning. Two weeks later.*

*Seagulls call to one another in the distance.*

*Lights up on the flat which looks slightly more homely than the previous scene.*

*Next to PETE's bed there is now a wooden chair which he uses as a bedside table. He has pinned the postcard from his daughter onto the chair. Also on the chair is a piece of driftwood and a collection of shells and pebbles from the beach.*

*PETE descends the steps, opens the door. He enters and closes the door gently behind him. He behaves as though he was a guest in someone else's house and is trying not to disturb them.*

*He talks to himself quietly. It stems from loneliness and a need to communicate his thoughts to the world.*

PETE: Fried breakfast, nothing like it. Eggs, mushrooms, tomatoes the whole shebang.

*PETE stands by the door and looks about his flat. It's as though there is just too much space for him and he doesn't know where to put himself. He walks to the sofa and stands behind it. He brushes some fluff off the top of one of the cushions.*

*Almost inaudibly sings the sea shanty 'Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest.' He walks to the kitchen to put the kettle on.*

PETE: Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men on a dead man's chest

Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done with the rest

Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum

*Faint KNOCK at the door.*

*Unsure of whether he heard something he stops what he is doing and looks towards the door. He waits for a second to see if it happens again. Silence. He very quietly carries on WHISTLING the song and continues making his tea.*

*Another KNOCK, louder this time.*

*PETE stops WHISTLING. He puts down whatever it is he is holding and walks slowly to the door. Thinking it's probably MARILYN he mutters to himself.*

PETE: I told her, I said don't bother. I don't need her turning up on my doorstep every two minutes. Don't need a blasted babysitter.

*PETE secretly hopes it is MARILYN. Before opening the door he straightens his hair with his hands. Opens the door.*

*SAMMO, a young man in his early twenties stands in the doorway. He wears jeans, trainers and a baggy t-shirt. He has a dishevelled appearance but a friendly and open face. He is holding a carrier bag.*

SAMMO: *(smiling)* Watcha'.

*PETE is immediately suspicious of SAMMO. He is also disappointed it's not MARILYN.*

PETE: Yes?

*Pause.*

PETE: Can I help you?

SAMMO: No, not as such.

PETE: Well –

SAMMO: But I think I can help you.

PETE: (*suspicious*) Really?

SAMMO: Yes.

PETE: Do you want something? You're not one of those Jehovah's Witness people are you? 'Cos I don't believe, never have and never will. Sorry.

SAMMO: (*Laughs*) Do I *look* like a Jehovah's bloody Witness?

PETE: No. No I don't reckon you do as it happens.

SAMMO: Well then.

PETE: But you never know. Shouldn't judge a book as they say.

SAMMO: True. Too true.

PETE: Sorry though.

SAMMO: (*mock posh voice*) Apology accepted dear fellow.

PETE: So, what is it then? Are you selling? 'Cos whatever you're selling I'm not buying.

SAMMO: I'm not selling anything.

PETE: Good.

SAMMO: (*rummages in carrier bag*) I found...(*pulls out an old leather wallet*)

...this. Or, more like, my girl did. You left it in the caff just now.

SAMMO *hands it over to PETE.*

PETE: Did I?

SAMMO: Yes.

PETE: That's mine.

SAMMO: I know.

PETE: I left it –

SAMMO: In the caff.

PETE: I can't believe it.

SAMMO: We've all done it.

PETE: (*looks inside*) Well blow me.

SAMMO: It's all there. I didn't touch a thing.

PETE: (*overwhelmed*) Thank you. Thank you so much.

SAMMO: No problem.

PETE: I don't know what to say. I'm usually so careful. That's not like me at all.

Must have been –

SAMMO: Distracted.

PETE: Away with the fairies more like.

SAMMO: One of those days eh?

PETE: Could say that. (*puts out his hand*) Thank you again.

*They shake hands.*

SAMMO: Hey, no sweat. It's the missus you need to thank anyway. She spotted it just as you left and I arrived, sent me off after you. You walk quick don't you?

PETE: (*laughs*) Yeah, sorry.

SAMMO: Needed the exercise, (*pats his stomach*). It's dangerous having a girlfriend who works in a greasy spoon, know what I mean?

PETE: (*smiling*) I bet. That's ever so kind of you, don't get many would do a thing like that nowadays. I really am grateful, to you and to –

SAMMO: Leila.

PETE: To Leila. And you are?

SAMMO: Sammo.

PETE: Thank you Sammo and please pass on my thanks to Leila won't you?

SAMMO: I will. (*pause*) Anyway, I'd better get going I 'spose.

*SAMMO lingers in the doorway.*

PETE: That would've been me up shit creek without a paddle and no mistake.

SAMMO: Not a problem. Glad to help Mr?

PETE: Pete. Call me Pete.

SAMMO: Happy to help Pete.

*SAMMO turns, he is about to make a move.*

*PETE likes chatting, he wants to make the moment last.*

PETE: (*quickly*) Can I make you a cup of tea? To say thanks, you know, for your trouble?

SAMMO: Well I –

PETE: Are you busy?

SAMMO: Not really.

PETE: The least I can do is make you a cuppa. It's not much but I'd like to, if you don't have to rush off?

SAMMO: No, no I don't have anything on today, not 'til later that is. (*thinking*)

Well, if you're not busy?

PETE: (*eagerly*) I'm not. Just about to have one myself anyway. (*opens the door wide*) Come in. Please.

SAMMO: If you're sure?

PETE: I'm sure.

*SAMMO steps inside.*

PETE: You could fill me in on what's what in the area.

SAMMO: Sure.

*PETE gestures to the sofa and closes the door.*

PETE: So do you leave nearby?

SAMMO: Round the corner.

PETE: Please, have a seat.

SAMMO: *(walks to sofa)* Thanks.

*SAMMO sits down.*

PETE: Ah, so not far then?

SAMMO: No, only a couple of streets away.

*PETE goes to the kitchen. He holds up the wallet.*

PETE: I'm blown away by this, I really am.

SAMMO: The way I see it I'd like to think you would have done the same for me.

*PETE gets mugs and a teapot ready and puts the kettle on.*

PETE: I would have, and that's the truth.

SAMMO: If you can't see the best in people then what is there?

PETE: Exactly.

SAMMO: Treat others how you'd expect to be treated yourself.

PETE: That's it. Shame not every bugger has that attitude.

SAMMO: It is. But what can you do?

PETE: What can you do?

*PETE gets a tray out of a cupboard. He puts the mugs, sugar bowl, milk jug and spoons on it. He waits for the kettle to click off.*

*SAMMO sits back in the sofa, making himself more comfortable.*

SAMMO: I've seen you about.

PETE: Have you?

*PETE pours boiling water into the teapot. Takes the tray over to the coffee table and sets it down.*

SAMMO: Yup. In the caff.

PETE: I'm in there quite a bit.

SAMMO: You sit by the window. Mug of tea. Take your time, sit there for hours you do. Reading and looking out the window mostly. Sunday roast, you had a Sunday roast last week.

PETE: Were you there too?

SAMMO: Yeah.

PETE: I didn't see you.

SAMMO: You always look far away if you know what I mean?

PETE: Yeah.

SAMMO: Or got your head stuck in a book.

PETE: I like reading.

SAMMO: I don't. Haven't got the patience me.

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: Leila says you're nice fella'.

PETE: The young one, brown hair?

SAMMO: That's the one.

PETE: So that's Leila?

SAMMO: The very one.

PETE: What a diamond. You've got a good 'un there.

*PETE stirs the tea round in the pot before pouring.*

SAMMO: Tell me about it.

*Slight pause. PETE hands SAMMO his tea. SAMMO helps himself to milk and lots of sugar.*

SAMMO: (*stirs his tea*) She likes you. Says you're ever so polite, not like some she gets in there. Dirty buggers some of them.

PETE: Really?

SAMMO: Oh yeah. Not the sort of clientele with many manners, you get me?

PETE: I do. (*pause*) Poor Leila.

SAMMO: Some people.

PETE: Yeah, some people.

*SAMMO pulls out a bottle of whiskey from his carrier bag. Unscrews the lid and pours some in his tea. Offers it to PETE.*

*PETE shakes his head.*

PETE: (*worried*) So you lived round here long then?

SAMMO: (*puts the bottle down*) Could say that.

PETE: It's nice. I like it.

*PETE is finding it difficult not to look at the whiskey. He is also remembering MARILYN's words about being kicked out if he has alcohol in the flat.*

SAMMO: We like it too.

PETE: Feel like I could put down some roots here.

*PETE sips his tea. He holds on to the mug with both hands.*

SAMMO: Really?

PETE: Never had that before.

SAMMO: No?

PETE: No. *(pause)* I like the sea. Being near it. It's comforting.

SAMMO: It is?

PETE: The sound. You know, of the waves?

SAMMO: Oh right. Gotcha.

PETE: *(embarrassed)* I sound like a right hippy, don't I?

SAMMO: No, you're right. Never thought of it much before but yeah, I couldn't live anywhere else that's for sure.

PETE: Been here long have you?

SAMMO: Only my whole life.

PETE: Never lived anywhere else?

SAMMO: Tried London for a bit. Didn't get on with it though.

PETE: No?

SAMMO: No. (*gestures to whiskey bottle*) You not going to join me?

PETE: No. No thanks.

SAMMO: I don't like drinking on my own.

PETE: Please, I don't, you see, I don't...

SAMMO: Drink?

PETE: Drink.

*Beat.*

SAMMO: Right.

*PETE puts down his tea and goes back to the kitchen. He gets himself a glass of water. He's shaking slightly but trying to hide it. He nervously looks towards the door as though MARILYN will suddenly appear.*

SAMMO: Well, if you're sure you don't mind?

*PETE wants to tell SAMMO 'no' but can't seem to get the words out.*

*SAMMO pours a large measure of whiskey into his tea. PETE watches from the kitchen.*

*SAMMO is about to take a sip when he stops.*

SAMMO: This isn't right. If you're not drinking, I'm not drinking.

*He takes his mug to the kitchen and puts it on the counter.*

*PETE looks at it.*

*SAMMO looks at PETE, then at the mug. Takes it and pours it down the sink.*

*Pause.*

*PETE looks relieved. He smiles a thank you at SAMMO.*

SAMMO: How about some biscuits with the tea? I'm hank-marvin' I am.

*He looks in the cupboards for some biscuits. PETE goes over to show him where they are.*

*The lights fade slowly on the two of them.*

Scene Four.

*Two weeks later. Lights up on PETE and SAMMO playing cards (Pontoon). It's raining hard outside.*

*PETE is a little tired, it's obvious something is on his mind.*

SAMMO: Twist.

*PETE turns over a card.*

SAMMO: Twist.

PETE: You sure about that?

SAMMO: I'm sure. Turn one over for me Petey-boy.

PETE: Fair enough.

*PETE turns over a card. SAMMO reveals his hand.*

PETE: You jammy bastard.

SAMMO: Told you. When lady luck is sitting on your shoulder the cards...

PETE: Yeah, yeah, put a sock in it will you?

SAMMO: You might as well give up now old man.

PETE: *(referring to something else)* Yeah maybe you're right.

SAMMO: I'm only winding you up. Come on, smile will you?

PETE: *(smiles a fake smile)* There. Just deal you cocky little git.

*SAMMO collects up the cards, shuffles and deals.*

*PETE looks at his cards.*

PETE: Twist.

*SAMMO turns over a card.*

PETE: I don't believe it.

SAMMO: Don't tell me, you're bust?

PETE: Never liked this game anyway.

*PETE throws his cards on the table.*

SAMMO: Sore loser.

PETE: No, just bored.

SAMMO: (*laughing*) You're bored because you keep losing Pete, that's what it is.

PETE: Rubbish. It needs more people that's all, at least four I'd say.

SAMMO: Let's play something else then, what do you fancy?

PETE: (*stands*) I'm not really in the mood.

SAMMO: Come on, I was only joshing. We'll play whatever you want.

PETE: Na, maybe in a bit.

SAMMO: (*disappointed*) But I like playing games.

*PETE goes to kitchen.*

PETE: Cuppa'?

SAMMO: I'm in danger of turning into a cup of tea.

PETE: I've got coffee. You want a coffee? Freeze dried crap but still sort of tastes like it's rubbed shoulders with a coffee bean?

SAMMO: I'm alright cheers.

*PETE fills the kettle and puts it on.*

SAMMO: Everything O.K Pete?

PETE: (*in his own world*) My old man used to love his coffee...make it on the hob in one of those percolators...all metal it was...even the handle...once when I was pretty small I came into the kitchen howling about something, no idea what now, my bleating distracted him from what he was doing and instead of using the tea towel to pick up the pot...like he always did...he just grabbed hold of it with his bare hands. Hotter than the sun it must have been...not as hot as his language though (*smiles*)...couldn't half swear that man. Not at me though...wasn't swearing at me...the coffee pot got all the blame. (*snaps out of it*) Sorry, what was that?

SAMMO: What's up?

PETE: Oh nothing.

SAMMO: Things on your mind?

PETE: Yeah, my dad keeps popping in my head for some reason.

SAMMO: Miss him do you?

PETE: Yeah, something like that.

*Slight pause.*

PETE: Sometimes, out of nowhere a fully-formed...technicolour memory will spring up right in front of me. Doesn't matter where I am, without warning I'll be

watching a fragment of my past, things I thought were lost forever...they said this would start to happen.

SAMMO: Who did?

PETE: The people down at AA.

SAMMO: Oh.

PETE: Didn't think they'd be so vivid though.

SAMMO: No?

PETE: Like watching 3D holograms it is.

SAMMO: Sounds ace. You lucky bastard.

PETE: (*to himself*) Beats talking flowers.

SAMMO: Talking flowers? What's that all about?

PETE: Oh nothing.

SAMMO: (*gently*) You can talk to me you know Pete?

*Pause.*

*PETE looks at his feet.*

PETE: (*hesitatingly*) When I was bad...really bad...you know...with the drink...I'd...I'd see things.

SAMMO: You'd see things?

PETE: Yeah, that weren't...there. If I didn't drink for, say, half a day or so.

SAMMO: Go on.

*PETE looks up at the ceiling.*

PETE: I'd see all sorts.

SAMMO: (*encouraging*) Like what?

PETE: (*deep breath*) Rain pouring down from the ceiling...not just rain, (*looks at SAMMO*) not like the rain out there now...this was tropical...pounding...the sort of rain you think might never stop you know? (*SAMMO nods*) Torrential it was.

SAMMO: (*shocked*) No shit.

PETE: Other times the furniture would...would come alive...I'd walk across a room and out of the corner of my eye I'd see a footstool scuttling along the floor (*pretends to see something*)...scuttle, scuttle...I'd turn to look (*turns*) but it'd stop dead...but then from the other side of the room I'd see a chair change position or a curtain would come down off its rail and waltz across the room.

SAMMO: Oh my Petey, that's mental.

PETE: Yeah.

*PETE shakes his head in disbelief at the memories. He walks slowly and thoughtfully back to the kitchen to carry on with his tea.*

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: What about the flowers?

*PETE's really come into his stride and is opening up like he's never done before.*

PETE: Oh, well this one time, I was staying in this hostel...Plymouth I think it was...maybe not, who knows...anyway I'd decided to quit booze for good this time, not like all the other times, this was different...I was determined, wanted to get myself sorted. I'd reached such a depth that I couldn't really get any lower...the way I saw it I had two options...and one of them was final if you know what I mean?...no going back.

SAMMO: I get you.

PETE: So I downed the last of my booze and sat in the corner of the communal room and waited.

SAMMO: Waited?

PETE: For "the horrors" to descend.

*SAMMO looks at PETE slightly confused for a second until it dawns on him what he means.*

SAMMO: The shakes?

PETE: That's it. Anyway, after a few hours I heard these little voices calling my name. I looked up but couldn't see anyone, I was all alone...that's when I noticed them...out on the windowsill...pansies and marigolds...loads of them there were...all calling my name...they had little mouths...tiny mouths and no eyes.

They asked if they could put on a play for me. I had nothing better to do so I got a chair and sat by the window...watched these flowers perform some sort of cabaret number it was...they sang songs, the lot.

SAMMO: Über weird Pete.

PETE: Tell me about it. Anyway, twelve hours later and even more hallucinations...I couldn't hack it...found some other fella's stash and downed the lot.

SAMMO: Well, can't say I blame you Pete.

*PETE finishes making his cup of tea and takes it to the coffee table.*

SAMMO: So, how have you been this time round then? Have you been seeing things again?

PETE: No. Thank goodness. I've got tablets to help me with that.

SAMMO: Work do they?

PETE: So far, so good.

*They are both silent. Both are thinking about what PETE has just been talking about. SAMMO shuffles the cards for want of something to do. PETE sips his tea.*

SAMMO: I've been meaning to ask you –

PETE: Sounds ominous.

SAMMO: What brought you here, to Brighton?

PETE: What?

SAMMO: You've travelled around a lot haven't you?

PETE: Quite a bit I 'spose.

SAMMO: Why did you end up here?

PETE: I don't know -

SAMMO: Could've gone anywhere but you came here.

PETE: (*not giving anything away*) Just did.

SAMMO: Just did, huh?

PETE: That's right.

SAMMO: No other reason than that?

PETE: (*tetchy*) Why are you so interested all of a sudden?

SAMMO: (*packs the cards away*) Just am. I'd like to know a bit more about you.

It's natural, only natural for a person to be interested in his friends ain't it?

PETE: 'Spose so.

*SAMMO stands. He looks around the room.*

SAMMO: (*holds the cards up*) Where shall I put these?

PETE: Oh just leave them on the table.

SAMMO: Have you got a box, somewhere you keep all your games?

*SAMMO wanders around the room looking.*

PETE: No, just put them on the side there.

*PETE points at the chair by his bed.*

SAMMO: Here?

*Puts them on the chair and notices the postcard.*

SAMMO: What's this?

PETE: *(turns)* What?

SAMMO: This postcard. *(looks more closely)* That's Brighton. You haven't been sending yourself postcards now have you Pete?

PETE: *(flustered)* It's nothing. Something someone sent me a long time ago now.

SAMMO: Who?

PETE: *(snaps)* What's with all the questions? Just put it back will you?

SAMMO: Ah so that's the connection with Brighton.

PETE: *(seething)* There is no connection. Now are you going to come back over here and sit down and mind your own business or are you going to leave me in

peace? Leila's probably wondering where you've disappeared to the amount of time you've been spending here.

SAMMO: She doesn't mind. Actually I think she likes having me out of her hair but I take the hint Pete so don't worry I'll be off...don't want to outstay my welcome...

*SAMMO places the postcard back on the chair. He walks to the sofa, takes his jacket from off the back of it and heads to the door.*

PETE: (*apologetic*) Wait. I didn't mean to...I'm sorry...It's just some things I don't like to talk about that's all.

SAMMO: It's alright, I understand. I'll leave you to it.

*SAMMO is about to leave.*

PETE: No, wait.

*SAMMO stands where he is between the door and the sofa looking at PETE.*

*PETE faces forwards looking towards the floor.*

PETE: (*taking his time. Imagining it as he speaks*) I thought, maybe, someone that I was looking for ...someone I haven't seen in a very long time...might be living here...I thought I might stand a chance at finding this person if I came to live here. In my mind I imagined walking down the street, no...more often than not it was the seafront...the sea in the background....waves breaking...a blustery day...I imagined myself walking along minding my own business...paper under

my arm, clean shaven...looking respectable you know? I look up and there she is...real Hollywood blockbuster stuff...there she is right in front of me and we recognise each other straight away...even though we haven't seen each other in years so there's no way we would actually be able to recognise each other...but then I'm imagining all this so that doesn't matter...the finer details don't really matter...we see each other...smile...run into each other's arms and...and that's it...we're together again. Reunited, never to part again.

SAMMO: (*moves to sofa*) So, is this some old girlfriend then that you've lost touch with? The love of your life?

PETE: Not a girlfriend, no.

SAMMO: Sister?

*PETE shakes his head. He is obviously uncomfortable.*

SAMMO: A relative? It must be a relative of some sort then?

PETE: You don't give up do you?

SAMMO: (*smiles*) Naturally curious I'd call it.

PETE: Curiosity -

SAMMO: Killed the cat. I know, I know. (*Pause*) So?

PETE: So?

SAMMO: Is she a relative or what?

PETE: A relative, yes.

SAMMO: (*suddenly clicks*) Daughter? It's your daughter isn't it Pete?

*Silence*

SAMMO: Pete?

PETE: (*changing the subject*) How about a game of gin rummy? (*stands*) You know how to play rummy? I'll teach you.

*PETE fetches the cards from the chair. Touches the postcard lightly with one finger.*

*SAMMO wanders towards the sofa.*

SAMMO: Who'd of thought it?

PETE: What?

SAMMO: (*sits*) You, having a daughter, mad.

PETE: (*hurt*) It's not mad. Why's it mad?

SAMMO: I didn't mean it in a bad way, just can't see it that's all. You strike me as someone with no ties...you know?

PETE: (*sadly*) I know.

SAMMO: Is she still here?

PETE: (*sits*) No. I don't know. I doubt it.

SAMMO: Do you know where she might've gone?

PETE: No idea. Who knows?

SAMMO: (*sits*) I'm sorry.

PETE: (*deals*) Nothing for you to be sorry about.

SAMMO: Still -

PETE: Never mind. Nothing I can do about it.

SAMMO: Have you tried looking for her?

PETE: I think about it, all the time, but maybe she doesn't want to be found.

Wouldn't blame her.

SAMMO: Aren't there people who specialise in that kind of stuff?

PETE: I had my chance a few years back. She got in touch through A.A. I blew it, just like I blew A.A.

SAMMO: She might try again?

PETE: Doubt it.

SAMMO: You never know Pete. Positive thinking 'n all that.

PETE: She's probably given up on me.

SAMMO: That doesn't mean you should give up on her though. It's all about perseverance Petey.

PETE: And that's something you'd know all about I 'spose?

SAMMO: It is as a matter of fact.

PETE: Sure.

*PETE smiles and shakes his head.*

SAMMO: Pass the biscuits.

*PETE rummages down the side of his chair for the biscuits. Finds them and chucks them at SAMMO.*

SAMMO: Per-ser-ver-ance.

*SAMMO puts a whole biscuit in his mouth.*

*Blackout.*

Scene Five.

*Lights up. Few days later. After a few moments PETE is seen running down the steps. Unlocking the front door he hastily enters. Quickly he shuts the door and locks it.*

*He is out of breath and covered in milk and eggs. He has a black eye and a bloody lip. He holds a crumpled milk carton in his arms. Noticing the window he slowly goes over to it and draws the curtains.*

*PETE sits on his bed exhausted and defeated still cradling the milk carton.*

*After a few moments there is a KNOCK at the door.*

*PETE drops the carton. He is frozen. Stares at the door.*

*KNOCK.*

*PETE: (under his breath) No, no, shit no.*

*Another KNOCK.*

*PETE quietly gets down onto the floor and pulls out his clothes drawer. He digs around frantically.*

*KNOCK.*

*PETE finally finds what he's looking for. He pulls out a knife. Stands.*

*SAMMO: (O.S) Pete. Pete mate, let us in. I know you're in there.*

*PETE: Sammo?*

*SAMMO: I can hear you Pete.*

*PETE: Is that you?*

SAMMO: 'Course it is. Come on will you, I've got someone here who wants to say hello.

*PETE peeks through the curtains.*

SAMMO: Would you open the door for Christ's sake.

PETE: Hang on. Just coming.

*PETE shoves the knife back in his clothes draw. Holding his bruised ribs opens the door.*

*SAMMO stands with his arm around a small, pretty young woman (LEILA).*

*PETE stands so that the door obscures him from view.*

PETE: Come in. Quick. I don't want them to see where I...

*SAMMO and LEILA enter.*

SAMMO: (*hasn't seen Pete's black eye*) What's up Pete? Got the Mafia after you or what? Didn't know you were such a dark horse.

*PETE closes the door and locks it again.*

*SAMMO sees PETE's face.*

SAMMO: What the hell?

PETE: I'm okay. I think.

SAMMO: Pete, who did this?

PETE: I don't know.

SAMMO: What happened?

PETE: Probably looks worse than it is.

SAMMO: *(to PETE)* Sit down. *(to LEILA)* Get something to clean him up with.

*PETE lowers himself onto the sofa. SAMMO sits next to him.*

LEILA: Like what?

SAMMO: Water. Warm water, I don't know.

LEILA: He's not having a baby.

SAMMO: What?

LEILA: Never mind.

*LEILA goes to the kitchen. Gets a bowl of water and a tea towel.*

SAMMO: So what the hell happened?

PETE: I was jumped.

SAMMO: By who?

*PETE shrugs.*

SAMMO: Did they take much?

PETE: No. *(under breath)* Karma, I knew I couldn't get away.

SAMMO: (*misunderstanding*) You did get away Pete.

PETE: (*not listening*) Won't ever get away.

SAMMO: You're not talking sense. You're at home now, safe, with us. (*to LEILA*)

He must be really shaken up.

LEILA: (*trying to get through to him*) Pete? Are you alright? Have you banged your head?

SAMMO: 'Course he's banged his head, just look at the state of his eye.

PETE: (*ignores this. Thinking out loud*) Thought I'd paid. Thought I'd done enough...

LEILA: Paid who? (*PETE just stares ahead*) Did you know them...the people who did this? Did you owe them money or something?

PETE: After all this time you'd think it'd be over by now.

LEILA: (*to SAMMO*) He must have concussion. What should we do?

SAMMO: Hospital?

PETE: (*snaps out of it*) I don't need no hospital. Not this time anyway.

LEILA: You sound like you know it's going to happen again?

PETE: It probably will. I sometimes feel like I've got a great big neon sign above my head saying 'mug me, punish me, do what you like to me'.

*SAMMO and LEILA look at each other.*

SAMMO: You've got to stop with the negativity Pete.

PETE: You don't know anything. I've lived with this for over twenty years. I know, I know.

SAMMO: You *know* what?

PETE: You wouldn't understand.

*SAMMO and LEILA look at each other confused and shrug.*

*Pause.*

SAMMO: *(to PETE)* Can you remember anything about what they looked like?  
Hair colour? Clothes? Something?

PETE: It was so quick. There were loads of them. It was all a blur.

*LEILA kneels down by PETE. She wets the tea towel in the water and dabs at his face.*

PETE: I just want to forget about it. *(to LEILA)* Thanks.

LEILA: Sorry if this hurts.

PETE: It doesn't.

LEILA: Good.

SAMMO: *(moves about the room)* We'll not get the police but I will sort this.

PETE: No. Leave it.

SAMMO: They're not going to get away with this.

PETE: Just leave it. Please.

SAMMO: (*determined*) No way. Someone needs to teach them a lesson.

LEILA: They've got you in their sights now Pete.

PETE: What do you mean?

LEILA: They took your shopping this week, bit of spare change, right? Next week it'll be your phone.

SAMMO: Week after your cash and if you haven't got any on you they'll take you to cash point.

LEILA: They're scum. They pick on people like you.

SAMMO: You can wave goodbye to your dole money.

LEILA: (*looks at PETE*) They'll wait for you outside the jobcentre.

SAMMO: Seen it happen.

LEILA: Loads of times.

*Pause.*

LEILA: They'll take everything Pete.

SAMMO: Everything. Unless (*looks at LEILA*) we do something about it.

PETE: Listen I really don't want anyone getting hurt or anything.

SAMMO: They beat you up.

LEILA: Stole from you.

SAMMO: And they'll do it again, that I can guarantee.

LEILA: We know.

SAMMO: Trust us.

LEILA: We can help you.

SAMMO: We'll take care of it.

PETE: But I don't know who they were.

SAMMO: You'd recognise them though if you saw them?

PETE: I couldn't be sure.

LEILA: Don't worry we've got a pretty good idea about who did this. Haven't we Sammo?

SAMMO: Yeah, yeah we have. Always the same gang it is.

PETE: What, have they mugged you too?

SAMMO: No. Not as such but we've known people, before, who've had this happen to them.

LEILA: That's right.

PETE: Why don't we call the police then?

SAMMO: The police? As if they'll want to know.

LEILA: Scum nicking off scum isn't top of their list. No offence.

PETE: None taken.

SAMMO: Let us help you.

PETE: But why?

LEILA: They shouldn't be allowed to get away with it.

PETE: It's not worth...

LEILA: We won't get hurt. Let us deal with this.

SAMMO: Who knows, maybe one day you can return the favour?

PETE: I don't want anyone getting hurt though. It was only a bit of food and a fiver.

SAMMO: Don't worry about it mate. We know what to do.

*SAMMO stands. Gestures to LEILA to get up.*

LEILA: *(Looking at PETE)* You be alright?

PETE: Yeah.

LEILA: Sure?

SAMMO: (*antsy*) Come on will you. We need to get going.

PETE: Hang on, don't I need to come with you to show you who...

SAMMO: It's alright Pete, like we said earlier it'll be the same gang. We know who we're looking for.

LEILA: You stay here. We'll be back later.

*SAMMO and LEILA leave.*

*PETE lies down on the sofa as the figure of the MAN descends the steps. The sound of the waves is audible. MAN peers through the window at PETE.*

*Lights fade to darkness as the sound of the waves gets louder.*

Scene Six.

*Lights up. Two weeks later. SAMMO sits on the kitchen counter eating a bread roll.*

*PETE enters with a bag of laundry. He does not see SAMMO.*

*PETE puts his laundry bag on the bed. He unpacks his clothes placing them in the draw beneath his bed.*

*SAMMO WHISTLES s a tune.*

*PETE startled turns round.*

PETE: What the bleedin' hell.

SAMMO: Watcha'

PETE: What you doing in here? How did you get in? You gave me a bleedin' heart attack.

SAMMO: Should be more careful.

PETE: What?

SAMMO: The door. It wasn't locked.

PETE: That can't be.

SAMMO: It was open. Anyone could've got in, anyone.

PETE: I locked it, I know I did.

SAMMO: If you locked it then how come I'm sitting here right now?

PETE: I don't know. But I know I locked it. I lock it, then check it. Without fail.

SAMMO: Sure about that?

PETE: Positive.

SAMMO: Mmmm.

PETE: Without fail. (*goes to door*) Must be faulty. (*looks at lock*) It's a faulty old lock. Will have to get that checked. (*points at the lock*) Look it's rusty, it's got rust all inside.

SAMMO: Or else you left it unlocked?

PETE: No, look it's the lock I'm sure of it.

SAMMO: That's not good now is it?

PETE: Must be the sea air.

SAMMO: Eh?

PETE: The salt. Anything metal just rusts up after a while 'cos of all the salt in the air. Comes off the sea.

SAMMO: Oh, I get you.

PETE: They should've sorted that out before I moved in shouldn't they? I'll have to ring Marilyn.

SAMMO: Monroe?

PETE: She's my housing lady.

SAMMO: What Marilyn Monroe is? Lucky bugger.

PETE: Don't be daft.

SAMMO: Here (*throws a roll in a paper bag at him*), got you this from the caff.

PETE: *(catches the bag)* Cheers.

SAMMO: Ham with enough mustard to take your face off. It's from Leila, she said that's how you like it.

PETE: *(smiles)* More mustard the better.

SAMMO: She's got a soft spot for you.

PETE: Don't know why.

SAMMO: Or me. *(laughs)* Only joshing.

*PETE shuts the door and sits down on his bed. Eats his roll.*

*SAMMO jumps down from the kitchen counter.*

SAMMO: You know I could fix it for you?

PETE: Really?

SAMMO: Handy with a screwdriver I am. Ask Leila.

PETE: That's really good of you Sammo but don't worry about it.

SAMMO: Why's that then?

PETE: I'll get on to Marilyn about it. That's what she's there for. Ring anytime, that's what she said.

SAMMO: Why bother when I can do it? Seems silly to hassle her when I could fix it in the time it'd take you to ring her.

PETE: That quick?

SAMMO: Simple as that. Probably take me half an hour tops.

PETE: But you've done so much for me already. I'd feel bad.

SAMMO: Don't be soft. I want to.

PETE: I'd rather not ring Marilyn to be honest.

SAMMO: Well then?

PETE: But -

SAMMO: I said I want to Pete.

PETE: Well if you're sure.

SAMMO: Course I'm sure.

PETE: I owe you one.

SAMMO: Deal.

PETE: Deal.

*They shake hands.*

*SAMMO puts on his jacket.*

SAMMO: I'm just going to nip out and get a lock and my screwdriver.

PETE: Let me get you some cash for the lock.

SAMMO: Don't worry, we'll sort it out when I get back.

PETE: Right. Thanks.

SAMMO: No worries. Won't be long.

*SAMMO opens the front door. Turns as if remembering something.*

SAMMO: Actually there is something you could do for me as it goes.

PETE: Oh yeah, what's that then?

SAMMO: It's, well (*looks at PETE for a moment*), actually don't worry. You wouldn't want to so don't worry about it.

*SAMMO turns to leave.*

PETE: No, go on. Tell me what it is. How do you know I wouldn't want to when you haven't even asked?

SAMMO: It's too much. Too much to ask.

PETE: Just ask will you?

*Pause.*

SAMMO: Well, O.K then but I don't blame you if you want to say no.

PETE: Out with it.

*SAMMO closes the door behind him.*

SAMMO: You know how I don't work?

PETE: Yeah. You're between jobs right?

SAMMO: Right. Well, to keep things ticking over I do a little bit of shifting this 'n that.

PETE: Ah, I get you. Lorries. Off the back of.

SAMMO: No. Not quite. Sort of.

PETE: What kind of stuff?

SAMMO: Probably best if you don't know.

*Slight pause.*

PETE: I see.

SAMMO: Less you know the better.

PETE: Right.

SAMMO: I need a place to stash some stuff, just for a couple of days. I had a tip-off and well my place isn't safe right now.

PETE: You want to keep...whatever it is...here?

SAMMO: It'd only be for a bit, just 'til I find somewhere else.

PETE: Well...

SAMMO: It's a lot to ask I know but you wouldn't even know it was here, honest.

PETE: I don't know –

SAMMO: Just a couple a days?

PETE: I'm not sure –

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: Actually, what am I thinking? It's too much to ask. Forget it.

PETE: No, hang on a minute. I was just thinking that's all.

SAMMO: You don't have to. I mean it's not like we've even known each other for that long.

PETE: It's not that...I just...I don't know, I mean I've only just got myself in here, I don't want to risk it really.

SAMMO: I understand.

PETE: You do?

SAMMO: Of course.

PETE: Sorry.

SAMMO: It's a lot to ask, I understand. I can't lie I was hoping you'd say yes, I've kind of run out of people that I can rely on right now but hey that's not your problem.

PETE: Is there no-one else you can ask?

SAMMO: Nope, 'fraid not.

PETE: I'm sorry Sammo.

SAMMO: No worries mate. I completely understand...anyway I'd best be off. Got to get that lock. Want to get it fitted as soon as. Don't want any old bugger being able to get in here now do you? You were lucky it was just me last time.

PETE: Yeah, thank goodness it was you and not some –

SAMMO: It doesn't bear thinking about.

PETE: No, you're right, it doesn't.

SAMMO: Anyway, is there anything else I can get you whilst I'm out?

PETE: No, no thanks. I'm good.

SAMMO: Great.

*SAMMO goes to the door.*

PETE: *(thinks for a moment)* Wait.

*SAMMO stops by the door.*

PETE: O.K

SAMMO: What?

PETE: Yes...yes you can. Leave 'it' here, for a bit anyway.

SAMMO: Really?

PETE: Yes.

SAMMO: You sure now?

PETE: I'm sure.

SAMMO: Positive?

PETE: Positive.

SAMMO: Thanks man. I knew I could rely on you.

PETE: Only short term though. Just for a couple of days and then you're going to have to get whatever it is out, agreed?

SAMMO: Absolutely.

PETE: Okay. 'Cos if Marilyn ever found out that'd be it, right? I'd be out on my ear.

SAMMO: Right. Thanks.

PETE: No problem.

SAMMO: You've saved my bacon.

PETE: That's what friends are for.

SAMMO: You're a real mate.

*SAMMO and PETE are still. They look at each other for a second or so.*

*Blackout.*

Scene Seven.

*PETE sits on the sofa with a phonebook on his lap. He uses his finger to look down the list of names.*

*LEILA sits cross-legged on the floor holding a cordless house phone to her ear.*

LEILA: *(into phone)* No...no I'm sorry to have bothered you Mrs. Brown...no I'm not the hospital...I'm...hello can you hear me?...*(waits)*...I'm looking for someone...what's that? No...no...it's 2011 now...yes that's right...no, no September...yes September. *(silence)* Hello? Hello are you still there? Hello?

*LEILA slowly puts the phone down. She looks a little upset.*

PETE: You alright?

LEILA: Yeah, I think so.

PETE: Sure?

LEILA: That lady I just spoke to...she didn't know what year it was let alone what month.

PETE: Scary isn't it?

LEILA: I hope she's got some family...some sort of help. *(Slight pause)* That's my worst fear that is.

PETE: What?

LEILA: Being old with nobody in the world.

PETE: Doesn't bear thinking about does it?

LEILA: What if she hasn't got anyone there to help her?

PETE: Nothing we can do about it Leila, put it out of your head.

LEILA: Imagine if that was you or me though...you can't just say that Pete.

PETE: It's lovely that you care, it really is but what can you do? There is nothing, is there?

LEILA: I could go round and check on her...her address is right here.

PETE: You start doing things like that and you'll get into trouble.

LEILA: What, because I want to help?

PETE: It's the way of the world now Leila, people are suspicious of strangers...even if they do want to help.

LEILA: You weren't.

PETE: True.

LEILA: Maybe you should have been.

PETE: What do you mean by that?

LEILA: Nothing.

PETE: Anyway, just for the record I was suspicious at first but then when I realised Sammo had brought back my wallet I knew.

LEILA: Knew what?

PETE: That he was one in a million.

LEILA: (*inferring something else*) You can say that again.

PETE: And if I hadn't of trusted him then I wouldn't have met you...so I'm really, really glad I did.

*PETE smiles at LEILA. Feeling guilty she looks away.*

LEILA: (*quietly*) Me too.

PETE: Have you seen him today? He left something here which he's meant to be picking up.

LEILA: No, I...I...haven't seen him yet. I left early for work so I'm not sure where he is. Sorry.

PETE: Oh no bother. He'll probably be around later.

*LEILA taps the phonebook.*

LEILA: (*changing the subject*) Was that the last one?

PETE: (*sighs*) Yes, that's it. We've tried them all now.

LEILA: Sorry Pete.

*PETE slowly closes the phonebook.*

PETE: Thanks though.

LEILA: What for?

PETE: This.

LEILA: I hope you didn't mind Sammo telling me? He's got a right gob on him sometimes.

PETE: He has hasn't he?

LEILA: Oh yeah.

*They both gently laugh at this.*

*Slight pause.*

PETE: Shouldn't have kidded myself that it'd be so easy.

LEILA: Got to start somewhere.

PETE: Maybe she *is* in here (*taps the book*) but under a different name...her married name maybe?

LEILA: Maybe.

PETE: Married, imagine that.

*PETE is far away thinking of this.*

PETE: Last time I saw her she was this big, (*puts his hand out to demonstrate*) little dot of thing she was (*smiles sadly at this*). Won't be a dot anymore.

LEILA: Nope.

PETE: Little sprat with lots of dark hair, bloody nightmare to comb it was.

LEILA: *(smiles)* Tangled?

PETE: *(smiling)* You can say that again. Dark and thick, the colour of molasses.

LEILA: Beautiful.

*PETE lowers his eyes and looks at the phonebook before slowly closing it shut. He's silent and still for a moment before hurriedly getting up and placing the phonebook on the coffee table.*

PETE: Fancy some fresh air?

LEILA: Blow the cobwebs out?

PETE: Precisely.

LEILA: Lead the way Captain. Lead the way.

*Lights fade on the two of them as they link arms and walk out of the front door.*

Scene Eight.

*Lights up. Two weeks later. SAMMO is in the kitchen. There is a large hold-all and a carrier bag on the kitchen counter.*

*From out of the carrier bag SAMMO takes a six-pack of strong lager.*

*PETE watches him from the sofa.*

*SAMMO opens a can.*

PETE: You have to get that stuff out of here *now* Sammo. It's been two weeks, it was only meant to be for a couple of days.

SAMMO: It's fine, no one knows. Don't panic Pete.

PETE: (*stands*) It's most definitely *not* fine Sammo. I said two days tops, you're taking the mick.

SAMMO: Relax will you.

PETE: Two days you said. Two days.

SAMMO: So I'm a few days over. It's no big deal.

PETE: You're weeks over not days.

SAMMO: Either way, it's only a problem if you make it a problem.

PETE: Are you taking the piss?

SAMMO: No.

PETE: You're seriously taking the piss out of me. You are.

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: Am I now?

PETE: I could get kicked out. I could lose this place if they find out. No alcohol. No drugs. It's in my contract. People aren't allowed to stay over. Just the other night you brought Bungle round...he didn't go...I couldn't get rid of him. He passed out on the sofa. All night he was here. *All night.*

SAMMO: (*laughing*) Ooops.

PETE: Is that all you've got to say?

SAMMO: Relax Pete.

PETE: This is unbelievable.

SAMMO: Look as long as everything's kept discreet, like, then you've got nothing to worry about. Have you?

PETE: I've got lots to worry about. I'm breaking my contract, it's serious.

SAMMO: Have a drink.

PETE: (*can't believe his ears*) What?

SAMMO: It'll calm you down.

PETE: You know I don't -

SAMMO: Sure? (*drinks*) I'll just say this mate, just for something to think about really. You did it all wrong.

PETE: What?

SAMMO: Cold turkey. You should've just gradually eased off.

PETE: I'm managing.

SAMMO: Really?

PETE: Yes.

SAMMO: I'm not so sure.

PETE: It's the only way.

SAMMO: It's a myth. One of those untruths that people bandy about willy-nilly.  
Trust me.

*Pause.*

PETE: (*looks at his hands*) It worked for my mate. He hasn't been back on it for...well, last time I saw him it'd been nearly eight months. Something like that anyway.

SAMMO: And when exactly did you last see this *mate*. Where is he now? He's not here is he?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Who is?

PETE: What do you mean?

SAMMO: I mean who is here with you right now? Who has been looking out for you above and beyond the call of duty? I mean...Pete mate, do I have to spell it out?

PETE: (*slightly confused*) You Sammo. You're here.

SAMMO: Correct. *I'm* here, *I'm* looking out for you. (*drinks*) I mean, what do smack heads do when they want to get clean? They get given methadone. They don't just quit, bam no more. That's crazy talk.

PETE: I've got tablets.

SAMMO: Yeah, but you'll just have an addiction to those. You'll be swapping one for another.

PETE: What's gotten into you?

SAMMO: What do you mean?

PETE: You seem...different.

SAMMO: Do I?

PETE: Yes.

SAMMO: Listen, I just think maybe you need something to take the edge off.

PETE: Why are you doing this?

SAMMO: What?

PETE: Trying to get me to drink?

SAMMO: Because I've spent all this time with you and I know you pretty well now.

PETE: Already?

SAMMO: We're kindred spirits Pete.

PETE: We are?

SAMMO: Yes. Don't you feel it too?

*Slight pause.*

PETE: Well...I suppose...I do feel –

SAMMO: Connected.

PETE: Like we have a connection, yes.

SAMMO: Yes. I knew it. Me too. And it's because of this connection that I know you're about to lose it.

PETE: Lose what?

SAMMO: Your self-control. I've watched it slipping away from you.

PETE: You have?

SAMMO: Oh yes. And rather than see you slide into a binge I think you'd be better off having a controlled drink, you know?

PETE: Controlled?

SAMMO: With me here to kind of keep an eye on things.

PETE: I have been thinking about it.

SAMMO: I know.

PETE: A lot.

SAMMO: I knew it.

PETE: You did?

SAMMO: I could see it in your face.

PETE: Really?

SAMMO: Don't lose it Pete.

PETE: I'm trying.

SAMMO: I know you are.

PETE: You do?

SAMMO: Yes and I don't want you to.

PETE: No?

SAMMO: That's the last thing I want.

PETE: Me too.

SAMMO: I want to help.

PETE: Really?

SAMMO: Of course I do.

PETE: Right.

SAMMO: We're friends right?

PETE: Right.

SAMMO: Well then.

PETE: Thanks.

SAMMO: No problem.

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: You have a constant pained expression.

PETE: I do?

SAMMO: Noticed it the first time I met you.

PETE: You did?

SAMMO: Tension in your face. In your neck and shoulders. Even your feet.

PETE: It's difficult for me to relax.

SAMMO: It's unhealthy. You're a heart attack waiting to happen.

PETE: Thanks.

SAMMO: I bet your blood pressure's through the ceiling.

PETE: Probably.

SAMMO: You look hunted, like someone's after you.

PETE: *(taken aback)* Do I?

SAMMO: *(knowing)* Yeah. I catch you glancing over your shoulder all the time.  
Like someone's watching you.

PETE: Oh?

SAMMO: Anyone after you Pete? Something you're not sharing?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Sure?

PETE: I don't know what you're talking about.

SAMMO: Don't you now?

*SAMMO opens up his hold-all which sits on the kitchen counter. He digs around for something.*

SAMMO: It's in here somewhere.

PETE: *(worried)* What is?

SAMMO: *(rummages)* Give me a second.

PETE: What are you talking about Sammo?

SAMMO: Hold your horses, I'm looking aren't I? *(pulls out a letter)* Ah, here it is.

*SAMMO takes the letter and his lager over to the armchair. Sits.*

Now don't get all agitated, you here? I did this for your own good.

PETE: Did what?

*SAMMO takes the letter out of the envelope.*

SAMMO: This is a very interesting letter. I can understand why you never sent it though...talk about...what's the saying?...spilling the beans.

PETE: What is it? Where did you get it?

SAMMO: I found it. It's a letter, like I already said, a very heartfelt letter to a...let me think, can't quite remember her name *(looks at the letter)*, oh yeah that's right...Rachel. *(reading)* Dear Rachel...

*PETE lunges at SAMMO, trying to snatch the letter off him.*

*SAMMO jumps up out of PETE'S grasp.*

SAMMO: Easy tiger. Snatching isn't nice.

PETE: *(seething)* Neither is stealing.

SAMMO: Now come on I didn't steal it Pete, I came across it.

PETE: When you were rooting through my things?

SAMMO: I never root. That isn't very nice of you is it? After all I've done as well.

PETE: (*stands*) Give it back.

SAMMO: (*ignoring him. Looks at the letter*) So Rachel is your long lost daughter I take it?

PETE: What's gotten into you? That's *my* letter, it's private Sammo, please just give it back.

SAMMO: It explains a lot. After I read it I felt I knew you better...actually, I felt closer to you.

PETE: (*trying a different tack*) We are close, we've become friends haven't we...I mean I wouldn't let you stay if we weren't friends would I?

SAMMO: *Let* me stay? (*laughs*) That's a good one.

PETE: Why?

SAMMO: You don't really have any choice.

PETE: I could ask you to leave. You'd have to leave then, this is my place.

SAMMO: I don't *have* to do anything.

*Pause.*

SAMMO: Are you asking me to go?

PETE: I was just saying that's all. I'm not meant to have people to stay.

SAMMO: *(holds the letter up)* Blah-di-blah-di-blah. I'm trying to tackle some important issues here. Sssshhhh. Did he die straight away Pete?

*PETE stares at SAMMO. He can barely contain his anger.*

SAMMO: Or did it take a couple of days?

PETE: *(quietly but forcefully)* Don't do this Sammo.

SAMMO: Must've been quite a smash.

PETE: Shut your mouth.

SAMMO: Were you hurt or was it just that poor bugger?

PETE: Shut your...

SAMMO: Did he have a family? Any children?

PETE: ...mouth right now or I'll...

SAMMO: You'll what?

*PETE launches himself at SAMMO rugby tackling him to the floor.*

PETE: I told you to shut the fuck up...I told you...

*SAMMO easily gains control of PETE pushing him off and pinning him to the floor.*

SAMMO: *(suddenly nice again)* That's right...let it all out. You shouldn't keep it bottled up.

PETE: (*sobbing*) You read it, it's got nothing to do with you, why did you do that?

SAMMO: I told you I just want to get to know you that's all.

PETE: It's none of you're fucking business.

SAMMO: It is. It is now.

PETE: I don't like –

SAMMO: What, people knowing you?

PETE: Who *does* that?

SAMMO: The *real* you.

PETE: I mean seriously.

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: I did it for you.

PETE: Who rummages through someone's stuff to get to know them?

SAMMO: I care about you.

PETE: Are you nuts?

SAMMO: You're angry, I get it, but Pete you really need to calm the fuck down.

PETE: Calm down?

SAMMO: And just for the record it's not me who's nuts. Talking flowers. Moving bloody furniture. I'm not the fruit-loop here matey.

*SAMMO grabs a cushion from the sofa. He moves it around as though it's talking.*

SAMMO: (*funny voice*) Hi, my name's McDoogle, the walking, talking, eating, shitting cushion. I just love to talk to my friend Petey and he just loves to talk to me. Hey fancy a dance Pete, we could skip the light fantastic, jitter-bug all over this swell joint, what d' ya say? (*throws the cushion down. Serious*) I'm here for you.

*SAMMO gets off PETE. He offers his hand.*

*PETE looks up at him. He does not move.*

SAMMO: Come on.

*PETE is still.*

SAMMO: (*gently*) You can't stay there, come on.

*Beat.*

*PETE tentatively takes SAMMO's hand.*

*SAMMO helps PETE to his feet. PETE stands watching as SAMMO gets two lagers from the kitchen and walks over to PETE. He stands right in front of him and holds out a can. PETE takes it.*

*SAMMO opens his can and drinks.*

SAMMO: *(wiping his lips)* Aahh. Have one. Just one.

PETE: One?

SAMMO: Go on. Let yourself down gently. It's better in the long run.

*SAMMO sits in the armchair.*

SAMMO: Drink. Don't worry about it Pete.

*Pause.*

SAMMO: Drink.

*PETE looks at the can, then at SAMMO, then back to the can.*

*SAMMO doesn't take his eyes off PETE.*

SAMMO: *(softly)* Don't worry. I'm here for you.

*Blackout.*

Act Two, Scene One

*Lights up on PETE. He sits on the sofa with SAMMO's hold-all in front of him on the coffee table and lots of wraps of coke laid out. The curtains are drawn. There are a couple of cans strewn about the place.*

*SAMMO is unseen in the bathroom taking a piss.*

*PETE picks up a wrap. Looks at it, shakes his head and puts it in the hold-all.*

SAMMO: *(calling from bathroom)* This is the good shit Petey and no messing.

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: Can you hear me or what?

*Sound of the toilet flushing.*

PETE: *(calling)* I heard.

SAMMO: What was that?

PETE: *(louder)* I said I heard you.

*KNOCK at the door.*

*Thinking it must be one of SAMMO's clients PETE slowly stands to go and answer the door.*

MARILYN: *(calling)* Pete. Pete are you in?

PETE: Shit. Oh shit no. Not now. Fuck.

KNOCK.

*PETE darts over to the coffee table and manically starts chucking the wraps into the hold-all.*

*SAMMO comes out of the bathroom.*

SAMMO: Sometimes I think you deliberately ignore me.

PETE: (*whispers*) Ssshhhh.

SAMMO: Just to wind me up.

PETE: Get back in the bathroom. Go.

SAMMO: What?

*PETE rushes over to SAMMO and pushes him back towards the bathroom.*

PETE: And be quiet.

SAMMO: What the fuck.

PETE: Ssshhhh. You're not here right.

SAMMO: You what?

MARILYN: (*calling*) Pete?

SAMMO: Who's that?

MARILYN: Please let me in. I know you're in there.

PETE: Get in there. Don't make a sound and do not come out until I say so.

Right?

SAMMO: (*whispers*) Ah, a lady friend eh?

PETE: It isn't what you think.

SAMMO: Yeah right. (*winks*) That's what they all say.

MARILYN: (*calling*) I have some news. It's important Pete.

*PETE herds SAMMO back into the bathroom. He tries to close the door but SAMMO puts his foot in the way.*

SAMMO: Whoever it is she sounds desperate.

PETE: Quiet as a mouse. Understand?

SAMMO: No sweat.

*SAMMO moves his foot. PETE shuts the door.*

*He runs over to the hold-all and finishes putting the wraps away. He zips up the bag and takes it to the bathroom. Opens the door and throws bag inside. 'Ow' is heard from inside as the bag hits SAMMO. PETE quickly closes the door.*

MARILYN: (*calling*) I know you said you didn't want me calling round Pete but I really do need to see you.

PETE: (*calling*) Just coming.

*PETE walks towards the door, he notices a couple of cans on the kitchen counter. He rushes over to them and hides them in a cupboard. A can remains unseen under the coffee table, unseen by PETE.*

*PETE straightens his hair and smooths down his crumpled shirt before opening the door.*

PETE: Sorry to keep you I –

MARILYN: No, no it's fine. I'm sorry to just turn up like this.

PETE: I was having a nap. Haven't been feeling too well so I –

*PETE gestures for MARILYN to come in.*

MARILYN: *(entering)* Oh sorry.

*Slight pause as MARILYN looks about the room.*

MARILYN: I could've sworn I heard you talking to someone?

PETE: Really?

MARILYN: Yes, I was positive.

PETE: Well I have been known to talk in my sleep.

MARILYN: Oh right.

PETE: Ever since I was a boy. Very embarrassing.

MARILYN: That's strange.

PETE: I know. What a weirdo eh?

MARILYN: No, I meant strange 'cos I thought I heard a different voice.

PETE: Really?

MARILYN: Yes, I was sure I heard –

PETE: Only little ol' me here so unless I've taken to doing impressions in my sleep now as well, you're hearing things.

MARILYN: Oh dear. Well it has been a long day.

PETE: I wouldn't worry. It's probably the wind. Play's all sorts of tricks on us. Can carry voices from way out there, across the sea. Voices from miles away. *(pause)* I hear them too sometimes.

MARILYN: Oh right.

PETE: I hear plaintive singing from way out there. The wind carries it across the sea. Magical it is.

*Slight awkward silence.*

PETE: Anyway, umm...what's this about some news?

MARILYN: Perhaps we should sit down.

PETE: *(worried)* That bad is it?

MARILYN: Let's just sit down shall we?

PETE: Have I done something wrong? I mean I haven't have I?

MARILYN: Sorry?

PETE: Am I going to get chucked out? Whatever it is I'll sort it...I will Marilyn, just give me another chance.

MARILYN: What? Pete, we're not about to evict you. Whatever gave you that idea?

*PETE looks towards the sofa and sees the can of lager.*

PETE: Oh nothing. Just my paranoia I expect.

*PETE leads the way to the sofa. As they sit he kicks the can further under the table.*

MARILYN: It's about your daughter.

*Slight pause.*

PETE: *(quietly)* My daughter?

MARILYN: Yes. Well I managed to do a bit of digging and –

PETE: And?

MARILYN: I'm afraid she's not living in Brighton anymore.

PETE: *(taking it in)* She's gone?

MARILYN: I'm afraid so.

PETE: Do you know where?

MARILYN: I don't have that information. I'm so sorry Pete.

PETE: Well, that's that then.

MARILYN: It's not the end of the road though. She still has your surname. Well for the time being anyway.

PETE: She's getting married?

MARILYN: That's right.

PETE: So a bit of good news as well as some bad eh?

MARILYN: You should try to find her before the wedding.

PETE: What, so I can go along and ruin her big day?

MARILYN: It'd probably *make* her day not ruin it.

PETE: Yeah, yeah.

MARILYN: You shouldn't give up.

PETE: Really?

MARILYN: Never.

*BANG from bathroom.*

MARILYN: What was that?

PETE: What?

MARILYN: I heard something.

PETE: Did you?

MARILYN: Yes. Didn't you?

PETE: (*lying*) Na.

MARILYN: It came from the bathroom I think.

PETE: I didn't hear anything.

*Another BANG comes from the bathroom.*

MARILYN: You must have heard that?

PETE: Oh yes...that...it's nothing. Just the pipes.

MARILYN: Oh.

PETE: Really old pipes. Make a lot of noise they do.

MARILYN: I'd better take a look. They might need seeing to.

*MARILYN stands.*

PETE: (*stands*) It's OK, really it is. They're fine, just old. Bit like me...keep on going but have a grumble along the way.

MARILYN: I don't mind taking a quick look.

*MARILYN heads towards the door.*

PETE: (*quickly*) I'd really rather you didn't.

*MARILYN'S hand is on the door handle.*

PETE: Please don't. It's...it's a bit of a state in there. I haven't had a chance to clean what with feeling a bit under the weather.

MARILYN: I've seen all sorts in my time. Don't you worry.

PETE: (*forcefully*) I don't want you to. So don't. Just don't. Please respect my wishes Marilyn.

MARILYN: (*taken aback*) Well, alright. If you're sure?

PETE: I'm sure.

MARILYN: Right. I'll leave you be then.

PETE: Thanks.

*MARILYN picks up her bag from the sofa and walks towards door.*

MARILYN: (*stopping*) I'm really sorry about your daughter Pete. Really I am.

PETE: Yes. Me too.

*MARILYN opens the door.*

MARILYN: I'll be in touch.

PETE: Right.

*Slight pause.*

*MARILYN smiles. Disappears up the steps.*

PETE: *(shouts up after her)* Thanks. Thanks for looking.

*PETE watches her go for a beat before quickly closing the door.*

*He falls back against the door a mixture of relieved and devastated.*

*SAMMO opens the bathroom door. He stands in the doorway high from taking some coke.*

SAMMO: Man this shit is good.

*Blackout.*

Scene Two.

*Lights come up. A makeshift washing-line has been erected across the width of the room. Dripping wet clothes hang on the washing-line as well as over the open kitchen cupboard doors and the backs of chairs.*

*PETE is in the bathroom (unseen) washing clothes in the sink, the door to the bathroom is open.*

*SAMMO sits on the sofa with his feet up on the coffee table flicking through a magazine. He is dressed only in his boxer shorts.*

SAMMO: How you doing in there?

*No answer.*

SAMMO: (*shouting*) You nearly done in there or what?

*No answer.*

*Throws his magazine down and stands up. Walks with purpose to the bathroom door. He leans in the doorway.*

SAMMO: Pete?

PETE: Yeah?

SAMMO: I *said* how are things going in there?

PETE: Fine.

SAMMO: You're doing a great job Pete. You're a real workhorse you know that?

PETE: Thanks.

SAMMO: Me, I couldn't be bothered to do this. No way. Not by hand at any rate.

PETE: Well, I wouldn't mind taking some of it to the launderette actually.

SAMMO: Pete. What have I said about that?

PETE: I know but there's so much –

SAMMO: Pete?

PETE: It's expensive.

SAMMO: Too much money Petey. It's ridic.

PETE: It's what?

SAMMO: Ridiculous.

PETE: Oh.

SAMMO: Why people use them, it's a fucking mystery.

PETE: Have a go in here with all this and you'll soon realise why they use them.

My hands are all shrivelled.

SAMMO: What I mean is, if you've got enough money to spunk on launderettes every week then you've definitely got enough to *buy* a fucking washing machine.

PETE: Launderettes aren't that expensive.

SAMMO: You'd know would you? I'm telling you, all you need to do is save your cash for a month or so and easily, I mean *eeasily* you'll have enough for a second-hand machine.

*PETE appears in front of SAMMO in the doorway holding up a sopping wet, bright white t-shirt.*

PETE: I got that stain out.

SAMMO: I can bloody see that. You're a marvel Pete, you really are.

PETE: It was tough but I did it in the end.

SAMMO: How?

*PETE tries to find space on the washing line for the t-shirt.*

PETE: No secret to it, just elbow grease.

SAMMO: There's a secret. I know there is.

PETE: Nope, nothing. Did a lot of scrubbing on the ships. Had some practice you could say.

*PETE goes back into the bathroom.*

SAMMO: Good with your hands.

PETE: Yeah, 'spose.

*Pause.*

SAMMO: Maybe I should get a job on a boat.

PETE: Boat or ship?

SAMMO: What do you mean?

PETE: Well, for a start one's bigger than the other.

SAMMO: So?

PETE: (*appears in doorway*) So they're used for different -

SAMMO: (*mood suddenly changes*) I don't fucking know do I?

PETE: (*keeping things light*) I worked on a ship. A ship's bigger, it's used for -

*SAMMO walks away from PETE towards the kitchen.*

SAMMO: Who gives a fuck?

PETE: I thought you -

SAMMO: Well you thought wrong. Stop showing off and get my fucking washing done, in case you hadn't noticed I'm only in a pair of pants.

PETE: I'd noticed.

SAMMO: I'm cold. This flat is bloody cold.

*PETE turns to go back into the bathroom.*

PETE: Bugger off then.

*SAMMO spins round. He looks ready to pounce.*

SAMMO: What was that?

*No answer.*

SAMMO: What did you just say?

*Still no answer.*

SAMMO: I'm talking to you. I know you can hear me.

*PETE appears in the doorway.*

PETE: *(standing up to him)* I said I didn't ask you to stay.

*SAMMO stands perfectly still, holding PETE's gaze. PETE wants to turn back and retreat into the bathroom but can't take his eyes off SAMMO.*

SAMMO: Say it again.

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Say it again. I dare you.

PETE: Why?

SAMMO: Just say it.

PETE: *(nervous)* I'm going to finish doing the washing now.

SAMMO: *(walks towards him)* But why won't you?

PETE: Because –

SAMMO: *(anger has turned to almost pleading)* Because you didn't mean it, is that it?

*Slight pause.*

PETE: *(going along with it)* That's right.

SAMMO: Really?

PETE: 'Course I didn't.

SAMMO: (*smiling*) Didn't think so. You're such a kidder.

PETE: (*forcing a smile*) That's me.

*SAMMO leaps over the back of the sofa and sits.*

SAMMO: Just think of it, here, without me, you'd be all alone. You don't want to be all alone do you? Why would you want that?

PETE: (*truthful*) I don't.

SAMMO: Didn't think so.

PETE: It's just –

SAMMO: Yes?

PETE: You're not meant to be here. I could get into real –

SAMMO: Do you really give a shit what that poxy charity say?

PETE: They could kick me out.

SAMMO: I mean, it's a bit much telling you you're not allowed friends.

PETE: They didn't say that, they said I couldn't have visitors...you know, to stay.

SAMMO: Same thing in my book. They're cutting you off from having a normal life. What right do they have to do that?

PETE: Well –

SAMMO: None. Absolutely none Pete.

PETE: I'm not sure it's quite like that Sammo.

SAMMO: Trust me, I've dealt with the authorities before...they do what they do because they can. Power. It gets inside them. Takes over.

*SAMMO slips into some sort of flashback scenario. He impersonates a particularly nasty guard he encountered while in the Youth Offenders Institute in London. His voice becomes deeper and louder. He walks about the room aggressively.*

*SAMMO: Out. Get out of there before I drag you out. MOVE. Faster, faster. Move those chicken legs. Look at those horrible little things, hairy and skinny...call yourself a man? Think you're a man do you? THINK YOU'RE A MAN? On the floor now chicken boy, fifty press-ups now. NOW. Or I'll punch you in the fucking face.*

*SAMMO suddenly snaps out of it.*

SAMMO: They'd lock you up again out the way if they could. Next best thing's what they've done here.

PETE: Anything's better than prison.

SAMMO: Too fucking right Petey. I'd rather cut my own arms off than go back into that hell-hole. Now when you've finished in there we could get some grub. How does that sound?

PETE: Yeah?

SAMMO: Yeah.

*PETE stays in the doorway. He wants to ask SAMMO something but is nervous about his reaction.*

*SAMMO puts his feet up on the coffee table and picks up the magazine he was looking at.*

*SAMMO notices that PETE is still in the doorway.*

SAMMO: Thought you were going to get on with the washing?

PETE: I am, I mean I will.

SAMMO: Well go on then.

*PETE goes back into the bathroom but reappears a moment later holding a purple cardigan.*

PETE: I found this when I was tidying up.

*SAMMO turns to look at what PETE is talking about.*

SAMMO: (*unfazed*) Oh.

PETE: Thought I'd wash it and maybe pop it over to the caff later.

SAMMO: (*reading*) Why?

PETE: Leila could probably be doing with it back.

SAMMO: Really?

PETE: Don't you think?

SAMMO: (*spits the words out*) I think that stupid bitch can come get it if she wants it.

*PETE turns to go back into the bathroom.*

PETE: Still, I think I might.

SAMMO: More fool you.

PETE: What's that supposed to mean?

SAMMO: Oh nothing.

PETE: No, what? What did you mean by that?

SAMMO: It's just –

PETE: Yes?

SAMMO: (*changes his mind*) It's nothing. I don't want to upset you so just leave it.

PETE: Upset me, how?

SAMMO: Pete, it's honestly best to leave it.

PETE: Why?

SAMMO: Because, Pete, the truth can hurt and you don't need that right now.

PETE: The truth?

SAMMO: Yes.

PETE: I don't know what you mean.

SAMMO: She's...(*changes his mind*) Oh nothing.

PETE: (*defensive*) She's my friend.

SAMMO: If that's what you think then...fine...carry on deluding yourself.

PETE: I'm not deluded.

SAMMO: Fine.

PETE: Fine, what?

SAMMO: You're not deluded.

PETE: Why did you just say I was then?

SAMMO: Because...you really want to hear it?

PETE: (*unsure*) Yes.

SAMMO: You sure about that?

PETE: (*with more conviction*) Yes.

SAMMO: (*puts magazine down*) You asked for it.

*SAMMO turns round on the sofa so that he's facing PETE.*

SAMMO: She's a conniving little skank that's only interested in what others can give her. She takes, sucks, sponges. She is a receiver not a giver. A leech. Someone should give her a medal for all the ways, (*laughs*) ingenious ways she has skanked and sucked dry all the poor souls who have had the misfortune to come into contact with her. You are a fool to believe anything that comes out of her scabby mouth. I thought you realised that, I thought you'd moved on from believing you two were *friends*? She doesn't have friends Pete. She looked at you and saw a weak, pathetic piece of shit that she could take for a ride. She plays with people. She was playing the part so well you fell for it. I don't blame you really.

PETE: (*devastated but trying to hide it*) What part?

SAMMO: Of a poor little waif in need of a father figure.

PETE: I don't believe you.

SAMMO: That's fine Pete, that's just fine but don't say I didn't warn you.

*PETE is crushed. He turns and goes back into the bathroom.*

SAMMO: (*smiling to himself*) Just don't say I didn't warn you that's all.

*Pause.*

SAMMO: So how long was it before she spun you the line.

PETE: (*from bathroom*) What line?

SAMMO: Come on, you know. (*waits. no reply*) The one that goes (*puts on a woman's high-pitched voice*) 'I'm so glad I met you Pete. I finally feel like I've found someone I can trust.' How long? A week, two?

*SAMMO waits for a response. Silence. He lies back on the sofa, pleased with himself. Puts his arms behind his head.*

SAMMO: It's okay, I don't blame you for falling for it. I mean, I did didn't I? Also, you've got to remember, you're in a vulnerable place at the moment, you're missing your daughter, Leila came along...and well...it's only natural isn't it?

PETE: (*appears in doorway*) What is?

SAMMO: You know, that you'd look at little Leila there and see a sort of replacement.

PETE: (*has hit a nerve*) Replacement?

SAMMO: Yeah, it happens you know?

PETE: Leave my daughter out of this. You don't know what you're talking about.

SAMMO: Don't I?

PETE: No. And I could do without your cod psychology if you don't mind.

SAMMO: Just saying how it is that's all.

PETE: Well don't.

SAMMO: Either that or you want to fuck her.

PETE: What?

SAMMO: You trying to tell me it hasn't crossed your mind?

PETE: You're being repulsive.

SAMMO: Really, am I now?

PETE: I don't think of Leila like that.

SAMMO: Don't you now?

PETE: It's not like that.

SAMMO: No?

PETE: I'm not like that.

SAMMO: Of course not.

*PETE rolls down his sleeves as he walks across the room to get his jacket. He quickly pulls on his jacket and goes to the kitchen to get a plastic bag. He rams the cardigan into the bag.*

SAMMO: Anyway, I wouldn't waste your time going down the caff.

PETE: (*blunt*) It won't take me a minute.

SAMMO: Fine, go ahead then but she's not there.

PETE: (*looks up*) What?

SAMMO: You'll get all the way down there only to be disappointed.

PETE: What do you mean?

SAMMO: She's not there Pete.

PETE: (*disbelieving*) No. I don't believe you.

SAMMO: Oh yes. Fucked off with some geezer the other week.

PETE: But -

SAMMO: Saw Bungle didn't I, he told me.

PETE: What about her flat, her job?

SAMMO: Like I told you, she doesn't give a monkey's. She's tarted her way into some other poor sod's pants and now she's going to take him for whatever she can get. Poor bugger, he's going to get rinsed and that's for sure.

PETE: She wouldn't.

SAMMO: Wouldn't she now?

PETE: Leila's not like that.

SAMMO: Wake up Petey. You're just lucky I was around.

PETE: And how's that?

SAMMO: (*sits up*) To protect you from her.

PETE: I don't need protecting.

SAMMO: No?

*PETE doesn't answer. He walks to the front door clutching the plastic bag.*

*SAMMO picks up the magazine again and opens it. He puts his feet up on the table.*

*As PETE walks out of the door SAMMO shouts after him.*

SAMMO: Don't say I didn't warn you.

*Door slams shut.*

*Lights fade on SAMMO smiling as he flicks through the magazine.*

Scene Three.

*Two weeks later. The washing-line still hangs across the room with some clothes dangling from it. Tangled clothes also lie on the floor in amongst rubbish, driftwood and shells.*

*Spotlight on SAMMO. He sits on the coffee table facing the audience. He takes big gulps from a can of lager. PETE sits on the floor in the corner.*

SAMMO: She was nice, you know, nice to me. Said hello to me in the street if she saw me out. Most teachers blank you. Well they do unless you're in one of their little clubs. You know, like chess, or French or whatever. I'm ace at chess. Bet you didn't think I would be, did you? Well I am. Beat me granddad when I

was four...four or five...something like that. *(pause)* He was a nice fucker he was. Lived in a pink house. Bright bloody pink.

*SAMMO looks at the floor. Shuffles his feet. Bites the inside of his mouth.*

Thought she was just being friendly at first but then after a while I cottoned on to it. She'd do this little wave *(waves and flutters his eyelashes)*, cute kindofa wave. She winked at me all the time. No-one else mind...just me. Liked me, noticed me. She *noticed* me. She had to say what she said otherwise game's over for her ain't it? Can't be having people thinking she's no paedo, so she said what she said. *(thinking about it)* I get it. I don't mind that much really.

*Pause.*

SAMMO: Not anymore. I mean what can you do? Life's a shitter and then you die.

*SAMMO finishes his can and turns to look at PETE. PETE does not look up.*

SAMMO: What you doing?

PETE: *(mumbles)* Nothing.

SAMMO: *(whiney)* Nothing.

*Pause as SAMMO waits for a response which he does not get.*

SAMMO: I'm not doing anything 'cos I'm Pete and I'm a pathetic lump. I'm a jibbering wreck.

*Sammo stands. Stretches out his arms and raises his voice as if addressing an audience at a magicians show in a large auditorium.*

SAMMO: My name is Pete the Pathetic. Watch ladies and gentlemen as I say and do nothing *(lets arms flop down)*. *(turns to PETE)* Isn't that right? *(silence)* I said isn't that right Pete?

*PETE looks at him.*

SAMMO: Why so sad? You're not still sulking about Leila fucking off are you?

*(PETE looks away)* You are, I can tell. Listen mate, you really need to get over this. Move on. She's a fucking bitch, end of. Right? They both are.

*Silence.*

SAMMO: I said, *(shouting)* END OF STORY.

*SAMMO walks over to PETE. Kneels down beside him.*

SAMMO: I don't know what your problem is. You've got me. We're in this together. Who needs them? Not us. We don't, do we Pete?

*He places a hand on Pete's shoulder. PETE shrugs him off.*

*Rejected SAMMO stands up. Looks down at PETE.*

SAMMO: Get up. GET UP and stop looking at me with that pathetic haunted look you've got going on now.

*PETE scrambles to his feet.*

SAMMO: It does nothing for you. You look demented.

*SAMMO sniffs close to PETE's face. PETE is silent and does not move a muscle.*

SAMMO: Jesus. Rrrripe.

*Pause.*

*SAMMO looks at him as though he just spoke.*

SAMMO: What was that?

PETE: *(quietly)* I didn't say anything.

SAMMO: *(ruffles Pete's hair)* Good.

*Suddenly turns away from PETE and leaps over the kitchen counter.*

SAMMO: *(forceful)* I've got to go out now. You stay here. Do not go out. Right? You'll get some visitors. Their packages are in here *(opens kitchen cupboard)*. Make sure they get them. Got it?

*PETE nods.*

*Suddenly SAMMO's face breaks out into a warm smile. He looks at PETE in a genuinely tender way.*

SAMMO: I won't be long. Maybe we could have a game of Gin Rummy when I get back...what do you say?

*PETE does not know how to respond to this sudden change in mood. He's not sure whether it's real or some sort of trap. He tries to smile and nods slightly.*

SAMMO: Just the two of us.

*Beat.*

*SAMMO disappears out of the door, it slams shut. PETE is alone. He stands looking after the door.*

*He looks around his bedsit, taking in all the mess. He moves about the room picking clothes up in an attempt to tidy up. Once he has an armful of clothes he suddenly stops where he is. He opens his arms and lets the clothes fall to the floor.*

*He turns to look at a can of lager which sits on the kitchen counter. PETE closes his eyes and breathes deeply. Slowly he clenches his fists as he breathes in, opening them again when he breathes out. He repeats this a number of times until the urge to grab the can becomes too much.*

*PETE rushes to the counter, grabs the can and opens it. He holds it up to his mouth. He is about to drink when he stops. He turns and hurls the can across the room.*

*Blackout.*

Scene Four.

*One week later. PETE kneels on the floor hunting through takeaway food wrappers and bottles that litter the carpet. He nervously keeps looking towards the front door.*

*He finds an old bit of burger which he stuffs into his mouth. Whistling from outside can be heard. PETE chews his mouthful as quickly as possible and hastily goes back to his place on the floor in the corner.*

*SAMMO skips down the steps and flings the door open.*

SAMMO: Did anyone call?

PETE: (swallows) No.

*SAMMO puts a bag of shopping down on the coffee table.*

SAMMO: Sure?

PETE: Sure.

SAMMO: Mmm.

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: Steve?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Not even Livvie?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Said she would.

PETE: Right.

SAMMO: Odd. Not like her.

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Bungle?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: His package ready?

PETE: Yes.

SAMMO: What's with the one-word answers?

*Slight pause.*

PETE: Just tired.

SAMMO: Right.

PETE: Right.

SAMMO: You're probably hungry.

PETE: Yeah.

SAMMO: I've been crap haven't I?

*Silence.*

Well, haven't I? Here you are letting me stay n' that and I haven't even got you any food in.

PETE: I am a bit hungry actually.

SAMMO: Thought so. Manners, sometimes I just forget my manners. Two years in a detention centre and I still come out with no manners.

PETE: Don't worry, it's...

SAMMO: Not alright. It's not. That's why I went out, 'specially to get some grub in.

*PETE visibly cheers up. Standing, he makes as if to go over to the bag of food but stops himself. He is nervous. He looks at SAMMO.*

*SAMMO smiles warmly.*

SAMMO: Go ahead. Knock yourself out mate.

*PETE walks towards the coffee table. He picks up the carrier bag and retreats to his spot in the corner.*

*SAMMO, still smiling, flops onto the sofa. Puts his feet up on the coffee table.*

*PETE reaches into the bag and pulls out an apple. It is rotten.*

PETE: It's -

SAMMO: What?

PETE: Well, it's -

SAMMO: An apple. Correct. I've always said you're the observant type.

PETE: No, it's ...

SAMMO: It is Pete. It really is an apple.

PETE: But -

SAMMO: A red, juicy apple. A genetically modified redder-than-a-red-apple-should-be, apple.

PETE: Rotten.

SAMMO: Rotten?

*PETE looks at the apple, then at SAMMO and back at the apple.*

PETE: It's got mould on.

SAMMO: Let's see.

*PETE walks slowly over to SAMMO. Hands him the apple.*

*SAMMO inspects the apple, turning it over in his hands. He looks at PETE.*

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: *(shakes his head)* Oh no.

PETE: What?

SAMMO: Oh dear, oh dear.

PETE: What, what is it?

SAMMO: I knew it.

PETE: Knew? Knew what?

SAMMO: You.

PETE: Me?

SAMMO: You're not yourself are you?

PETE: Not myself? I don't understand.

SAMMO: Of course you don't. But I noticed see, I clocked it quite a few weeks back now.

PETE: Clocked what?

SAMMO: I've got first hand experience you see? What with me Ma and Pa n' that.

PETE: What?

SAMMO: You're not, how do I put this...

PETE: What?

SAMMO: ...without sounding

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: That apple ain't rotten.

PETE: But it is, I...

SAMMO: It's not.

PETE: It smells.

SAMMO: It's not the apple that's rotten here.

*SAMMO hands back the apple to PETE.*

*PETE looks at the rotten apple.*

PETE: I don't understand.

SAMMO: It's simple. It's your brain.

PETE: My brain?

SAMMO: It's playing tricks on you again. It's confused. It doesn't know your arse from your elbow.

PETE: But...

SAMMO: How long since you had a drink?

PETE: About -

SAMMO: Too long mate. It's been too long for your system, your nervous system n' that. You're in meltdown 'cos you need a drink.

PETE: But I -

SAMMO: I know.

PETE: But –

SAMMO: How's the furniture?

PETE: What?

SAMMO: Gone walkabouts yet?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Won't be long.

PETE: It's not the furniture. It's just that that –

SAMMO: Yes?

PETE: It's -

*PETE holds the apple up and looks at it. He blinks hard. Looks again. Goes to bite into it but can't.*

*SAMMO takes the apple.*

SAMMO: Listen I'm not going to force you. If you don't want to eat it then -

PETE: I do though. I do want to. It's just...

*SAMMO has turned his back on PETE who is looking at the floor. He secretes the rotten apple in his jacket pocket and from the other pocket pulls out a healthy one. He does this then takes his jacket off. Hangs it on the back of the front door.*

*SAMMO turns round to face PETE holding the apple up.*

SAMMO: Well if you don't want it

PETE: *(looking up)* No don't, it's...

*SAMMO bites into the apple.*

SAMMO: *(smiling and chewing)* Delicious.

*Blackout.*

Scene Five.

*A couple of weeks later. The clothes-line is covered in the same clothes from the previous scenes only this time everything is even more chaotic. There are clothes on the floor, over the sofa, cupboards and over the tops of doors. They are crumpled and messy.*

*Large pieces of driftwood are strewn about the flat, as well as rocks of differing sizes, shells, starfish and seaweed. It looks as if the outside is gradually creeping in and taking over.*

*In the distance the BREAKING WAVES can be heard. Even more distant still is the sound of the SEA SHANTY from earlier 'Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest'. It sounds as if a large group of sailors are singing out at sea and their voices are being carried across to shore on the wind.*

*SAMMO lies on the bed face down. The bed has been stripped. He sobs very quietly.*

*PETE is fully dressed asleep on the floor by the sofa. He is curled up into a tight ball clutching a can of lager.*

*After a moment or two loud squawking can be heard right outside the window.*

*The squawking gets louder and more angry as the shanty slowly fades out.*

*SAMMO looks up at the window. PETE does not wake up.*

*SAMMO reaches down the side of the bed and picks up a small rock, he throws it at the window. The squawking stops for a split second and then carries on only louder.*

*SAMMO: Fuck sake.*

*SAMMO gets up and goes to the window. He opens the curtains and bangs on the glass.*

*SAMMO: Shut the fuck up.*

*The noise continues. SAMMO tiptoes over to PETE.*

*SAMMO: (hushed voice) Pete? Pete, wake up. They're out there again.*

*PETE stirs but does not wake up. SAMMO kneels down by PETE's side and shakes him. No response. He shakes him more violently. PETE wakes up with a start. He doesn't know where he is or what is going on for a second. He is very hungover and still slightly drunk.*

PETE: What? What the...I'm...Rach?...What's going on?

SAMMO: (*conspiratorially*) They're out there again. Make them go Pete, make them go away.

PETE: Who's out there?

SAMMO: The seagulls. They're fighting. I think one of them is trying to eat the other one.

PETE: (*confused*) Who's eating who?

SAMMO: The seagulls.

PETE: (*unbothered*) Oh them.

*SAMMO runs back to the window. He warily pulls back the curtain a tiny bit to look out.*

SAMMO: How are we meant to get out? We can't get out.

PETE: ( *rubs his eyes*) We're not meant to.

SAMMO: What?

PETE: (*sits up*) Nothing.

SAMMO: They're tearing chunks out of each other.

PETE: They're not cannibals.

SAMMO: I'm not so sure, the other day I saw a seagull tucking into a pigeon. I'm pretty certain the pigeon was still alive as well.

PETE: Are you sure?

SAMMO: As sure as I can be. It was dark. *(pause)* What did you mean?

PETE: When?

SAMMO: Just now.

PETE: I never mean anything. Take no notice.

*SAMMO closes the curtains. PETE turns and sees the stripped bed.*

PETE: Did it happen again?

SAMMO: *(vulnerable)* Sorry Pete.

PETE: Where are the sheets?

SAMMO: In the bath.

PETE: We'll have to chuck the mattress.

SAMMO: Sorry.

PETE: Can't be helped.

SAMMO: I can sleep on the floor like you. We'll be the same. We can bunk down and pretend we're camping...on the beach. It's more fun than sleeping in a bed. Beds are for wimps. I used to love sleeping on a cushion on the floor at my granddad's. It's exciting. Don't you think?

PETE: (*unenthusiastic*) Yeah, maybe.

SAMMO: Feels special 'cos it's out of the ordinary. (*slight pause*) I wish he was still here. I wish he hadn't gone 'n left me.

PETE: Who?

SAMMO: The old fucker.

PETE: *Who?*

SAMMO: My granddad.

PETE: Oh.

SAMMO: Shall I come down on the floor with you?

PETE: Whatever.

SAMMO: (*suddenly angry*) Well fuck you then. I'm just trying to be...na forget it, just fucking forget it.

PETE: (*trying to placate him*) It's a great idea, really it is. I just don't feel well that's all. That's why I sounded a bit –

SAMMO: Like you didn't want to?

PETE: Like I didn't want to.

*The squawking has stopped now. SAMMO looks out through the curtains again.*

SAMMO: They've gone. Cannibalistic fuckers. (*thinking*) If there was nothing left, in like the whole world apart from humans and seagulls then we'd be for it wouldn't we?

*PETE rubs his legs as if in pain.*

PETE: What?

SAMMO: They'd eat us. They're aggressive little bastards. Not so 'little' actually. You wouldn't stand a chance if a whole load of them dive-bombed you. They'd rip you to shreds.

PETE: (*wearily*) That's not going to happen.

SAMMO: Ravens eat people.

PETE: Carrion.

SAMMO: What?

PETE: They eat carrion.

SAMMO: Always have to get your posh words out don't you.

PETE: They eat the flesh of animals that have already been killed by something else.

SAMMO: (*mulls the word over*) Ca-rr-i-on. Carrion.

PETE: And if they do eat the flesh of humans then it's a human that's already dead, been dead a while as a matter of fact.

SAMMO: Oh.

PETE: They don't go round killing people.

SAMMO: Okay, okay you win.

*SAMMO goes to the kitchen and takes a bottle of whiskey out from under the sink.*

*He walks over to PETE who has his head in his hands. SAMMO offers the bottle.*

SAMMO: Here, have some of this. You look like you could do with it.

*PETE looks up.*

PETE: I thought we were out.

SAMMO: (*grins*) Secret stash.

*PETE takes the bottle, unscrews it and takes a big gulp.*

*SAMMO pushes seaweed and shells off the sofa to make space so he can sit down.*

SAMMO: What shall we do tonight then?

*PETE is far away thinking about something else.*

PETE: (*thinking out loud*) Supper at McCall's, steak with potatoes, not chips...can't stand chips...and then onto the cinema. That's all I wanted to do. Just to say thank you. Nothing in it. Just a friendly thing to do, you know?

SAMMO: You what?

PETE: Just wanted to feel part of something.

SAMMO: Of what?

PETE: Oh I don't know...part of this...this thing...that every other fucker seems happy to go along with.

SAMMO: Normal stuff?

PETE: Yeah. You know, just the normal, everyday humdrum stuff. I thought if I could just stay in one place long enough then maybe...who knows...maybe I could be like everyone else but it's not that easy is it?

SAMMO: No. I guess not.

PETE: Sometimes I have an overwhelming urge to just disappear.

*Slight pause.*

PETE: You know?

SAMMO: Yeah. Me too.

PETE: (*sighs*) Ah well.

*SAMMO tries to lighten the mood.*

SAMMO: You know what we should do tonight?

PETE: What's that then?

SAMMO: Play cards.

PETE: Again?

SAMMO: Yeah, why not?

PETE: That's all we've done for weeks now.

SAMMO: So?

PETE: Aren't you bored? Don't you want to go out and see your mates?

SAMMO: They're not mates. You're my mate.

PETE: If they're not mates then what are they?

SAMMO: Acquaintances.

PETE: Right.

SAMMO: I like it here. In here with you.

PETE: I know but –

SAMMO: (*upset and angry*) You're trying to get rid of me. Everyone always tries to get rid of me. You want me to go out so that you can go looking for those stupid bitches.

PETE: No –

SAMMO: (*stands*) Yes, yes that's what you're doing. Well I won't...I won't go out I tell you. I'm not leaving. I won't leave you. She left you...just remember that...she left without even saying goodbye...she doesn't give a shit about you. So stop harping on about her.

PETE: I didn't, I wasn't –

SAMMO: I can tell that's what you're thinking about. You think about her all the time.

PETE: I don't.

SAMMO: (*vicious*) Well apart from your daughter.

PETE: Be quiet now Sammo. Let's not go there, not today.

SAMMO: Why not today?

PETE: Nothing.

SAMMO: Is today a special day?

PETE: I said shut up. You don't know what you're talking about.

SAMMO: Don't I?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: Is it her birthday?

PETE: Shut up.

SAMMO: So I'll take that as a yes then?

PETE: No. No it's not Rachel's birthday.

SAMMO: It's the day of the crash. Isn't it?

PETE: Stop. That's enough.

SAMMO: It is. I have a sixth sense for these sorts of things.

PETE: Just leave it I'm warning you.

SAMMO: You're warning me?

PETE: Yes.

SAMMO: That's a joke.

*SAMMO starts laughing uncontrollably.*

SAMMO: God you crack me up.

PETE: Stop. Just stop.

SAMMO: I can't, really I can't. You crack me up big time. (*calming down a bit*) I think that's why I like you so much.

PETE: (*head in hands*) Stop. I can't do this, I can't listen to you anymore. One minute we're having a nice chat and the next...well...well you're...I just don't get it.

SAMMO: Maybe you should try looking outside your little bubble sometimes. The world's bigger than just you, you know.

PETE: I know it is.

SAMMO: I mean you haven't even let me open the sodding curtains for...what...a week...because you reckon...you reckon...

*PETE drinks, wipes his mouth and starts SINGING 'Fifteen Men On A Dead Man's Chest' quietly under his breath in an attempt to block SAMMO out.*

SAMMO: ...and this is totally loopy...crackers...you reckon some bloke is stood out there watching you through the window. So I'm not allowed to open them.

*PETE SINGS a bit louder and swigs on the bottle.*

SAMMO: You see him but he's not there. Hysterical. You must be hallucinating. I know what it is. Do you know what I think it is Pete?

*PETE doesn't answer. He carries on SINGING louder than before.*

*SAMMO swaggers over to PETE and stands next to him by the sofa.*

SAMMO: It's the 'dancing flowers' all over again, that's what it is.

*No answer. PETE stares straight ahead and continues to SING.*

SAMMO: I don't know how many times I told you to give it a rest...chill out a bit...you just wouldn't listen though. You're such a worry Pete, what am I going to

do with you? You're drinking yourself into an early grave...you know that don't you? You've nobody to blame but yourself, you do realise that don't you?

*SAMMO kneels down beside PETE on the floor.*

SAMMO: I mean I know why...I'm not dumb. I look it but I'm not. You're drowning yourself to forget...isn't that right? It must have been awful...killing that man – accident or not you still killed him didn't you? How old was he? Wasn't much older than me was he? Two kiddies as well. Awful. His poor Missus. I wonder what kind of a life she's had? Do you wonder about that Pete?

*PETE is SINGING very loudly now so that SAMMO has to shout to be heard.*

I wonder how she looked after those two little kiddies after that...she must have been on the edge I'll bet. Killed on the way to work...just horrible.

BAM!...(punches his fist into his hand)...obliterated, gone, finito. Just a heap under your car. A bloody heap of twisted limbs. (pause) Dangerous...driving when you're smashed...didn't you know that Pete? *Really* fucking dangerous.

*PETE can't take anymore, he stands. He is no longer SINGING but SHOUTING the words.*

*SAMMO stands.*

SAMMO: Maybe she couldn't look after them. Maybe she had to have them taken away. Into care...some big old house somewhere far away from home...no mummy or daddy...just these two little innocents all alone in the world. Who

knows eh Pete? Probably won't stay innocent for long though will they eh? What a start in life. What a fucking start.

*Slight pause.*

It's probably a blessing in disguise you never found your daughter Pete, 'cos I'm not so sure she'd want anything to do with you if she knew the truth. Do you?

*SAMMO takes the bottle of whiskey off PETE and drinks.*

*PETE stops singing/shouting, turns and pushes SAMMO full force. SAMMO is taken totally by surprise. He flies backwards, dropping the bottle as he goes.*

*PETE dives on top of SAMMO and starts to strangle him.*

SAMMO: (*choking*) Pete, Pete, I was just saying 'cos...what I mean...is...you've got *me*. Stop...please stop...I can't breath.

*SAMMO struggles and manages to push PETE over. He pins PETE's arms down whilst sitting on top of him.*

SAMMO: Why did you do that Pete? You're going to have to start trusting me a bit more you know? This is more than I can stand.

*PETE struggles. He tries to lift his arms but SAMMO is too strong.*

PETE: Get off me. Get off, get off, get off.

SAMMO: Pete just calm down. I'll get off if you promise to behave yourself? Do you?

PETE: GET OFF.

SAMMO: You've got to promise.

*Silence.*

SAMMO: I'll take your silence as a yes. You're lucky...very bloody lucky but that's just what I'm like...I'm trusting you do you hear?

*SAMMO slowly lets go of PETE's arms and cautiously gets up. He moves away from PETE who remains on the floor, unmoving and silent.*

*The sound of the fighting seagulls starts up again.*

*SAMMO hunts around for the cards. They are all over the place. He moves about the room picking up the cards. PETE doesn't move.*

*After a couple of seconds the sound fades as lights fade to black.*

## Scene Six

*One week later. PETE alone in the dimly lit flat. The WIND blows wildly outside. He is lying drunk on the floor. He wears a big baggy fisherman's jumper, trousers and bare feet.*

*The figure of a MAN sitting on the steps looking in can be seen through the window. He remains there completely still throughout the scene.*

*The flat is a complete mess. Cans, ashtrays, wrappers and drug paraphernalia litter the floor, coffee table and kitchen counter. Instead of clothes, seaweed now hangs on the washing line. There are more rocks, shells and driftwood everywhere.*

PETE: (Sings) Come all ye young fellows that follow the sea

To me, way hey, blow the man down

Now please pay attention and listen to me

Give me some time to blow the man down

I'm a deep water sailor just come from Hong Kong

You give me some whiskey, I'll give you a song...

*TAPPING at window. PETE stops SINGING. Listens.*

*TAPPING stops.*

PETE: (sings) When a trim black ball liner's preparing for sea

On a trim black ball liner I wasted me prime

*TAPPING starts again. PETE hears it and so SINGS louder trying to drown it out.*

*The TAPPING gets louder and louder throughout.*

*You'll split your sides laughing such sights you would see.*

*TAPPING is now full-on BANGING.*

*PETE: (shouting) Bugger off. (more BANGING) Go somewhere else...skanks.*

*It's my turn...my turn to get wasted...why not? Why the hell not? (just about manages to lift his head) This is my Shangri-La (laughs. Lets his head fall back onto floor) THIS IS MY SHANGRI-LA do you hear? (muttering along the lines of 'mine, my Shangri-la, you've got yours and I've got mine...').*

*More BANGING. PETE heaves himself up on the sofa and looks towards the window. He sees the figure of the MAN. PETE is terrified.*

*(under his breath, getting louder) Get away...get away do you hear? Get away from here. I've done enough haven't I? Why won't you leave me alone? I just want to be left alone...I've got nothing left to give...you've had it all. Look at me. Look. I haven't got anything left. What do you want? (sobbing but angry) What...do...you...want? You sent him...I know you sent him to finish me off. He's the devil...you win. Are you listening to me...you win...*

*The door handle turns. Slowly the door opens. PETE is frozen to the spot.*

*The door opens to reveal LEILA dressed in a long overcoat, a white, net skirt can be seen poking out of the bottom of the coat. She has beautiful white wings on, a tiara and is holding a wand. The wind gusts in blowing rubbish around the room.*

*LEILA tentatively comes into the room. She pushes the door shut against the wind. Looks at PETE.*

LEILA: (softly) Pete?

*Pause.*

LEILA: Pete?

PETE: (squinting) Leila?

LEILA: You look as if you've seen a ghost.

PETE: Leila? That is you isn't it?

*LEILA walks slowly towards PETE.*

LEILA: It's me. It's alright, it's only me.

PETE: (relieved) Only? Only? Leila...lovely Leila the fairy princess...I thought you were someone else...someone...(collapses onto sofa) I thought he'd come for me but no. It's you. It really is you isn't it?

LEILA: I was passing.

PETE: Are you my fairy godmother?

LEILA: Just been to a party...saw your light on. I guessed Sammo would be out, otherwise I wouldn't have...

PETE: I know, I understand.

*Slight pause.*

LEILA: I wasn't really just passing. I wanted to see you.

PETE: You came, came to see me? To see if I was alright? But where have you been? You've been gone for such a long time. (*confused*) I've been having a lie down...singing...to ward him off...I've been singing...shanties...do you like sea shanties?...I like them, they make me feel at home. I sing now, no whistling....bad luck on land...before a voyage to...to...it brought him here...he heard me whistle and he came...the devil came. (*pause*) I asked him where you were...he said not to ask again so I didn't...he said you'd moved away...with a man...left with a man...he said not to ask again so I didn't...I didn't ask again.

LEILA: There was no man and I didn't move, just kept my distance.

PETE: No man?

LEILA: No-one. Just had to get out. Get away.

PETE: I don't blame you.

*LEILA sits.*

LEILA: I'm sorry Pete.

PETE: Sorry?

LEILA: For not stopping him.

PETE: You weren't to know.

LEILA: I should've tried. But he...overpowered me.

PETE: You and me both eh?

LEILA: I should have done something.

PETE: (*not understanding*) There's nothing you could've done...nothing.

LEILA: I knew what he was going to do.

PETE: Do?

LEILA: Here. With you.

PETE: With me?

*PETE picks up a can of lager and guzzles it down.*

LEILA: After I met you properly...here...and got to know you...I changed my mind.

PETE: Changed your mind? About what? You've lost me. I don't get it...

(*muttering*) I don't...nope...I don't...

*PETE takes another swig from his can.*

LEILA: But he said we had to...and 'cos I was scared of him I went along with it.  
But I felt bad, /really bad about it.

PETE: (*going over it out loud*) /Go along with it...

LEILA: And you...you were doing really well, getting it all back on track before we came along. What a fuck up...I'm such a fuck up...I'm so sorry Pete...I'm so, so sorry...

*LEILA starts to sob quietly. She buries her face in the arm of the chair.*

PETE: Leila? Leila stop crying...why are you crying? It's so nice to see you please don't cry.

LEILA: (*looks up at PETE*) I'll make amends. I will. I promise.

PETE: Amends for what Leila?

LEILA: Me and Sammo.

PETE: You don't need to. You're here now that's all that matters.

LEILA: We didn't really find your wallet.

PETE: (*confused*) What?

LEILA: In the beginning. Do you remember?

PETE: When Sammo gave my wallet back, the one I lost?

LEILA: You didn't lose it Pete.

PETE: I left it in the caff. Sammo brought it back to me. I'll never forget that.

LEILA: I stole it. When you weren't looking I took your wallet.

PETE: (*in denial*) You're mistaken...I left it behind...and you...you...

LEILA: Took it. I took it so that Sammo would have a reason to introduce himself to you. So that you would let him in.

PETE: He gave it back.

LEILA: So that he could get into your flat.

PETE: But I don't understand.

LEILA: He became your friend.

PETE: Mmm friend.

LEILA: In the beginning anyway. You let him in, that's all he needed.

PETE: I thought my luck was turning when I met him...

LEILA: He got in and took over. Used your flat as his own.

PETE: ...how wrong can you be?

LEILA: He used you. We both did. I'm so sorry.

*Slight pause.*

PETE: Why me?

LEILA: You were alone.

PETE: A saddo?

LEILA: Alone, that's all.

PETE: No friends.

LEILA: No-one to look out for you.

PETE: *(starting to make sense)* It was all a lie.

LEILA: In the beginning.

PETE: False. Everything.

LEILA: Not everything Pete.

PETE: You lied to me.

LEILA: To begin with yes.

PETE: You pretended to care.

LEILA: I care now. I've cared for a long time.

PETE: Pretended to help me when I got mugged. *(dawns on him)* I wasn't really mugged was I? You set that up, just like you set up the wallet.

*PETE suddenly starts to sober up. His anger building throughout.*

PETE: You even pretended to help me find my daughter. That was the last thing you wanted... 'cos then I'd have someone, have someone to look out for me and that would have got in the way of your plan.

LEILA: I'm sorry Pete. Please believe me.

PETE: Pick on life's no-hopers, life's lost and broken. Great idea. They're trusting 'cos they have to be. They're desperate. Desperate you hear me? For...for people to let them in...for them to...to...

LEILA: Stop. Stop please.

PETE: It's all just a game to people like you isn't it?

LEILA: (*sobbing*) No.

PETE: My life's just part of the game. You enjoy playing. You play the part so well or should I say 'parts'. Sammo was right...it is all just an act for you. So, he did tell me something truthful for once. He said not to trust you...but then how do I trust him...he's been playing the part too...all this time.

LEILA: I did lie but not about wanting to help you find Rachel. I did want to help you.

PETE: Don't you say her name. Don't you ever say her name again.

LEILA: I wanted to help. More than anything. And I *do* care.

PETE: Do you care? Or do you just pity me? Once you realised I was a nice guy you felt bad? You felt sorry for Mr. Billy-No-Mates?

LEILA: I didn't feel sorry for you. I looked at you and I saw...I saw...*you*. A man who hasn't had the best life, always wandering, never settled...a lost soul...but someone who looks at everyone with the same eyes. Me, Sammo...you saw the best in us. You let us in. Not just into your flat but into your life. And we...we abused that trust. I just couldn't do that anymore. Not to you. Not to anyone.

PETE: It must have been so easy for you? A poor old drunk in need of friends. What a pushover I must have been?

LEILA: You believe in people. That's why it was easy. You see the best in people. That's not a flaw Pete.

PETE: Well, believe it or not but I'm starting to think it is.

LEILA: We're the flawed one's. Me and Sammo.

PETE: We all are Leila. Every last one of us. Some more than most maybe. Me more than anyone.

LEILA: Don't say that.

PETE: Believe me. It's true.

*LEILA and PETE look at each other.*

PETE: So you disappeared? Rather than face me you did a runner.

LEILA: I'm a coward, what can I say?

PETE: We're alike in that respect then.

LEILA: But I came back. I'm here now.

PETE: You left me with *him*?

LEILA: I'm so sorry. I didn't know what to do. I wanted to warn you. Before I left.  
But I was so scared. He said he'd kill me.

PETE: Instead he's nearly killed me.

LEILA: We have to get out.

PETE: I can't.

LEILA: Of course you can.

PETE: (*shakes his head*) No.

LEILA: Why not? I'll help you. I'll help you right now.

*LEILA stands. She takes hold of PETE's arm and tries to haul him up. He doesn't budge.*

LEILA: Come on. Let's go Pete.

PETE: (*pulls his arm away*) It's not as easy as all that.

LEILA: Why not, what do you mean?

PETE: There's no point. What's the point in running? I'll never escape.

LEILA: I did it. So can you Pete, with my help...

PETE: He needs me. And in a funny sort of way I 'spose I need him.

LEILA: (*kneels*) He's drowning, he's clinging to you like a drowning man clings to driftwood. You can't keep him afloat, you're not strong enough. He'll drag you down with him. I can't let that happen.

PETE: Why?

LEILA: You don't deserve that.

PETE: Don't I?

LEILA: Of course you don't.

PETE: What about Sammo? Who's to say he deserves it? Who's to say any of us are more worthy of being rescued than anyone else?

LEILA: I've known him for a long time. Trust me when I say he has done things worse than you ever have.

PETE: You don't know what I did.

LEILA: Yes Pete. Yes I do.

PETE: But –

LEILA: Sammo told me.

PETE: What everything?

LEILA: *(softly)* Everything.

*PETE looks away.*

LEILA: Please look at me?

PETE: I wish he hadn't.

LEILA: I'm glad he did.

PETE: I didn't want you to know.

LEILA: I don't think of you any differently.

PETE: Don't you?

LEILA: It was an accident Pete.

PETE: It never would have happened if I hadn't have been drinking.

LEILA: You've punished yourself enough.

*PETE turns to look at the MAN in the window.*

PETE: No I've got a long way to go yet.

LEILA: What are you looking at Pete?

PETE: *(points)* Him.

LEILA: *(looks)* There's no-one there.

*PETE and LEILA look at each other. Unseen by them SAMMO descends the steps taking the place of the MAN. He peers through the window and watches them*

PETE: I killed him.

LEILA: It was an accident.

PETE: He won't leave 'til I've paid.

LEILA: There's no-one there Pete.

PETE: He's followed me ever since...all this time and he's still there. I won't be rid of him...I think maybe I have to join him. That's what he wants. Maybe that's what I want too.

*LEILA suddenly gets quite angry. She takes PETE's face in her hands and forces him to look at her.*

LEILA: You know what you are don't you? A selfish man wallowing in self-pity. You took that man's life...wasn't that enough...but no...you ruin not only your own life but your daughter's, your wife's...what you're doing...have done...does not make everything alright again, you just make more people's lives a misery. What you should do...should have done...is face it head on...no matter how painful...you should've done that with your family. Face your guilt. Face it now. Running and drinking yourself into oblivion is the coward's way. You're a coward Pete, a fucking coward.

PETE: And you're a liar. That's just the way it is.

LEILA: Was Pete. Was a liar. Just like I was a coward.

PETE: Not anymore eh?

LEILA: No. Not anymore.

PETE: I just can't help thinking –

LEILA: What?

PETE: (*quietly*) If only I'd left a bit earlier that morning...or got stuck in traffic...he'd still be here. He'd be here with his family. (*pause*) And I'd be with mine.

LEILA: You still could be with them. It's not too late. When you're six feet under then it'll be too late but not now.

PETE: Why do people always say that? 'It's never too late'.

LEILA: Because it's true. (*slight pause*) Don't you think you have a duty to *live* your life...to do amazing things with the time you've got left instead of moping about feeling sorry for yourself? You owe it to him. You owe it to your wife. Your daughter. Don't be a coward anymore Pete...come with me, please come with me?

*LEILA stands. She offers her hand to PETE. He doesn't take it.*

LEILA: We'll find her together.

PETE: You really want to help me?

LEILA: I really and truly want to help you.

PETE: But I –

*LEILA reaches down and takes PETE's hand.*

LEILA: And whatever happens I'll be with you. We'll face it. Together.

*LEILA pulls PETE up. They stand looking at each other for a moment. PETE turns to look at the window. He sees SAMMO staring back at him.*

PETE: *(quietly)* I knew it was too late.

*PETE doesn't take his eyes away from the window. LEILA turns to see what he's looking at. LEILA gasps. They do not move.*

*SAMMO slowly stalks into the room. Closes the door. Turns to face them.*

SAMMO: Well, well, well. They meet again.

*Silence.*

SAMMO: Looks like a joyful reunion to me. Beautiful. I love a happy ending.

*(slight pause)* Don't you?

PETE: We don't want any trouble Sammo.

LEILA: Just let us leave.

SAMMO: I'm not stopping you.

LEILA: Step away from the door.

SAMMO: Tart with a heart. Who'd of thought it eh?

PETE: Just let Leila leave. Alright?

LEILA: *(to PETE)* You're coming too.

*PETE doesn't take his eyes off SAMMO.*

PETE: No.

LEILA: I'm not leaving without you.

PETE: Just go Leila. I belong here. With him.

SAMMO: You heard him. I'd move it girl. Go before I do something I might not regret. Get me?

PETE: *(to LEILA)* Leila please. Get out of here.

LEILA: I'm not leaving you with him. Not again.

SAMMO: She's come to rescue you Petey. This is so sweet. I'm choking up I am. You should count yourself lucky my man, I obviously wasn't worthy enough. Lost cause am I Saint Leila?

LEILA: You don't want to be helped. You just want to take everyone down with you.

SAMMO: *(to PETE)* Feisty little piece ain't she?

*PETE takes LEILA's hand and walks her slowly towards the door.*

PETE: Leila's going to go out through that door, you hear? And you're not going to stop her.

SAMMO: Listen to that. Has Petey grown some balls at last?

PETE: (*forceful*) Understand?

SAMMO: Relax. I'm not going to stop her.

PETE: Move away from the door then.

SAMMO: I'm not going anywhere. She wants to leave she can at least have the decency to walk past me. I mean where's my hug. Where's my friendly hug goodbye.

LEILA: Please Sammo. Don't do this.

SAMMO: (*mimicking*) 'Please Sammo don't dooooo this'. Do what? I'm not fucking *doing* anything. You two are though. You two were going to sneak away. You were leaving me. Both of you. I was going to come home and find –

PETE: This isn't your home.

SAMMO: You know what your problem is don't you? (*waits for a reply*)

*Silence.*

SAMMO: You're so wrapped up in yourself and your fucking issues that you can't see it...you can't see past your own nose let alone being able to see that I –

PETE: That you what?

SAMMO: What's the point.

*Walks more into the room towards LEILA.*

PETE: Stay back.

SAMMO: What do you think I'm going to do? Whatever she's told you its lies.

She's a conniving little bitch Pete. Open your fucking eyes.

PETE: Don't you dare call her that, you hear?

SAMMO: Fucking Nora. Look who's all fucking protective. Daddy Pete with his surrogate daughter Leila. Where's your *real* daughter Pete? Gave up looking for her pretty sharpish didn't you?

PETE: Shut your mouth.

*SAMMO walks towards LEILA. LEILA backs away from him until she's up against the wall by the bathroom.*

SAMMO: *(takes her face in his hand)* Do you reckon she's as pretty as Leila? I wonder. Is that why you gave up so easily? Got taken in by those big brown eyes did you?

LEILA: Take your hands off me right now before I... before I...

SAMMO: Before you?

*LEILA is still.*

SAMMO: Silence...thought so.

PETE: Don't do this. Let Leila go and I'll stay here with you. Just me and you.

We'll carry on like before. Just like before.

SAMMO: It's too late though isn't it?

PETE: No.

SAMMO: She's got inside you again.

PETE: I'll stay. I promise.

SAMMO: I don't believe you.

PETE: You must.

SAMMO: Just when I'd started to trust you, you go and do something like this.

Everyone lies. You're all liars.

*SAMMO puts his face right up to LEILA's.*

SAMMO: You more than most. Think I'm going to do something I won't regret now.

*SAMMO starts to pull on LEILA's coat trying to rip it open. She struggles but can't move. Every time she manages to push an arm off he clamps down with the other.*

LEILA: Stop. Don't do this, please.

*PETE runs over to SAMMO.*

PETE: Get off her. Get off her right now. Stop touching her. Just stop.

*PETE tries to prise him off LEILA. SAMMO forcefully shoves PETE away with one hand.*

SAMMO: There's nothing you can do Petey. Get out of here. Go on. You won't want to see this I can promise you that.

*PETE rushes at SAMMO grabbing at him and trying to pull him off LEILA.*

*SAMMO pushes PETE away again. PETE falls to the floor.*

*SAMMO pulls LEILA's coat off and claws at the rest of her clothes. LEILA puts up a fight but it's useless.*

*SAMMO shoves LEILA down onto the bed and unzips his trousers.*

*Something has snapped inside PETE. He runs at SAMMO grabbing him around the waist and pulling him to the floor. They wrestle. Rolling around the floor.*

*Sometimes PETE is in control holding SAMMO down, other times SAMMO gains control.*

PETE: Go Leila. Get out of here.

LEILA: No. Not without you.

*SAMMO gains control and sits astride PETE on the floor. He starts punching him in the face. LEILA jumps on SAMMO's back pulling him backwards and off PETE.*

*PETE is still. He is dazed from the punches.*

*SAMMO falls back onto LEILA. He turns round and pins LEILA to the floor.*

*SAMMO: Gotcha'.*

*SAMMO forcefully kisses LEILA's face. All of a sudden he bites her nose. LEILA screams.*

*PETE comes round enough to crawl to the drawer under his bed unseen by SAMMO.*

*SAMMO rips at LEILA'S clothes.*

*PETE scrambles to find what he is looking for. Eventually he pulls out his knife. Holding the knife out in front of him he stands. PETE rushes over to SAMMO. Standing behind him he pulls SAMMO's head back by his hair and holds the knife against his throat.*

*PETE: Get off her now.*

*SAMMO: What's all this? Petey really and truly has grown some balls hasn't he?*

*PETE: Right now.*

*SAMMO raises his arms up.*

SAMMO: Easy tiger.

PETE: Move.

SAMMO: Alright. Alright.

PETE: I'll use this. I will.

SAMMO: I'm moving.

*Slowly SAMMO stands. LEILA lies on the floor holding her nose and sobbing.*

PETE: (to LEILA) It's okay Leila. You'll be okay. I promise.

*All of a sudden SAMMO elbows PETE in the stomach forcing him to drop the knife. SAMMO reaches down to grab it but LEILA gets there first.*

*LEILA holds the knife up against SAMMO's chest.*

SAMMO: Come on now Leila-loo you're not really going to use that are you?

LEILA: No?

SAMMO: I didn't mean to hurt you. Really I didn't. I was only playing.

LEILA: I want to. You don't know how much I want to stick this in.

SAMMO: But –

LEILA: But I'm not like you.

*PETE rushes to LEILA who still holds the knife. He takes hold of her hand and pulls her up. He takes the knife and holds it near SAMMO's face.*

PETE: Touch Leila again and I *will* use it. Believe me.

*Silence. They all remain still.*

SAMMO: *(quietly)* It's over? Is it over Pete?

*PETE nods. He takes LEILA's hand and tries to lead her away.*

*LEILA turns.*

LEILA: *(to SAMMO)* You're going to be alone for the rest of your life. You did that to yourself. Just remember that. *(slight pause)* You're going to die alone.

*PETE leads LEILA by the hand through the debris and out of the door. They ascend the steps and are gone.*

*Lights fade.*

Scene Seven.

*Lights up. SAMMO is curled up on the sofa. He suddenly looks younger, like a lost little boy about to burst out crying.*

*After a few moments there is a KNOCK at the door.*

*Silence.*

*A louder KNOCK.*

*The door is slowly pushed open. MARILYN stands in the doorway.*

*She can't quite believe her eyes. She walks slowly into the room. Doesn't see SAMMO.*

MARILYN: Pete? Pete? The door was open so I –

*MARILYN sees SAMMO.*

MARILYN: What the...who are you? What are you doing here? Where's Pete?

SAMMO: *(remains still)* Gone.

MARILYN: What do you mean gone?

SAMMO: He left.

MARILYN: Well, where? Where did he go?

SAMMO: Who knows?

MARILYN: Who are you?

SAMMO: No-one. I'm no-one.

*Slight pause.*

SAMMO: Who are you?

MARILYN: I'm Marilyn –

SAMMO: Monroe.

MARILYN: Sorry?

SAMMO: Nothing.

*MARILYN walks further into the room leaving the front door open.*

MARILYN: (*nervous*) What are you doing here?

SAMMO: I don't know.

MARILYN: Did Pete let you in? Are you a friend of his?

SAMMO: You could say that.

MARILYN: You shouldn't be in here. It's not permitted.

*MARILYN walks hesitantly to the end of the sofa.*

*SAMMO looks up at her.*

MARILYN: (*recognises him*) Sammo? Sammo Walker is that you?

SAMMO: I think so.

MARILYN: I thought you were long gone.

SAMMO: I am. I'm all gone.

*Pause.*

SAMMO: Is it raining? I like the rain, don't you?

*MARILYN is frozen. SAMMO is still. He closes his eyes.*

*Sound of the WAVES, RAIN and faint SINGING of 'Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest'.*

*Lights fade to black.*

*After a couple of beats the RAIN, WAVES and SINGING fade.*

*Silence.*

*The End.*

## REFERENCES

### Primary Sources:

BUFFINI. M. 2011. Seminar. University of Birmingham. 28.02.11.

DALE. S. 2011. Supervision. University of Birmingham. 15.03.11.

FREEMAN. R. 2011. Meeting. Tobacco Factory Theatre, Bristol. 17.05.11.

MORRIS. C. 2011. *Cuckoo*. University of Birmingham.

2011. *Dramatic Structure Essay*. University of Birmingham.

RAFAEL. 2011. Conversation. The Harbourside, Bristol. 08.04.11.

WATERS. S. 2010. Supervision. University of Birmingham. 30.11.10.

2011. Supervision. University of Birmingham. 21.02.11.

2011. Seminar. University of Birmingham. 21.03.11.

2011. Supervision. University of Birmingham. 30.05.11.

### Bibliography/Work cited:

ALBEE. E. 1978. *The Zoo Story*. St. Ives: Penguin Books.

ARTAUD. A. 1999. *The Theatre and its Double*. Trowbridge: Calder Publications Ltd.

BILLINGTON. M. 2007. *Harold Pinter*. Kent: Faber and Faber.

- ED. BOGARD. T. & OLIVER. W. I. 1971. *Modern Drama: Essays in Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ed. BRAUN. E. 1998. *Meyerhold On Theatre*. London: Methuen Drama.
- BROOK. P. 1990. *The Empty Space*. St. Ives: Penguin Books.
- BROWN. J. R. 1972. *Theatre Language: Arden, Osborne, Pinter, Wesker*. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press.
- Ed. DAVIES. H, W. 2005. *Now You're Talking: Drama in Conversation*. Llandybie: Parthian Books.
- EDGAR. D. 2010. *How Plays Work*. Trowbridge: Nick Hern Books.
- ESSLIN. M. 1988. *The Field of Drama*. Reading: Methuen Drama.
- GURALNICK. E. S. 1996. *Sight Unseen*. Ohio: Ohio University Press Ltd.
- Unrelated*. 2007. [DVD: Region 2 encoding]. HOGG. J. London: new wave 001.
- KELSALL. M. 1996. *Studying Drama: An Introduction*. Eighth Ed. Gateshead: Athenaeum Press Ltd.
- KENNEDY. A. 1975. *Six Dramatists In Search Of A Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- The Servant*. 1963. [DVD: Region 2 encoding]. LOSEY. J. London: Optimum Releasing Ltd.
- LYNCH. J, J. 1979. *The Broken Heart: The Medical Consequences of Loneliness*. Sydney: Harper and Row Publishers.
- MAMET. D. 1996. *Plays 2: Reunion*. Berkshire: Methuen Publishing.
- McPHERSON. C. 2004. *Plays: Two. Dublin Carol*. Chippenham: Nick Hern Books.
- PENHALL. J. 1998. *Plays 1: Some Voices, Pale Horse*. Berkshire: Methuen Publishing.
- PINTER. H. 1997. *Harold Pinter: Plays 3*. Kent: Faber and Faber Limited.

Ed. RABY. P. 2009. *The Cambridge Companion To Harold Pinter*. Second Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SHEPHERD. S. 1981. *Plays 2: True West*. Kent: Faber & Faber.

STANISLAVSKI. C. 1968. *Creating a Role*. London: NEL Mentor Books.

WATERS. S. 2010. *The Secret Life of Plays*. Wiltshire: Nick Hern Books Limited.