



## Preview Script

# *Dancing With Auntie*

a one *(or two)* act play

by

**Bill Cronshaw**

# **Dancing With Auntie**

by Bill Cronshaw

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Published by :

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Publication History:

August 2006 : First Edition

**NOTE : This is a preview version, and does not contain the full script.**

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**ISBN 1 904458 89 0**

## Characters (4m, 4f)

### **Principals** (3m, 4f)

Norman Metcalfe (Dad)	45-55, Barry's father
Beryl Metcalfe (Mam)	40-50, Barry's mother
Barry Metcalfe	17-18, their son
Susan Pearson	17-18, Barry's girlfriend
Dot Metcalfe	40-50, Barry's unmarried aunt, Marlene's mother
Marlene Tonks	25, Barry's cousin (his 'Auntie')
Jed Tonks	25-30, Marlene's husband

### **Support** (1m)

Older Barry	35-50, written as a disembodied, reflective voice
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## Synopsis

The Boxing Day 'do' at Barry's parents' house was always the same, year after year, until 1967. Up to then, the get-together had consisted of a visit by Auntie Dot, cousin Marlene, and Jed, Marlene's boorish husband; present giving, mountains of food, too much drink, and dancing. Every year, to Barry's excruciating embarrassment, Dot would say to Barry, "Come on Barry, dance with your auntie!", and Marlene, Dot's daughter; also called 'auntie' by Barry, would 'inadvertently' find some way of making him cringe.

When Christmas 1967 arrives though, Barry, now in his late teens, and having outgrown the childish pleasures of Christmas, invites his new girlfriend, Susan, along to meet Beryl, his mum, Norman his dad, and his other close relatives. Her inclusion in the festivities however, has a catalytic effect on the entire family's relationships; changes that somewhat alter the Christmas-time party atmosphere. Susan is a very modern, uninhibited 'sixties' girl, and quickly comes into conflict with Beryl, a strictly conventional woman, who desperately tries to reinforce her rose-tinted view of family life.

With tensions raised, Marlene's pregnancy is clumsily announced and despite more ham-fisted attempts at humour from Jed, Norman is forced to keep the peace between the women as deeply hidden anxieties rise to the surface like molten lava, scorching each and all in its path. The source of the turmoil is uncovered when Beryl's fragile emotions explode and she reveals the family's dark secret - that Norman made a girl pregnant while he was in the army. The baby's mother died at birth, and so the child (Marlene) was brought up as her own by Norman's sister, Dot. Marlene and Jed are unaware of this, as is Barry, who now has a new step-sister. With everyone coming to terms with this dramatic news, the play finishes with just Barry and Marlene on stage, as she touchingly says to him, "Come on Barry, dance with your ... auntie?".

## Setting

Suburban Manchester, 1967

## Scenes

Scene One :	A dance in a school hall
Scene Two :	The Metcalfe's House
Scene Three :	The Metcalfe's House
Scene Four :	Marlene And Jed's House
Scene Five :	The Metcalfe's House
Scene Six :	Susan's Bedroom
Scene Seven :	Dot's Soliloquy
Scene Eight :	The Metcalfe's House
Scene Nine :	Outside The Metcalfe's House
Scene Ten :	Norman's Soliloquy

### *Optional Interval*

Scene Eleven :	The Metcalfe's House
Scene Twelve :	The Metcalfe's House
Scene Thirteen :	Marlene's Soliloquy (Lavatory & Landing)
Scene Fourteen :	Susan's Soliloquy
Scene Fifteen :	The Metcalfe's Kitchen
Scene Sixteen :	The Metcalfe's Garden
Scene Seventeen :	Jed's Soliloquy
Scene Eighteen :	The Metcalfe's Garden

## First Performed

'Dancing With Auntie' premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in August 2004 with the following cast and crew :-

Barry . . . . .	Tim Minshull
Norman . . . . .	Iain Barton
Beryl . . . . .	Lisa Defty
Jed . . . . .	Robbie Gardner
Marlene . . . . .	Karen Little
Dot . . . . .	Helen O'Reilly
Susan . . . . .	Claire Benjamin
<i>Lights And Sound . . . . .</i>	<i>Alex Lewer</i>

## Running Time

The relatively fast-paced original production ran for 70 minutes, without an interval, to fit in to the production schedule of its Edinburgh venue. It is expected that other productions will be more leisurely-paced which should provide a performance time of 75-80 minutes.

## Also by Bill Cronshaw

### **Free And Easy** - a two act Comedy (5m, 4f)

Set in 1960's Manchester, Eric and Iris Dobbins have been running a friendly neighbourhood pub (The Last Drop) for many years, and regularly run an evening of 'Free And Easy' (now known as Karaoke), both of which have helped them to win the coveted 'Pub Of The North' Award twice. Everybody knows everybody – it's a real family style pub; a home from home – somewhere to feel safe and warm and comfortable.

Their peaceful existence is threatened however by a visit from Ron Stone, the brewery's new external premises consultant who presents them with a new five-year business plan and a revised tenancy agreement. The oleaginous Stone has seen the 'marketing potential' of The Last Drop and has persuaded the brewery to not renew their existing agreement, but to demand twenty-five thousand pounds for a new one. Failure to pay will mean eviction – and thus allow the consultants to take over the pub and transform it into an 'entertainment centre' where pole-dancing and other salacious events are held. Eric, Iris and Tracy (their daughter) are distraught, Vanessa and Sharon (the barmaids) are devastated, and the regulars (Kev, 'Switch' and Lonnie) are disconcerted.

Vanessa feels obliged to reveal to Iris that she knows Ron Stone of old, having had to 'dance' in one of his clubs in the South, and that she may have an idea of how to stop him in his tracks. She persuades Sharon and the male regulars to help her and sets about her plan.

She and Sharon (together with Kev, 'Switch' and Lonnie) visit Ron's office. The girls pretend to agree with him that it would be in all their best interests to modernise the pub, then, barricading him in another office and fusing all the lights, they manage to steal his file on The Last Drop. This reveals that not only was there a letter for the Dobbins' from North West TV offering the pub an entertainment contract, but the 'new' tenancy agreement was a forgery. By the time Ron manages to escape and gets to The Last Drop, not only have the relevant papers been given to a solicitor, but Eric has recorded all of Ron's threats and admissions on tape, ready for the Police. With Ron's plans thwarted, the staff and regulars at "the North's favourite pub" look forward to a brighter future with 'Free And Easy' beamed live into every home, every Friday night.

With over fifteen songs from the 50s and 60s, to be successful, this play with music requires an enthusiastic cast of strong actor/singers, and a small competent band.

## Scene 1

**MUSIC : 'DO I STILL FIGURE IN YOUR LIFE'** (HONEYBUS) *[Do not use the later Joe Cocker version]*

*The music underscores throughout the scene.*

**Older Barry** We'd met at school ... I liked her ... she was funny and pretty ... and clever and it was at a school dance when I met her, properly like. Tommy Miles had bet me that I wouldn't dare ask her to dance ... and he was right! I didn't dare! I don't know why ... all she could say was no ... And then ... then ... it was amazing I couldn't believe it ... she was walking towards me. Me! I thought she was coming up to Tommy Miles ... All the girls fancied him ... And I couldn't believe it when ...

*Tight spotlight on Susan.*

**Susan** Do you want to dance?

**Barry** Pardon?

**Susan** Do you want to dance?

**Barry** Me?

**Susan** *(She laughs)* Yeah, you!

*The spotlight widens as Barry and Susan dance together.*

**Older Barry** And so ... we danced. I tried to act all calm like ... but I wasn't calm ... my heart was pounding! I'd never danced like this with a girl before ... we put our arms round each other and ... I ... I could smell her perfume and ... and I wished it was just me and her and everybody else didn't seem to matter ... it just seemed right ... the two of us ... we danced ... we danced ... and just when I thought it couldn't get any better ...

*Susan kisses him.*

**Barry** Oh, bloody 'ell!

*The lights and music slowly fade.*

## Scene 2

*A spotlight on the contemporary, mature Barry sitting on a stool stage left.*

**Older Barry** You know, the first mention of Christmas and I'm thinking of when I was a kid. Dad getting the box of decorations down from the loft ...

*Lights up stage right on Norman and Beryl. Norman is standing on a ladder that Beryl holds. Norman's feet are all that is visible of him.*

**Norman** Can someone give me a hand here!

**Older Barry** ... Mam supervising proceedings ...

**Beryl** Do you need a duster in that loft, Norman?

**Older Barry** ... And the Christmas tree. Not any old Christmas tree, mind you ... the Christmas tree! *(Barry produces a tacky silver Christmas tree and places it on his knee).* I'd first seen it when I was eight. It was glittering in Tomlinson's shop window ... and I wanted it! How I wanted it! And I was so thrilled when it actually became ours! To know that Mam and Dad had got it for me ... for me ... because they knew how much it meant to me ...

*Barry places the Christmas Tree on the floor so that Norman can then refer to it. Norman enters carrying a cardboard box of decorations.*

**Norman** *(Nodding in the direction of the tree)* It'll be cheaper in the long run will this ...

**Beryl** It'll help keep the place nice and tidy! Them pine needles get everywhere!

**Older Barry** In our house, Christmas was a Godsend ...

**Norman** Do you want a shandy, Beryl? I can open the Party Seven if you like!

**Beryl** Go on ... but don't be having too much, mind! And be careful you don't spill any. That floor doesn't mop itself!

**Older Barry** ... if only because for once in the year everything changed. The ordinary became extraordinary. It might just be the paper decorations hanging across the room ...

**Norman** *(On ladder, again leaning precariously)* Can someone give me a hand here!  
**Beryl** Do you want a duster while you're up there Norman?  
**Older Barry** ... or the lights with all their colours sparkling and reflecting in the windows and mirrors ...  
**Norman** Bugger! Have we got any spare bulbs, Beryl?  
**Beryl** Ooh ... don't they show up the marks on the windows! That's one of the snags about Christmas  
**Older Barry** ... and, to my child's eyes, our little corner of Manchester became, for that short annual period of time, a wonderland! But it wasn't just the house that was transformed. No! It seemed to affect everyone! Oh, it was good to watch the relatives in action ... and us kids had plenty of opportunities to do that because there were parties ... family get-togethers.

*Fade to black.*

**MUSIC : 'PUPPET ON A STRING' (SANDIE SHAW)**

*Lights up to reveal the whole cast being led by Dot in a group dance. This continues until brought to a sudden halt by Beryl.*

**Beryl** Who's got dog muck on their shoes?

*It transpires that Jed is the culprit.*

**Jed** Oh bloody hell! Marl, can you sort this out?

*The music and action freezes.*

**Older Barry** Of course, there was always a price to pay for your pleasures! I learned that at a very tender age. It was only a matter of time before you heard those famous words ...

*Dot rushes forward to Barry.*

**Dot** Come on our Barry! Dance with your auntie!

**Older Barry** Every year was the same ... I could watch them ... and that's the way it always was ... me watching them. Until ... until ... that year ... when, for some reason, I became the focus of attention. Auntie Marlene, well cousin Marlene really, but we all called her auntie, started it ... trust her! I'd just started shaving ...

*Two separate tight spotlights focus on Marlene and Barry throughout the following. They do not look at each other but play this 'out front'.*

**Marlene** Have you burnt yourself, our Barry?

**Barry** Burnt myself? No. Why?

**Marlene** Your face ... it's all blotchy and red ... like a baboon's arse.

**Barry** *(Embarrassed)* No ... it's just ... it must have been ... the hot water ...

**Marlene** You look like Jed did when he lay out in the sun in Rhyl. Raw his face was ... he screamed every time I went near him. *(Pause)*. Some honeymoon that turned out to be! *(Pause)*. Oh, you've got it all before you, our Barry! Don't go making the mistakes I made!

*Spot fades on Marlene.*

**Barry** "Don't make the mistakes I made". What was it about all the adults in my life that made them say that? As if everything they did was a mistake! I mean, you might as well not bother living at all if everything you do turns out to be a mistake ... Mind you, I suppose if I was her, married to Jed ...

*Two separate spotlights focus on Jed and Barry. Again, they do not look at each other.*

**Jed** Bazzar!

**Barry** Jed.

**Jed** How are you doing?

**Barry** Doing, Uncle Jed?

**Jed** I bet it's all girls and drinking now, eh, eh?

**Barry** Well, I've got my A-Levels and things ...

**Jed** That's the way, that's the way! Make the most of it my son! I tell you, I did, I did! Great days, great days! So who is she then?

**Barry** Who's who?

**Jed** The bint! Or is there more than one?

**Barry** I'm not ... I don't really know ...  
**Jed** You're a dark horse, our Barry! That's the way though! Play the field! Twist and turn ... swivel and stoop ... jab and glide! And by the way ...  
**Barry** What?  
**Jed** Give her one for me!

*Blackout.*

### Scene 3 - The Metcalfe's House

#### **MUSIC : 'HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS'** (BING CROSBY)

*As the lights come up on the interior of the Metcalfe's home, we see Beryl who is busily tidying the house in preparation for the party. As she bustles around, it is clear that she is not pleased. She checks on the time frequently, often sighs with annoyance and is obviously anything but festive in spirit. She comes and goes from the kitchen, perhaps carrying hot items to place on a table.*

**Beryl** Now let me see ... Sandwiches, lettuce, tomatoes, pies, barm cakes, biscuits, vol-au-vents, tea cups ... Where's that man? *(She sees herself in the mirror above the fireplace).* Good God, what do I look like ... I'll get me make-up.

*She scuttles into the kitchen. Fade music. Enter Norman. He is tipsy, and as he walks into the room he suddenly stops as he realises he's still got his shoes on.*

**Norman** Bugger! That's me for the high jump.

*He carefully takes his shoes off and goes to get his slippers from in front of the fireplace. He switches on an extra heating bar on the fire and then goes and sits down on the settee. Beryl enters with her make-up bag, looks at him in disgust and switches the fire off again.*

**Beryl** Oh you've decided to show your face again have you? *(She sees the shoe marks on the carpet).* Have you been walking about with shoes on again?

**Norman** No, I walked home on me hands ... joining the circus next week!

**Beryl** I'll give you circus! It's been a right circus here I can tell you! Now shift yourself, I need to sit there. *(She sits on the settee, plonks her bag down next to her and begins to apply make up, looking in an imaginary hand mirror through which she sees Norman switching the fire bar on again and heating his backside).* Fire, Norman, fire! Bad for you is that ... give you piles. So ... where do you think you've been?

*The following duologue is delivered almost simultaneously.*

**Norman** I've been in The Grapes.

**Beryl** You've been in The Grapes.

**Norman** Just had a quick one with the lads.

**Beryl** A quick one? A quick one? Do you know what the time is?

**Norman** It's just gone three.

**Beryl** It's just gone three! Some quick one ... Do you know what time you went out?

**Norman** About eleven.

**Beryl** Eleven o'clock it was ... Have you seen yourself?

**Norman** What??

**Beryl** You've been drinking!

**Norman** I haven't!

**Beryl** Well what else do you do in The Grapes? Basket weaving? *(She gets up to take her bag back to the kitchen. As she exits, Norman tries to steal a sandwich from the table but she sees him in her mirror).* And you can get your hands off that an' all ... I know you ... I spend hours making food and all you'll do is eat it!

**Norman** We've been having a laugh you know ... it's Christmas!

**Beryl** *(Re-entering)* It was the same last year, you and The Grapes.

**Norman** Last year?

**Beryl** Don't keep repeating what I say! ... I say, don't keep repeating ... Drives me to distraction it does. It's always the same!

**Norman** What is?

**Beryl** This caper! No sooner have we got Christmas Day out of the way than I've got the do to organise!

**Norman** *(He sits on the settee again)* It doesn't take much, Marion ...

**Beryl** I beg your pardon?

**Norman** It doesn't ...

**Beryl** I heard you the first time, Norman Metcalfe. Does the drink affect your ears as well now?

**Norman** It's only family ...

**Beryl** Oh, only family is it? And that's supposed to make it easier is it? Like family only eats fresh air do they?

**Norman** No, no, course not. I mean they're not fussy ... you don't have to bother yourself ...

**Beryl** But I am fussy, Norman ... I'm fussy. I'm not having people traipsing through my house thinking I run a tip here!

**Norman** They won't notice ...

**Beryl** Now that I can believe! Your Marlene wouldn't know a duster from a headscarf ... and the only brush she can handle has got three ton of mascara on it! Any road, I haven't got time to waste ... shift yourself!

**Norman** Come on Beryl, have a drink yourself ... it's Christmas. I'll get you a sherry. Give us a kiss! *(He puts his arm round her).*

**Beryl** *(Carefully disentangling herself)* I'll give you a clout! I've the trifle to decorate ... And you've had enough too! Just remember I'll be needing help later on clearing this lot, and help seems to be in short supply round here.

**Norman** Where's our Barry? He'll chip in.

**Beryl** Our Barry? Our Barry? It'd be easier to raise the Titanic than our Barry! *(There is a knock at the door, much to her annoyance).* Good God, what's that knocking?

**Norman** Well it isn't opportunity!

**Beryl** Oh, you're sharp today ... mind you don't cut yourself!

*Dot's voice is heard from the adjoining room.*

**Dot** Coo-ee! Anyone at home? I've let meself in!

**Beryl** *(In hushed tones to Norman)* It's your Dot! What's she doing here already? Didn't you tell her what time to come?

**Norman** I ...

**Beryl** Don't waste time nattering! Get yourself upstairs and smartened up a bit! God, that's all I need! You smelling like a brewery and now that dozy sister of yours clocking in early! *(As Dot enters, she immediately switches to effusive charm).* Dot, love! How lovely to see you! Let me take your coat.

*Beryl removes Dot's coat and is clearly upset by the sight of Dot's ample cleavage.*

**Norman** Cold out, Dot?

**Dot** Not half, Norman.

**Norman** *(Joking)* Well put 'em away then!

**Dot** What? *(She suddenly gets the joke).* Oh ... you're a right one, our Norman. *(She laughs).* Well you know my motto, "No one notices the curtains if you can't see the pelmet!". That's right int'it, Beryl. Oh, that's a nice frock you're wearing ... that's served you well over the years hasn't it?

**Beryl** *(Coldly)* Would you like a drink?

**Dot** I shouldn't really, but go on then ... just to be sociable. I'll have a port and lemon ... go easy on the lemon, Beryl. I knocked and just let meself in. Hope I'm not too early.

**Beryl** *(Getting drink from the table)* Early? Early? Not at all ... Lovely to see you. Isn't it, Norman?

**Norman** What? Oh yeah, grand... We were just saying Dot ...

**Beryl** *(Interrupting)* Go and get yourself ready, Norman. *(To Dot).* Here's your drink love, cheers. Have you had a good Christmas, Dot love?

*Exit Norman.*

**Dot** Quiet, you know. I went round to our Jed's and Marlene's for Christmas dinner ...

**Beryl** Oh, I bet that was nice.

**Dot** Well ... it was eventful.

**Beryl** Eventful? How do you mean, eventful?

**Dot** Well you know me, Beryl. I don't like to judge people ...  
**Beryl** Course you don't, you're like me.  
**Dot** *(Confidentially)* But, Jed ...  
**Beryl** Jed?  
**Dot** I know he's me son-in-law and all, but at times I can't help but think... what a useless little berk he is.  
**Beryl** I completely agree. So what's he done now?  
**Dot** He only set fire to the kitchen curtains ... honestly, he's a dozy sod!

*Fade to black.*

**MUSIC : 'PRETTY FLAMINGO' (MANFRED MANN)**

Scene 4 - Marlene And Jed's House

*The music plays under the whole scene. Jed is slumped in a chair, sleeping off the earlier drinking session he has had in The Grapes with Norman and the lads. Partly-dressed, Marlene is at the ironing board but flits in and out of the room, trying to decide what to wear for the party. Each time she re-enters she carries or tries on another item and looks at herself in front of an imaginary mirror. She sings along to the music but is obviously irritated by her indecision. It is important to note that Marlene is in the very early stages of pregnancy but has not yet told Jed, or anyone. Marlene needs to capture a sense of anticipation/wistfulness when in front of the mirror and to do just enough in her body language for the audience to perhaps get some idea of her situation. She exits for yet another item of clothing which she swipes Jed across the head with as she re-enters.*

**Jed** *(Waking suddenly and violently)* Bloody hell Mar! Turn it down will ya! Trying to get some kip here!  
**Marlene** Trying? What do you mean trying? You've been like Rip Van bloody Winkle all afternoon! Lying there snoring like a blast furnace and your gob wide open ... like staring at the Mersey Tunnel!  
**Jed** Oh give over! It's Christmas ... everyone can relax at Christmas.  
**Marlene** Oh, is that right? Well get off your fat arse and try relaxing over this ironing board!  
**Jed** *(Muttering)* No chance, women's work that!  
**Marlene** What did you say?  
**Jed** Nothing. *(He notices she's half dressed).* Ay up, what's this? Expecting the milkman?  
**Marlene** Ha ha, very funny! No he's been and gone ... just before the gas man and the paper lad. Didn't you hear us? We had complaints about the noise from the neighbours. Oh, course not ... you were under the Tetley anaesthetic!  
**Jed** What you doing woman?  
**Marlene** I'll tell you what I'm doing Jed Tonks! ... and don't call me woman! I'm getting ready for this party at Marion and Norman's! That's what I'm doing. Trying to think what to put on ... honestly, I've nothing to wear!  
**Jed** Nothing to wear! Nothing to ... you've got more clobber through there than Kendal Milnes! What do you think's in that bloody wardrobe of yours? Scotch mist?  
**Marlene** Oh shut it!  
**Jed** *(With leery interest)* Anyway, you look OK to me.  
**Marlene** You wouldn't notice if I was wearing a bloody gas mask!  
**Jed** *(Unzipping her dress)* You'd be surprised what I notice ... what time's this do?  
**Marlene** We've got half an hour  
**Jed** Great ... five minutes'll do ... Come here you!

*The lights fade and the music builds up as we hear Marlene getting away from Jed's clutches ... a process which culminates in her shouting "Oh piss off!"*

Scene 5 - The Metcalfe's House

*Lights up. Fade music. The action continues from Scene 3.*

**Beryl** You what? He set fire to the curtains?  
**Dot** Yeah. Silly little bugger took it into his head to pour brandy over the Christmas pudding. He switched the lights off, struck a match and before you know it we had an inferno on our hands  
**Beryl** What did you do?

**Dot** Do? Do? I leapt up, and honestly Beryl, that doesn't do you any good on a full stomach. "Shove it under the tap!", I shouted. Any road, he span round, headed for the sink, stumbled ... stumbled on our Marlene's handbag ... what the hell that was doing lying there, God alone knows ... anyway he went flying, banged his elbow on the washing machine and chucked the pudding straight at the curtains!

**Beryl** What did Marlene do?

**Dot** Luckily she wasn't there

**Beryl** Not there? But I thought it was Christmas dinner?

**Dot** Yes, but she'd gone into the living room to lie on the couch ... she had a bad reaction to the Babychams. I don't know, she doesn't seem to be herself just lately. So, they're busy now sorting out the insurance claim.

**Beryl** Oh dear, what a to-do!

**Dot** Honestly Beryl, men, eh? Oh, I know they have their uses, but to be honest, I'm glad I've got my independence.

**Beryl** Oh, aren't you seeing Neville any more then?

**Dot** Neville? Oh yeah, but that's only occasional ... companionship, you know. Any road, I've come to give a hand. Anything I can do?

**Beryl** Well, I've the trifle to decorate

**Dot** Oh what a fiddly job that is, I couldn't be bothered me ... I'd just give 'em a choc-ice each. Any road let's get started. I'll put the sherry in if you like ... are you going to have one Beryl?

**Beryl** Oh why not? Just a small one.

**Dot** Right you are ... here we go ... I may as well join you ... keep you company. Oh, Christmas again, eh? It soon comes round, doesn't it? Still, it's a good time, especially for the kids. That reminds me, where's your Barry?

**Beryl** Barry? Oh he'll be back soon. He's seeing Dougie, that's his pal, and then he's gone to fetch Susan Pearson.

**Dot** Oh, don't say he's courting!

**Beryl** Oh don't be silly, Dot! It's nothing like that. Susan's just a friend from school. Our Barry and Dougie, a crowd of them, and Susan ... they're working on some English essay together ... a group project or something I think they call it ... they seem to have a lot in common ... studying literature and that ... you know ... books? He'll have his hands full of Thomas Hardy at the moment no doubt.

**Dot** Oh aye? I bet he will!

**Beryl** Dorothy Metcalfe! You've got a one-track mind you have!

**Dot** What did I say?

**Beryl** It's not what you said, it's what you were thinking! ... they're just kids! A nice crowd, our Barry wouldn't be involved if they weren't. Dougie's dad's a policeman ... and Susan sounds a nice type of girl ... she lives over in those private houses near the hospital. Her mother and father are on the parish council ... as I say, nice kids. You'll meet them later ... we told our Barry to bring his little friends round.

**Dot** Oh great! It'll be nice to have few young ones to liven the place up. *(She notices that Beryl is offended)*. Oh! Not that it's going to be dull! No, what I meant was ...

**Beryl** It's all right, Dot, I know what you mean! *(She looks at the clock)*. Oh, is it that time already? I hope Barry's watching the time ... you know, he's in another world when he's seeing Dougie!

*Quick fade to black.*

**MUSIC : 'SAN FRANCISCO' (SCOTT MACKENZIE)**

Scene 6 - Susan's Bedroom

*Barry and Susan are lying partly-dressed on Susan's bed, kissing.*

**Susan** *(Reluctantly pulling away)* Had we better be getting ready?

**Barry** What?

**Susan** To get to your house ... I'm looking forward to meeting your family.

**Barry** No rush ... Mam thinks I'm seeing Dougie.

**Susan** Seeing Dougie? Is that what you said?

**Barry** Yeah.

**Susan** Why?

**Barry** Why do you think? They think I'm doing my homework.

**Susan** Homework?

**Barry** Yeah. With you and Dougie.

**Susan** *(Mocking)* Ooh! A threesome, eh? Who's the right little swinger! But, OK then ... I will if you will.

**Barry** *(Worried)* You wouldn't, would you?

**Susan** *(Teasing)* Might do. If it makes you happy.

**Barry** *(Quickly)* It wouldn't!

**Susan** Only joking!

**Barry** I don't want to share you with anyone.

**Susan** Oh I see ... the possessive type, eh? I like that.

**Barry** Do you?

**Susan** Yeah. It makes me feel wanted.

**Barry** That's good. 'Cos it's you I want.

*They kiss.*

**Susan** Do you think the others enjoy their homework as much as us?

**Barry** Who cares? I think I'm getting quite fond of Thomas Hardy.

**Susan** Good job he was prolific.

**Barry** How do you mean?

**Susan** Well, there's loads to study. Could take us years to finish it all. *(She kisses him. Barry tries inexpertly and tentatively to unfasten her bra until she stops him).* Uh, uh!

**Barry** *(Worried)* Sorry! I didn't mean ...

**Susan** *(Reassuring)* It's all right! I don't mind.

**Barry** *(Surprised)* Don't you?

**Susan** No ... but not now. Wait 'til you come round tomorrow night ... Mum and Dad are going away for the night.

**Barry** *(Slowly realising the implication of what she's said)* Are they?

**Susan** Yeah.

**Barry** All night?

**Susan** All night.

**Barry** Oh. *(Attempted nonchalance).* Where they going?

**Susan** Some council do at the Midland, they're staying there. Mum likes posh hotels ... so we'll have the place all to ourselves.

**Barry** *(Nervously)* Great.

**Susan** Yeah ... so we can run around with nothing on if we want.

**Barry** *(With poorly disguised nonchalance)* Great.

**Susan** *(Seductively)* Or I could dress up for you.

**Barry** *(Mystified)* Dress up?

**Susan** *(Excited)* Yeah! Have you never dressed up before?

**Barry** Yeah.

**Susan** Really?

**Barry** Yeah ... I won the prize at the Infants' party dressed as Roy Rogers ... he was a cowboy.

**Susan** I know who Roy Rogers was stupid! Oh Barry, you've got a lot to learn *(She notices his Manchester City shirt lying on the floor).* Close your eyes.

**Barry** What?

**Susan** Close your eyes! *(She grabs the shirt and puts it on).* OK, you can open them now! How about this? Do I look like Colin Bell?

**Barry** You look much better than Colin Bell! *(He kisses her. She responds. During the embrace he begins to pull the City shirt over her head but it gets caught on her watch which makes him notice the time).* God! Is that the time! Bloody hell, we'd better get dressed!

**Susan** You weren't saying that a minute ago!

**Barry** No. I didn't realise the time ... they'll get suspicious. It doesn't usually take me that long when I see Dougie.

*They start to dress.*

**Susan** Characters are they, your family?

**Barry** You could say that ... they're certainly different.

**Susan** Interesting?

**Barry** Well ...

**Susan** Do we have to go?

**Barry** Yeah ... we'd better. I promised Mam and Dad that we wouldn't be long.

**Susan** So was it a good Christmas then?

**Barry** Yeah ... not bad.

**Susan** Did you miss me?

**Barry** Course I did.

**Susan** A lot?

**Barry** Yeah.

**Susan** How much?

**Barry** What?

**Susan** How much did you miss me?

**Barry** I missed you loads.

**Susan** Are you sure we have to go?

**Barry** Yeah ... I promised.

**Susan** And you always keep your promises do you?

**Barry** Try to ...

**Susan** Well, promise me, Barry Metcalfe ...

**Barry** What?

**Susan** That you'll make up for it tomorrow night.

**Barry** *(Hesitating)* Ah ... tomorrow night.

**Susan** Yeah, tomorrow night. Don't tell me you've forgotten already!

**Barry** No! Course I haven't. It's just ...

**Susan** Just what?

**Barry** I said I might help my Dad ...

**Susan** Help your dad? What's wrong with him?

**Barry** Nothing. It's just ... me Mam ...

**Susan** Your mam? What's wrong with her?

**Barry** *(Exasperated)* Nothing! It's just that me Mam wanted him to clean the loft, and I said I'd help.

**Susan** Clean the loft! Barry, no-one cleans their loft.

**Barry** My Mam does! Or should I say, my Dad does ... and I usually help him. It's a sort of Christmas time ritual at our house.

**Susan** Bloody hell! They are different aren't they?

**Barry** I told you.

**Susan** *(Patiently)* Barry?

**Barry** Yes?

**Susan** Just let me get this right. We've got the chance to spend tomorrow night alone together ... I mean properly together ... and you're telling me that you'd rather spend the night in the loft with your Dad.

**Barry** Course I wouldn't! I want to be with you!

**Susan** Well what are you going to do?

**Barry** I'll think of something.

**Susan** You better had! I'll make it worth your while.

**Barry** *(Teasing)* Oh! Going to show me your Christmas presents then?

**Susan** You want me to show you what's in my stocking?

**Barry** Not half!

**Susan** Well get yourself round here then ... no excuses. *(She cuddles him and then gets off the bed).* Come on ... wait downstairs for me. I'll just get ready ...

**Barry** Can't I stay here?

**Susan** Tomorrow you can! Now go on. You can be telling Mum and Dad all about Thomas Hardy! *(She notices the garish pullover Barry has put on).* Blimey that's an original isn't it?

**Barry** *(Despondently)* Me mam made it. She always makes me and me Dad pullovers at Christmas ...

**Susan** Never mind, maybe you can lose it when you're in the loft!

**Barry**            *(With a flash of inspiration)* Seeing Dougie!  
**Susan**            Pardon?  
**Barry**            Seeing Dougie! That's what I'll say! I'm seeing Dougie! That's where I'll say I'll be tomorrow night!

*Fade to black.*

**MUSIC : 'SOMETHING STUPID'** (FRANK AND NANCY SINATRA)

Scene 7 - Dot's Soliloquy

*As a single spotlight comes up on Dot, the music fades to underscore her throughout her soliloquy.*

**Dot**            I could have told her ... I know ... I suppose I should have told her. But you know, I'm a great believer in "what the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over". I mean, God knows, there's enough in this life to worry about already without bringing more on yourself on purpose! Any road, things were different in them days ... It was a different world ... It's all very well looking back and saying, "if only" ... dead easy is that ... we just did what was right. And what can be wrong with that? As long as your heart's in the right place, that's the main thing! I suppose I could have told her ... I was going to! But the time never seemed to be right to be honest, and the more we went on, the less important it seemed to be ... We were all right ... we were doing OK! Any road, it's a family thing ... and families are different ... With the family it's a secret, not a lie. I could have told her ... I wish I had now ... it would have been better coming from me instead of old Mother Teresa! Our Norman deserves a medal for what he puts up with ... Oh well, what's done is done, I suppose ... I think I'll have another little port and lemon ... just to be sociable ...

*Bring up music, as the spotlight fades.*

Scene 8 - The Metcalfe's House

*As the lights come up, the music fades completely. Dot and Beryl are still preparing for the party. Dot is getting quite tipsy.*

**Dot**            Oh, yes ... Yes, it's a grand time, Christmas ... Mind you, I think it's all getting a bit out of hand ... too commercialised. You know, when we were kids, it was just an apple and an orange from your dad in your stocking if you were lucky ...

**Beryl**            But we were satisfied ...

**Dot**            I bloody wasn't! I could have told him where to shove his apple and orange, and it would have taken more than three wise men to find them again I can tell you! Tight-fisted sod! Christmas to him was just another chance for a boozing session. *(She swallows her drink and laughs hollowly).* So how many are we expecting Beryl; just the family?

**Beryl**            That's right, Dot ... Just the family, although you could still invite Neville if you want.

**Dot**            Neville? No I don't think so. I mean Neville isn't family ... not really ... he's just ... you know ...

**Beryl**            Companionship?

**Dot**            Exactly! And we all need that don't we, Beryl?

**Beryl**            I beg your pardon?

**Dot**            Companionship! We all need it! There's only so much you can get from a hot water bottle! But you'll know all about that, eh? I mean you've got Norman ... does he still ... you know?

**Beryl**            What?

**Dot**            You know?

**Beryl**            Dot, I'm sure I don't wish to discuss ... that sort of thing. I'm from a generation that understood that some things are private, and should remain so. Not like half of them today. No, I can assure you that Norman and I enjoy a very healthy relationship, based on the old-fashioned virtues *(Enter Norman)* of tolerance and mutual respect ... *(she sees him)*. Go and get your new jumper on! I didn't spend weeks knitting it for the good of my health! You're like summat the cat's dragged in! *(Norman exits again immediately)*. Now do you think we're just about all set?

**Dot**            It looks grand Beryl. You do a lovely table, there's no doubt about that.

**Beryl**            Old-fashioned hospitality, that's all Dot ... old-fashioned hospitality. Now then, I think I might just have that little drink.

**Dot** Good for you! I'll get it ... and I might as well join you ... just to be sociable ... (*Dot gets the drinks*). So, your Barry; he's taking his time 'seeing Dougie', in't he?

**Beryl** He'll be back soon ... I expect he'll have worked up quite an appetite, bless him.

**Dot** Hmm. I bet he has.

**Beryl** Yes, it's a pity he's growing up so fast ... it's not easy being a young person nowadays, Dot.

**Dot** Well it's a bloody sight better than being an old one. They've got it made, Beryl. You're not worried about him are you?

**Beryl** All parents worry, Dot; it goes with the job, but I'm sure our Barry'll be alright, he's a steady lad ...

**Dot** You know, I hadn't a clue what to get him for his Christmas present? But still, a voucher's always handy in't it? What did you give him? Jed and Marlene gave him after-shave.

**Beryl** After-shave?

**Dot** Well why not? He's a young man now ... not a kid any more.

**Beryl** He may seem to be a young man Dot, but believe you me, he's still a little boy in so many ways ... you should have seen his face when we gave him the compendium of games, it was a picture.

**Dot** I bet it was.

**Beryl** And the illustrated bible ...

**Dot** Oh, of course ...

**Beryl** And as for the yoyo!

**Dot** You what!

*Fade to black.*

**MUSIC : 'RELEASE ME'** (ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK)

Scene 9 - Outside The Metcalfe's House

*As the lights come up and the music fades, Susan's laughter is heard.*

**Susan** A yo-yo! You must be joking.

**Barry** You said you wouldn't laugh.

**Susan** (*Laughing uncontrollably*) I know!

**Barry** Well what are you doing?

**Susan** Laughing ...

**Barry** Well it's not that funny!

**Susan** I know, I know ... There ... I've stopped ... I promise I won't laugh again.

**Barry** Promise?

**Susan** I promise.

**Barry** Why do I get such stupid presents? You know Tommy Miles?

**Susan** Yeah.

**Barry** He got a Vespa! A bloody Vespa!

**Susan** So?

**Barry** So? So his parents don't treat him like a primary school kid! Honestly, it makes you sick! Bloody Tommy Miles! He's got everything he has!

**Susan** No he hasn't.

**Barry** What do you mean?

**Susan** He hasn't got me.

**Barry** Yet!

**Susan** What did you say?

**Barry** Nothing ...

**Susan** Do you think I'm that stupid? Do you really think that I'd go for a lad just because he might have a flash scooter?

**Barry** No! Yes! Oh, I don't know do I?

**Susan** Barry. Listen. Why do you think I'm here?

**Barry** You fancy my yoyo?

**Susan** (*Laughs*) Like mad! And I fancy you even more. Come here (*She kisses him*).

**Barry** Oh! That reminds me! What about Dougie?

**Susan** What about Dougie?  
**Barry** Mam's expecting him to come as well. What shall I say?  
**Susan** We'll think of something! Now where were we?

*She kisses him again. As they embrace, Marlene and Jed enter. Jed stares intently at the couple, smirking and gesturing to Marlene to keep quiet. Suddenly he whistles as if guiding a sheep dog and yells ...*

**Jed** Go get her Lassie!

*Barry quickly jumps away from Susan and turns, embarrassed, to see Jed and Marlene.*

**Barry** Oh, hiya, Uncle Jed, Auntie Marlene ... Didn't see you there.  
**Jed** I bet you didn't, I say I bet you didn't. Other things more pressing, eh ... eh?  
**Barry** Em, Uncle Jed, Auntie Marlene, this is em ... Susan ... my ... my ...  
**Susan** Hi, I'm Susan ... Barry's girlfriend.  
**Jed** Girlfriend, eh, eh!  
**Susan** Yeah, girlfriend.  
**Jed** *(To Barry)* You're a dark horse, our Barry! And where has he been hiding a lovely thing like you, eh? *(To Susan)*. Hello my darling, I'm Jed but you can call me ... Jed. *(He laughs uproariously)* Ey, ey, see what I did then? Had a laugh, had a laugh  
**Marlene** Take no notice of him, love ... no-one else does. I'm Marlene, Barry's auntie. Did you like his aftershave by the way?  
**Susan** Pardon?  
**Marlene** His aftershave! Barry's aftershave! I would have thought you'd be bound to notice it, you seemed to be close enough. We gave it to him for Christmas ... Old Spice.  
**Jed** I told her it was a waste of time. *(To Barry)*. Look at him! I've seen more stubble on an egg! That's right isn't it, Bumfluff.  
**Susan** Well I think it's very nice ... sexy ...  
**Jed** Do you want to smell mine, Susan? Old Scrotum *(Again, he laughs uproariously)* Ey, ey?  
**Marlene** No she doesn't! Any road, anyone within a mile downwind of you can whiff it! Like an elephant on heat!  
**Jed** Shut it you! This is for the maturer man ...  
**Marlene** Hmm. So are incontinence pads! Now come on, let's get in to the do ...

*Exeunt, during which, Jed explains the finer points about shaving to Barry, whilst making suggestive gestures about Susan behind her back. Fade to black.*

### MUSIC : 'THIS IS MY SONG' (PETULA CLARK)

#### Scene 10 - Norman's Soliloquy

*Lights up as music fades to accompany the entire soliloquy.*

**Norman** I could have told her ... I suppose I should have told her. It seemed all for the best at the time ... Making the best of a bad situation ... I were just doing the decent thing that's all ... just trying to accept my responsibilities like a man. It would have been the easiest thing in the world to run away, forget all about it ... loads of blokes did ... a new barracks, a new life ... get away and sod the consequences. But we weren't like that, me and our Dot. Oh, we both might have had bugger all to boast about, but we cared! We cared about things ... important things ... like giving kids the sort of family we'd never had ... It seemed the perfect way out at the time. If I didn't get back, and plenty didn't, the little 'un would have a good home and a loving mam ... not her real mam of course ... but a mam all the same. Dot cared, and still does. I sometimes think about her real mam ... I suppose you never forget special people in your life ... what life would have been like if she'd lived ... "unfortunate consequences", the doctors said. Sometimes words just aren't good enough to explain things. Losing your own life while bringing in a new one ... "Unfortunate" ... it's not unfortunate, it's just plain cruel, that's what it is, cruel ... and don't anyone try to tell me owt different, I don't want to know! It's a bugger that's what it is! Plain and simple. Wrap it up how you want ... fate, the will of God ... call it owt you want, but all you're left with is ... life can be a bugger. So what do you do? You can give up, or you can try ... give it a bloody go. And that's what we did ... gave it a bloody go! I like to think, well I hope ... that maybe I was good for her ... gave her the chance to move on

... I could have told her ... I should have told her ... but ... I'm just not brave enough ... or is it daft enough?

*Fade to black.*

## Scene 11 - The Metcalfe's House

*Lights up. Beryl is making a last few touches to the preparations. Norman is wearing the most horrendous knotted cardigan. Enter Jed, closely followed by Marlene, Susan and Barry.*

**Jed** Ding dong! Avon calling! Ey, ey? See what I did then? A'right Norm! Ey, I enjoyed that session at dinner ... you put a few away on the quiet! Bloody hell! What's that you're wearing?  
**Norman** *(Trying to quieten him in front of Beryl)* You will have your joke won't you, Jed? *(Trying to signal to him to keep quiet).*  
**Beryl** Oh, hello everyone. *(Jed mimics Beryl's words as she rushes to Susan).* And you must be Susan ... *(She notices Dougie isn't there).* Oh? Where's Dougie?  
**Barry** } He's got a cold.  
**Susan** } He's gone to church.

*Barry and Susan look embarrassed, but Beryl, as is her wont, hasn't listened and carries on.*

**Beryl** Now let me introduce you to everyone. That's Jed and *(seeing Marlene)* this is ...  
**Marlene** Excuse me Marion, I must get to the lav ... me legs are in a reef knot here! *(She dashes out).*  
We've met by the way!  
**Beryl** ... Marlene. Yes, right ... now Susan, this is Mr Metcalfe...aren't you Norman? And this is Dorothy, Marlene's mother.  
**Dot** Just call me Auntie Dot, everyone else does, love! D'you want a drink?  
**Susan** Oh, yes please.  
**Dot** I might as well join you, seeing as it's Christmas, just to be sociable! *(She exits to get the drinks).*  
**Beryl** Now. Let's take your coat, Susan love, that's right.

*Susan takes off her coat to reveal, to Beryl's obvious amazement and disgust, her halter-neck top and her body-painted stomach. Beryl is taken aback. Jed leers and nudges Norman who bangs into Susan.*

**Norman** *(Almost touching Susan as he stumbles, but totally embarrassed)* Oh sorry love, clumsy me! Barry, take Susan upstairs and put her coat in your room.  
**Beryl** *(Panicky)* Upstairs! No! *(Regaining her composure slightly).* No, no, I'll do it. Barry, take your guest through.

*Beryl exits with Susan's coat, scowling at Norman as she goes and Barry and Susan go into the other room.*

**Jed** By God, Norman! Seen the hooters on that! You don't get many of them to the pound, eh?  
**Norman** What? No, no ...  
**Jed** I don't know, youngsters today ... lucky buggers ... they don't know they're born! Did you see the old patterns on her belly? I might ask Marl to try that ...  
**Norman** Reminds me of a bird I saw once in a bar in Cairo, she had an elephant on hers.  
**Jed** Her what?  
**Norman** Her stomach! And you'll never guess where the trunk went.  
**Jed** It didn't!  
**Norman** Bloody did. For half a crown she'd let you give it a bun ...Muffin, the name was ... can't remember the bird's name though.  
**Jed** *(Joking)* Do you think Beryl would have an elephant?  
**Norman** I wouldn't allow it. I'm an animal lover.

*They're both convulsed with laughter as Beryl storms back in.*

**Beryl** And you two can cut it out! Dirty old men!  
**Norman** What do you mean? We were only ...  
**Beryl** Only drooling over that ... that ...  
**Jed** Her name's Susan.  
**Beryl** I am very well aware of her name, thank you Jed! *(Jed shrugs and goes off to join the others).*  
Norman, what are we going to do!  
**Norman** Do? We're going to go in there ... have a bit of a dance ...

**Beryl** No, you daft beggar! Susan ... you didn't tell me she was a ... a ...hippy!

**Norman** I've never met her before ...

**Beryl** Excuses, excuses! You should have a word with him.

**Norman** With who?

**Beryl** Our Barry!

**Norman** Our Barry?

**Beryl** Don't keep repeating what I say! Oh Norman ... did you see her ... (*points at her stomach region*).

**Norman** Can't say as I noticed ...

**Beryl** (*Interrupting*) Liar! You and Jed were like two dogs in a butcher's! (*Enter Marlene, unseen by Marion*). Oh Norman, I hope Barry knows what he's doing! You need to have a word with him.

**Marlene** I wouldn't worry Norman ... from what I've seen, Barry doesn't need any advice! You need more loo roll in the lav by the way Beryl! Right ... where's this party! (*She exits*).

**Beryl** God, she's common that one! And as for that one that Barry's dragged in ... well!

**Norman** Oh Beryl, don't be hasty! She seems like a nice kid to me.

**Beryl** Nice? Nice? No self-respecting girl would come to a do dressed like ... like ... summat from St Tropizz.

**Norman** I think it's St Tropez, Beryl.

**Beryl** In this house it's what I say it is! Don't tell me what I mean, Norman Metcalfe! By God it just goes to show, eh?

**Norman** What?

**Beryl** Private houses! I knew that Parish Council was a den of iniquity. God they might have money, but they can't bring up their kids decently!

**Norman** Now that's going too far, Beryl! Blimey, weren't you young yourself once?

**Beryl** Course I was! But I wouldn't have dreamt of going without a good foundation garment! Flaunting herself like that! It's a disgrace!

**Norman** It's fashion, Beryl.

**Beryl** Oh is it? Well I don't like it. In my day we learnt when to expose ourselves ... And that was in the privacy of the marital bedroom ...

**Norman** (*Drearily*) And only with the light off.

**Beryl** Exactly! They're not like us any more, Norman.

**Norman** No...no, they're not

**Beryl** Right, we'd better get in there before Gypsy Rose Lee starts to feel the heat!

**Norman** Don't give the girl a hard time, Beryl.

**Beryl** Hard time! She's in my home Norman, and she'll have to accept my standards. God what am I going to do? We won't encourage her Norman ... You know, I'm far happier when our Barry's seeing Dougie!

*Fade to black.*

**MUSIC : 'ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE' (THE BEATLES)**

Scene 12 - The Party At The Metcalfe's House

*Lights up as the music fades to be heard faintly in the background. Barry and Susan are standing by the buffet table.*

**Susan** She doesn't like me, your Mam does she? God did you see her face? If looks could kill..

**Barry** Don't be daft.

**Susan** I'm not being daft! No listen, Barry. Did you see how she looked at me? Like something she'd scraped off her shoe; well I'm not having it!

**Barry** You're just being too sensitive ... she's just not used to ... to ...

**Susan** What?

**Barry** (*Shyly*) Well, me bringing a girl home.

**Susan** Why? What does she expect? The church choir?

**Barry** Well ... it's just ... just ... strange for her, that's all? She's not used to it.

**Susan** Well what's she been like before?

**Barry** There hasn't been a before.

Pause.

**Susan** Do you mean I'm the first? You never told me!  
**Barry** You never asked.  
**Susan** Well ... I just ... I just assumed, I suppose.  
**Barry** Well that'll teach you to assume, won't it?  
**Susan** Barry. Are you telling me you've never had a girlfriend before?  
**Barry** Not a proper one no ... not like you.  
**Susan** Oh. Oh ... oh!

*She is just about to embrace Barry when Auntie Dot appears.*

**Dot** Ay up, Barry ... come on now, you're not too old to dance with your auntie! Excuse me, Susan ... I never see my favourite nephew these days ... (*knowingly*) he's too busy seeing Dougie ... he's in demand is our Barry! (*Enter Jed*). Get out of way, Jed!

*Barry looks helplessly over his shoulder at Susan as Dot drags him away. Jed gets a drink from the table. He is now quite drunk and saunters up to Susan. The following conversation is mainly conducted between Jed and Susan's breasts. Susan is still angry as she reaches out onto the table; and she's in no mood to tolerate Jed.*

**Susan** Excuse me, Jed.  
**Jed** Why? What have you done? Ey, ey, see what I did there?(*He laughs raucously*).  
**Susan** Pardon?  
**Jed** Joke! Joke! J-O-Kay! Are you enjoying yourself?  
**Susan** Well, I don't think I'm on Mrs Metcalfe's Christmas list.  
**Jed** Beryl? Don't worry about her ... she's just an old fuddy-duddy, in't she?  
**Susan** I could think of another description  
**Jed** Oh yes ... the older generation, eh Suze?  
**Susan** Pardon?  
**Jed** The older generation! Not like us you see.  
**Susan** Is that right?  
**Jed** Abso-looto! Oh yes ... I mean they're rooted in the past aren't they ... whereas our generation ...  
**Susan** "Our" generation?  
**Jed** Yeah ... we see things differently don't we? (*Wisely*). I've got a motto.  
**Susan** Have you?  
**Jed** (*Profoundly*) I have, I have ... The old men ... while they're changing braces, we're embracing changes! (*There is an awkward silence as Susan attempts to see the wisdom in the motto*). Makes you think, eh?  
**Susan** It does.  
**Jed** That's the way, that's the way! I hear you're off to University soon then?  
**Susan** Hope so ... If I pass my exams.  
**Jed** So, what you thinking of studying then?  
**Susan** Art.  
**Jed** Art? Art? Some people say I'm a bit of an artist you know ...  
**Susan** Yeah, I thought they might. Who's your favourite?  
**Jed** What?  
**Susan** Your favourite ... artist?  
**Jed** Oh! I ... er ... like them all me ... You looking forward to University, are you?  
**Susan** Oh, yeah.  
**Jed** I was thinking of University meself, you know.  
**Susan** Were you?  
**Jed** Yeah! See these hands. (*He holds his hands out*).  
**Susan** Yeah.  
**Jed** You know what these hands were made for?  
**Susan** I've an idea what one of them's made for.  
**Jed** Pardon?  
**Susan** Nothing ... go on.  
**Jed** These are thinking man's hands these. Should have been employed at University.

**Susan** Which one?

*Exit Barry.*

**Jed** Both of them.

**Susan** No ... I meant which University?

**Jed** What?

**Susan** Which University?

**Jed** Oh, can't remember now ... all the same aren't they? All set I was, and then ... along came Marl ... and ... well, you know how it is ...

**Susan** Yeah ... I think I know how it is.

**Jed** So ... University, eh?

**Susan** Yeah ...

**Jed** Yeah ... *(pause)* ... art, eh?

**Susan** Yeah.

**Jed** I bet it'll be all orgies and pot, eh?

**Susan** And a bit of studying.

**Jed** Oh, yeah! Studying, yeah! *(Pause)*. But ... as they say ... all work and no play, eh?

**Susan** Oh, I think I'll enjoy the playing ... I'm quite active socially.

**Jed** Are you?

**Susan** Oh yes ... I'm quite a physical person, actually.

**Jed** Are you?

**Susan** *(Now deciding to tease Jed who is quickly deflated)* Oh yes. You should see me on the volley-ball court, Jed ... I'm everywhere.

**Jed** Is that right?

**Susan** Yes ... What games are you good at Jed?

**Jed** What?

**Susan** What games are you good at?

**Jed** Oh! All of them ... well I'm a bit of an all-rounder, me.

**Susan** Is that right? *(Enter Marlene)*. Jed's just telling me he's a bit of an athlete, Marlene?

**Marlene** Athlete? Him? He couldn't run a raffle let alone a hundred yards. Is there any soft drink anywhere?

**Jed** Soft drink? You? You feeling all right?

**Marlene** Well, as you happen to ask, no I'm not!

**Susan** Are you all right Marlene? You look a bit pale.

**Marlene** I'm just feeling a bit ... you know. Excuse me, I need to get to the lav. *(She exits hurriedly)*.

**Susan** Do you think she needs help, Jed?

**Jed** No! She's been to the lav loads of times! Ey, ey!! Did you see what I did then?*(He laughs loudly)*.

**Susan** Oh for God's sake! I'll go. *(Enter Barry)*. Won't be a minute, Barry. *(She exits, much to Barry's frustration who was looking forward to getting back to her)*.

**Jed** *(Seeing Barry)* Here he is, here he is! The man of the momento! A'right Baz?

**Barry** Fine thanks, Uncle Jed.

**Jed** Ay, ay ... What's with the Uncle bit? Let's make it Jed and Marl now, eh? Now. Let's have a bit of a chat, eh? Man to man, like. Now Bazzar ... you don't mind me putting me arm round you do you? Good. Now, I'd just like to say ... Has your dad had a word with you?

**Barry** What about?

**Jed** You know ... things ... things you can't talk about ...

**Barry** No.

**Jed** Right! Right! Well, Bazzar ... if ever ... if ever ... you want a word about ... about ...

**Barry** Things you can't talk about?

**Jed** Exactly! I want you to know ...

**Barry** Yes?

**Jed** You know where my house is.

**Barry** Do you want me to take you home?

**Jed** *(Exasperated)* No, you daft ... I mean, I'll always be there ... If you need me like ... And Marl, she'll always be there as well ... we both will ... Unless we're not in of course. OK?

**Barry** OK.  
**Jed** Good lad, good lad! Put it there! Put-it-there! You don't mind us talking like this do you?  
**Barry** 'Course not.  
**Jed** Good ... only if you can't talk plainly with family it's a bad do isn't it?  
**Barry** Yeah.  
**Jed** 'Cos some of 'em out there ... mantraps!  
**Barry** Some of who?  
**Jed** The tarts! The little ladies! Oh yes. Believe me, Bazzer ... take my advice mate ... Have your fun ... but ... I hope you don't mind me asking ... *(He gazes at Barry's face and taps his cheeks)* ... God you're face is a bit red eh? Like a slapped arse! *(He now tries to change the subject)*. Bazzer? Are you ... are you ... being ... careful?

*Barry decides to pretend Jed is asking him about shaving.*

**Barry** Well, as careful as I can be ...  
**Jed** Pardon?  
**Barry** I'm as careful as I can be ... I'm just getting used to it you see.  
**Jed** Are you?  
**Barry** Yeah. First few times were murder, actually.  
**Jed** Were they?  
**Barry** Yeah, I think I was hurrying too much.  
**Jed** Oh?  
**Barry** Didn't half sting ...  
**Jed** What?  
**Barry** Yeah, it really stung.  
**Jed** What did Susan say?  
**Barry** She said I should use something.  
**Jed** Use something? Weren't you ... bothering ... like?  
**Barry** Not really ... sometimes I'd find some of me dad's to use afterwards.  
**Jed** Afterwards?  
**Barry** Yeah. Susan said I should just slap it on, and that it would be better than nothing.  
**Jed** Susan said that?  
**Barry** Yeah ... listen ... you won't mention it to me dad will you ... or mam for that matter?  
**Jed** Course not ... no ... course I won't.  
**Barry** Only, you know what they're like ... still think I'm a little lad.  
**Jed** Do they?  
**Barry** Yeah. Anyway, it's getting easier now that you and Marl have bought me some.  
**Jed** Some what?  
**Barry** After Shave ... Old Spice!  
**Jed** After Shave?  
**Barry** Yeah! It's great! It's made all the difference to my shaving.  
**Jed** Shaving?  
**Barry** Yeah ... I'll just go and find Sue. *(He taps Jed on the face)*. Hey Jed ... your face has gone the colour of a slapped arse!

*Exit Barry.*

**Jed** *(calling after him)* I'll bloody sort you our Barry! *(muttering)* Smart young sod!

*Enter Dot.*

**Dot** Oh, there you are ... Listen have you been letting Marlene mix her drinks again. What's wrong with you? Have you been upsetting our Barry?

*Fade to black.*

**MUSIC : 'SILENCE IS GOLDEN' (THE TREMELOES)**

### Scene 13 - Marlene's Soliloquy

*The whole scene is underscored by the music. A single tight spotlight is on Marlene. She has been crying.*

**Marlene** What am I going to do? How can I tell him? It's supposed to be special is this ... I always thought when it happened to me that I'd be ... I'd be ... happy! Yeah, happy ... that's all. Wanting to shout it from the rooftops ... wanting everybody to know ... having a bit of fuss made of me ... that's all ... being looked after ... cared for ... made to feel special ... maybe even treasured ... like a princess. *(She laughs to herself)*. Listen to yourself, Marlene! Listen for God's sake! This isn't a fairy story! No-one's ever loved me ... not properly like ... They've said they do ... and I've been daft enough to believe them at times! Might even have believed I love them ... I don't even know what love is ... I know what it isn't though! And it isn't this! It isn't this! *(She looks down at her stomach)*. Love's in there. Right in there. Part of me. Growing inside of me. That's where love is ... I know I might not be 'owt special ... I'm not clever ... I'll never have the chances that Susan'll have ... and our Barry ... they've got it made ... and good luck to them! They'll make mistakes an' all ... only their mistakes'll be different ... but they'll do things ... they'll make something of their lives ... you can just tell ... And so will I! So will I! I'll sort this! I will! I can ... I know I can! Me ... just me ... bugga the rest! Come on Marlene ... get a grip! Oh, you might not be clever ... but you're not stupid!

*She is brought back to reality by Susan knocking at the door. Lights up to reveal that Marlene is in the lavatory.*

**Susan** Marlene! Are you all right in there?

**Marlene** Yeah I'm all right ... Hang on, Susan. *(She opens the door)*. Come in.

**Susan** Marlene you've been crying ... are you OK?

**Marlene** Yeah ... yeah, I'm OK ... don't worry about me ... It's nothing.

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**... in this Preview Script, part of the play has been deleted from here ...**

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*A big row ensues which results in Dot, Marlene and Jed entering. They all join in and there is chaos until ...*

**Norman** *(Bellowing)* Shut it!

*Everyone is stunned by this incredible show of force by Norman.*

**Beryl** What did you say?

**Norman** You heard me! I said shut it! Do you want to hear it again? Shut! It!

**Beryl** *(To Barry)* Is he talking to me?

**Norman** Yes! For once he is! Only I'm not talking! I'm shouting! And do you know why I'm shouting? Eh?

**Beryl** *(Flabbergasted)* What ...?

**Norman** ... I'm shouting because it's the only way to make you listen! And it's about time you listened to someone other than your own daft, self-opinionated, poisonous self!

**Beryl** *(Frenzied)* I can't believe ...

**Barry** Dad ...

**Norman** Be quiet, Barry lad ... It needs saying, and she needs telling! Susan love, you've done nowt to be ashamed of ... nor have you Barry. The only mistake made tonight was to invite you round here and pretend it would be like a game of happy families. It was only a matter of time before the lid was blown off this lot ... I'm not proud, Barry ... and Marlene ... of the way this came out. We could have told you; we should have told you, properly like ... but ... *(to Beryl)* ... for some of us, we'd rather live a lie than believe that people can cope with the truth.

**Beryl** *(Crying)* What am I going to do? What am I going to do?

**Norman** I don't know what you're going to do ... but I'm going to have a drink, that's what I'm going to do, and if you lot have got any sense ... you'll all come and do the same. And who knows? In the morning, maybe we'll all be able to accept the situation ... I mean it is Christmas after all ... and at Christmas, miracles can happen.

**MUSIC : 'DO I STILL FIGURE IN YOUR LIFE' (HONEYBUS)**

*This music underscores the rest of the play. Norman wanders over to Beryl and slowly, gently holds out his hand to her. Gradually she regains composure and takes his hand. They exit. Marlene leaves Jed to slowly move towards Dot and the two women embrace affectionately. A car horn sounds. Barry kisses Susan and leads her to the exit. Susan goes to meet her dad but rushes back to kiss Barry one more time before leaving. Jed goes to approach Marlene, but Dot gently restrains him. Dot exits with Jed, leaving Marlene and Barry alone.*

**Barry** Marlene?  
**Marlene** What?  
**Barry** Can I have one of your fags?  
**Marlene** No.  
**Barry** Why not?  
**Marlene** I've chucked em away ... flushed 'em down loo.  
**Barry** Why?  
**Marlene** New start. Looking after meself. Others to think about now you know?  
**Barry** Jed? *(Marlene pats her stomach)*. Oh, yeah of course.  
**Marlene** Smashing song this, isn't it?  
**Barry** Yeah, Susan gave it me for Christmas.  
**Marlene** Come on, Barry.  
**Barry** What?  
**Marlene** *(Gently)* Come and dance with your ... auntie?

*They smile at each other and begin to dance. The lights fade until there's a tight spotlight on Barry who is reminiscing as his older self.*

**Older Barry** And so ... we danced ... for the second time that evening, I danced ... with my auntie.

*Fade to black. Music fades out.*

THE END