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Your gaze hits the side of my face

by

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The Personal is Political: managing the relationships between research, political argument and personal experience in my thesis play.

Introduction

Prior to writing this play I wrote very definitely from my own private experience and the worlds that I sought to represent were in the personal and private sphere. I did not seek to make any wider political point and my writing could easily have been reduced to what Aleks Sierz refers to as “me and my mates plays”. He typifies these as “small plays about small subjects put on in small places” (2006) by young writers who are still learning their craft. Sierz criticises such plays as little more than indulgent and pointless juvenilia that have limited purpose or meaning beyond that of being a mirror into the writer’s own small world. This is certainly a criticism that could have been very easily levelled at my body of work up to this point.

By contrast in writing this play I chose to tackle ambitious and overtly political subject matter from the public sphere. Perhaps predictably this led to my struggling with the scope and scale of what I wanted to say and I had a real difficulty in boiling the play down from a murky mixture of overt polemics, caricatured protagonists and personal but ultimately irrelevant storylines to something that was clear, lucid and poetic and which spoke to its audience rather than to my personal experience as the writer in researching the play. As Steve Waters predicted in my first supervision report:

[the idea that seemed] most formed and perhaps represented new ground, that is an examination of the new Green protest... is already well advanced and she has a strong, dispassionate yet shrewd take on the material – the work of making fiction out of it will be the challenge” (2008)

The making of the idea into fiction was the ultimate challenge and this was certainly affected by my ability to maintain a “dispassionate yet shrewd outlook” as a dramatist, something which was essential to the writing of the piece but which wavered and at times disappeared under the weight of what I had learnt about the subject, what I wanted to say and my own experiences gained in the research. This difficult negotiation was the cause of the main problems in the conception and writing of the piece but was also, as I will argue here, what led me to invest in a solid framework for what I wanted to say and was, ultimately, the greatest strength of the play.

Initial Conception

The original idea for this play came from an image: I switched on News 24 on the 28th of February 2008, to see protestors from the group Plane Stupid waving to cameras from the roof of the House of Commons during Prime Minister’s Question Time. Two things about that image came to define my thinking and conception of the play as it took shape:

Story

Firstly I was enthralled by the protesters’ belief that the actions of individuals could really change the course of things in a meaningful way. In the days that followed the protest the activists strongly advocated the idea that a move towards direct action was not only right but inevitable within the Climate Change movement and had strong historical precedents:

I think that in a society there must have been a crisis point, moments when a generation realised that something was wrong and something needed to change...the government is useless at thinking long term and soon we are going to have a climate crisis that is going to far eclipse the economic crisis and again we are going to have to say it is because we did not have long term vision, we're sorry, and that won't do for me. Women have this kick-ass historical past of the suffragettes and they have this to look back to as a defining direct action group that changed society. (Omond in *Climate Rush: Deeds Not Words*, 2008)

The idea of being at a turning point in history and protagonists having a contribution to make to that turning point is of course intrinsically theatrical. Not only is it the definition of a 'high stakes' scenario, but as one campaigner said "it makes people have a sense of being actors in history" (Unknown Protestor in *Climate Rush: Deeds Not Words*, 2008). It puts the individual at the centre of things and imbues their actions with a special significance (of being an 'actor in history'). This idea reminded me of two different tropes in the dramatic canon: firstly that of the protagonist who acts on behalf of what they believe to be the good of society or the community, but with little regard for the personal or familial implications of their actions, and with tragic consequences, as Creon does in *Antigone*. Secondly (and conversely) where the cavalier individual fights against the wishes of the community or society and is in the end proven to be right, as in Ibsen's *The Enemy of the People*. I was interested to explore how a contemporary group of protesters who feel that they must act now to 'save' society in some way might navigate their way through this moral challenge, how far they might be willing to go for what they consider to be the greater good and what the consequences, both personally and morally might be in choosing to act.

Protagonist

The second element that attracted me to the image of the protestors on that roof and made me want to put that gesture at the heart of my play was the sense of theatricality implicit in the stunt and how stage managed the images seemed to be. I was impressed with the way the protestors held and directed the media's gaze, bringing the public's attention to the cause that they were protesting about, namely climate change and the impact that short haul flights and the expansion of Heathrow would have on the environment. Through reading the press coverage it soon became clear to me that the protestors had planned the protest to gain maximum media coverage. All the photos and the information about their personal lives were carefully leaked to create an impact. In one article one of the protestors, Leo Murray, made open reference to this in describing the group's modus operandi:

We look through the laws, and the possible outcomes, and the cost benefit. We do R&D all the time, and some ideas turn out not to be viable, or not likely to give enough bang for our buck. For example, the parliament action, in terms of coverage, would clearly have been worth a custodial [sentence].
(quoted in Aitkenhead, 2008)

Implicit in what Murray said was a level of cynicism and media 'savviness' that seemed worlds away from the traditional green protest. The protestors understood how to make the media work for them, saw it as a tool and ran a campaign that seemed more reminiscent of the advertising world than that of traditional leftist protest. In particular the women involved seemed to promote a sexualized image in the media and played up to the attention that their gender and looks gave them. They seemed comfortable with using the media's susceptibility for an image of a pretty but

badly behaved and sexually promiscuous girl. I wanted to explore the extent to which they could continue to control the media. It was clear that they felt that this approach was a compromise worth making for the greater good of the campaign but I was intrigued with how they could justify their actions and what the personal moral cost to them might be.

The coverage about one particular protestor interested me. Tamsin Omond was a girl I had known slightly whilst at university and the media seemed to focus their gaze most consistently on her. There were a series of articles that seemed, at least to me, to be gushingly unrepresentative of their subject and also somewhat degrading. An example of this type of article (entitled “*Tamsin Omond: Eco Starlet*”) appeared in *The Times*:

[Tamsin is]...young, aristocratic (she’s the granddaughter of a baronet) clever (Cambridge educated) and very very pretty, her stunt on the House of Commons roof prompted front page headlines about the roof top rebel. Her looks have had the likes of *Vogue* and *Tatler* (who want to photograph her on a horse dressed as Lady Godiva) beating a path to her door... she has a mop of curly blonde hair and her eyes are caked in eyeliner...she’s actually a bit of a starlet. (2008)

As this extract implies, the articles consistently took as their topic three things about Omond: her class, her looks and her sexuality. It was clear that Omond was playing up to this, happy to pose (in the end) for both *Vogue* and *Tatler* and answer questions about her sex life, skin care habits and favourite fashion designers. I had recently read *Female Chauvinist Pigs* by Ariel Levy, a third wave feminist text about the rise of raunch culture and the willingness of young women in a ‘post-feminist’ society to sexualise themselves and other women for the gratification of men. In the book Levy attacked the perception of empowerment that women claimed by acting in a sexually available manner, saying that it is a hypocrisy, on the one hand, to praise sexual equality and female emancipation and on the other believe that the offering of yourself as a sexual object to the media and world at large (to whatever ends) is in some way empowering. Given Omond’s willingness to present herself in a way that she knew the media would find appealing (focusing on her looks and sexuality), I felt that Omond was demonstrating exactly the kind of behaviour Levy was talking about. To me this made her a complex and contradictory protagonist, who on the one hand defied the system in what was a strikingly anarchic gesture (breaking onto the roof of the House of Commons) and on the other used the system to promote her message through a cynical manipulation of her sexuality, which was both un-anarchist and un-feminist.

The trope of the flawed heroine is of course another dramatic convention and often it is this flaw that leads to the tragic climax of a narrative. This can be seen in fables like *Little Red Riding Hood* where the flaw of the protagonist and the inevitable outcome of this flaw serve as a warning to the readers, as one of the earliest writers of this tale, Charles Perrault said:

From this story one learns that children, especially young lasses, pretty, courteous and well-bred, do very wrong to listen to strangers, it is not an unheard thing if the Wolf is thereby provided with his dinner. I say Wolf, for all wolves are not of the same sort; there is one kind with an amenable disposition — neither noisy, nor hateful, nor angry, but tame, obliging and gentle, following the young maids in the streets, even into their homes. Alas! Who does not know that these gentle wolves are of all such creatures the most dangerous! (trans. Ashliman 1999)

Many writers and academics have, over the years, seen *Little Red Riding Hood* as a warning about the attention of men and in particular the links between sexual availability, rape and prostitution. Indeed it is not just in fairytales that heroines are punished for their sexual misconduct, there are a variety of plays in which a woman is punished for her sexual availability. For example in *Mrs Warrens Profession* by George Bernard Shaw and *Lady Windermere's Fan* by Oscar Wilde women's past sexual misdemeanours result in present onstage tragedy. More unusually in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* the roles are reversed and it is past male sexual behaviour that results in present tragedy.

Conversely, in other plays the role of the 'femme fatale' is seen as dangerous, not to women, but to the men they prey upon. This can be seen in the Medusa myth, in elements of Lady Macbeth's character and also of course in the various evil stepmothers that populate fables and fairytales. It is these archetypes that I wished to explore in the main protagonist. In particular I wanted to explore the link between the warning that Levy makes in her books about the danger of knowingly 'prostituting' oneself for the cameras and the warnings that these plays make about literal prostitution. I was interested in the different world views these warnings come from. Levy's warning comes from a feminist reading of women's place in society whilst the fables come from culturally conservative and often anti-feminist points of view, yet they both seem to be saying quite similar things about the dangers of female sexuality and its manipulations.

My understanding of these two ideas and their power was informed by David Edgar's theory of drama, in particular his conception of dramatic convention in theatre, in terms of story, action and protagonist:

The least interesting thing about *Cinderella* and *King Lear* is the story that they are founded on – one of two nasty sisters and one nice... [but] despite the fact that everyone wants and believes, and rightly believes, that their play is going to be unique, good or bad nobody else could write it, actually without structure the human skeleton holding up our bodies and what is individual about it, our faces and our skin, without them the skin would collapse...there are deep structures that operate from Aeschylus to Ayckbourn (in TheatreVoice 2009)

I have struggled with the idea of these immutable tropes and figures continually through writing this play and at times the feeling that plays can be reduced like this, as Edgar himself concedes, to mere "parlour games" (2009) did feel calculating, suffocating and uninspiring. I wondered if I would be able to write the play that I wanted to with one eye on how it related to the great canonical texts and their stories and protagonists. This, combined with the ambition to write a 'big' play and the sheer volume of research that I had already undertaken felt very daunting at this early stage of development. Because of this I felt that I had to get much closer to my subject in order to discover what the "face" and "skin" of my play would be, what would make it unique as a play and would prevent it from just being a "skeleton". I felt that a key part of this was an investigation into character and the private lives of the main protagonists, the campaigners.

Primary Research

Having absorbed much of the media coverage around the event, my initial writing was very much informed by that, focusing mainly on the interaction between the protestors, politicians and the press:

Intercut press conferences.

Light bulb flashes go off and the shouts of the press.

Emilia, Tess, Fred and Peter all enter together. The light from the cameras is blinding. Fred and Peter are wearing suits, Fred's is old fashioned, he looks uncomfortable. Peter's suit looks more expensive. Emilia and Tess are both wearing dresses, they look good.

Peter: Morning chaps. Bloody freezing isn't it?

Fred: This government is committed to action on climate change.

Peter: Yeah I know...enough to freeze your bollocks off.

Beat

See we have another eco-nutter on our hands.

Emilia: I am reading this statement on behalf of Tess/

Peter: Constance? Constantine was it?

Emilia: I am reading this statement on behalf of Tess/

Tess and Emilia: (*Together*) Constantine.

Fred: Me and my fellow cabinet members are committed to climate action/

Peter: Whatever. Stupid eco tart.

Fred: We are proud of our record on green energy.

Peter: 'Scuse my French.

Tess: I didn't mean to bite him. Obviously. I mean genuinely. That was not my/

Fred: But it is... it is vital that the runway go ahead.

Peter: Is she now? Blonde? Well.

Fred: International travel is a necessity in this modern age of business.

Tess: No.

Peter: Mmmm. I will have to do some 'internet research' won't I. Haha.

See it for myself. As it were. Haha.

Tess: I'm not like that. I didn't mean to bite him. Of course not. I don't bite.

Beat

Unless asked to.

More light bulb flashes go off

No I should not have bitten him.

(*Smiling*) Naughty me!

By focusing on press conferences, which are necessarily acts of performance and by using intercutting, a technique which allows the writer to manipulate the rhythm and meaning of what characters are saying artificially, I created an arch sense of satire in the dialogue. This was further compounded by the way that I made the protagonists address the audience directly, preventing them from reacting to each other in a way that would seem more 'authentic' or naturalistic. Whilst this gave the scenes a good sense of energy and pace and allowed me to set out the political arguments succinctly and at times to counterpoint them amusingly, I felt that I was doing my original conception of the play a disservice. I was certainly influenced by political satires like *Yes, Minister*, *The Thick Of It* and *Margaret Thatcher: The Long Walk to Finchley*, but I had not originally set out to write a satire but rather a political and personal drama. Rather than poke fun at my characters and allow the audience to react intellectually, I wanted to write something that not only probed the arguments involved but also allowed the audience to invest in the characters and the arguments emotionally and engage in the dramatic arc and story. I felt that in order to do this it was necessary to undertake primary research on the subject and learn much more about the private spheres that the protestors occupied and which informed these public 'performances' for the camera.

I had originally approached Plane Stupid in late spring 2008. After some negotiation it was agreed that I would interview Omond and a couple of other protestors, Leo Murray and Jennifer Hill, as well as taking part in several protests, including some which involved civil disobedience. These two research techniques helped me to get closer to the protestors and to understand their motivations, but the research also contained its own problems.

Interviews

Through interviewing the main protestors I gained an understanding of how they justified their actions, of the roots of their own particular political views and through recording and transcribing what they said I gained an ear for their particular voices:

Tamsin: Ok. Cool. Why are women so good at [public protest]? Well the thing is I'm really cynical about it. Part of the reason I think women are so good at it is that they are prettier (*laughs*) ...yep because I am quite cynical and I think that comes from having, working in plane stupid and having seen how well things like being media savvy work so I think that that is definitely a thing of a photo is a lot better and stronger if its got women in it and I guess that the question is why is that the case? But also there is the fact that the justice system treat you better, the police probably treat you a bit better and yeah, primarily because it makes a stronger thing. Yeah, why does it make a stronger thing? Am I meant to know the answer?

Me: Maybe just say why you think it is....

Tamsin: Why do I think it is? Um yeah...so there's all of these things about,...no that's not really, I mean I think it is probably about vulnerability and things like that, I dunno....

Me: So you think women are more vulnerable than men?

Tamsin: No I think they look vulnerable. I think they look better putting themselves on the line than men do, I think men, when they do it it looks sort of self satisfied whereas women look sexy and maybe a bit...I don't know...they look vulnerable...(2008)

These interviews were very illuminating, not least because Tamsin in particular was very clear and candid about how she used her sexuality to manipulate the media. The details of her private life that she chose to share and the links that she saw between her protest and those of the Suffragettes were very interesting. In her eyes the way that the Suffragettes used propaganda about the 'cat and mouse' laws was no different from the way Plane Stupid, and the group she subsequently set up, Climate Rush (an all-female climate group) manipulated the media.

The Cat and Mouse Act was passed in 1913 in an attempt by the British government to prevent suffragettes dying in prison on hunger strike and so becoming martyrs. Women were arrested and then went on hunger strike until they were released on license to gain weight before being rearrested for further offences committed while on license. The Suffragette response to this was the dissemination of graphic images of huge cats attacking damsels in white and pictures of the emaciated Suffragettes after their time in prison. These images clearly associated women with a special kind of 'vulnerability', as Tamsin argues above, a vulnerability that is necessarily linked with sexuality. There is of course an inherent contradiction in fighting for equality whilst playing on gendered stereotypes to win attention for that cause. To me there is a similar contradiction in modern women asking to be taken seriously for their political views whilst using their sexuality to advertise those views.

The other insight that I gained by interviewing the protestors was about the part that class played in the make up of the group. A phrase that was often repeated by the protestors was 'the price of privilege is absolute integrity'. The group seemed aware of its own place within a class system and the power that it had. This was made clear by the manner in which they spoke. When I transcribed what they had said in interview I noted how consistent they were in always sounding confident, assured and unabashed. Around the same time I also watched a documentary that seemed to chime with this view. *Last Party At The Palace* was about that last generation of women (in the late fifties) to be presented to the queen as debutantes. It charted the stories of the young women who were presented and their journey into the social revolution in the sixties. One of its subjects was Rose Dugdale who rejected her aristocratic background entirely and joined the IRA. Julian Fellowes said something about Dugdale which chimed with my experience of the protestors:

...empowered by all the values that we shared [Rose Dugdale] had gone over to the other side and was employing her own forces for the enemy... the one socialist complaint that I fully understand is their anger at the sense of empowerment that the privileged classes enjoy and that is what the aristocrat revolutionary has going for them. It's that they take that sense of entitlement and empowerment over into the cause...(2007)

Although I disagree with Fellowes in a great many ways this was certainly something that I had found when interviewing the protestors. There was a sense of 'empowerment' that I had come across whilst at Cambridge, that I found very hard to understand, and which, despite my shared views on Climate Change, I was unable to reconcile with my own background and politics. This made me all the more eager to write about them, but also cautious as it seemed that increasingly I had very little in common with them and that I did not fully understand who they were. It felt like an effort to make them 'speak' authentically in their own voices in my play in a way that it was not when I wrote about middle or lower-middle class characters, despite my extensive research and transcription. I was also anxious because I did not want my play to step over into a critique of the upper class's power or be reduced to an angry didactic kind of agitprop that I found equally alien to my own beliefs. To avoid either of these outcomes it was vital that I found their own authentic voices and avoided cliché, stereotype or satirical heightening of 'type'.

Protests

My experience of the protests also informed my writing, mainly in terms of my understanding of the group dynamics within the protest community and the sense that people are, in many cases, coerced into action through peer pressure. Whilst on one protest I had made it clear that as someone who was there primarily to observe and also as someone who had to be at work the next day, it was very important that I was not put in a position where I could be arrested. Despite my clear and (I felt) justified explanations for not wanting to commit criminal offences, quite a lot of pressure was put on me to commit offences. There was a real sense that people were pushing each other to take more and more aggressive action, buoyed up by the media attention and their shared sense of purpose. There was a gang mentality inherent in the group's behaviour that incited radical and often illegal action which I found fascinating.

At the end of my research period with *Plane Stupid* and subsequently with *Climate Rush*, the main thing that I was clear about was that I wanted my play to be about whether the ends justify the means on such a serious issue; whether with climate change being such a real and immediate threat, it is justifiable that the people that

fight such an issue and the methods that they use become subservient to the important message that they carry.

First/Second Draft¹

My research period led me to be quite clear about the debates that I wanted my play to be about and also the characters that I wanted to use to galvanise that debate. It also gave me a greater insight into their world and a better understanding of their voices. This led me to write a couple of drafts that avoided unity of either time or space. At the end of the second draft my play jumped about in time and in location and told the story through a wide panorama of events with a slightly bigger cast than I used in the final draft. The scene structure for the Prologue and Act One at the end of the second draft was as follows:

PROLOGUE

Katie recounts the incident when she first met the press on her new pink bike.
(*Outside time and space*)

ACT ONE

Sc1: Tess chains herself to the House of Commons, she is attacked by a Policeman, she screams and smiles for the camera.
(*House of Commons*)

Sc2: Katie ties up an unseen man.
(*Katie's college room*)

Sc3: Press Conference: Emilia, Fred, Tess and Peter (a spin doctor for Fred's Party) discuss the incidents of Sc1 and Fred's impact on Climate Policy
(*Public rooms in Westminster*)

Sc4: Katie addresses the audience in monologue and tells them about a boy that tried to chat her up by talking about date rape. The man remains tied up behind her.
(*Katie's college room*)

Sc5: Tess and Emilia discuss the press conference and the protest. Emilia mentions Katie.
(*Tess's house*)

Sc6: Katie pulls down the trousers of the man.
(*Katie's college room.*)

Sc7: Emilia and Tess discuss the next protest and whether Katie will be there. Tess leaves to go clubbing.
(*Tess's house*)

Sc9: Katie recounts how she danced in the club with the same boy. The man remains tied up behind Katie.
(*Katie's college room*)

Sc10: Tess and Katie arrive back from the party and sneak back into the

¹ I have chosen to write about the first two drafts together as the second draft was very much a refinement of the first rather than an extensive rewriting and in this context I feel that the more radical changes which were made between the second and third draft are more important to examine.

house, they kiss and Emilia catches them.
(*Tess's House*)

Sc11: Katie recounts how she humiliated the boy by tying him up and leaving him in his room naked with the door open for the rest of the college to see. The man remains tied up behind her.
(*Katie's college room*)

A very similar pattern continued in the second Act, with two more press conferences combined with direct address by Katie and dialogue scenes. The man tied up was eventually revealed to be Fred (kidnapped in the final scene). The scenes in Katie's room actually took place chronologically after the events in dialogue but Katie recounted stories in them that took place before any of the onstage action, so creating three separate timeframes: the past action involving the boy, the present action involving the protestors and the media and the future action involving Katie taunting her kidnapped father. My intention in mixing the timeframes in this way was to create meaning through emplotment and through the way that the different time frames fitted together, creating links between how Katie treated the boy, tempting him sexually and then punishing him for how he spoke about date rape, how the media objectified the protestors and the protestors then used that objectification to manipulate the media and how Katie punished her dad for exposing her to the media at such an early age.

Many other elements of the play were affected by this decision. The play relied heavily on the variety in the storytelling modes to illustrate the narrative. There were necessarily a great many locations represented on stage in the play and I was able to create a specific language for each location. Various I used conversational dialogue, monologue, intercutting and wordless scenes and tableaux. This gave the play a frenetic pace and a kind of collage effect that was perhaps more filmic than theatrical. In turn much of the exposition was baldly relayed in the press conferences, Katie's back story was able to be shown directly to the audience through monologue and the general tone of the piece was one which avoided subtext, but created links, investigated and discussed the arguments frankly.

It was at this stage that the play received a public workshop as part of the MPhil process at which the first twenty minutes were read by actors to a public audience. This was an illuminating experience and one that had a huge effect on how I saw the play, causing me to radically change the structure of the play in the third draft. What I learned from this experience was that in this draft the play lacked the feeling of being a single dramatic unified whole. As Aristotle wrote:

...[a tragedy], its parts consisting of the events, should be so constructed that the displacement or removal of any one of them will disturb or disjoint the work's wholeness. For anything whose presence or absence has no clear effect cannot be counted as an integral part of the whole. (trans. by Halliwell, 1984)

Jack Bradley put it much more crassly in his feedback on my piece "much like a losing dish served up on Masterchef, there were too many flavours on the plate" (2009). The mixture of storytelling styles, the different narratives and above all the use of open space and open time had led me to write something that was confusing, unsubtle and which, perhaps above all, did not have at the heart of it characters that the audience could invest in. Any empathy for the characters was diffused through the structural intricacies of the play and it became very clear in rehearsal, performance and in the feedback that I had used trickery and technique to mask my

anxieties about writing on such a big subject with characters that I found hard to understand or relate to.

Third Draft

The influence of other plays

There were three key productions that I saw at this point that helped me to think more carefully about the framework that I had chosen to use in my play and in particular how location could be used to control and inform the action of a play.

The first duo of productions that I saw was Steve Waters' *The Contingency Plan*. I saw both plays, *On the Beach* and *Resilience*, in the same day. Waters originally conceived the two plays as one and together they present a vision of England in the near future in which flooding has destroyed Bristol and threatens to sink the east coast. *On the Beach* takes place in the private Norfolk home of a scientist who has worked for years to prove climate change as he sees all his predictions come true and his home comes under immediate threat from the rising tide. *Resilience* is set in the meeting room of number 10 Downing Street as the government tries to decide what to do about the environmental melt down that they see developing all around them. I enjoyed both plays immensely, but what I found particularly interesting was the setting for *Resilience*. By locating the play in a single room which is both at the heart of government but also contained and not in the public eye, Waters was able to achieve a gradual sense of the characters being besieged, not only literally as the waters rise and threaten to engulf them but also metaphorically in terms of the weight of the decisions they are forced to make. The partiality of the protagonists' viewpoint in an urban environment, in a single room, with the lines of communications outwards so slight and partial (and slowly collapsing) seemed to me to represent a very compelling dramatic situation. It struck me that if Waters had followed his original plan and integrated the two worlds that he portrayed in this play the energy would have been diffused. It was necessary in these dramas, especially in *Resilience*, to stay in one small room.

The third play that I was influenced by was Phillip Ridley's *The Fastest Clock In The Universe*. The play is set above an old fur shop in the East End of London and charts the increasingly strange relationship between Cougar, a man who celebrates his nineteenth birthday every year, and his older servant/partner Captain. To celebrate his birthday Cougar has invited over the much younger Foxtrot Darling who he seduces, until Foxtrot's pregnant girlfriend, Sherbet, arrives and tacitly stakes her claim on Foxtrot. Eventually, in a fit of jealous rage, Cougar pummels Sherbet's stomach as she lies on the table with the birthday cake squashed underneath her. The violent act kills Sherbet and Foxtrot's unborn child. The play seemed to me to be about the devotion that Captain showed for Cougar and the fruitlessness of a love that would end in no progeny and so no future life. What I was most impressed by was how the location and space became not only active through the drama but also came to stand as a metaphor for this dying love between Cougar and Captain. Ridley achieved this in various ways. For example throughout the play there are a series of conversations about the birds that have nested on the floor below ever since it was a fur shop, how they hung around as scavengers and pests and were eventually exterminated. The flat contains many ornamental birds that Captain tends to lovingly and calls "his babies". The room itself also looks as though it is dying, old fashioned and cluttered with knick knacks. Like a strange warping of the 'kitchen sink' sets of the sixties and seventies, it represents an East End that had long since vanished even when Ridley originally wrote the play in the early nineties.

Space

In the submitted draft of my play the basic plot remains the same: under the glare of the media spotlight and through an escalation of events green protestors first befriend Katie Osbourne and then kidnap Fred Osbourne, Katie's father and a minister for climate change. In so doing the group achieve Osbourne's ejection from the cabinet. However, what has changed in writing this draft is that the play now operates in closed space and chronological (all be it open) time. I chose Tess's house as the location for a number of reasons, but mainly because I wanted to write about how the location of power can shift, through protest, from public democratic spaces to private spheres. Through the use of this single location I have also been able to play with the extent to which the characters are besieged by the media or are placing themselves at the heart of that media storm. Finally the effect of keeping it in the room has been to create a sense of the encroaching effects of climate change as the room literally heats up and begins to experience power outages, creating the feeling of a rising urgency and immediacy that remains undiffused.

Characterisation

One of the biggest effects this decision has had is in how the protestors are depicted in the play. By keeping the protestors in the private sphere and allowing the audience to see the difficulty of the decisions they have to make, the arch satirical quality of the earlier drafts has been replaced with a greater sense of empathy for them. What the characters say is no longer a public 'performance' but instead a set of private conversations and decisions: decisions which have consequences beyond the room in which they are made but which are also tied up in the interpersonal relationships and conflicts within that room. In this way the personal relationships between the characters have become far more important in the play. For example the play relies on a growing sense of unease, both in Emilia and in the audience, about what the protestors are doing, rather than in earlier drafts where didactic rhetoric and bald political argument dictated what the audience should think.

It has also forced much of the back story (and parallel storytelling) about characters into the subtext of what the characters say. This is especially evident in the character of Katie. Keeping the play in a single chronological order in one room has made me more subtle in my writing of Katie's character and has allowed me to rid the script of that which is not integral to the dramatic whole. This has led to me jettisoning the storyline about date rape in the play. Whilst I feel it was valuable for me to know a lot about Katie, I feel that she is much more strongly written in this draft as a result.

Focus

Because of the choice of location in this draft it is only the protestors' world that is depicted. In earlier drafts, through media press conferences and also in some very early dialogue scenes, I offered a window into the opposite side of things. Fred Harbourne was given far more opportunity for early rebuttal and defense. In this draft I have focused in on the politics within the group of protestors and then directed that outwards towards Fred. I feel that this has had the effect of clarifying what the play is about: not the debates around climate change itself, but the means by which we create change on big issues and whether the kind of protest depicted can ever be a means of creating that progress.

Conclusion

In writing this play I have found that the setting of boundaries, both early on and as my process unfolded, allowed me the freedom to write the political play that I wanted

to. Through limiting the scope of narrative, story, character and location I was able to boil down all the research, the politics and the opinion that I had amassed from something large, sprawling and confused to something much smaller, more intense and truthful. The “skeleton”(Edgar, 2009) of the play might be the least interesting part of the finished drama but it was very necessary in the writing. There are of course areas that I feel I could improve on: I would like to consider the act structure and the pace a little further as there are moments at which I feel the play could move a little faster. I am also aware that I have not entirely escaped the habit of political exposition that comes at the expense of character when it is allowed free rein. However I do feel that the play is now a working piece of drama rather than an essay, a diatribe or a manifesto. So as far as I can be I am content with what I have produced.

YOUR GAZE HITS THE SIDE OF MY FACE

By Zoe Cooper

Cast

Tess Constantine 23, activist

Emilia Miles 23, activist

Nina Williams 34, lead features writer for a right of centre newspaper

Katie Harbourne 21, from Huddersfield, Huddersfield accent

Fred Harbourne 62, Minister for Climate Change and MP for Huddersfield

Setting

The grand but down at heel reception room of a big house in Hampstead. The room is on the first floor with two large sash windows overlooking the street. There are a great many large Victorian oil paintings on a variety of subjects: some sheep, a factory scene, the Bradford landscape and a scientific experiment painted in the manner of John Wright of Derby. There is a dilapidated antique sofa, armchairs and a dusty broken looking chandelier.

NB. The play takes place some time after the 2010 general election.

ACT ONE

One

Summertime, dusk. It is hot. The curtains and windows are open. The chandelier is not lit. There is a heap of protestor paraphernalia: a battered flipchart with scribbled instructions, a pile of chains, high visibility jackets, bolt cutters, piles of flyers and newspapers on the floor.

EMILIA is sitting on the sofa. She is typing on a laptop. The blue light from the laptop is reflected on her face. There is the sound of a car as it goes past the windows, the lights reflect across the room. A horn sounds and EMILIA jumps slightly. EMILIA lights a roll-up cigarette, she takes a drag and exhales. There is the sound of the front door being closed. EMILIA puts out her cigarette and goes back to her computer. TESS enters behind EMILIA, wearing a white ankle length Georgian dress that is dirty and slightly ripped.

Tess: Makes me feel like I am being fucking strangled.

TESS switches the chandelier on, half of it lights up.

Makes me feel like someone is strangling me.

Pause

I was sweating like a pig all day, sweating and stinking like a hot pig...I smell like meat. It's given me heat rash.... Look. (*tugging at the neckline*). My skin has gone all... it looks like I have been scalded.

Beat

Emilia: Yes. Tess I'm/

Tess: (*Trying to pull the dress off roughly*) Fucking thing. (*The dress rips slightly*) Shit.

TESS exits.

Pause

TESS returns wearing a pair of shorts and a vest, she has bruises on the backs of her legs.

Always end up with carpet burns. Every time. Carpet burns right down my front. From the chafing. Look.

TESS lifts her vest and EMILIA reluctantly turns and looks for a second.

Every time. Like fucking carpet burns.

Pause

(Rolling a cigarette) I am fucking starving. Do you fancy chips?

Emilia: *(Signalling to TESS to be quiet)* Can you just....

EMILIA types a couple more words, moves the mouse to press send and closes the computer. EMILIA starts rolling another cigarette. She messes it up.

Tess: Press Release?

EMILIA screws up the paper and tobacco angrily and starts again.

Emilia: Shit.

Tess: Are you hungry?

Emilia: No.

Tess: We could get chips from the Turkish place round the corner. Chips, chips and a kebab/

Emilia: I'm not hungry/

Tess: I'll pay/

Emilia: I don't even like kebab/

Tess: You could just have chips.

Emilia: We ate at the meeting.

Pause

Tess: Think I'll have a donor, big donor kebab/

Emilia: Tess/

Tess: Something really greasy, that's what I fancy. Lots of sauce and grease and a can of coke to wash it down.

Beat

Emilia: We agreed we would all be back in time for the meeting.

Tess: I know/

Emilia: Where were you?

Tess: With the lawyers.

Emilia: Right.

TESS turns and lifts her shorts leg, revealing large welts across the back of her thighs.

Tess: Pretty aren't they?

Emilia: You should have let us know/

Tess: Lawyer took pictures of them in case they fade.

Emilia: Yeah, alright Tess/

Tess: Must have taken twenty photos. Reckon he was enjoying himself. He had this digital camera, kept asking me to move about. Wanted to make sure he got it all in he said/

Emilia: You should have rung/

Tess: Dirty bastard/

Emilia: You should have rung to tell us you were running late.

Beat

Tess: His secretary brought the camera in. Reckoned, assumed actually, I assumed she was going to take the photos but he just shooed her away, shooed her out the room and shut the door. He kept telling me to lift up my skirt, so as he could get all the bruises in.

Beat

He is friends with my dad, I've known him since I was little. He has come with us on holiday. I know his children. I went to school with his daughter. We shared a dorm. He is practically family and there he was trying to get a look at my knickers.

Beat

Some old leech perverting on me in my vulnerable state.

Beat

Thought you would be outraged. Practically fucking violated. Don't you care?

Emilia: Of course I care/

Tess: Barely in the door, night in the cells, whole day with that pervy lawyer and I'm knackered and I haven't eaten and I am barely in the door, and just look at the welcome I get.

Beat

Have you got a light?

TESS moves over to EMILIA, EMILIA lights TESS's cigarette, their heads close together.

TESS smiles and moves away again.

Emilia: Why didn't you ring?

Tess: Just give me a chance to catch my breath. Sit down and catch my breath and say hello before you start giving me the third degree yeah? I am bloody tired, my eyes still sting from the pepper spray. It was horrid being strip searched, being questioned, having to ring my dad for the bail. It was bloody awful talking to that lawyer, made me feel, they all did, like a silly little girl, a stupid silly little girl who had got her knickers in a twist. Got her knickers in a twist and had a tantrum. They made me feel so...silly. I just want a moment where no one is shouting at/

Emilia: I'm not shouting/

Tess: Alright/

Emilia: I didn't shout/

Tess: Let's just not start the cross-examination just/

Emilia: Fine.

Beat

Tess: I bit him because he kicked me, he pushed me to the ground and/ I

Emilia: You didn't need to bite him though did you? You didn't need to actually bite/

Tess: He wound me up/

Emilia: The group think/

Tess: This is so boring of you Em.

Beat

Emilia: I'm just/

Tess: (*Throwing herself on the sofa*) Aaarg/

Emilia: At the meeting I had to listen to them shout at me, bollock me for what you did and how you behaved and how you looked like you enjoyed it/

Tess: That policeman was picking on me all day/

Emilia: The blood and all that and you smiled at the fucking camera Tess/

Tess: All through the rally and the march/

Emilia: But you don't just rise to it. You don't just lash out. I don't just lash out. Tom doesn't just lash out. They were picking on all of us Tess, the whole group, but you don't just lash out. You have to control yourself.

Beat

Tom was so angry, you should have heard the way he yelled at me, the way they all did, the whole group. He thought it was planned/

Tess: How could I plan/

Emilia: He thinks you provoked the policeman on purpose/

Tess: Why would I/

Emilia: For the cameras/

Tess: I told you/

Emilia: He reckoned you planned it//

Tess: He is ridiculous/

Emilia: He thought we had planned it together. He thought it was a stunt. For the cameras.

Beat

Tess: He's just jealous.

Beat

Emilia: He thinks it made us look too radical/

Tess: We are radical/

Emilia: Not violent.

Beat

Tess: It was self-defence.

Emilia: Direct action isn't the same as/

Tess: Even the perty lawyer agrees with me on that/

Emilia: He thought I knew you were going to bite the policeman.

Beat

I am the press officer Tess, I am meant to know what is going to happen...I was bloody meant to/

Tess: I didn't know I was going to/

Emilia: I was meant to know what was going on.

Tess: It was spur of the moment.

Emilia: You have to learn to show some/

Tess: Tom has just been miserable since you broke up with him Em. He was just looking for someone to blame.

Pause

Emilia: You always do this/

Tess: What?

Emilia: You always, whenever I try to talk to you seriously you change the subject or you take the piss or you say something that you know will stop me from...from talking about it.

Beat

I told him I thought he was overreacting.

Tess: Thanks Em/

Emilia: That wasn't what I meant. I don't want you to thank me.

Beat

Have you eaten at all since breakfast?

Tess: No.

Emilia: You should eat. You only had toast this morning. You need to eat something.

Tess: Shall we get chips?

Emilia: Should eat proper food.

Tess: There isn't any food in the house.

Emilia: There's food. Bean thing. Casserole. On the stove.

Tess: Fucking beans.

Emilia: Tom made it.

Tess: Of course he did.

Emilia: Took him hours.

Tess: I hate beans.

Emilia: Four kinds of beans.

Tess: I don't know how you ever put up with him.

Beat

Emilia: I'll get you some casserole then shall I?

Tess: There's some wine in the kitchen. Let's have that instead.

Emilia: (*Exiting*) I'm getting you some of that casserole too.

Tess: Fine.

Emilia: (*Offstage*) This afternoon he saw/

Tess: What?

Emilia: (*Offstage*) Tom saw a picture of you in a newspaper, one of those free London newspapers...

TESS picks up a copy of The Evening Standard.

(*Entering, carrying a tray with bean casserole, two mugs and a bottle of wine*) Picture of you at 15, drunk and 15. Pouting for England.

Tess: (*Still looking at the newspaper*) You can see my tits. They must have got it off Facebook.

Emilia: He's got a point, does make us sound a bit/

Tess: Must have nicked it off Facebook or something.

Emilia: The group hate that sort of/

Tess: What do you want me to do?

Beat

Emilia: I know but/

Tess: I just said, they must have got it off Facebook, the picture, must have nicked /

Emilia: But you invite it, this is the sort of journalism you invite when you/

Tess: (*Uncorking the bottle*) Look at all these front pages. All about the Paper, the Paper and the consultation. All on the front page.

Beat

TESS pours the wine and starts to eat the bean casserole.

Emilia: I know but/

Tess: This stuff is disgusting. Tastes like soil. I'm getting some ketchup.

TESS exits.

The lights flicker, EMILIA looks up, slightly concerned, the lights stop flickering.

TESS returns with the ketchup.

Tess: Nobody had even heard of that consultation before yesterday and now they are printing all this stuff about it. Come on Em. What do we normally get? A couple of lines in the middle of the fucking Guardian? Preaching to the converted as usual.

Beat

You are allowed to be pleased you know.

Two

The next morning. The windows are still open and there are two fans on the floor that are switched on. TESS is sitting on the sofa. NINA is sitting in one of the armchairs, she has a pad of paper and a pen. TESS is wearing a different clean white Georgian dress, there is a tape recorder on a small table between them.

Tess: It's nice to meet you.

Beat

I like your column.

Beat

Nina: Do you?

Tess: Yes.

Nina: You read it?

Tess: Of course.

Beat

What?

Nina: Just. I didn't think you would read it.

Tess: Why not?

Nina: Not your sort of/

Tess: Bit of an assumption.

Nina: Is it?

Tess: Just because I am an activist I must be some leftist/

Nina: Aren't you?

Tess: Read your newspaper since before you wrote for it. Since I was little.

Nina: Really?

Tess: My parents read it.

Nina: I see.

Tess: So I suppose I inherited it, in a way.

Nina: Inherited?

Tess: Reading it.

Beat

You are younger than I/

Nina: What?

Tess: I thought that you would be older.

Beat

When I heard I was being interviewed by you I thought you would be much older.

Nina: You assumed I would be some home counties Tory is that/

Tess: No.

Nina: You assumed I would be some straight laced middle aged twin set and pearls type?

Beat

Tess: (*Smiling*) Not just that/

Nina: Just because I write for/

Tess: Not just/

Nina: No?

Tess: You're the lead features writer.

Nina: Yes.

Tess: You do all the big interviews.

Beat

Takes years doesn't it? To get - to work your way/

Nina: I didn't really.

Tess: No.

Nina: I got lucky.

Tess: I know.

Nina: Do you?

Tess: I wouldn't call it lucky though.

Beat

Nina: You looked me up.

Tess: You must have looked me up.

Nina: I'm a journalist. It's my job.

Tess: Not straight laced at all.

Nina: (*Smiling*) No.

Tess: Out and proud/

Nina: It's the twenty-first century/

Tess: Still/

Nina: Yes?

Tess: A queer/

Nina: That word!

Tess: At the heart of – working for a newspaper like/

Nina: So...eighties

Tess: Like you are a trailblazer.

Nina: It's never been an issue for/me

Tess: It's impressive/

Nina: No one cares what I get up to in the/bedroom

Tess: Don't you think so?

Nina: No.

Tess: Impressive. Striking a blow for/

Nina: Are you/

Tess: The freedom to be a free-market right-winger and a/

Nina: You are. You are taking the/

Tess: For queer women everywhere.

Beat

Can't be much older than me.

Nina: (*Smiling*) I am a bit older.

Tess: Just look young.

Nina: If you looked me up you must know my age/

Tess: I don't remember.

Nina: It's not a secret.

Beat

I met your Granddad recently.

Tess: Did you?

Nina: At a Do.

Tess: Right.

Nina: A very nice Do actually.

Tess: I'm sure/

Nina: A mutual friend introduced us/

Beat

He is terribly charismatic isn't he?

Tess: I suppose so.

Nina: Maybe you take after him.

Tess: I don't know.

Nina: I think you do.

Tess: That's nice of you to say.

Nina: That phrase 'could charm the monkeys from the trees.'

Beat

Tess: Well I wouldn't know.

Nina: No.

Beat

Quite the flirt. Not now, obviously, but in his day.

Beat

Tess: Was he?

Nina: What I heard.

Beat

Tess: He is good with women I suppose.

Nina: Exactly.

Tess: But that's not/

Nina: What?

Tess: He is very faithful to my Grandma.

Nina: Of course.

Tess: Even now.

Nina: To her memory.

Tess: Exactly.

Nina: I think it's something about your mouth.

Beat

Tess: Sorry?

Nina: The resemblance. Something around your mouth and your jaw.

Tess: Is it?

Nina: It's quite striking.

Beat

He sits as an Independent I think/

Tess: He has backed a lot of green policies.

Nina: You could say it's a bit of a family business/

Tess: What is?

Nina: Campaigning.

Tess: I never thought of it that way.

Nina: Didn't you?

Tess: No.

Nina: What was that headline in the Standard? 'Toffs with a conscience.'

Beat

You've got brothers I think.

Tess: Two.

Nina: And what do they do?

Tess: My older brother Michael works for VSO.

Nina: Were you all encouraged to do/

Tess: We were encouraged to contribute. To do something/

Nina: 'The duty of privilege is absolute integrity'

Tess: I suppose so.

Nina: It's a quote actually.

Tess: I have heard it before.

Beat

Nina: And it's just you here is it?

Tess: Sorry?

Nina: Here.

Tess: Yes/

Nina: You and Emilia/

Tess: The Press Officer/

Nina: Emilia Miles.

Beat

She lives here with you/

Tess: At the moment.

Nina: Your family don't/

Tess: They live in Shropshire.

Nina: On the estate.

Tess: Yes.

Nina: Of course.

Beat

Well we should probably get on shouldn't we?

NINA turns on the tape recorder.

So first of all I wanted to ask you if you could just lay out what your protest was about.

Tess: It was about the White Paper, the new white paper about action on climate change that has just been announced.

Nina: And for the benefit of our readers could you describe what/

Tess: I am sure that they must know/

Nina: I want to hear you describe it.

Beat

Tess: Not trying to catch me out are you?

Nina: What do you mean?

Tess: Trying to make me say something/

Nina: What?

Tess: Something inaccurate.

Nina: No.

Tess: You sure?

Nina: Is that what journalists normally do with you?

Tess: Sometimes.

Nina: I'm not that kind of writer.

Tess: No?

Nina: I haven't got an axe to grind.

Beat

Tess: It is basically a fudge. It is basically a few minor concessions when the promises that brought them to power were a lot more, a hell of a lot more radical. They promised extensive caps on the industry output of C.O.2. A commitment to investment in greener energy sources. They promised that and the Paper talks about two new wind farms and a household tax on energy used. It talks about encouraging recycling and subsidising green lightbulbs. It puts the emphasis on individual consumption. It passes the buck to the individual consumer and blames them for their individual choices rather than implementing more radical change.

Beat

I think that the government are using this Paper to prevent conversations about our responsibility as a developed nation to seriously reduce our emissions and find greener sources of fuel for a higher proportion of the energy that we use.

Nina: (*Smilingly*) Well you certainly are passionate.

Beat

EMILIA enters carrying a tray with a teapot, cups etc on it.

Emilia: Do you take milk and sugar?

Nina: Milk, two sugars. (*EMILIA passes NINA her tea and goes over to the window*) Thankyou so much. (*NINA takes a sip of the tea*) I have to say Tess, so many of the people I interview, well, it is rare that I get to interview someone who is a really, what I would call a serious person, with something to say. I get so sick of interviewing...well, I better not...I'll just get angry... but you know... I did want to say to you Tess: I really do admire what you are doing.

Tess: Thankyou.

Beat

Nina: (*To TESS*) Your dress/

Emilia: It's after a Suffragettes dress, you should make that clear in the article. It is a reference to the Suffragettes/

Nina: I know/

Emilia: Good.

Nina: (*To TESS*) Is it your great grandmothers?

Tess: Yes.

Nina: She was a Suffragette wasn't she/

Tess: You did do your research.

Nina: It's my job/

Emilia: Sorry, it's just some people don't get that. They don't understand the reference/

Nina: Society ladies misbehaving themselves. Sometimes you have to use direct action to get your point across. Just like the Suffragettes. Sometimes you have to do something that seems quite, maybe seems a bit unsavoury or violent/

Emilia: Not violent/

Nina: No, sorry that was my/

Emilia: It's not the same.

Nina: Yes. I understand.

Emilia: We are dedicated to peaceful protest/

Nina: But given the events of Tuesday, the protest.

Beat

Emilia: Tess has already made a statement about that/

Nina: I know/

Emilia: She has already explained/

Nina: Yes.

Emilia: We don't want to talk about that/

Nina: I understand that.

Emilia: I thought I made that clear.

Nina: Well/

Emilia: It is absolutely off limits. I thought we agreed.

Beat

Nina: It has brought you a lot of publicity.

Beat

Emilia: It was an accident.

Nina: I understand, but the effect/

Emilia: Was unintended.

Nina: But it must make you wonder if/

Tess: What?

Nina: If you need to be more/

Emilia: We have never been violent, we are not/

Nina: But I am talking about the principle.

Tess: What do you mean?

Nina: It is necessary sometimes to do something that might seem quite outrageous, extreme or even violent/

Emilia: That's your view, not/

Nina: Of course. But you must think that sometimes, in some situations, it might be necessary to do that, to get your point across?

Beat

Tess: Yes.

Nina: Like Mandela.

Emilia: I don't think/.

Nina: You don't like the comparison?

Emilia: Tess is hardly Nelson Mandela.

Nina: That wasn't quite what I was/

Emilia: This is hardly apartheid South Africa.

Nina: You think it is less important than that?

Emilia: Of course not.

Nina: That global warming is less/

Emilia: We are not a violent group.

Beat

Nina: I am just trying to establish what your tactics for the future/

Emilia: We are not/

Nina: But if the rate of warming were to continue to increase/

Tess: Which it will/

Nina: Exactly. If things were to escalate, you must see a time when you might have to start to/

Emilia: We would never/

Nina: But if you felt that we had reached a crisis/

Emilia: We will remain peaceful.

Beat

Nina: People have spoken about a new militancy in green politics and I just wondered where you stood on that?

Emilia: We are not violent.

Nina: That wasn't actually what I meant/

Emilia: No?

Pause

Nina: Harbourne distanced himself from the consultation this morning.

Beat

Emilia: He said that it was a preliminary/

Nina: You must be pleased though/

Emilia: He said that White Papers are only ever a preliminary overview.

Nina: But he made the statement in response to your protest/

Emilia: In response to the whole protest/

Nina: In response to the protest and in response to Tess's actions/

Emilia: It's a big movement Nina, it's not just Tess/

Nina: Oh come on now, that is a little bit naïve/

Emilia: That was a huge protest. There were 5000 people there.

Nina: But all the articles were about/

Emilia: Of course they have to comment, I agree it did make an/

Nina: It was Tess that grabbed/

Emilia: Tess made a mistake. She bit a policeman, and it was a mistake. It was spur of the moment and it was a mistake. You can't start comparing her to Nelson Mandela/

Nina: But you are a direct action group?

Emilia: We are a peaceful group. That is the point. We take peaceful direct action.

Nina: I am just saying sometimes it might be necessary to/

Tess: What?

Nina: To push those parameters/

Emilia: And like I said, that is your opinion.

Nina: Yes.

Beat

Emilia: What we are saying is not extreme, it is supported by all the science.

Nina: I know.

Emilia: Not just the science. People's experience, these heatwaves, the powercuts, the floods last winter/

Nina: (*To EMILIA*) Exactly, exactly, but look, it's silly season and apart from the heatwave and the powercuts there aren't many stories about are there? So you've got our attention/

Emilia: We have gained your attention because this issue - people know this issue is /important

Nina: But the new parliamentary session kicks off soon, the heat will go come the autumn and people will forget. Harbourne will be able to crawl away having made his little stand and the Bill will get passed.

Beat

Come the autumn the heat will be gone. Parliament will be back in session. A girl biting a policeman won't, it won't be the story it is now. I mean, what you achieved this time was... well I am sure you know with my being here what it means. It is very impressive, but you are going to need to do something a lot bigger than this to hold our attention.

NINA's phone rings.

That will be my photographer.

NINA picks up the call.

Three

The following Sunday, dusk. The fans are still on the floor, the windows are open and the chandelier is lit.

TESS is standing by the window.

Emilia: Hi.

Beat

I thought yesterday went well.

Tess: Did you?

Emilia: Yes.

Tess: Mums with kids in buggies, the WI, all those people from Friends Of The Earth.

Emilia: Exactly.

Beat

I was glad that Friends of the Earth came. And the Green Party. You should have stayed afterwards. We were talking about green coalitions, a couple of backbenchers were there.

Tess: Sounds fascinating.

Emilia: We talked about the possibility of forming a cross group coalition: Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, all the smaller groups. Find some common ground, put an end to all these petty squabbles. Start to work together as an alliance. It was really inspiring. We were talking about a green conference, to coincide with Climate Camp in London. Where it would be accessible to everyone/

Tess: You could have workshops. How to knit your own knickers.

Beat

Emilia: Don't be like that.

Tess: What?

Emilia: Don't take the piss.

Tess: I'm not.

Emilia: Not everyone can be as hardcore as you.

Tess: That's not what I am saying.

Emilia: Have to target the light greens.

Tess: Why?

Emilia: Don't start.

Beat

It is important to have mass support.

Tess: For recycling?

Emilia: Not everyone can afford to dedicate their lives to change like you do Tess.

Beat

Tom says we have to empower people, make them feel that they can make a /difference

Tess: Did you like my speech?

Emilia: It was very good.

Tess: Did you enjoy the bit about Nelson Mandela?

Beat

Emilia: Yes.

Tess: I thought it was pretty good - that bit.

Emilia: We got good numbers. That's what will make the difference. I know you are an old cynic about all of that Tess, but mass protest/

Tess: Power to the people eh Em?

Emilia: Fuck sake Tess.

Beat

Press turnout was good.

Tess: Have you seen all the papers this morning?

Emilia: Yes.

Tess: Seen the Telegraph?

Emilia: The pictures were good.

Beat

Tess: What?

Beat

Emilia: It just did make you seem a bit... bit/

Tess: What?

Emilia: Nothing, just a bit/

Tess: What?

Emilia: Alright then, maybe a little bit, all that stuff about your granddad and the estate/

Tess: I can't help my/

Emilia: I know. I know/

Tess: I can't help where I am from Em/

Emilia: Yeah, I know/

Tess: And I'm not ashamed of it.

Emilia: No. Fine. Good. It was a good article/

Tess: It's not about me looking like the perfect eco warrior is it? I'm not bloody Swampy am I and I am never/[going to be]

Emilia: I know, I know that wasn't what I was/

Tess: What are you saying?

Emilia: Well you know, the estate, your granddad, the photos of the house. Of you and your house and your hair/

Tess: My hair?

Emilia: Looking all/

Tess: What?

Emilia: You posing like/

Tess: It was a photograph – of course I/

Emilia: There was a whole paragraph about how you looked/

Tess: What did you think they were going to write about?

Emilia: The rally, they could talk about the rally, about how many people we/

Tess: Rallies and meetings and cake sales. Come on Em, it's not exactly/

Emilia: Aren't normal people interesting?/

Tess: It's not exactly attention grabbing/

Emilia: It should be – that is the/

Tess: It got us noticed, that's the point. That rally, it's all very well normal people signing petitions and/

Emilia: What? Normal people taking action is pointless? Is that/what you are...

Tess: That's not what I meant. I just think/

Emilia: Actually, there was someone quite important there.

Tess: Who, Lib Dem spokesman on the environment? Blue Peter presenter?

Emilia: No/

Tess: Your mum?

Beat

Emilia: Katie Harbourne.

Beat

Tess: What?

Emilia: Katie Harbourne was there.

Tess: What?

Emilia: Fred Harbourne's daughter.

Beat

So you see, it's not just about big violent attention seeking protests, sometimes you can be just as effective/....

Tess: How do you know?

Emilia: I saw her.

Tess: When?

Emilia: She came to your speech.

Tess: I didn't even know he had a daughter.

Emilia: Well he does.

Tess: He's got two boys hasn't he?

Emilia: He had an affair.

Tess: When?

Emilia: It was a scandal, years ago.

Tess: You sure?

Emilia: Her mum comes from an estate on his constituency.

Tess: How old is she?

Emilia: Our age.

Tess: Christ.

Emilia: She was at Cambridge, at Kings.

Tess: You sure/

Emilia: It was Julia from Kings that pointed her out.

Tess: Why do you think she came?

Emilia: I don't know.

Tess: There was nothing in the papers about her being at the march.

Emilia: I doubt people recognise her. I didn't, did I?

Tess: Are you sure/ [it was her]?

Emilia: Definitely. I looked her up afterwards.

Beat

Tess: You should have told me before.

Emilia: Why?

Tess: We could have spoken to her.

Emilia: I didn't want us to scare her off.

Tess: So you were just going to leave it?

Emilia: I didn't say that/

Tess: So what? What are you going to do about it?

Emilia: I thought we could write to her.

Tess: Write to her.

Emilia: Yes.

Beat

What?

Tess: Nothing.

Emilia: What's wrong with that?

Beat

EMILIA is holding a roll-up cigarette. She finishes rolling it and licks the papers.

Sorry Tess, have you got a light, mine is...

TESS throws EMILIA a lighter, EMILIA lights her cigarette.

Tess: I just think that might be a bit/

Emilia: What?

Tess: Shouldn't we/

Emilia: What?

Tess: I don't know, doesn't Julia have her number?

Emilia: I didn't ask/

Tess: Why not?

Emilia: I wanted to take the, I didn't want her to get/

Tess: What?

Emilia: Fuck sake Tess, to scare her away. I just think that we should be careful.

Beat

Tess: Fine.

Emilia: I'm not saying we should ignore it, ignore her coming just... just be careful.

Tess: Right.

Emilia: I am planning on writing to her. I just don't want to scare her off.

Beat

You understand don't you?

Beat

Tess: Yes.

Beat

Emilia: You've been standing there for hours.

Tess: Have I?

Emilia: It's not/

Tess: What?

Beat

It's not been that long.

Emilia: You were there when I came down this morning.

Tess: I like watching them.

Beat

Funny really. Them watching me, watching them.

Beat

Emilia: We should get blinds.

Beat

For the windows, stop them seeing in.

Tess: Bit extreme.

Emilia: They creep me out. All lined up on the other side.

Tess: Must get so bored. I mean, it's not like we are doing anything is it? Must be so tedious for them.

Emilia: That tall bloke, the one with grey hair. He has been here for/

Tess: (*Pointing*) One in the green pullover?

Emilia: Don't point at him.

Tess: Why not?

Emilia: I don't know/

Tess: What's he going to do, take a picture of me pointing?

Emilia: We should get blinds or start using the curtains more.

Beat

I think his name's Clive. The bloke with the grey hair. He's always there. He came to the conference after the protest last week.

Beat

He actually talked to me the other day. When I was leaving the house. Pretended to be friendly. Not really. Fishing for information. Gossip I suppose. Wanted to know about you.

Tess: Did you speak to him?

Emilia: Course not.

EMILIA crosses to the window.

Don't they make you nervous?

Tess: What?

Emilia: The photographers. Those photographers, the doorsteppers.

Tess: What do you mean?

Emilia: Them being there.

Tess: Oh. Not really. I don't really think about it.

Emilia: They make me nervous.

Tess: You work with photographers all the time.

Emilia: That's totally different.

Tess: Is it?

Emilia: Of course.

Tess: How?

Emilia: I don't know how you can compare them. It's completely different. They are completely different.

Tess: How are they different?

Emilia: They just are.

Tess: How?

Emilia: I work with the photographers at conferences and protests. I talk to them. I coordinate them. That lot, they are more like a pack.

Tess: What do you mean?

Emilia: Just... well they don't, no one invited them. I didn't tell them to be there did I? It's not like it's a press call, but there they are, fucking circling the house aren't they, like a pack, a braying pack/

Tess: *(Laughing)* Like wolves?

Beat

Emilia: Makes me feel as if. I feel like they can see inside. Inside here. Like they can see inside my head. I was sitting on the loo earlier and I got all, I thought that they might be able to see in through the blinds/

Tess: Paranoia.

Emilia: I thought they might be able to see. I couldn't go. Had to go in the upstairs loo in the end. Window faces onto the back up there.

Tess: Mind playing tricks.

EMILIA moves over to the window.

Emilia: Seven. That is the most we've had so far. There were only three of them there this morning and then four of them arrived at the same time about an hour ago, but nothing has happened for days. Just envelope stuffing and Tom's petition. The rally. That woman from Friends of the Earth came round.

Tess: So you've been watching them too.

Emilia: Like they know something. Like they are expecting something to happen. I wish I knew what they were thinking.

Pause

You coming?

Tess: What?

Emilia: The meeting, Tom's squat.

Tess: Oh.

Emilia: I'm going now.

Beat

Tess: It's just/

Emilia: Yeah?

Beat

Fine. Suit yourself. I'm not going to try to persuade you/

Tess: I'm not asking you to/

Emilia: And I am not lying to them.

Tess: Good.

Emilia: I am saying you couldn't be bothered.

Tess: I came on Friday.

Emilia: (*Exiting*) I'm leaving Tess. Last chance/

Tess: Sorry Em.

Emilia: (*Offstage*) You're missing out.

Tess: I know.

Emilia: (*Offstage*) Tofu and brown rice this evening.

Tess: Have a good meeting.

The sound of the front door being closed.

TESS takes out her mobile phone. The lights flicker. TESS looks up, but the lights don't go out. TESS dials a number.

ACT TWO

One

Much later that evening. The chandelier is still on and so are the fans. KATIE and TESS are standing in the middle of the room.

Katie: *(Looking around the room)* My God.

Tess: What?

Katie: Well.

Beat

That journalist wasn't exaggerating.

Tess: What?

Katie: The dyke.

Tess: Sorry I/

Katie: That article. I assumed that she was exaggerating. But she wasn't was she? You are actually fucking loaded.

Tess: No.

Katie: Fucking chandelier.

Tess: Doesn't work.

Katie: What?

Tess: Doesn't really work. The chandelier.

Katie: Still. Fucking chandelier isn't it?

Beat

Imagine having a house like this/

Tess: It's my parent's house actually.

Katie: Well I didn't suppose you actually owned it.

Tess: Right.

Katie: Course not.

Tess: Right - sorry.

Katie: Rich family though.

Tess: I suppose so.

Kate: Fucking loaded, spare houses in Hampstead.

Tess: Just the one.

Katie: Must be nice.

Tess: Yes, it's nice.

Katie: Living here.

Tess: I'm lucky.

Katie: You are fucking lucky.

Tess: I know how lucky I am.

Beat

Katie: They were right.

Tess: What?

Katie: The Newspapers. You are a bunch of posh protestors.

Tess: Not all of us.

Katie: My mum is too busy keeping afloat to have time to worry about coal. You have to be rich to protest.

Beat

Surprised my dad hates you so much really. You are just the sort of, just the class of person that he normally admires.

Tess: I doubt that/he would like

Katie: Reason he got into politics I reckon. Reason he joined the party. Spends most of his time trying to crawl up the arses of people like you. Fucking obsessed with toffs.

Beat

Must be nice. Having the time to dedicate yourself to a cause like this.

Beat

How did you get my number?

Tess: Someone I know.

Katie: Right.

Tess: A girl I know from Cambridge.

Katie: Old girl's network was it?

Tess: No I just/

Katie: But she's not your friend though?

Tess: I suppose not/

Katie: She's not someone you actually know?

Tess: Not really. She's/

Katie: What?

Tess: Like I said, friend of a friend. Someone I know.

Katie: So an acquaintance.

Tess: I have met her a couple of times.

Katie: You sure?

Tess: Sorry?

Katie: You sure you know her? Have you actually met her?

Tess: Yes, briefly. I've met her briefly.

Katie: But you're not actually properly friends with her?

Beat

Tess: No.

Katie: And you just phoned her up out of the blue and asked for my number?

Tess: I suppose so.

Katie: You phoned up someone you barely know and got them to give you my number and then you rang me. I don't know you and you rang me up and you invited me round to your /house.

Tess: I didn't /[mean]

Katie: What?

Tess: I didn't mean /it to [look like that]

Katie: And I agreed.

Tess: Yes.

Katie: And I came round.

Tess: Yes.

Katie: I came straight round, soon as you called. Came straight round of my own free will.

Tess: Look/

Katie: And all those photographers saw me come in.

Tess: Yes.

Katie: That's going to look good for you isn't it?

Beat

Tess: Sorry?

Katie: Having me come round and visit you, visit your headquarters, your radical headquarters in the heart of leafy Hampstead. Going to look pretty good isn't it?

Beat

Tess: I suppose.

Katie: You know it is. It's going to look really good. That's why you invited me.

Beat

You brought me to your house, you invited me round and I innocently agreed. I naively and innocently agreed to come round and talk, just talk to you. Just hear you out, but then you had all these photographers outside/

Tess: I didn't put them outside, they just/

Katie: You put all these photographers outside so that they saw me come in, into your big fuck off house and you gave me a, you offered me a cup of, a glass of wine say/

Tess: I'm sorry, do you want a drink?

Katie: The kind of wine I have never had before, some very expensive French wine. So naturally I drank the very expensive French wine that you gave me.

Tess: I don't understand.

Katie: And it tasted, fair enough it tasted a bit odd, but being unaccustomed, not having any experience of real wine before, I assumed, understandably enough, I assumed that it was just an acquired taste/

Tess: I really don't/

Katie: Until I started to feel unwell that is. Started to feel really unwell. Falling all over the place and mixing up my words. Slurring my words. Because you had put something in the wine hadn't you? Only gone and slipped something in my wine and eventually I passed out, passed out on the floor, on expensive Persian rugs, under

big Victorian oil painting, I passed out. Legs akimbo, little girl knickers on show and all pale, all pale from whatever, what you had slipped me. And you picked me up, picked me up, my limp white body and you tied me up. Tied me to a chair, tied my hands behind my back and gagged my mouth so I couldn't scream. So I couldn't scream and couldn't move, pushing my pink little tongue to the floor of my mouth and you blindfolded me so I couldn't see and kept me here in the dark, half naked and tied to a chair, and you kept me here for political reasons. To blackmail my dad. Blackmail him into doing what you want. You brought me here under false pretences so you could do all that.

Beat

Tess: That's not what I am/

Katie: People do do that sort of thing though don't they?

Tess: I don't know.

Katie: If they are desperate enough.

Tess: I'm not sure what/

Katie: Everyone saw you bite that policeman. Everyone knows how desperate you are. How extreme you are. Photographers saw me come in. They might believe it. If I said that, they might believe me: 'eco-warrior drugs Minister's daughter in raunchy lesbo sex protest'.

Pause

Tess: I'm sorry.

Katie: Are you?

Tess: Of course.

Katie: We all know how much the papers love a sex scandal. I mean just look at my dad.

Beat

Tess: Really, I didn't think, I didn't think it would, you would think it was like that, I just /*[wanted to talk to you]*

KATIE starts to laugh.

Katie: I'm joking.

Tess: Are you?

Katie: I'm just teasing you. You're not half easy to wind up. You need to learn to relax. Learn to take a joke.

Beat

I came to your speech you know.

Beat

Tess: I know

Katie: How?

Tess: Emilia saw you.

Katie: Emilia?

Tess: My... the Press Officer. She saw you in the crowd.

Katie: I came to the protest too.

Tess: What?

Katie: The protest, last Tuesday. I preferred that to your speech actually.

Tess: Did you?

Katie: Much more exciting wasn't it?

Beat

Tess: I / [suppose so]

Katie: Much more immediate.

Tess: Yes.

Katie: I was stuck at the back for most of it but I saw you bite him. Your blonde hair and all that blood. All down his hand. You must have bitten him deep. He looked shocked. His mouth gaping open like that. Staggering back like that. Like a painting. Like a picture from a Greek tragedy. Like Agave or something, like Medusa. It was almost beautiful. The way you screamed when she sprayed you, like a stuck pig. Your angelic face and that horrible squeal.

Beat

No wonder you were on all them front covers. All those magazines. All them newspapers.

Beat

Your face was everywhere. You are lucky you photograph so well.

Tess: Do I?

Katie: You know you do. You probably practice.

Tess: No.

Katie: Come off it, you must have practiced. I saw the way you looked at those cameras. Turning your head. Making sure everyone got you. Like you were a professional.

Tess: It wasn't like that.

Katie: Flashing, practically flashing your tits at the camera with your mouth gaping open like that and that poor man's blood still on you. Looked like a porn star.

Tess: No I/[didn't....]

Katie: Looked like you were loving it/

Tess: I didn't / [mean to bite him]

Katie: I'm just teasing you.

Tess: Oh.

Katie: Not got much of a sense of humour have you?

Beat

You've still not offered me that drink.

Tess: I'm sorry.

Katie: Good manners isn't it?

Tess: I/

Katie: People like you are meant to be born with good manners.

Tess: I was going to.

Katie: Were you?

Tess: Yes.

Beat

What do you want?

Katie: What have you got?

Tess: Tea? Coffee? I think there is some juice.

Katie: You got any wine?

Tess: Somewhere I think/

Katie: Wine sounds fine.

Tess: I'll just get it.

Katie: Don't dope it will you.

Beat

Tess: No.

Katie: Just another little joke.

Tess: Very funny.

Katie: Glad you're getting the hang of it.

Tess: Sit down.

TESS exits. KATIE doesn't sit down. KATIE moves over to the window and looks out.

Katie: *(To Tess)* I photograph quite well too you know. Very well actually. Even better than you.

Tess: *(Off stage)* Do you?

Katie: I always have. Ever since I was little. Ever since I was a little kid. It's a knack.

The sound of a lot of commotion outside and the front door being closed. EMILIA enters, limping slightly.

Beat

Emilia: Where's Tess?

TESS enters holding the wine and two mugs.

(To TESS) There are 20 of them out there now. There is a camera crew. They were all shouting at me. They were running after me down the street and shouting at me. They literally chased me, the photographers, they chased me down the street. They shouted at me, asking me what she was doing here Tess, asked me why she was fucking here. I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. I thought they must have got it wrong. I must have looked like a complete pillock/

Katie: I'm sure / you didn't

Emilia: I am the fucking Press Officer Tess and I didn't even know she was here. I didn't know we had invited her. I didn't know what to say. I looked incompetent. You made me look incompetent.

Beat

Katie: Hello.

Emilia: Hello.

Beat

Katie: You must be Emilia.

Emilia: Yes.

Beat

Katie: You should sit down.

Tess: You should/

Emilia: I don't need to sit down.

Katie: Your ankle.

Emilia: I just. I must have turned it. I was running and I slipped, my foot slipped.

Katie: Poor you. You have gone a bit white.

Emilia: Have I?

Katie: A bit.

Emilia: Just the surprise I suppose.

Katie: You should sit down, take your shoes off.

Emilia: Yes. Thanks.

EMILIA sits down and takes her shoes off. TESS and KATIE watch her.

Tess: Do you want me to get an extra glass?

Emilia: What?

Tess: For the wine/

Emilia: No. No thankyou.

Katie: Oh go on.

Emilia: I don't really/

Katie: Calm you down.

Beat

Emilia: Ok.

Katie: Good.

TESS exits.

Emilia: I'm sorry.

Katie: What?

Emilia: Sorry... that was.... I am being very rude.

Katie: That's ok.

Emilia: Is it?

Katie: Of course.

Emilia: You see, Tess hadn't told me you were coming round.

Katie: Hadn't she?

Emilia: No, she didn't tell me.

Katie: Didn't she?

Emilia: I didn't expect you to be here.

Katie: Must have been a shock.

Emilia: I had no idea.

Katie: I'm sorry/

Emilia: So when you were here, here already in the house I was just really surprised.

Katie: I can imagine.

Emilia: Can you? It really is just a huge, a really big surprise to see you here, here in the house. Considering Tess had not told me. I'm the Press Officer you see. It's normally me that does all this, so it is quite a shock.

Beat

It's very nice to meet you.

They shake hands awkwardly.

I'm sorry. It really is good to meet you. I was just a bit, surprised, that's all.

Beat

I really didn't mean to shout.

Katie: You didn't shout at me.

Emilia: It was just because I wasn't expecting you. I was just surprised, and those photographers/

Katie: They can be/

Emilia: Still. It's no excuse. I've never met you before and here I am screaming in your face.

Katie: Don't be silly.

Emilia: I feel bad.

Katie: Don't.

TESS comes back with an extra glass and pours the wine.

(To EMILIA) I saw you at the press conference.

Emilia: Were you there?

Katie: On the news.

Emilia: Right.

Katie: Tess told me you are the Press Officer.

Emilia: Well, we work as a group/

Katie: But it's you that's behind it all?

Emilia: What do you/mean?

Katie: All those newspapers, television and on the radio. All those pictures of Tess.

Emilia: Someone has to do the leg work.

Katie: You're good at it. All that coverage. Everywhere. It's more like advertising than a political campaign isn't it?

Emilia: Is it?

Katie: Saatchi and Saatchi or something. You've got the whole of the press marketing her. For you. Falling over themselves to put her on the front cover.

Beat

Emilia: I'm not/ [sure]

Katie: What?

Emilia: I'm not sure I understand what /you

Katie: I just meant your relationship with the press.

Beat

Getting them to photograph her like that, it's a gift.

Emilia: Is it?

Katie: I think so.

Emilia: I don't do much really, I just tell them where its going to/be

Katie: And where to stand.

Emilia: What?

Katie: You tell them where to stand.

Emilia: How do you mean?

Katie: In front of the gates. I came to the protest on Monday.

Emilia: Did you?

Katie: Just before she bit him. Telling the photographers where to go to get the best shot.

Tess: Did you?

Emilia: Well, yes/

Tess: I didn't know you did that.

Emilia: If I didn't tell them where to stand then they wouldn't get the shot.

Katie: It's normal practise Tess.

Tess: Is it?

Katie: What all the press guys do/

Emilia: All those people pushing, we could have ended up with the photographers at the back or pushed to the side/

Katie: What all the PRs do. Very professional.

Emilia: I have to/

Tess: I just didn't know you did that.

Emilia: They have to get a shot they can use, that's all/

Katie: And that's why you always choose Tess isn't it?

Emilia: What?

Katie: They will always be able to use a picture of a pretty blonde girl won't they?

The lights flicker, the fans stop turning. They all look up. The lights flicker for a second longer but don't go out. The fans start again.

You noticed how they always do that?

Tess: What?

Katie: They just flickered.

Emilia: So?

Katie: They always do that just before it cuts out.

Emilia: No, it's just the/

Katie: Electricity trips a couple of times before it goes.

Emilia: We don't know that/[it will]

Katie: It will, trust me, next couple of hours, it will go out.

Beat

Tess: I was on the tube last time. Took them half an hour to get the generator going and get us out. An old lady fainted.

Katie: Someone died on the tube in the last one. Just keeled over in the heat, heart attack apparently.

Beat

I've heard that there are lots of muggings.

Emilia: What?

Katie: In the blackouts. There are gangs, they wait until the black out and then they/

Emilia: You don't believe those rumours do you?

Katie: Why not?

Emilia: It's scaremongering/

Katie: It's why shops have started shutting in the blackouts/

Emilia: That's just because they don't have any lights not/

Katie: And they can't use generators?

Beat

Emilia: I don't know/

Katie: It's because of the lootings. They close the shops to prevent/

Emilia: Now you are just being ridiculous/

Katie: Crime spikes during blackouts, everyone knows that.

Beat

Probably more rapes too.

Emilia: Oh for goodness/

Tess: I read that, wasn't there a women in/

Katie: Walking home from the tube during the last one/

Emilia: That was just chance/

Katie: Normally she would have had the streetlights/

Emilia: She cut across wasteland/

Katie: So you are saying it was her own fault?

Beat

Emilia: No, of course not, but it wasn't/

Katie: What?

Emilia: It was a coincidence.

Katie: But crime is up.

Emilia: Just tabloid hysteria/

Katie: It makes sense though doesn't it? All that darkness, hot sweaty summer and no one about because there is a blackout cos the system can't cope with the heat and everyone stays in. Crime is bound to be up.

Beat

The heat and the powercuts. And now the crime. It's snowballed hasn't it?

Emilia: What do you mean?

Katie: The hysteria. This summer. Good for you though. Gives people time to think. Think about what caused all this.

Beat

Tess: Perhaps Katie should stay here tonight.

Two

7am the next morning. The fans are off. The sound of birdsong and then some movement from outside and muffled shouting. One of the windows crashes down and shatters, glass flies onto the floor. Some more shouting and a car driving away.

Beat

EMILIA enters wearing pyjamas.

EMILIA looks at the broken glass.

TESS enters.

Tess: What happened?

Emilia: Window.

Tess: Did someone try to break in?

Emilia: I'll get something to clear up the mess.

EMILIA exits.

There is a knocking at the door.

Tess: *(To EMILIA)* I'll get it.

EMILIA comes back with a dustpan and brush. She kneels down and starts to sort through the broken glass with her hands.

Katie: Morning. What happened? Is that glass?

Emilia: Yes.

Katie: They must really want a picture.

Emilia: We don't know it was a photographer.

Katie: Who else would it have been?

Emilia: Might have been a burglar.

Katie: At seven a.m.?

Emilia: Might not have been anyone at all. Might just have just been the wind.

Katie: There isn't any wind.

Emilia: It's an old house. It's a big old house and things break, they get broken.

Katie: Not windows. Not like that, not suddenly shattering like that. Someone was trying to get in.

Beat

They all still out there?

Emilia: What?

Katie: The other photographers.

Emilia: I haven't looked.

Beat

Katie: Don't know why they would go home while I am still in here. Looks like I really am stuck.

TESS enters.

Tess: Next door. Said they saw a man try one of the windows, must have climbed all the way up.

Emilia: Did they say what he looked like?

Tess: They couldn't tell. Thought it was one of them though. Had a camera. They were so angry, she was practically screaming. Like it was her house or something. Like we had told him to break in.

Emilia: There is glass everywhere.

Tess: You should put some shoes on Em.

Emilia: It's fine.

Katie: She's right, you could really hurt yourself.

Tess: You should be careful.

Emilia: I'm being careful. I just want to get it cleared up.

Beat

Tess: Do you want some help?

Emilia: No.

Tess: I could get the broom.

Emilia: I'm fine.

Tess: I don't mind.

Emilia: It's a one person job.

Tess: You are going to hurt you hands, you shouldn't pick up bits of glass like that.

Emilia: It would be better if you just let me get on with it.

EMILIA continues to clear up the glass. KATIE and TESS watch her.

KATIE moves over to the window, she starts to laugh.

Katie: Christ!

Emilia: Come away from the window.

Katie: Two camera crews and billions of photographers. Not just the normal lot either.

Emilia: What?

Katie: Isn't that that bloke from the BBC? Does the political reports?

Emilia: Come away from the window.

Katie: It is. He is so ugly. Don't you think he is the most ugly man you ever saw Tess?

Tess: *(Moving over to the window)* He's/ [alright]

Emilia: You just said that they climbed all the way up here. They tried to get in.

Tess: I'm sure they can't see us/

Emilia: I don't want them getting more photos of her. Of either of you.

Tess: I'm sure they can't see us this far up.

Katie: He is sweating so much, it's only seven a.m. and he is sweating already, you can see it from here/

Emilia: They have long lens cameras/

Katie: But it's just me standing in a house.

Emilia: I don't want them getting any more pictures of either of you until we have decided what to do.

Tess: I'm sure it's/[ok]

Emilia: No Tess it's not ok.

Beat

I'm sorry Katie but I am the Press Officer for the group, I am meant to be in charge of all this. I know that it is Tess that invited you, but can you just please stand away from the windows.

Beat

Katie: Ok Emilia.

KATIE sits down.

I'm sorry.

EMILIA stands up and crosses to one of the windows and draws the curtains forcefully. She then crosses to the other window and repeats. Both sets don't quite cover the windows. There are shafts of light across the floor from outside but otherwise the room is quite gloomy.

EMILIA resumes clearing up the glass.

We just need to be a lot more careful.

EMILIA carries on with the glass.

You are going to have to speak to the group today.

Tess: What?

Emilia: Have you told them about this, about Katie?

Tess: Not yet.

Emilia: You'll have to.

Tess: I know.

Emilia: You need to speak to them today.

Tess: Alright. I will.

Emilia: This morning. You should ring round.

Tess: Ok.

Emilia: I think it should be you that speaks to them.

Tess: Ok.

Emilia: I don't want to be the one to tell them. It should be you that does it this time.

Beat

Katie: I expect they know already.

Emilia: What?

Katie: It'll be everywhere by now won't it? They've probably already heard.

Tess: That's true.

Emilia: I think you should speak to them anyway.

Tess: Alright.

Beat

Emilia: Good.

Beat

Katie: (*Giggling*) Bit dark in here isn't it?

Tess: It is a bit gloomy.

Emilia: Turn the light on then.

TESS tries to turn the light on, it does not come on.

Tess: Power must still be down.

TESS lights a cigarette.

Emilia: I'm just saying Tess. I am not trying to be difficult but you will have to tell them.

EMILIA has finished sweeping up, she stands.

What's the plan then?

Tess: What?

Emilia: Now that Katie is here.

Beat

My God Tess/

Tess: I hadn't actually/

Emilia: You must have an idea/

Tess: No, I/

Emilia: (*To TESS*) You haven't thought this through at all have you?

Tess: I just/

Emilia: What?

Tess: I thought we could/

Emilia: You just bloody steamed ahead as usual/

Tess: It wasn't like/

Emilia: Wasn't it?

Tess: No.

Beat

Katie: I could give a statement.

Emilia: Saying what?

Katie: Tell them why I think the consultation needs to be extended. They promised a serious investigation into the production of energy in this country and into how we can reduce our emissions in line with Kyoto and Minsk. I think that this process has been an inadequate response, given what they promised before the last election. I could say that I think that my father should question it, that he has a duty to question it. I could say that the report has been biased, they haven't referred to all the evidence. They have not consulted widely enough. There is no reference to Predict and Decide is there? Whole body of research they ignored. They don't put enough emphasis on reducing emissions from industry. The Paper relies too much on household changes, on blaming the ordinary everyday householder, on normal people and telling them to take more responsibility. Telling them not to fly or drive a car rather than setting up systems to actually reduce the amount that is being used by industry, putting caps on that and their output. It dodges the question, the difficult question, about how to reduce emissions by industry and produce genuinely cleaner fuel. By doing so it actually reneges on the manifesto pledges about the level of reduction. It makes those targets unreachable. I could say that he has a responsibility, as a minister for Climate Change and an MP and as a father. For the good of his family, for the good of his children, I could say, I could say... (*starting to giggle*) Daddy, Daddy please, Daddy please don't, please don't do it Daddy. Daddy don't...

Beat

Tess: I think it's a great idea.

Emilia: Yes but/

Tess: Maybe not the last bit Katie/

Emilia: No, exactly/

Tess: But the rest of it.

Emilia: So emotive/

Tess: She sounded just like you just then. That could have been you.

Emilia: Because I've said all that before. Not just me, Green Party talk about it all the time, opposition talked about it, backbenchers, some of the shadow cabinet have/

Katie: But I haven't, I haven't said/ anything.

Emilia: I know but/

Katie: What?

Emilia: I just don't think/

Katie: I haven't said anything. I am the Minister for Climate Change's daughter and I haven't said anything.

Beat

My dad must be shitting himself.

Beat

He must be shitting himself.

Emilia: What?

Katie: He must have seen the coverage by now. He must know I am here.

Tess: Yes.

Katie: Here with you in this house.

Beat

Emilia: Probably.

Katie: Very careful with his words isn't he? Doesn't like to give too much away. He's always been like that, ever since I can remember, since me I suppose. Since they found out about me and my mum. Careful not to trip himself up or make any rash decisions. Doesn't want to get caught with his pants down again: 'Love rat minister cheats on his lovely wife with some horrid council estate scum'. 'Minister's bastard child'. (*Laughing*) God, those awful photos, of me looking just like him. And his lovely wife all brave. And all his real, his proper children hiding their faces with their school coats. And my sad little face. Above all my sad little face staring out at him from all the national newspapers. Heartbreaking.

Beat

(*To EMILIA*) You were the one that saw me at the march weren't you Em?

Emilia: Yes but/

Katie: You saw me and you told Tess, didn't you? You saw me at the rally and you told Tess because you knew how useful I might be.

Three

Late in the afternoon of the same day. The curtains are still drawn but the fans are back on and so is the chandelier. EMILIA is sat on the sofa. She is watching the television, the blue light is reflected in her face. Her laptop is on her lap. There are two mobiles and the house phone at her feet, the cord stretches out from the hallway.

There is the noise of the press, shouting and hollering, the shutters of cameras. Simultaneously: the sound of the front door closing, the other noises stop, EMILIA turns off the television with a remote.

KATIE enters, laughing.

Katie: *(To TESS who is offstage)* Did you see him, did you see his reaction?

Emilia: I was just watching.

TESS enters

Katie: But did you see his face?

Tess: He looked pretty uncomfortable.

Emilia: He hasn't cracked.

Katie: Not yet, but I mean, my God, it's only a matter of time isn't it?

Tess: It was spectacular. You should have seen it Em/

Emilia: I was watching/

Katie: I give him a week.

Tess: *(To EMILIA)* You have to admit/

Katie: *(To EMILIA)* Come on, I can see you cracking a smile/

Tess: A week before he has to say something I reckon/

Katie: Before he resigns more like/

Emilia: I don't think/

Katie: You have to admit I did a pretty good job.

Beat

Emilia: It was a good speech.

Katie: I said everything we agreed on.

Tess: It was good wasn't it Em?

Emilia: It went well.

Beat

Katie: All your work.

Emilia: What?

Katie: It was.

Emilia: I just checked the facts.

Katie: You are just being modest.

Tess: It's true Em - we couldn't have done it without you/

Emilia: It was nothing/

Katie: You are the one that persuaded the group.

Emilia: I just told them what I thought.

Tess: But if they hadn't been on side. If they hadn't all been standing behind Katie as she made the/

Katie: Like I was really part of the group. Like I had been part of it for years.

Tess: It was genius/

Emilia: That was your idea/

Tess: But you persuaded them Em.

Katie: You were so clever.

Emilia: I just gave my opinion.

Katie: You ruled that meeting.

Emilia: I didn't rule anything.

Katie: You did (*laughing*) No one else could get a word in.

Beat

Emilia: That's not true.

Katie: It is.

Emilia: Everyone got their say.

Katie: Yeah, but they didn't know what to say, they didn't have a clue.

Emilia: They did, they /[just]

Tess: Even Tom agreed with you.

Emilia: He wasn't that pleased about it.

Katie: I bet he's never that pleased about anything.

Emilia: I could tell he was still unhappy.

Tess: But he voted with us, that's what counts.

Emilia: He was very quiet, hardly said anything.

Tess: He'll come round.

Emilia: He hardly smiled at all, all afternoon.

Katie: Face like a slapped arse/

Emilia: I could tell he thought it wasn't the right thing/

Katie: Sour faced cunt.

Beat

Emilia: Tom is a good person.

Katie: He does though, looks like/

Emilia: Don't call him that.

Beat

Tess: Emilia used to go out with Tom.

Emilia: It's not about that Tess. For fuck sake, that's not why I mentioned it/

Katie: Oh, I'm sorry... *(she starts to laugh)* I'm sorry, God, I didn't, I didn't even realise. I didn't even realise that you were, I thought that you two/

Tess: What?

Katie: I assumed you two were... God, I was so rude... I've been being so rude about Tom.

Beat

Emilia: It's fine.

Katie: Sorry, I just didn't realise. I assumed the two of you/ were....

Tess: Tom will be ok Em. It was the right thing to do.

Katie: I didn't mean to upset you.

Emilia: Didn't you?

Katie: No.

Beat

Getting them to stand behind me at the press call. Having them line up like that. My dad's reaction. The way he, that colour he went, the way he stammered and shook. I was congratulating you.

Beat

Emilia: I was just doing my job.

EMILIA looks back down at her laptop.

Katie: Shall we have some wine? I fancy a drink after all that.

Tess: We've run out, I'll just pop/

Emilia: You shouldn't go out/

Tess: What?

Emilia: We don't want people seeing you. We don't want any shots of you that they can use instead of the one we want.

Tess: There is some brandy somewhere. I'll go and find it.

TESS exits.

Katie: Did you see that photo of me with my bike?

Emilia: What?

Katie: When you looked me up on the internet.

Beat

Emilia: I didn't look you/

Katie: After you saw me at the rally. I was six, maybe seven.

Beat

Emilia: I'm sorry I don't/

Katie: Pink bike.

Emilia: What are you/

Katie: Almost like, not baby pink, not girl pink, like acid, pink like acid it was. This bike. Like a scream, screamin' pink. Violent pink. Angry sort of colour. It was too big for me. In the photo you can see. Standing next to it because I couldn't ride it. Couldn't ride it for a year after I got it. Just used to wheel it round. Wheel it round the estate. Ever so proud of it I was. My dad gave it me, for my birthday. In the photos I

am holding it, in a park. Pink bike with streamers on the handles. I used to think that it was a proper memory, a memory I had, but then I realised. Seen that photo so many times, seen it and so I remember that day more than I remember the day before or the day after. Funny how your memory works. Lots I don't remember but 'cos of that photo I remember that day clearly.

TESS enters, holding an ornate decanter with brandy in it.

I had decided to go on an adventure. Go to the park by myself. Sneaked out the back. Down the alley. Only there was. The end of our, the cul de sac, was this little crowd. Little crowd of people. Men. Mainly men. Big fat men. They started. Soon as they saw me. Started shoutin. Shouted at me. Knew my name. Said. Shoutin at me: 'He give you that did he?' 'Your Dad. Did he give you that bike?' 'It was your birthday weren't it Katie?' 'It was your birthday, he give you that bike did he?'. 'Give us a smile Katie.' 'Want to give us a smile Katie'. And I remember. Only eight. Only eight and I. Stuck my chest out. My. Little pigeon chest. Leaned on one - fuck knows where I got that from - one leg, coquettish, fuckin coy and I smiled up at them. Shyly. 'Cept not fuckin shy at all. Knew what I was doing. Knew exactly what to do. Knew straight away. What I was doing. Held my bike proudly. Held it out proudly. Smiled. I've got a good smile. Innocent. But. Not. Somehow. Stuck my chest out. Smiled. Front page. Front page that picture was.

Four

Early the next morning. The window where the glass was shattered has been boarded up roughly with cardboard. The curtains are drawn. FRED and KATIE stand in the middle of the room.

FRED dries his forehead with a handkerchief.

Katie: You look a fucking mess.

Beat

Fred: Thankyou.

Katie: What for?

Fred: For letting me in.

Katie: Did I have a choice?

Fred: What?

Katie: Would you have gone away if I hadn't let you in?

Fred: Of course/

Katie: You sounded pretty insistent on the/

Fred: I would never have made you see me/if you

Katie: No?

Fred: I appreciate you agreeing to see me.

Katie: I was asleep/

Fred: Don't worry, I'm not staying for/

Katie: You woke me up.

Fred: What I have to say won't take long.

Katie: I could wake the others.

Beat

Fred: Go on then.

Katie: They would crucify you.

Fred: Go on then, wake them up.

Katie: I could.

Fred: But you're not going to.

Beat

Katie: Not yet.

Fred: I just need us to/

Katie: It is 5 o'clock in the morning and I was asleep.

Fred: I'm sorry.

Katie: You can't just turn up at people's houses/

Fred: It's difficult for me to make contact any/

Katie: Without them seeing/

Fred: Exactly.

Beat

Katie: I'm an embarrassment/

Fred: I didn't say that/

Katie: No?

Fred: No.

Katie: But you did sneak into my house at 5 o'clock in the morning to/

Fred: It's not your house at all though is it?

Katie: It's where I live/

Fred: Your and your...you live with your mum in Huddersfield not/

Katie: Well I'm not in Huddersfield am/I

Fred: You don't belong.

Katie: And you do?

Beat

Why didn't you ask if you could come round?

Fred: Because I knew you would/

Katie: What?

Fred: Katie, I need you to/

Katie: You phoning me once you are already at the house. Once you are already outside the back gate/

Fred: I didn't have a choice/

Katie: Not very dignified is it? The only way you could get your own daughter to talk was to turn up unannounced in the middle of the/

Fred: It was the only time I could/

Katie: What?

Fred: The only time I could come here without having to/

Katie: What were you going to do if I refused to let you in?

Fred: For goodness sake Katie, I just need you to/

Katie: What were you going to do, break in?

Fred: Of course not.

Beat

Katie, I haven't got very long so can we just/

Katie: What would you have done, scaled the back wall?

Fred: No!

Katie: Can just see you, arse over tit/

Fred: You let me in.

Katie: Imagine if I told the newspapers.

Beat

Not got far from your roots have you? Still a working class thug when it suits/

Fred: I had to/

Katie: Can't see most of your colleagues doing that though can you? Breaking into a posh house in Hampstead. Coming round the back. Scaling a wall. Forcing a door, phoning a poor innocent sleeping girl/

Fred: You are my daughter/

Katie: Still, a house of sleeping young girls. You break in, sweating and confused and shouting. You refuse to leave. Could be misconstrued, in any other circumstances it would/

Fred: Katie please/

Katie: Looks a bit weird doesn't it? Bit strange. It certainly looks desperate.

Fred: I need to/

Katie: I'd leave if I were you. Leave before someone finds you here.

Beat

Fred: I need to talk to you/

Katie: Of course I could scream. Lots of press outside, I could scream and run outside and tell them how I found you here.

Fred: Katie please/

Katie: Tell them I just found you standing in the house/

Fred: Katie, you are behaving/

Katie: I expect this is why women carry rape alarms isn't it?

Fred: I didn't mean to scare you, I just/

Katie: So that if they find a strange man in their house in the middle of the night they don't even have to scream they can just/

Fred: Katie/

Katie: So they can alert people to intruders by pressing the button. Set off the alarm.

Beat

Fred: Katie I have come to tell you that/

Katie: What?

Fred: That you have got to stop.

Katie: Have you even told Valerie? Have you told your wife that you are/

Fred: Does it matter?

Katie: Don't you think it's a bit risky?

Fred: I just wanted to talk to you.

Katie: If Valerie found out you were here you would be/

Fred: She would understand that I need/

Katie: I'm not sure that Valerie would understand. I think she might think it was one step too far, one step that she just could not/

Fred: Stop talking about/

Katie: She's been very loyal to you over the years, a stalwart really, considering the rubbish you have put her through but I think she might think that this is the line in the sand. The point of no return. This might be the moment at which she can't just let you carry on.

Beat

Fred: Please try and be reasonable Katie. I just want a reasonable conversation with you.

Katie: About the Paper?

Beat

Fred: Oh for goodness/sake

Katie: What?

Fred: You don't care about the Paper.

Katie: Don't I?

Fred: No.

Katie: You heard my speech.

Fred: It didn't sound like you.

Katie: You hardly know me.

Fred: It sounded like someone else's words.

Katie: They were my words.

Fred: It sounded like someone else had written it.

Katie: Nobody else wrote it.

Fred: You just wanted/

Katie: What?

Fred: You are just trying to ridicule me/

Katie: Don't be ridiculous/

Fred: You and your mother, you have always/

Katie: You want to be careful - you are beginning to sound/

Fred: You have always tried to trip me up/

Katie: That's not true/

Fred: Always out to embarrass/

Katie: What? What have I done to/

Fred: You are absolutely bent on/

Katie: I haven't done anything/

Fred: You and your mother/

Katie: What?

Fred: All you care about is humiliating me.

Katie: You are beginning to sound paranoid.

Fred: You have never had any interest in the environment.

Katie: How would you know?

Beat

Come round here in the middle of the night, break in, don't tell anyone you are here, just arrive in the house and phone me to tell me you are here. You have to admit it sounds a bit...sounds like you have lost it doesn't it?

Beat

Fred: Everyone thinks you are ridiculous.

Katie: That why you are here? Because everyone thinks I am ridiculous?

Fred: I am here to warn you.

Katie: To threaten me?

Fred: To try to persuade you to/

Katie: Well you're not doing a very good job are you?

Beat

Fred: I can see now that this was a waste of time.

Katie: Afraid so/

Fred: I can see that I am wasting my time with you.

Beat

You don't care what you are doing to me.

FRED turns to leave.

Beat

The day that I came round, it was your fourth birthday, the day that I gave you that dress, that yellow dress that you loved so much. Too big for you of course. I had had to guess your size and it was too big. Kept slipping off your shoulders. But you loved that dress.

Katie: I don't remember.

Fred: Me and your mum argued of course. Over tea. Managed to be civil all afternoon and then suddenly she just lost it. Just before your cake, your cake and opening your other presents. She lost it. Threw a glass of Ribena, your Ribena actually, threw it at me. Screamed like a banshee. All about you and how I hadn't done my bit and how hard it was bringing you up on her own. So we didn't notice. Didn't notice that you had climbed up. Climbed up onto the breakfast bar. On the breakfast bar where all your presents were. Your other presents and your cake, Chocolate cake with Smarties on it. God knows how you did it, but you had climbed up, up onto the bar. It was quite high. Dangerously high for such a little girl. Such a little girl in a big dress. And you stood there. We noticed you then. Standing there in your big yellow dress. You standing there, staring at us. Such a serious little face. A serious little mouth. And you looked at us both. You just looked at us. Same mouth you've got now. You just looked at us. Me with Ribena down my front and your mother all breathless from the screaming. And you just pissed, pissed all over the presents, all over the presents and the cake. Pissed all over it. All over everything.

Beat

That is your speciality isn't it Katie? Pissing all over everything.

Beat

FRED exits.

Five

The next day, mid evening. The curtains are still drawn and the stage is gloomy, but the chandelier and the fans are on. EMILIA is standing by the window looking out from behind a curtain that she has pulled halfway back.

There are press cuttings displayed on one wall and there are newspapers all over the floor.

The sound of photographers and commotion outside and the door being shut.

EMILIA busies herself with some of the cuttings.

TESS enters.

Tess: Hullo. (*Rolling a cigarette*) I think they are breeding.

Emilia: Is Katie with you?

Tess: She'll be here in a minute

TESS lights a rollie.

Think they sleep there. They all look the fucking same don't they? Same faces. Men in their thirties with stubble. I feel quite sorry for them really. Thought about, I actually contemplated getting them all a cup of tea the other day. It's like. What's that called, when you start to fancy the people who have taken you/hostage?

Emilia: Stockholm Syndrome.

Tess: Exactly/

Emilia: Not really.

Tess: Like we are their hostages.

Emilia: Nobody took us hostage did they?

Beat

Tess: What's the press like?

Emilia: Good. Good about Katie's statement.

Tess: I thought she was good in the interviews too.

Emilia: Yes.

Beat

Tess: What?

Emilia: Nothing.

Tess: Come on/

Emilia: I just wonder how much she means it.

Tess: What?

Emilia: She just repeats the same facts over and over again.

Tess: What else do you want her to do?

Emilia: I don't know.

Tess: It's always the same message isn't it?

Emilia: But word for word, what she says, it is always the same.

Tess: She'll be here in a minute, she was just...just...*(looking at one of the newspapers)* Christ, she wasn't exaggerating.

Emilia: Tess, I do actually need to talk to you about/

Tess: Makes me seem like an amateur.

Emilia: What?

Tess: The way she...the way she works with the cameras.

Beat

She is quite beautiful isn't she? Especially next to Harbourne, in his sweaty shirt and his receding hairline.

Beat

Emilia: Tess I spoke to the group today/

The noise of the front door opening and shutting again.

KATIE enters, her dress is ripped and she has a nasty cut on one leg and bruises.

Katie: Fucking hell. Bloody hell them photographers/

Emilia: Your dress is ripped.

Katie: Shit! *(looking at the dress)* Bloody hell. Must have been the, Christ, I was trying to bloody get my key out. I was right behind you Tess but I got stuck. Too many photographers.

Emilia: *(To TESS)* She has a key?

Tess: I thought you were right behind me/

Katie: Door went behind you and I tried to, trying to get my key out and there were so many of them, all pushing and shoving at me and then, then I don't know, this one bloke shoved a bit hard and I fell over.

KATIE takes the dress off. Her knee is bleeding and she has bruises all up her legs. She stands, looks at TESS.

Emilia: I'll get you something to wear.

EMILIA exits.

Katie: I must look a sight.

Beat

I must look awful.

Beat

Do I?

Tess: Sorry?

Katie: Do I look dreadful?

Beat

Tess: No.

Katie: You're just being nice.

Tess: No.

Katie: Like I've been dragged through a hedge backwards.

KATIE picks up one of the newspapers that is on the floor.

(Indicating the newspaper) Told you.

Tess: What?

Katie: The photos, from earlier. Told you I photograph well.

Tess: Yes.

Katie: I look good don't I?

Tess: Sorry?

Katie: In the photos.

Tess: I suppose so.

Katie: *(Holding out the newspaper)* Do you think I look sexy?

Tess: Sorry?

EMILIA returns with a large mans shirt. She hands the shirt to KATIE. KATIE doesn't put it on straight away.

Katie: Thanks.

Emilia: I'm not sure if we have any antiseptic.

Katie: You don't need to fuss.

Emilia: I just don't want it to get infected.

Katie: Poor photographer.

Emilia: What?

Katie: The photographer. He looked terrified. Went white as a sheet when he realised what he had done. Went white and wouldn't stop apologizing.

Beat

Emilia: Your knee is still bleeding.

Katie: Is it? (*Looks*) Shit.

Tess: (*Handing KATIE a tissue from a box on the floor*) Here.

KATIE takes a tissue and wipes the cut.

Katie: Fuck.

Emilia: It looks bad.

Katie: I always bleed loads.

Emilia: Might need stitches.

Katie: Looks worse than it is.

Emilia: You should, maybe we should take you to A and E.

Katie: I am fine.

KATIE sits down on the floor rather suddenly.

Emilia: I really think/

Katie: Took me by surprise, that's all.

Emilia: I'll get the First Aid kit.

EMILIA exits.

Beat

Katie: What?

Tess: Sorry?

Katie: You were staring at me.

Tess: No I wasn't.

Katie: I don't mind.

Beat

KATIE hobbles awkwardly over to the window where EMILIA was standing.

(Pointing) It was that one.

Tess: *(Moving to the window)* Which?

Katie: That one there. He still took a photo. Even as he was saying sorry he took a photo. Sorry can you just *(KATIE leans on TESS)* Emilia is right, I am a bit unsteady on my feet *(TESS puts her arm round KATIE and KATIE leans into her, bodily and appears to lose her balance slightly)* Sorry.

KATIE kisses TESS lightly on the lips. TESS smiles, confused for a second and then carefully leads KATIE to the sofa where KATIE sits down. KATIE smiles at TESS.

EMILIA returns with the First Aid box.

Emilia: We should raise your leg. Tess can you put Katie's leg on the, can you get a chair for Katie to rest it'?

Katie: It's fine.

TESS exits and returns quickly with a chair. She carefully moves KATIE's leg onto the chair. KATIE watches her do it.

Emilia: Fucking hell/

Katie: I'm a bleeder. I just bleed a lot. I always have been. Bleed loads. Fell off my bike when I was ten, looked like I had been in a car accident.

Emilia: But there's tones.

Katie: It's alright. It'll stop in a minute. It just looks worse than it is.

Emilia: You are all bruised.

Katie: Must have fallen awkwardly, that's all.

Emilia: It looks really horrid, to come up that quickly.

Katie: Must have bashed myself as I went down.

Emilia: Did you?

Katie: Must have.

EMILIA puts some antiseptic cream on KATIE's knee.

Shit.

Emilia: Sorry.

EMILIA continues and through the following puts a bandage around KATIE's knee.

That must be assault.

Katie: I just didn't expect it.

Emilia: Do you want to call the police?

Katie: It's my own fault. I just wasn't thinking. (*Beat*) Anyway, it's fine, it's just a bit of a cut.

EMILIA has finished dressing KATIE'S leg. KATIE starts to roll a cigarette.

What are you both looking so worried about?

Beat

(*To TESS*) You got a light?

TESS lights KATIE's cigarette for her, their heads close together.

Did you see me cry?

Emilia: What?

Katie: Our interview/

Emilia: I didn't watch it.

Katie: It was on just now.

Emilia: Was it?

Katie: They showed it just now. My mum phoned me while we were in the taxi.

Emilia: I didn't see it.

Katie: It was good. Mum said I looked like Princess Diana.

Emilia: What?

Katie: The tears. I thought that was pretty good, a pretty good touch. I've always been able to do that, just switch it on. It's a gift. I just have to think of doing it, I just

think of doing it and the tears just come. I just, I feel myself welling up, I feel the tears in my eyes and I (*she wells up*) I just, I feel them spilling out onto my cheeks (*the tears spill down her cheeks*). Like Princess Diana. Like the Queen of Hearts herself.

Beat

Tess: Have you spoken to your dad yet?

Beat

Has he tried to/

Emilia: Tess don't/

Katie: What?

Emilia: How would that/help

Katie: That's what we want isn't/

Emilia: No.

Katie: Isn't it?

Beat

Emilia: Of course not.

Tess: I was just asking/

Emilia: It's not about that, it's not about Katie and her dad Tess, and Katie shouldn't feel that she has to/

Katie: Dad came over this morning/

Emilia: What?

Katie: You were still asleep.

Beat

Emilia: Why didn't you wake us?

Katie: He broke in.

Emilia: Katie, that's/

Katie: Climbed the wall, broke in round the back.

Emilia: But there wasn't any/

Katie: A window was open. He climbed through it.

Beat

Emilia: Katie.

Katie: He phoned me once he was already inside the house. Inside the house in this room. He phoned me and told me to come downstairs.

Beat

Tess: What did he say?

Katie: Not much. Hardly anything at all. Just told me to stop it. Told me to stop it straight away. Like I was three. Like I was three and he could just tell me what to do and I would do it. Just like that. Like tell me to jump and I would ask how high. He is so arrogant. He thinks I will just roll over and do what he says. Like I will just do what he says.

Beat

Funny though, underneath it all, all the sound and the fury, he sounded scared. Underneath all his, all that anger he sounded really afraid. He actually sounded quite scared.

Six

Early the next morning. The room is the same as the night before. One curtain remains half open and the light streams in. One of the telephones starts to ring.

TESS runs on, wearing nightclothes and picks up the phone.

Tess: Hullo. Speaking.

EMILIA enters and stands by the door, bleary eyed and still half asleep.

No comment. No. No.

EMILIA crosses to the curtain and closes the curtain that is open, blocking out some of the light.

Goodbye.

TESS rings off.

Emilia: I don't know what makes them think they can ring this early.

TESS starts to roll a cigarette.

Beat

Tess: Do you want some coffee?

Emilia: Who was it?

Tess: Sorry?

Emilia: The phone, who was it?

Tess: Newspaper.

Emilia: I know that.

Tess: The Mail, just letting us know that they are running a story.

Emilia: Bit odd.

Tess: They wanted a comment.

Emilia: A comment?

Tess: They wanted a comment from me.

Emilia: What's the story?

Tess: It's just gossip really.

Emilia: What is/[it?]

Beat

What gossip?

Beat

Tess: They say they've got a photo.

Emilia: Of what?

Tess: They are probably lying.

Beat

Emilia: Why would they lie?

Tess: To get me to say something.

Emilia: What of?

Tess: Do you want some coffee?

Emilia: What have they got a photo of?

Beat

Tess, what did they want?

Tess: They say they have a photo of me and Katie.

Emilia: Doing what?

Beat

Tess: Kissing.

Beat

Emilia: Have they?

Tess: I don't know.

Emilia: Come on/

Tess: How should I/

Emilia: But they could have?

Tess: What do you mean?

Emilia: They could have a picture of you kissing?

Beat

Tess: She kissed me on the cheek.

Emilia: When?

Tess: Last night.

Beat

It doesn't actually mean anything does it?

Emilia: When did you kiss her last night?

Tess: After she cut her knee.

Emilia: I was here/

Tess: She was upset. She was a bit upset and confused and/

Emilia: But I was here, in the room/

Tess: When you went to get the First Aid kit/

Emilia: I was gone for a couple of/

Tess: I know.

Emilia: But how did they...I mean...you were inside the house, in this room/

Tess: Yes/

Emilia: Where were you?

Tess: What?

Emilia: In the room, where were you in the room?

Tess: Does it really matter?

Beat

We were standing by the window, I suppose.

Emilia: I warned you didn't I?

Tess: Oh come on/

Emilia: What?

Tess: You think that they/

Emilia: You just said they have a picture/

Tess: They are probably lying/

Emilia: Lying/

Tess: Probably just trying to provoke a/

Emilia: I warned you about the photographers.

Tess: I know but/

Emilia: I told you to be careful/

Tess: I know/

Emilia: And now they've got a picture/

Tess: She had hurt her leg, she was leaning on/

Emilia: Didn't you think about what it might look like?

Tess: I was worried about her, that's/ all

Emilia: For fuck sake Tess. You just don't think do you/

Tess: She seemed confused so I/

Emilia: She was manipulating you Tess/

Tess: I don't think you can blame/

Emilia: Oh come on.

Tess: What?

Emilia: You just said, she kissed/

Tess: She was just being/

Emilia: What?

Beat

Tess: I don't know.

Emilia: She probably set the whole thing up/

Tess: You are not/seriously

Emilia: What?

Beat

Tess: That's a bit/

Emilia: Don't you think she is capable of/

Tess: She was confused and shaking and she didn't know what she was/

Emilia: She knew exactly what she was doing.

Beat

Emilia: The way you look at her/

Tess: What do you mean?

Emilia: The way you look at her. All the time/

Tess: I don't know what you are talking about.

Emilia: Like she is, like she has mesmerised/

Tess: Fuck off Em, I don't/

Emilia: What?

Beat

I have seen you look like that before.

Tess: No you haven't/

Emilia: She doesn't fancy you Tess. She was just using you for a cheap shot.

Beat

Tess: She was confused – last night, her leg was bleeding and/

Emilia: Do you really think she cares?

Tess: What?

Emilia: About you/

Tess: I know/

Emilia: About this.

Beat

Tess: She cares about the/cause

Emilia: She cares about humiliating her father that is all.

KATIE enters and stands by the door, unseen by TESS and EMILIA.

She cares about humiliating her dad and getting her face on the telly. She is damaged and confused and that is all. And I am beginning to wonder if you/

Tess: What?

Beat

Emilia: If you care either.

Tess: Why do you think I am doing all this?

Emilia: I don't know.

Tess: It is working Em. This stuff, it's getting results.

Emilia: You can't/

Tess: I do. I do think that.

Emilia: I spoke to the group yesterday.

Tess: What are they annoyed about now?

Emilia: I tried to tell you last night but you weren't interested.

Tess: Go on then, what are they whining about this time?

Emilia: They care, that is all/

Tess: All they ever do is moan/

Emilia: And what are they meant to do/

Tess: Would it kill them to be a little grateful?

Emilia: (*Incredulous*) Grateful?

Beat

Tess: Yes grateful.

Beat

Emilia: I can't believe I am hearing this.

Tess: All they do is moan and/

Emilia: They just care about the cause.

Tess: I have done more for that cause than any of them. Me and Katie have got the cause more publicity than they have ever/

Emilia: By flashing your tits at the camera and pouting and fucking/

Tess: All so fucking pious. Like they actually believe sitting about eating lentils and discussing things...endlessly bloody discussing things is getting us – had got us anywhere/

Emilia: But you act like/

Tess: All they do is patronise us and treat us like we don't know what we are doing, when we do, when I do know exactly what I am doing and it is them that are indulgent and self-centred, acting like it is their campaign, their cause, their fucking precious hair-shirt and no one else is allowed to make any decisions. I mean for fuck sake, it's not just me, the way they talk to you Em, the way Tom speaks to you, like he thinks that it is his job to make all the decisions, like he owns the campaign/

Emilia: No he doesn't/

Tess: Like he owns the campaign and he owns you.

Beat

Emilia: And you do? You own me do you Tess? Is that what you are saying?

Beat

Tess: I didn't say that.

Emilia: It's what you meant though, isn't it?

Tess: No.

Beat

Emilia: They think you are humiliating yourself, that you are humiliating yourself and the campaign. They think you are a whore, a whore for publicity. That's what Tom said, that you were a whore for the cameras.

Beat

They are going to make a statement and it is stuff like this, it is things like this that have made them so angry. It is this kind of behaviour, this kind of thing that means that they have had enough. This is why they are kicking you out the group.

Beat

Tess: So what?

Emilia: You don't mean that.

Tess: Don't I?

Beat

Katie: (*TESS AND EMILIA turn, surprised, as KATIE starts to speak*) My dad phoned me three times yesterday, kept repeating himself. Just rang and rang until I picked up and half the time he put the phone down as soon as I picked up. At first he was just completely, just, I could feel it down the phone, stiff with rage, with rage and a kind of injustice, injustice about it all. I could feel him thinking it, thinking how could I? How could a stupid little girl like me, like us, all of us, just a group of girls be messing things up for him? Be messing things up for him and his plans? How can we humiliate him like this when everything was going so well?

Beat

He said he was trying to talk some sense into me because it wasn't just him that I was upsetting. 'Your Mother, think about the effect that this is having on your Mother.'

Beat

Emilia: I know, but Katie that isn't the/ point

Katie: And it wasn't just him. Not just him, two other people working for him, a man from Downing Street, young man from Downing street, he wouldn't say his name, but kept, like he wanted to threaten me but without saying anything/

Emilia: But Katie/

Katie: And this women from the party, phoned me all chummy to tell me how she agreed with me, of course she agreed with me, they all did, on lots of what I was saying, but this wasn't the way that I should go about things. All day yesterday, all these calls. They are really scared.

Emilia: You don't understand/

Katie: I do. The group are pissed off about me/

Tess: Not just you Katie/

Katie: But it doesn't really matter does it?

Emilia: Of course it/

Katie: Tess is right, we have outgrown them.

Emilia: Katie, you don't understand/

Katie: I do Em/

Emilia: There are photos of you and Tess kissing/

Katie: So?

Emilia: It makes us look/

Katie: He offered to come over. He said he would come over today. Through the front door this time. In front of all the photographers. He sounded desperate. Sounded like he had lost it.

One of the phone lines starts ringing.

Another one goes off.

TESS's mobile starts ringing.

EMILIA's starts ringing.

KATIE starts laughing.

News must have broken.

Tess: What?

Katie: You and me kissing. It must have broken mustn't it?

Emilia: Unplug the landlines.

Tess: What?

Emilia: We have to unplug the landlines.

Tess: Shouldn't we answer them?

Emilia: We need to unplug all of them.

Tess: But shouldn't we speak to them?

Emilia: No.

The phones carry on ringing.

We need to turn everything off until we have has decided what to do.

Beat

Katie: You're the press officer.

They turn their mobiles off. TESS exits to pull one housephone cord out and EMILIA crosses to the other side of the room and pulls out the second line.

Silence

TESS enters.

Beat

I think we should have him round this evening. In the blackout. Then they can get some good shots of him stumbling round in the dark, in the pitch black. That will look good won't it?

Beat

Tess: Em – I think we have/to

Katie: But you have to tell me Emilia – you have/

Emilia: What?

Katie: You have to let me know – if I am, if we are, if we are compromising this campaign/

Emilia: Then what?

Katie: If we are compromising what you stand for – then you have to tell us.

Tess: Em?

Beat

Katie: Maybe he will fall over.

Tess: What?

Katie: In the dark, stumbling about in the dark, maybe he will fall on his arse. That would be good wouldn't it? The Minister for Climate Change on his arse.

ACT THREE

One

8pm that evening. The curtains are drawn and the fans and the chandelier are off. There are several large battery operated lantern torches that illuminate the room, although the light is very cold and it is quite gloomy. FRED stands in the middle, looking at the paintings. He mops his brow with a handkerchief.

TESS enters, wearing a white Georgian dress and holding a glass of water. She hands the glass to FRED. FRED drinks the whole glass of water in one go.

Fred: (*Smiling*) I was absolutely parched.

Tess: Katie will be in in a minute.

Fred: No rush.

Tess: She is just talking to the press.

Fred: Absolutely no hurry.

Tess: I'm/

Fred: I was really thirsty.

Tess: I/

Fred: My throat was like sandpaper.

Tess: I'm Tess.

Fred: I know who you are.

Beat

KATIE and EMILIA enter, also wearing white Georgian dresses.

Fred: Christ.

Katie: What/

Fred: You look/

Katie: What?

Beat

Fred: You look nice.

Katie: Go on then.

Fred: What?

Katie: Go on then – tell us what you are going to offer/

Fred: Sorry – I/

Katie: Tell us what you are offering.

Fred: Offering?/

Katie: What compromises are you going to offer?

Beat

Fred: I did think it would be just us.

Katie: Did you?

Fred: Yes.

Katie: Why?

Fred: What?

Katie: Why did you think that?

Beat

Fred: I thought you said/

Katie: What?

Fred: I thought you said it would be just us.

Katie: Did you?

Beat

Tess and Emilia are here too.

Fred: Well if you are sure you want them here.

Beat

I just thought...

Beat

Well I suppose it doesn't really make any difference.

TESS lights a cigarette.

Fred: Can I have one?

Tess: They're roll ups.

Fred: I can see that.

Beat

Tess: Do you want me to roll you one?

Fred: I can roll it myself.

TESS passes FRED tobacco and papers. FRED sits on the sofa and starts to roll a cigarette.

Tess: Didn't know you smoked.

Katie: He doesn't.

Fred: I used to smoke roll-ups.

Tess: Did you?

Fred: I was young once.

Katie: Bit of a rebel weren't you Dad?

Fred: Not in the same way of course.

Katie: Bit of a lefty/

Tess: Were you?

Fred: I wouldn't go/

Katie: You were like us once too/

Fred: I was a member of CND.

Katie: Bit of a hell-raiser.

Fred: I went to some protests.

Katie: Held up some placards.

Fred: Went to Greenham Common.

Katie: With the women.

Fred: Something wrong with that?

Katie: Of course not.

Fred: I learnt a lot from them – from those women/

Katie: I bet you did.

Fred: From those – (*jovially*) it might be a dirty word to you now – from those feminists/

Emilia: Why would it be a dirty word?

Fred: I just meant/

Emilia: We know what you meant.

Beat

Fred: I'm sorry, I didn't/

Emilia: We are feminists Mr Harbourne.

Fred: So am I/

Emilia: That's what the pretty dresses are about.

Fred: Yes, of course/

Emilia: We are reclaiming feminism for the green movement/

Fred: Yes I know – it was just a – I was just joking.

Emilia: Right.

Katie: I bet it was really inspiring.

Fred: Sorry?

Katie: Greenham Common.

Fred: Oh – yes/

Katie: Changing the world through direct/

Fred: I have a lot of respect for mass protest.

Emilia: Do you/

Fred: Of course – peaceful/

Katie: I can just see you, across the barricades/

Fred: You shouldn't mock it Katie/

Katie: Why?

Fred: Part of your tradition, the great British tradition of dissent/

Katie: Power to the people eh Dad?

Beat

Fred: It was different back then of course, there was more of a/

Katie: What?

Fred: It was more of a mass/

Katie: Yeah?

Fred: It was bigger and we were...things were a lot more innocent then.

Emilia: Innocent?

Beat

Fred: A lot less media-savvy than your generation.

Emilia: What happened?

Fred: I'm sorry/

Emilia: You were at Greenham Common, you were a member of CND and now/

Fred: Well you know/

Emilia: What?

FRED finishes rolling the cigarette. TESS passes him a lighter, he lights his cigarette.

Katie: It suits you.

Fred: Thank you.

Katie: Makes you look a bit less like a politician.

Beat

You should take it up again.

Fred: It's not me any more.

Katie: Isn't it?

Fred: No.

Beat

That is what happens when you get old.

Katie: Is it?

Fred: Yes.

Beat

Your self image changes.

Katie: You stop smoking roll-ups.

Fred: Your views change.

Katie: You compromise.

Fred: Yes.

Beat

I am on your side.

Katie: What have you got done?

Fred: I'm sorry?

Katie: If you are on our side what measures have you put in place that/

Fred: Several measures have been /discussed

Katie: What was it the Paper suggested?

Fred: Since then I mean/

Katie: A public campaign advising us not to boil more water in our kettles than we need when we make a cup of tea, to consider washing our clothes less often and to make sure we always remember to turn lights off/

Fred: You are trivialising/

Katie: Am I?

Fred: Yes.

Katie: I am trivialising it?

Beat

Fred: A bit, yes.

Katie: We are sitting in the middle of a blackout.

Fred: I can see that Katie.

Katie: We are sitting in the middle of a blackout and you think I am trivialising it/

Fred: What we said was a lot more complex/

Katie: A blackout in the middle of the biggest heatwave ever recorded and after a winter of floods.

Beat

You have put no industry measures in place at all.

Beat

Fred: We are committed to encouraging industry to/

Emilia: Encouraging?

Fred: Yes/

Katie: What does that even/

Fred: We are expecting serious changes/

Katie: By being 'encouraging'?

Fred: What is wrong with that?

Katie: There are no actual terms laid down in the Paper other than public campaigns and/

Fred: We are still working on it/

Katie: Good/

Fred: I... sorry?

Katie: You said you are still working on it/

Fred: On the details, yes/

Katie: You haven't decided if this will definitely be the policy/

Fred: That wasn't what I/

Katie: So you are still considering what industry side measure you would like to include.

Beat

Fred: Of course we could move a lot faster if/

Katie: Yes?/

Fred: If I was not having to deal with the unnecessary distraction/

Emilia: Distraction?

Beat

Fred: That was the wrong/

Emilia: You think we are a distraction?

Fred: That isn't what I/

Emilia: You think that legitimate protest is/

Fred: (*Amused*) Sorry – ‘legitimate’/

Emilia: Yes, legitimate.

Beat

You think that dissension is the same as/

Fred: Legitimacy implies – your tactics – come on you have to admit they have been/

Katie: What?

Fred: I just meant - I /

Emilia: You think we are a distraction?

Fred: I misspoke.

Katie: What are you offering us dad?

Fred: I am just telling you what the situation/

Katie: Funny, because it sounded like you were offering us/

Fred: I’m not, I am just telling you the situation.

Katie: When you phoned me earlier and begged me to come/

Fred: I did not beg Katie/

Katie: When you phoned again and again/

Fred: I just wanted to talk to you/

Katie: To talk/

Fred: To you – to my daughter/

Katie: It sounded like you were saying if I shut up, if I stopped embarrassing you like this, you would reopen the consultation.

Beat

Fred: Look, I cannot make any/

Katie: What then?

Fred: If I had a clearer idea of what your... what it was you were asking for it would be a lot easier for me to respond. It seems to me that you are not being very clear about what it is exactly that you want.

Emilia: Katie has already told you what we want.

Fred: Katie/

Katie: We want you to reopen the consultation.

Beat

Fred: I am on your side but change has to/be gradual

Katie: Why? Why does it have to be /gradual?

Emilia: We just want you to honour your manifesto pledges. The pledges that brought you to power.

Fred: (*Impatiently*) That is how it works, that is how change works/

Emilia: Why are you here?

Beat

Fred: Because I thought we could/

Emilia: In front of all the press/

Fred: I am offering you my continuing commitment to/

Emilia: But you are not saying you will change any/thing

Fred: It's not that simple.

Beat

Katie: Why come here then?

Fred: I thought me and my daughter could/

Katie: I am here, I am talking to you dad. I have talked to you/

Fred: But you are clearly, you have clearly been/

Katie: What?

Fred: You are not yourself, this is not you.

Katie: How would you know?

Fred: You have been brainwashed.

KATIE starts to laugh.

This is serious Katie.

Katie: I know.

Fred: This isn't just a game.

Katie: I know it isn't a game.

Fred: I don't think you realise what you are doing.

Katie: I know what I am doing Dad.

Fred: They are just using the fact that you are emotionally/

Katie: What? Emotionally what?

Fred: Don't/

Katie: What am I? Tell me what I am/

Fred: They are using the fact that you are vulnerable/

Katie: Vulnerable?

Fred: They know how you feel about me and they are using you.

Beat

If you don't change your mind, if you don't stop all this I could lose my position. I could lose my ministerial post, I could get booted out of the party, I could lose my seat. All because you wanted to punish me.

Beat

Emilia: So you aren't going to compromise?

Fred: The chief whip phoned me this morning. I am going to get deselected. I will lose my position. I will get shuffled out of the cabinet, I will get deselected and at the next election I will get voted out, that is what you are/

Katie: So that is all you came here for, just to persuade me/

Fred: What else am I supposed to do? You didn't seriously think that I would be here to negotiate with a bunch of kids. Can you imagine how that would look? My daughter threw a strop and I just rolled over. You have a tantrum and I agreed with you. If I called for a reopening of a consultation just because you threw your toys out the pram can you imagine what that would do? How that would look? No one is taking you seriously, no one cares what you have to say. All this, all this media circus, that is all it fucking is, a fucking big top, it is a distraction. The circus will move on in a week. The consultation is closed, the Paper will get passed, the only thing, the only thing you could possibly achieve is, is what you are doing to me.

Beat

Well I can see your mind is made up Katie, I don't think there is any point in my staying is there?

FRED stands up to leave. KATIE blocks his path.

Fred: Come on now.

Katie: No.

Beat

Fred: I'm asking you politely.

Katie: Are you?

Fred: Yes.

Katie: You are asking me to get out the way.

Fred: Please/

Katie: To move out the way.

Beat

Fred: I ... I don't want to/

Katie: What?

Fred: Don't make me...

Beat

(Taking a step towards KATIE) I don't want to have to/

Katie: That would look good/

Fred: Please – let's be dignified about this – be dignified/

Katie: You using force – that would be/

Fred: Be reasonable Katie.

Beat

I am asking you to please get out of my way.

Katie: You will have to make me.

Beat

You will have to use force. You will have to make me, I am not going to move.

Beat

Go on then.

Fred: Oh for Christ's/

Katie: Go on.

Emilia: Please Mr Harbourne, please don't/

Fred: I/

Emilia: This will all have been pointless if you just/

Katie: I am sure that the press would be pleased to hear about it.

Emilia: Mr Harbourne, I am sure that we can/

Fred: I would like to leave now/

Katie: You will have to pick me up and/

Fred: This is ridiculous/

Emilia: (*Taking a step towards FRED and putting her hand on his arm*) Can we just – please can we just/

Fred: (*Pushing EMILIA off, EMILIA stumbles slightly*) No!

Beat

Sorry.

Beat

Look I am sorry – I didn't mean to – that was an...an accident but this is ridiculous.

Katie: Ridiculous?

Fred: You want people to take you seriously, but just look at you. You want to be a legitimate protest group and this is how you...you are discrediting yourselves. The way that you are behaving. It is degrading/

Katie: Is it?

Fred: Yes, of course it is. Parading yourselves in public the way that you do. These stunts. The way you/

Emilia: The way we manipulate the media/

Fred: Exactly/

Emilia: The way we manipulate your arguments/

Fred: Exactly/

Emilia: What you say and do/

Fred: Yes/

Emilia: So that it sounds completely different to what you said. Twist what you say and do to make it look so sordid/

Fred: I/

Emilia: Like it never came out of your mouth. Like you don't recognise it/

Fred: I/

Emilia: And use the fact that people like to take photos of pretty girls dressed up in white dresses and the fact that they will always speculate about young women's sexuality and their looks/

Fred: I see what you are/

Emilia: You are right. We should never have started using the media the way that you use/

Fred: I understand what you are/

Emilia: You were right, they were more innocent times back then. Your generation had Greenham Common and feminism and left and right and class and all that and now things are much more...what we inherited...things...they are mucky. Which is why we have got to do it.

Tess: Em/

Emilia: Why we have not got a choice, we have got to do/

Fred: Do what?

Two

A few hours later. The room remains lit solely by lantern torches.

FRED is tied to a chair in the middle of the room. He is gagged and bound.

EMILIA stands uneasily by the door, not looking at FRED.

FRED is staring at EMILIA. She has not noticed that he has come round.

FRED tries to speak, gargling slightly.

Beat

FRED tries to speak again, gargling.

Beat

FRED rocks his chair back and forth to make a noise.

Beat

EMILIA goes over to FRED and loosens his gag.

Fred: Can I...can I have some water.

Emilia: I/

Fred: I need some water. Please.

Beat

Emilia: Ok.

EMILIA leaves the room.

FRED sits quietly.

EMILIA enters holding a glass of water.

EMILIA feeds FRED the water, he drinks it greedily.

Fred: I was parched.

Emilia: Yes.

Fred: My throat.

Emilia: Yes.

Fred: Like sandpaper.

Emilia: Right.

Fred: It's the heat I think. Makes it so dry.

Beat

Thanks for getting me that.

Emilia: That's ok.

Fred: You didn't have to

Emilia: I know.

Fred: Where are Tess's family from?

Pause

Emilia: Sorry?

Fred: Her family?

Beat

Emilia: Why are you asking?

Fred: It's not a trick question.

Pause

Emilia: Shropshire.

Fred: But this house is from her mother's side?

Emilia: Yes.

Fred: And where are they from?

Beat

Emilia: Bradford I think, originally.

Fred: I'm black country myself. Born and bred.

Beat

And the paintings?

Emilia: Sorry/

Fred: Where do they come from?

Emilia: Sorry I/

Fred: They comes from her mother's side do they?

Emilia: I don't know/

Fred: She inherited them with the house?

Emilia: I have no idea.

Beat

Fred: They are fascinating aren't they?

Emilia: I suppose/

Fred: You're not a fan?

Emilia: I don't like the Victorians.

Fred: No?

Emilia: Find it all a bit sentimental.

Fred: My parents collected a lot of prints like that. They are very English aren't they, very British?

Emilia: I don't know.

Fred: I've always been something of a fan of the Victorian realists. Dockyards and factories and so on. Honest toil. I expect you think that is ridiculous?

Emilia: I think it's sentimental.

Fred: (*Smiling*) Very good.

Beat

Have you heard of Edwin Butler Bayliss?

Beat

Emilia: No.

Fred: I think you would like him. He isn't famous. Same period as these painters. His father was a manufacturer of some sort, of metals, not in Bradford, in Wolverhampton, my neck of the woods, but much the same world and he only ever painted that landscape. Endless obsessive paintings of the kind of visual impoverishment of a landscape, the slag heaps and the smoking towers and the sheer industry of the place. His paintings are part of the collection at Wolverhampton Gallery but they don't get shown much now. Council keep them locked up in their buildings. People don't like Edwin's work. People don't like to look at all those greys, endless greys with just the oranges of the fiery holes. They find it too pessimistic. They prefer the warmth of these kinds of paintings I think. All these paintings, Joseph of Derby, scientific progress, the warmth of industry, the communion of people. Not nice to see what has created that progress. Even then people didn't want to look at where their wealth had come from.

Emilia: People don't like to think of the cost of their lifestyle.

Fred: Exactly.

Beat

But that was the funny thing about Edwin. He lived at home his whole life, never left home, never married. Lived off his dad's money. All that anger, all that bleakness of all those landscapes, people toiling in horrific conditions and he lived off the money from the factory his whole life. It must have been difficult. His whole existence, all that history and wealth and prosperity built from the muck that he objected too. The muck that he thought was ruining the landscape. Must have been a strange position to be in.

TESS and KATIE enter.

Beat

Fred: (To *TESS*) I think your mother's family must have been industrialists?

Beat

Tess: Originally.

Fred: Ah yes, wool manufacturers I bet?

Beat

Tess: I think so, yes.

Fred: Real Bradford industry that. The industrial revolution at it's height. Magnificent in a way.

Tess: I suppose so.

Fred: And now here you are.

Tess: Yes.

Fred: The daughter of industry. Of coal and wool and/

Tess: Ironic isn't it?

Beat

Nina will be in in a minute.

Fred: Nina?

Tess: Williams.

Fred: The features writer?

FRED laughs a little.

Tess: What?

Fred: Nothing. Just a funny choice.

Tess: What do you mean?

Fred: Thought that you would want to give an exclusive like this to someone a bit more/

Tess: What?

Beat

Fred: I don't know. Maybe someone who actually agrees with you.

Tess: Why?

Fred: I just/

Tess: She understands/

Fred: Understands?

Tess: She knows what the story is. She knows what this will mean.

Fred: Mean?

Tess: What it will represent.

Beat

Fred: Does she know that you tied me up/

Tess: We thought that we would give her a surprise. More impact that way.

Fred: More bang for your buck.

Tess: Exactly.

Beat

Emilia: We could/

Tess: Nina understands why we did what we did.

Emilia: We could untie him now. For the meeting with Nina/

Tess: She gets it.

Emilia: We could/

Katie: Why should we?

Beat

Emilia: It's not about humiliating him.

Katie: Isn't it?

Emilia: No.

Katie: Tying him up like this?

Beat

We won't lose anything if Nina's photographer gets a few shots of him tied up will we?

Beat

Emilia: He has agreed to do what we want.

Katie: Exactly/

Emilia: So I don't see why/

Katie: It did work.

Emilia: Yes.

Tess: I am really proud of you Em, for/

Emilia: But I think we should untie him/now that

Tess: If you think/

Emilia: I want us to untie him

Beat

Tess: Alright Em, alright, if that's what you think/

Emilia: Yes.

Katie: Fine.

Emilia: I just don't see any point in humiliating him/

Katie: Ok. You are the Press Officer so whatever/

Emilia: I want to untie him.

Beat

Katie: It would have made a much better picture though, wouldn't it? If he had been tied up.

Beat

Emilia: I'm untying him.

EMILIA carefully unties FRED. FRED stands. He readjusts his tie.

Have you thought about what you are going to say?

Fred: I think that is up to me isn't it?

Emilia: I...I was just asking.

Fred: I think I am allowed that dignity aren't I?

There is a knock at the door.

Tess: That will be Nina.

Katie: I'll get it.

KATIE exits.

NINA and KATIE enter.

Nina: (To EMILIA) So you took my advice.

Emilia: Sorry?

Nina: You did something to keep our attention.

Emilia: I/

Nina: Very arresting. Impressive. (*Shaking FRED's hand*). Shame you aren't still tied up really ... ha ha.

Emilia: Sorry?

Nina: Well, it would have made a much better photo wouldn't it. Ha ha. Still. Probably for the best. (*To FRED*) Nice to see you Fred.

Fred: Nina.

FRED and NINA sit down.

Nina: So Fred, I think you are our first resignation.

Fred: Yes.

Nina: It's an amazing record really/

Fred: What?

Nina: For the new cabinet to have got this far in without anyone/

Fred: Yes.

Nina: The honeymoon period must finally be over.

Beat

And you the minister for Climate Change. I wonder what that will mean.

NINA takes out a tape recorder and puts it on the table.

Right, shall we begin?

END

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