

Bitter

by

Colin Pink

There's always free cheddar in a mousetrap, baby.

- Tom Waits.

CAST:

Tom: A man in his mid thirties.

Frank: A man in his mid forties.

Viv: a woman in her thirties.

Set: Interior of a dilapidated farm house. Kitchen and sitting room area. A back door leads into the kitchen from the yard outside.

As the audience take their seats play 'God's Away On Business' by Tom Waits (from the album 'Blood Money') with the lyrics projected onto the back wall and a bouncing ball following the rhythm of the lyrics as if designed to sing-along.

Scene 1. Evening.

Set in darkness, just faint illumination from moonlight spilling through the kitchen window. Sound of a lorry approaching, at first faint, then the engine sound getting nearer, louder. Sound of the lorry swinging into the yard outside the house. The headlights sweep across the window and as it pulls up outside a loud bang is heard as the lorry hits something. Sound of engine idling. Voices off:

Viv Oh!

Frank Fucking hell! I thought you said you could drive an HGV.
Tom I can.
Viv Fuck.
Tom I'm just a bit out-a practice is all.
Frank Fucking hell.
Tom What dickhead put a bollard there for anyway?
Frank Probably to stop some dickhead like you crashing into his house.

The lorry engine is switched off and sound of lorry doors slamming and feet landing on gravel. Footsteps towards the building. Someone rattles the door. Sound of lock turning. Handle being yanked back and forth. Grunting as someone tries to push open the door. Sound of voices off stage:

Tom I'm sure this is the key.
Frank Here, let me try it.
 [More door rattling.]
 Are you sure this is it?
Tom Course I am. It's just a bit stiff. Let me try again.
 [More grunting as Tom tries to open the door.]
 Fucking thing's stuck.
 [Suddenly the door gives way and Tom staggers into the kitchen. Frank and Viv follow him in. They look around.]
Viv Fucking hell.
Frank Another dump.
Tom You asked for something remote.
Frank True.
Tom It's remote.

Viv It's filthy.

Frank You might 'ave considered a bit a comfort.

Tom There was nothing 'comfortable' so remote.

Frank Mmm.

Tom It's not bad.

Frank It might be okay for you, let's face it, a dry shop doorway's comfortable for you.

Viv I'm not staying here.

Tom [Tom sighs.] Here she goes.

Frank It'll be all right. It just needs a bit a sorting out.

Viv I don't know.

Frank We'll get it straight in no time.

Viv Hmmm.

Frank I thought you liked the country.

Viv This isn't the "country" I had in mind.

Tom [Tom sits down and puts his feet up on the table. A cloud of dust is disturbed.]

 I don't know why you're making such a fuss.

Frank Just make the best of it.

Viv I suppose so – yeah.

Frank Yeah.

Viv Cleaned up it could be quite nice. Those curtains'll have to go.

Frank Why?

Viv They're hideous!

Frank Forget the fucking curtains! You don't change anything, right! People are not supposed to know we're here. You change the fucking curtains it's advertising our presence, init.

Viv Okay Frank. Keep your 'air on. Christ, it was only a design idea.

Tom. We should never've –

Frank Don't start.

Viv Yeah, don't start. Anyway, don't you think that big fucking truck is a hint that someone's here?

Frank We'll park it behind the barn, it won't show up much then. Anyway, farms always have trucks don't they. Don't they.

Viv S'ppose.

Tom I still don't understand why you 'ad to bring 'er?

Frank She wanted to come.

Tom So?

Viv Frank can't resist my little whims.

Frank Anyway, it wasn't safe to leave her.

Tom It was always safe before.

Frank This time's different. There's more at stake. Imagine how I'd feel if I read in the paper they found bits of a woman floating down the Thames.

Viv I wouldn't be too happy meself.

Frank I'd think it was her, wouldn't I.

Tom S'ppose so.

Frank. Wondering. Anyway, it won't be for long, just till Chinghiz gets here. You'll just have to get along.

Tom Huh.

Frank Make an effort, for Christ's sake.

Viv He gives me the creeps.

Tom You snotty bitch.

Frank Now don't start. Shut it, both of you. [To Viv.] You don't have to worry about him, he won't bother you, will you Tom.

Tom I wouldn't touch her with a barge pole.

Frank There you are, see. Tom's harmless, aren't you. [Silence.]
He wouldn't hurt a fly. Hasn't killed anyone for years, have you.

Tom [Ponders, serious.]
Now when was the last time?
[They all stand in silence thinking.]
It would've been Scottie! That old bastard. It would've been when I
killed Scottie; that would've been the last time.

Frank I killed Scottie.

Tom Oh, did you?

Frank Yeah.

Tom Funny, I could've sworn it was me. Oh then, it must have been that
cunt Hicks. Now, when was that?
[They all stand in silence thinking.]
I know it was in the winter. There were no leaves on the trees. Very
bleak it was. The ground was hard as concrete. Nearly did me back in
trying to bury the little shit. It would've been about three years ago.

Frank No, longer than that, surely.

Tom I don't know. Time flies.

Frank [To Viv.] Anyway, he's out of practice.

Viv Well, I hope he's not going to start practising around here. I've had
enough excitement for one day. I think I'll go and freshen up.
[Exit Viv. Frank peers out of the window suspiciously.]

Tom Why did you really bring her along?

Frank She's a good fuck.

Tom Do you expect me to believe that?

Frank She knows a thing or two.

Tom She's playing you for a mug.

Frank She's got no morals. I like that in a person. You know where you stand.

Tom It's dangerous.

Frank Dangerous?

Tom She'll get in the way.

Frank Just relax. Your nerve's goin'.

Tom I don't like it.

Frank Nobody asked you.

Tom I know!

Frank So shut it! She's here now, and there's nothing you can do about it. She'll help pass the time.

Tom Hmm.

Frank She's got to be a better conversationalist than you.

Tom I can converse! I can converse as well as the next man.

Frank That's not saying much.

Tom I've conversed with the best of them. I've conversed with better'n you.

Frank Okay, okay, calm down.

Tom How long have we got to stay here?

Frank Until Chinghiz turns up.

Tom What kinda fuckin' name is that?

Frank He's from Uzbekistan.

Tom Where the fuck's that?

Frank Fucked if I know. It's one o' those new countries innit. They invent 'em on the news every other week. They mumble something ending in Stan.

Tom What happened to home grown criminals? That's what I'd like to know.

It's like everything: once we had a car industry, now they're all owned by foreigners, same wiv steel, mining, you name it -

Frank We're all multi-national now.

Tom. When's he coming?

Frank. Soon.

Tom. How soon?

Frank. He'll be along.

Tom. Yeah, but when?

Frank. Hard to say. When it's safe. He won't keep us waiting. He wants his merchandise.

[Viv returns but Frank and Tom don't notice.]

Tom. I don't like it. Hanging around for Chinghiz just to turn up when he feels like it. We're sitting ducks here.

Frank. Nobody knows we're here. We're safe. No problem.

Tom. He should've met us here.

Frank. He's a busy man. You can't rush him.

Viv. Who is this Chinghiz anyway? [Tom and Frank jump.]

Frank. Don't sneak up like that.

Viv. Answer the question.

Frank. Best not ask.

Viv. Why?

Frank. The less you know about him the better.

Viv. You've got me all intrigued now. I like mystery men.

Frank. Not this one. You wouldn't like this one.

Viv Chinghiz. That's a funny name.

Tom. Yeah, fucking hilarious.

Viv I'd like to meet him.

Frank. He's a busy man, he doesn't have time for pleasantries, like me.

Viv. Why's he so busy?

Frank. He's taking over. Diversifying. It means he's very busy. Either you're with him or you're in his way. [Pause.] Don't be in his way. He's cleaning up. He's the multi-national of crime. He's MacDonalds, he's Microsoft –

Tom He's fucking hard.

Frank You get the picture?

Viv I think so.

Frank Good. Let's eat. I'm starving. What've we got?

Viv The foods still in the cab. I'll go and get it. [Exit Viv.]

Tom It's bad luck. You know that, don't you.

[Frank wanders around the place. He starts to sniff.]

Frank I wish you'd drop it. [Frank sniffs.] It smells a bit in here, wouldn't you say?

Tom [Sniffs.] Dunno.

Frank [Sniffing.] It's a bit whiffy. It's not you is it?

Tom No!

Frank I won't live with people who smell. I have standards.

Tom It's not me!

Frank Okay. Stop flappin'. [Sniffs again.] It could be damp, I suppose. But, no, there's something . . . yes, something has definitely died around here. [Searching the room.] I'd know that smell anywhere. Can't you smell it?

Tom Sort of.

Frank Sort of! You either can or you can't.

[Continues to search. Looks behind a cupboard.]

A-ha!

[He shifts the cupboard away from the wall a bit and nudges a dead rat out with his foot.]

What did I tell you?

Tom It's horrible.

Frank Of course it's horrible. It's dead. [Peering down at the rat.] I'd say it's been dead quite some time. Lost a bit a weight I'd say. Next time I need the services of an estate agent remind me not to call you. Get rid of it before Viv comes back, it'll upset her, I don't want her upset.

Tom What should I do with it?

Frank I don't know. Just get rid of it. I'll check how Viv's getting' on.

[Exit Frank.]

Tom [Tom stares at the dead rat. He looks around, finds an empty shoe box. Picks up the rat and puts it in the box. Stares at it. Puts the lid on the box. Smiles.]

Musical Interlude 1. Time Passes. The actors mime.

Frank and Viv come back in.

All three tidy up the farmhouse.

They sleep.

Tom goes outside (he enters the audience space) and keeps watch. Smokes a cigarette.

Frank and Viv start kissing – make love.

Tom does exercises – pulling himself up by his arms from the door-jamb.

Frank and Viv talk among themselves.

They sleep.

Scene 2. Morning. Tom and Frank sit around the table drinking tea and smoking.

Silence – then:

Tom Did you know Viv went down the village yesterday?

Frank No. Did she?

Tom I saw her go.

Frank So?

Tom What's she doing in the fucking village? Sending post cards? Dear Uncle Bill, having a lovely time, wish you were here.

Frank You've got a suspicious mind.

Tom I don't trust her. She makes me nervous.

Frank She's just bored. It makes 'em a bit temperamental.

Tom You're thinking with your balls.

Frank At least I've got the option.

[Enter Viv from yard through Kitchen door.]

Frank Where've you been?

Viv I went for a walk.

Frank You were up fucking early.

Viv I couldn't sleep. The countryside is too fucking noisy – give me

Peckham any day.

Frank You just 'ave to get used to it.

Viv All those animal noises – it's creepy. Something was a making a weird yapping noise at 4am.

Tom That'd be you. [Sniggers.]

Viv Don't you start.

Frank Shut up Tom.

Viv I've had enough. The country isn't what it used to be.

Frank What d'you mean?

Viv Well, I thought we'd be able to go for lots of walks; watch the animals, commune with nature. Instead the only place you can walk is along the road, everything else is surrounded by barbed wire. It's like the frigging Somme out there.

Frank We're in England, what do you expect. We don't have nature in England. Too unproductive, wasteful, nature innit. We did away with it years ago. You're in countryside plc, my dear, devoted to the down payments on Farmer Giles's next Volvo.

Viv Well, it's boring.

Frank You've only been here a coupla days, you can't be bored already.

Viv I know when I'm bored. And I'm bored!

Frank Just make the most of it.

Viv There isn't even a telly. Nothing to watch. I'm missing my programmes.

Frank Tough.

Viv Let's go.

Frank We're waiting for Chinghiz.

Tom He should get a fuckin' move on.

Frank You two 'ave got no fuckin' patience 'ave you.

Tom Don't compare me to her.

Frank Shut it.

Viv What's in the truck anyway?

Frank Never you mind.

Viv But what?

Frank Merchandise. Just merchandise.

Viv Why d'you 'ave to be so fuckin' mysterious?

Frank It's special merchandise.

Tom What?

Frank I said it's special.

Tom You didn't tell me it was special!

Frank Well I'm telling you now.

Tom I thought there was somethin'.

Frank Keep you're 'air on.

Tom I fuckin' knew it.

Frank For fucks sake -

Tom Then it's not ciggies?

Frank No.

Tom And it's not porno?

Frank No.

Tom Oh fuck – it's not illegal fuckin' immigrants is it?

Frank No! 'Course not.

Tom Thank fuck for that.

Frank [Pushes away the breakfast things.]
Right. Tom and me've got some work to do. You can do the washing up.

Viv You needn't think I'm doing it. I did it yesterday.

Frank So.

Viv [Pointing at Tom.]
 It's his turn.

Frank I need him to help me shift some boxes.

Viv [Gets up and goes to sink.]
 You needn't think I'm doing it again tomorrow.

Frank We've all got to pull together.

Viv Huh! Look! You haven't even got Fairy Liquid. How am I supposed to cope with this?

Frank We all have our crosses to bear.
 [Frank and Tom exit to the yard.]

Viv [Viv goes to her handbag, gets out mobile phone, hurriedly sends a text message. Returns to the sink and starts washing up. Frank and Tom struggle to manoeuvre a packing case into the house.]

Frank Easy with it.

Tom Okay, okay.

Frank Tilt it a bit.

Tom [As they squeeze through the door.]
 It's a fuckin' tight fit.

Frank Okay, down your end.

Tom Why don't we leave it in the truck?

Frank I was going to but then I thought I'd better get the best boxes inside. They might get nicked from the truck. You can't trust anyone these days.

Tom What's special about these?

Frank Never you mind. Come on, one more to go.
 [They exit to the yard again and return with another packing case.]

Frank Round a bit.

Tom Okay, got it, got it.

Frank Got the hang of it now.
[They put the second case down.]

Tom God that's fucking 'eavy.

Viv Are you leaving them there?

Frank Yeah.

Viv It makes the place look untidy.

Frank Tough.

Viv Let's have a look then.

Frank No. Leave it alone.

Viv Oh. I like opening boxes.

Tom [Handing Viv the shoebox.]
Here you are then, open that.
[Viv opens the box and screams at the sight of the rat. Tom starts laughing his head off.]

Viv You fucking bastard.

Frank I thought I told you to get rid of it.

Viv Fucking cunt.

Tom Sorry, Frank, couldn't resist.

Frank You two stop arsing about. Tom, get outside and look out for visitors.
[Exit Tom.]
Don't let him wind you up.

Viv He's a sicko.

Frank The more he sees it get to you the more he'll do it, won't he.

Viv He creeps me out. He keeps looking at me.

Frank Well, he's only human.

Viv I can feel his eyes crawling all over me.

Frank You shouldn't go around looking so gorgeous shouldya.

Viv It's unnerving. And another thing.

Frank What?

Viv I dunno, I get this strange feeling, it's weird, like I know him, know him from some place, but I don't, do I.

Frank Perhaps he looks like someone famous. That's why he looks familiar.

Viv Nah.

Frank People often say I remind them of Robert DeNiro.

Viv What!

Frank Robert DeNiro.

Viv Leave it out.

Frank Straight up. Quite a few people've mentioned it.

Viv Did they all have white sticks?

Frank Very funny.

Viv Can't ya get rid of him? Why'dya keep him on?.

Frank He's reliable.

Viv How do you know?

Frank It's a question of initiative.

Viv What?

Frank He hasn't got any. You can always rely on people with no initiative.

Viv Maybe he's found some initiative. I don't think you can trust him.

Frank 'Course I can trust him, he's dependable.

Viv You think so?

Frank Yes.

Viv I'm sure you know best.

Frank What?

Viv I'm sure it's nothing.

Frank What?

Viv Just my imagination.

Frank What!

Viv Only, yesterday, I could have sworn I saw him at the end of the lane on his mobile phone.

Frank He hasn't got a mobile phone.

Viv Hasn't he?

Frank No. He hasn't. They can be traced. I gave him strict instructions to leave it behind.

Viv Then I must have imagined it. Silly me.

Frank [Under his breath.] Fucking mobile phones. [To Viv.] After this job I think I'll take a break. Maybe even retire. Go to Spain. 'Course Spain's not what it used to be but where is?

Viv I don't like Spain.

Frank What d'you mean you don't like Spain? Everyone likes Spain.

Viv It brings me out in heat bumps.

Frank We'll get away. Get away anyway. This might be the last job. Tidy little earner. Might retire.

Viv Retire? You?

Frank Yeah, why not. I've done enough. You get into a certain line of work, almost by accident, then you get caught in it, don'tcha.

Viv S'ppose.

Frank If you're not careful work takes over don't it. The dead haunt your nights and the living haunt your days. This is our chance to pack up. Finish. Get out of the rat race, isn't that everybody's dream?

Viv But Spain?

Frank Drop Spain – we'll go somewhere else.

Viv [Pause.] I dreamt about you last night.

Frank. Really.

Viv. Yes.

Frank. Was it nice?

Viv. No.

Frank. No?

Viv. It wasn't that kind of dream.

Frank What 'appened?

Viv In the dream?

Frank Yeah.

Viv There was something really important we 'ad to do. But we couldn't remember what. We tried lots of things but it was never the right thing. And then, towards the end, I realised, I suddenly, it dawned on me, like sudden, that we were dead, we'd been dead all along without knowing it and still hadn't done, whatever, whatever it was . . .

Frank. Fuckin' hell, what a dream. I never dream.

Viv. Never?

Frank. Never.

Viv. I don't believe you.

Frank. You can believe what you fuckin' like.

Viv. We all dream. We have to dream. Dreams are necessary.

Frank. Not for me. Dreams don't do nothin'.

Viv If you've used up all your dreams then you're dead. When I was little I used to dream of what I'd do when I grew up. I'd be very important, and everyone would look up to me. That's dreams for you. My Dad he didn't have a dream. He got up in the morning, went to work, came home, got

up, went to work, came home, got up, went, came back, went, back, went, back, went, back. That was all there was to it. And I said to myself – there must be something more. There must be more, more than this . . . fuckin' endless coming and going. [Pause.] I promised myself I'd do better.

Frank. There's no point in having dreams, dreams don't do anything. That's the thing about dreams. They aren't real. They don't come true.

Viv They do!

Frank. They don't!

Viv They do.

Frank. They don't

Viv They do! They do! Otherwise what's the point? What's the point in even being alive?

Frank. There is no point.

Viv Don't say that!

Frank. There is no point. Why'd you want a point? There's no fucking point, that's the point!

Viv If that's what you think no wonder you have no dreams.

Frank. Leave my dreams out of it.

Viv My Dad gave up. Took refuge in the bottle. Damped down his brain with as much as it took. I'd watch him sitting there, weak, dull, lolling in the chair. I said to myself I'm gonna experience everything. I'm gonna grab hold-a life – swallow it whole – bones an' all.

Frank There's only so much life you can eat – before it starts eating you.

Viv You have to prove you're alive, awake, have feelings. Is that so bad?
To feel?

Frank. It depends what you're feeling.

Viv. I feel a lot.

Frank. I know.

Viv. I feel a lot for you.

Frank. Do you now.

Viv. I love you.

Frank. No you don't.

Viv. Yes I do.

Frank. No you don't

Viv. Yes I do.

Frank. No you fucking don't! And I don't love you either.

Viv. You're just saying that. You're just saying that to protect yourself.

Frank. I don't need protection! You need protection.

Viv. I've got you.

Frank. No you haven't.

Viv. Yes I have.

Frank. No you fucking haven't. How many times do I have to tell you? Take your misplaced affection and put it somewhere else.

Viv. But I love you.

Frank. You're irrational.

Viv. You're part of me.

Frank. Too much sex, it's gone to your head.

Viv. [Laughs.] Don't flatter yourself! Do you really think you're the best shag I've had? I've had hundreds of men. You're not even in the top ten!

Frank. You haven't learnt very much.

Viv. You're just teasing. You want to make me angry. Why, Frank? Why d'you want to upset me?

Frank. It amuses me.

Viv. This is what 'appens when you 'aven't got a telly.

Frank I don't need a telly for entertainment – I've got you. Come here. Tell me a story.

Viv No.

Frank Why not?

Viv Can't think-a one.

Frank You don't have to make it up. Tell me something true. I like being told something true. It makes a nice change.

Viv I don't like Tom.

Frank True but hardly a revelation. If it makes you feel any better he doesn't like you either.

Viv I'm devastated.

Frank He thinks you're untrustworthy. Are you untrustworthy?

Viv No.

Frank I'm glad. I'm very glad Vivienne. Because if I couldn't trust you I'd have to kill you, and that would be such a waste.

Viv I don't like it when you joke like that.

Frank I'm not joking.

Viv Yes you are.

Frank Yeah, I am.

Viv Anyway, you know you can trust me.

Frank 'Course I can. I trust you. It's Tom who doesn't trust you. He thinks you're a snob too. Are you a snob?

Viv Yes, of course I am.

Frank I admire your honesty.

Viv Are you a snob?

Frank Oh yes. If you're a cut above the rest it's the only way to be. I'm

fascinated by you. Tell me something about yourself you've never told anyone else before.

Viv [Pause.] Why?

Frank Trust. Trust me with something.

Viv [Thinks for a bit.] When I was ten . . .

Frank Yes?

Viv [Pause.] I poisoned my sister Heather's goldfish.

Frank Never!

Viv Yes. I did.

Frank. You Devil.

Viv. It was wikkid.

Frank Why did you do it?

Viv They were getting too much attention.

Frank. Too much attention?

Viv. I couldn't bear anything getting more attention than me; specially fish.

Frank How did you do it?

Viv I put some bleach in their tank.

Frank Cunning. Did you get found out?

Viv Heather had her suspicions but nothing could be proved.

Frank I can see I'm dealing with a professional here. I'm impressed.

Viv Thank you. If accused I just deny everything.

Frank Me too! It's amazing how alike we are, underneath the surface.

Viv Whose pets have you killed?

Frank Depends what you count as a pet.

Tom [Enters the kitchen from outside.]

It's getting a bit nippy out there.

Viv Have some tea. [Pouring.] It'll warm you up.

Tom [Surprised.] Thanks.

Frank Viv was just telling me how she poisoned her sister's goldfish.

Viv That was a secret!

Frank She likes poisoning things.

Tom [Tom looks at his tea and pours it down the sink.]

Viv. That was fresh!

Tom I'll make me own.

Frank. I'm going into the village. There are a few things I need to sort out. You two behave while I'm gone.

[Exit Frank.]

Tom [Making more tea.] Well.

Viv. Well.

Tom I think it might rain.

Viv Probably.

Tom. [Pause while he makes his tea. Sits opposite Viv.]
What you doing here?

Viv. I'm on me 'olidays.

Tom. The real reason.

Viv. Frank asked me.

Tom. Do everything he asks, do you?

Viv. What do you think? And you. D'you do everything Frank wants?

Tom. Depends. He asked me to help him out on a job. Nobody else was asking so I said yes.

Viv. Just like that?

Tom. Yeah, just like that.

Viv. What did you do before you started working for Frank?

Tom. This and that. I was in the army for five years.

Viv. I thought you'd been in the army.

Tom. Yeah? Does it show?

Viv. Yeah, it shows. You can always tell, when someone's been in the army.
It leaves its mark.

Tom. It keeps you fit.

Viv. It leaves all kind of marks.

Tom. Feel that.
[Holds out his arm. Viv feels his bicep.]
Pure muscle that.

Viv. It's very [beat] hard.

Tom. I keep meself fit.

Viv. I'm sure you do.

Tom. Watch this.
[Strips off his shirt gets down on ground and starts doing vigorous press-ups.]
You can count, if you like.

Viv. No thanks.
[Pause while Viv watches him some more.]
It doesn't do anything for me. You can stop now. Show's over.

Tom. [Keeps doing push-ups.]
I'm not doin' it for you, I'm doin' it for me.

Viv. I wish you'd stop, I keep imagining various things under you. I might
laugh any minute, I wouldn't want you to think I was laughing at you.

Tom. What sort-a things?

Viv. First I imagined a sheep, then a pig, it must be the effect of the country.

Tom. You're weird.

Viv. Then I started to imagine it was Margaret Thatcher.

Tom [Stops doing push ups.]
Oh leave it out, you're turnin' me stomach. Leave the old cunt out-a it.
Look, stop mucking about, Frank's out . . . we could . . . you know.

Viv Cement our friendship?

Tom Yeah, somethin' like that.

Viv. I should've thought you'd had enough excitement for one day. Maggie's more than enough for any man.

Tom. Go on.

Viv. No.

Tom. Why not?

Viv. I don't feel like it.

Tom. I'm just as good as Frank.

Viv. Are you now?

Tom. You're impressed just because he uses big words.

Viv. No.

Tom You think he's clever but he's not. If he was that clever we wouldn't be stuck here waiting.

Viv He can't help it.

Tom He should never've agreed to this arrangement. It's asking for trouble.
Cooped up here. Waiting. [Pause.] I'm great in the sack.

Viv Are you?

Tom Yeah, really great. Lotta stamina. I get a lotta compliments; you'd be surprised.

Viv You're right there.

Tom Frank's no great shakes in the lurve department anyway.

Viv How would you know?

Tom I've heard.

Viv Well you've heard wrong. He's quite good.

Tom. I've got a bigger dick than him.

Viv. Really. How fascinating. [Pause.] How do you know? Have you two
 been indulging in the love that dare not speak its name?

Tom. What?

Viv. Never mind. How do you know yours is bigger than his?

Tom. I saw it. Standing at the urinal one day I saw it. I wasn't looking, mind,
 I'm not one of those, I just happened to see it.

Viv. You gonna prove it?

Tom. What?

Viv. Get it out. When I've seen both I'll be able to give you a considered
 opinion.

Tom. You sound like a doctor.

Viv. Shown it to a lot of doctors, have you?

Tom. Shut up.

Viv. Bet you have. Bet it's seen the inside of consulting rooms more often
 than the inside of a cunt.

Tom. You're hard you.

Viv Thanks.

Tom Tell you what.

Viv What?

Tom Want to open a box?

Viv This isn't another rat joke is it?

Tom No, one of these.

Viv Frank wouldn't like it.

Tom Well?

Viv What d'you think's inside?

Tom One way to find out.
[Tom fetches a crowbar, prises open the top of one of the boxes and peers inside.]
Fucking hell!

Viv What is it?

Tom [Pulling out an Uzi machine pistol from the box.]
Serious hardware.

Viv Wow.

Tom [Examining the weapon with reverence and working the mechanism.]
Well fuck me if it's not a fucking Uzi. Fucking hell. You gotta hand it to those Yids they gotta touch of that durch sprung technik ain't they.

Viv What's in the other box?

Tom [Puts down the gun and prises open the other case. Peers inside.]
[Whistles.]

Viv What is it?

Tom [Picks out a package and throws it at Viv who catches it.]

Viv What is it?

Tom Semtex. It's a fucking crate full of Semtex.
[Tom lifts out another package of Semtex and examines it.]
Beautiful stuff.

Viv What's Semtex?

Tom Plastic explosive. Used it in the army. Sappers. Learnt how to blow up bridges, stuff like that.
[Throws the other package of Semtex to Viv.]

Viv You've got hidden talents.

Tom [Rummaging in the case.]
Yeah, don't do a lotta good down the job centre though. What can you

do? I know how to blow up bridges. Not a lotta call for that around here. Aha. Got detonators too. Nice ones. Pro-fes-ssional!

Viv It looks like silly putty.

Tom It is very silly putty. Great stuff, do what you like with it. Throw it around, stomp on it, wouldn't hurt a fly. Not without one of these in it. Now, with one of these, different story.

Viv Kah-boom!

Tom Yeah [laughs.] Kah-boom!

Viv How do you -

Tom Use it?

Viv Yeah.

Tom Like a lesson?

Viv Yeah.

Tom See, the great thing about plastic explosives is you can mould it into any shape you like.

Viv Like silly putty.

Tom Yeah. Means you can get it into all kinds of awkward places. Of course the tricky thing is knowing the right quantity to use to do the job.

Viv Yeah.

Tom Then, you have to know the correct way to rig up the fuses. Without a fuse it's fucking useless. These are my favourites. A fuse like this is just a small charge of explosive with a timer and it's the fuse what causes the main charge

Viv The silly putty.

Tom To go off.

Viv How do they work?

Tom These one's are electronic, each has a preset time delay see. You fix it

into the charge, activate it and it's count down to -

Viv Kah-boom!

Tom [Laughs.] Yeah.

Frank [Enter Frank.]

What the fuck do you two think you're fucking doin'?

Viv Tom's showing me how to make a bomb.

Frank I didn't say you could open the fucking boxes did I.

Tom Sorry Frank, just curious.

Frank Curiosity kills.

Viv [Laughs.]

Frank Don't fucking laugh! Get out, I want a word with Tom – private.

[Exit Viv.]

Tom [Picks up the Uzi and stares at it.]

This is serious shit.

Frank That's why it's confidential.

Tom You shoulda told me Frank.

Frank What!

Tom You shoulda told me first. This is serious shit.

Frank It's just a job.

Tom Who's it going to?

Frank I told you, Chinghiz.

Tom Who's it going to after him?

Frank How the fuck should I know?

Tom We should know.

Frank No we shouldn't fucking know. The less we know the better. It's just business.

Tom Serious fucking shit this.

Frank Will you shut the fuck up about it! It's just business, how many times do I have to tell ya. And you can put that fucking thing away too. I want it all in mint condition for Chinghiz, don't want your fuckin smeary paw prints all over it.

Tom I was just checking it.

Frank Oh yes, Mr. Quality Control now are we.

Tom When's he coming for it?

Frank Soon.

Tom He should've been here by now – if he was coming.

Frank He's coming.

Tom How do you know?

Frank I spoke to him. He's coming tomorrow.

Tom But can we trust him?

Frank 'Course we can trust him.

Tom Why?

Frank He's a man of his word.

Tom I have a bad feeling.

Frank You always have a bad feeling.

Tom I can feel it here.

Frank Just because you got gut ache you think everything's fucked up. Your gut affects your world view mate. You wanna get something for it.

Tom I don't trust him.

Frank You can tell him when he gets here tomorrow.

Tom If he comes.

Frank For fucks sake give it a rest why don'tcha.

Tom You shoulda told me what it was we was shiftin'.

Frank You're not gonna go on about that again.

Tom It's not the same.

Frank I know it's not the fuckin' same that's why I didn't mention it. I knew you'd go all weird on me.

Tom Why Chinghiz?

Frank He pays well.

Tom Vollman would give us a good price for this stuff.

Frank I dun the deal with Chinghiz.

Tom Vollman wouldn'ta kept us waitin'.

Frank Will you shut up about Vollman!

Tom You shoulda asked me.

Frank I do the business. Right! I always do the business. Since when do you do the business?

Tom Okay, okay.

Frank Fuckin' opinion about everything these days. Look – I'm getting' a better deal off Chinghiz. It's me retirement fund – I've had enough.

Tom No you haven't.

Frank Yes, I have.

Tom Nah, you're not gonna retire. You'd get bored, miss the excitement.

Frank No I won't. This is the last job – so don't fuck up.

Tom What about me?

Frank What?

Tom When you retire, what happens to me?

Frank Nothing.

Tom No. Not nothing. I get made redundant don't I. Not needed no more.

Frank I'll see you're all right.

Tom I don't like it.

Frank It's just a deal.

Tom But what if it goes to, you know, them fundamentalists? Do a lotta damage this stuff.

Frank Business is business Tom. That's what you don't understand. That's why you are no fucking good at business. Leave it to me, okay.

Tom I'd feel bad.

Frank Look. Nobody gives a shit. You start givin' a shit you're fucked see.

Tom It's bad.

Frank Bad? I'll give you fuckin' bad. You don't know bad. [Pause.] Look, it's like fucking Rwanda mate innit.

Tom What?

Frank Look at it. They knew all the fucking Tetsis, or whatever they're called, was gonna get it but did they do anything? No.

Tom No.

Frank And the reason is they fucking don't got nothing anyone wants, have they. [Pause.] But Saddam fucking Hussein waves his wanger at the U.S. once too often and it's World War Fucking Three innit. And why is that? [Pause.] Shitloads of oil, that's why. Fuckin' obvious innit. Now they're making out it was 'cause he was a right fuckin' bastard to his own don't they. But he was a right fuckin' bastard all the time they bin supporting him, didn't bother 'em then did it, 'cause it suited 'em didn't it.

Tom So?

Frank So it's business innit. It's all just fucking business. Everybody does it. Business don't got no morals do it. It's true. I read it in one a those Economics textbooks. 'Economics is a non-normative science' it said. Know what normative means?

Tom No.

Frank I looked it up. Values. Normative is values, morals, stuff like that. But

economics ain't normative. Which translates as, they can all fucking die in Rwanda, but Iraq, it's time for 'regime change' innit.

Tom I don't trust Chinghiz.

Frank Not again!

Tom He might be working for one of them Muslim groups.

[Tom works the mechanism of the Uzi, pulling the trigger. It isn't loaded so it just goes click. Frank does not flinch, just ignores it.]

Frank He's an interesting man is Chinghiz. You could learn a lot from him. He can get quite philosophical. Reckons half this stuff about concentration camps is made up. Propaganda. Israeli propaganda, according to him.

Tom Don't talk crap.

Frank He's thinking out-a the box.

Tom If he uses this stuff there'll be a lot-a people in boxes.

Frank You worry too much. Stuff gets blown up all that happens is it creates work don't it. Look at Iraq, those contracts are worth millions.

[Tom points Uzi at Frank, pulls trigger, click.]

Tom He sounds like a nutter to me.

Frank He's very smart, don't forget it.

Tom He could do something wild.

[Tom points Uzi at Frank, pulls trigger, click. Frank ignores it.]

Frank Something spectacular you mean? Like 9/11? Nah, he's not like that.

Tom You don't fuckin' know.

[Tom points Uzi at Frank, pulls trigger, click.]

Frank Pretty fucking amazing though man. 9/11 – talk about fucking reality T.V.! Now that's what I call reality T.V. Best entertainment for years.

[Tom points Uzi at Frank, pulls trigger, click.]

Makes the rest look like the shite it is. Fuckin' glued to the box I was.

Tom I wonder about you some times.

Frank I'm just being honest Tom. No one else is. They was all glued to the fucking box. But they don't admit it.

Tom You're not supposed to fucking enjoy it!

[Tom points Uzi at Frank, pulls trigger, click.]

Frank Stop fucking doing that!

Tom Where's the ammo?

Frank Leave the fucking ammo alone and listen to what I'm saying. If you don't listen how the fuck you ever going to learn. Give it here.

[Frank takes the Uzi off of Tom.]

You know the parable of the talents?

Tom What?

Frank In the fucking Bible.

Tom I don't read that stuff.

Frank You should try it some time. I was staying in this hotel and I opened the drawer and there was this shit coloured book in it. Turned out to be the Bible. The porn channel wasn't working so I had a little read.

Tom I didn't think the Bible had much wank material.

Frank I'm not talking about wanking!

Tom Oh.

Frank I'm talking about the fucking parable of the talents.

Tom Oh.

Frank. Anyway, in the parable of the talents this rich guy, see, he goes away on business; and while he's away he gives his three trusted servants some of his money to look after.

Tom. I can see where this's going.

Frank. No, it's not like that.

Tom. He sounds like a pratt.

Frank. [During the following speech Frank rummages around for the Uzi ammo clip, finds it and loads it into the gun.]

He tells them to do what they like with it until he comes back. Well, one of them he gambles all the money away and when the boss comes back he gives him a good hiding; and one of them invests it wisely and doubles the amount of money and the boss says, well done, my son, join the firm. And the third one, see, he's done fuck all with his talents but buried 'em in the ground and he hands back the same amount of money he was given, not a penny more, not a penny less, and what do you suppose happens?

Tom. Don't know.

Frank. He gets a good kicking too!

Tom. Never.

Frank. Yeah.

Tom. That's not fair.

Frank. Exactly.

Tom. What's it mean then?

Frank. It means the world ain't fair, it means business is business, it means economics ain't a normative science,

[Pointing the Uzi at Tom.]

it means cross me and I'll blow your fuckin' head off.

Musical Interlude 2. Time passes. The actors mime.

Viv sits and reads a book.

Tom on look out. Checks no one is looking – pulls out a mobile phone and mimes conversation.

Frank anxiously paces up and down in the farmhouse.

Frank goes up to Viv and strokes her hair. She brushes him off irritated.

Frank goes outside and relieves Tom. They swap hostile looks.

Tom sits in the farmhouse bouncing a tennis ball off the wall and catching it like Steve McQueen in 'The Great Escape'.

Viv brushes her hair – ignores Tom – applies make up.

Frank on look out. Keeps glancing anxiously at his watch.

Scene 3. Later that evening. They sit around the table drinking, smoking and playing monopoly.

Tom What 'appened to Chinghiz then? Another no show.

Frank He couldn't help it. Something came up.

Tom What came up?

Frank I don't know. He didn't go into details.

Tom I'm beginning to think he's your imaginary friend. Are you sure he wants the stuff?

Frank He wants it all right. He'll be here tomorrow.

Tom Oh yeah?

Frank Yeah. He said tomorrow. Definitely tomorrow.

Tom Definite?

Frank That's what the man said.

Viv Are you two playin' or what?

Frank Sorry.

Tom Whose turn is it anyway?

Viv Your move.

Tom [Tom plays.]

Frank It's a clever fuckin' game, Monopoly. The cunt who designed it knew a thing or two.

Tom What the fuck are you going on about now?

Frank It's like life innit, Monopoly. One player ends up with everything, all the others end up wiv nothin'.

Tom It's just a fuckin' game.

Viv [Viv plays.]

 We used to play monopoly when I was a kid. But the set we had, some cunt'd lost the houses so it was nearly impossible to make anyone bankrupt.

Frank [Chuckling.] You had the communist version.

Viv Fuckin' games used to go on forever, days, weeks sometimes, we started calling it Monotony.

Frank [Throws dice.]

 Six.

 [Moves piece.]

 One, two, three, four, five, six. Angel Islington. I'll buy it.

Viv I've already got it. That'll be six pounds.

Frank [Giving her the money.]

What do you want the Angel Islington for, it's a right dump.

Viv Not any more it isn't. Trendy. Very A-B. Full of Independent and Guardian readers these days.

Frank It's still a dump.

Viv Yes, but it's urban grime chic.

Frank I'll buy it off you.

Viv It's not for sale.

Frank I'll make it worth your while.

Tom No private property transactions are allowed between players. My turn!

[Throws.]

Eight!

[Moves piece.]

Mayfair! I'll have that.

[Counts out money and retrieves card.]

Full of high class hookers, Mayfair, just the thing.

Viv [Throws dice and moves.]

King's Cross Station.

Tom Full of cheap hookers.

Viv I'll have it.

Tom [Handing her the card.]

You should feel at home there.

Viv There's no need to be insulting just because you're losing.

Tom I'm not losing.

Viv Just wait and see.

Frank I'm bored.

Tom Throw. It's your turn.

Frank [Throws and moves.]

Marylebone Station.

Viv That'll be fifty pounds.

Tom I'd say you've been over charged.

Frank [To Tom.] Shut it!

[Hands Viv the money.]

Viv Thank you.

Frank I'll be bankrupt in no time if I keep following you around the board

landing on your property. We should consider a merger:

[Looking at Tom.]

gang up on the little runt.

Viv But have you got anything I want?

Frank I've got plenty for you.

Tom No private transactions between players! Get on!

Viv [To Tom.] It's your turn.

Tom Oh yeah.

[Throws and moves.]

Income Tax!

Frank Serves you right for buying Mayfair. It's out of your league anyway. I

don't know why you want it. Tell you what, I'll swap you Old Kent Road,

that's more your line.

Tom Shut up.

Viv [Throws and moves.]

Chance.

[Picks up a card.]

Bank pays you dividend of £50. About time too.

Frank [Throws and moves.]

Seven. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Chance.

[Picks up card and reads.]

Go to jail. Move directly to jail. Do not pass go. Do not collect £200.

Tom Ha, ha, ha.

Viv Poor dear. I'll visit you.

Tom They always say that.

Frank [Throws over the board.]

Shut up! Both of you. It's just a game. And a fucking stupid game at that!

Viv [Awkward pause.]

I think we're all a bit tense.

Tom [Picking up the pieces and putting them away.]

Keep you're 'air on Frank.

Frank What!

Tom Nothin'.

Viv [Going up to Frank and massaging his neck.]

We just need to relax.

Tom I was definitely winnin' that time.

Frank We keep our nerve we all win.

Viv That's right, Frank.

Frank Got that straight?

Tom Can't find Whitehall.

Frank Stick together we're all winners.

Tom You seen Whitehall?

Viv [Continuing to massage Frank.]

How's that, Frank? Feel better?

Frank Bit.

Viv Good. Good.

Tom There it is!

Viv You're all knotted up.

Frank Ah, that's the spot.

Viv That good?

Frank Mmmm.

Viv There. You're all smoothed out now. Let's play something different.

Tom Like what?

Viv Umm. I know, let's play a kinda truth or dare type game.

Tom Leave it out.

Viv Don't be bashful Tom. I you got lotsa interestin' things in your past.
You start.

Tom No way.

Viv Scared?

Tom Don't be stupid. It's your idea, you start.

Viv Okay. I don't mind. I'll start. But you'll 'ave to help me.

Tom Anything for a quiet life.

Viv Okay. [Pause.] I'm going to tell a story. And you have to guess. It's a
guessing game.

Frank Guess what?

Viv Guess if it's true. [Pause.] Ready? [Pause.] Then I'll begin. When I
was 16 we lived for a bit in Wiltshire, in a shitty little town called
Warminster.

Tom Well that sounds true enough.

Viv Very funny.

Tom No, seriously, when I was in the army I was stationed just outside
Warminster, at Knock Camp.
[Silence.]

Viv Were you?

Tom Yeah. Right fucking dump.

Viv Yeah.

Tom Yeah.

Frank So what's the story?

 [Silence.]

Viv The story [beat] yes the story. Well, on a Saturday night me and some friends we used to go down this pub called the Bird in Hand. Every Friday and Saturday they had a disco see in the upstairs bar.

Frank Thrilling I'm sure.

Viv That was what passed for entertainment in Warminster.

Tom Probably still does.

Viv So we used to go dancing. Nothing serious. Just girls mucking about, you know, eyeing up the boys.

 [Silence. Viv stares at Tom.]

Frank Is that it? Is that all the fucking story you've got?

Viv I haven't finished yet.

Frank All right.

Viv Let me finish.

Frank Okay.

Viv No interruptions.

 [Silence.]

 One night we were down the Bird in Hand as usual. [To Tom.] Do you know it?

Tom Me?

Viv Yeah.

Tom Rings a bell. Might've been there once or twice.

Viv I bet you did. Lots of squaddies used to go down the Bird in Hand. You could always tell which ones were the squaddies by their haircuts. All the same. Every one alike.

[Pause. Viv looks quizzically at Tom.]

Like robots. [beat] Anyway, it's noisy. Lots of people. Saturday night.

[Cue disco music and disco lights on the set.]

The music is throbbing, like it's . . . like it's . . . cranking up the atmosphere. It's telling you, let go of your inhibitions, have a fun time. All us girls are dressed up, lined up, posing, pretending not to be interested, giggling, getting drunk. All the boys are lined up, decked out, looking at the girls, laughing among themselves, showing off, acting stupid, getting drunk. One of 'em, the squaddies, a bit scruffy looking, comes up to me and asks if I wanna dance. So I says yes. Come on Tom, you can be my partner.

[Pulls up Tom and they dance awkwardly together.]

So we dance. He's all right. And we make small talk. What d'ya think we say Tom? What d'ya think?

Tom You from round here?

Viv Oh very good, very good. So I say, Yeah.

Tom I'm at the camp.

Viv That so.

Tom So, do you like soldiers?

Viv Dunno. Convince me.

Tom [To Frank.] She's bloody hard work.

Viv [Laughs.] I'm just playing it cool. But by now me friends are dancing with the other lads. I don't want to be the only one without a bloke so he starts getting more attractive. He's not bad, he'll do.

[They dance closer, making eyes at one another.]

As the evening wears on I quite like him. So we dance and drink and dance and drink and before you know it it's closing time. As we're leaving his mates invite me and my mates to come back to the camp with them. Most of my mates aren't interested but me and my best friend, Sandie, say yeah, we want to see what it's like inside the camp. So we pile into the truck but on the way Sandie has to get out to be sick. While she's barfing her brains out by the side of the road they drive off and leave her. But I didn't notice at the time. 'Cause I was too pissed and I had me face glued to lover boy. [To Tom.] What happens when we get to the camp.

Tom We smuggle you in.

Viv I'm smuggled in.

Tom We have a party.

Viv [Viv does sexy dancing with Tom.]

Yeah a party. Someone puts on some music and we start dancing again. I dance with the guys real sexy. I'm feeling flirty. And someone says -

Tom How about a striptease!

Viv I'm off me face so I think, that's a good idea. And I do.

Tom She doesn't do it very well because she's a bit too pissed, keeps staggering around, but the lads lap it up anyway.

Viv Half way through I think to myself, where's Sandie? And I get a bit sober and I say, I want to go home. And they say -

Tom Don't go now.

Viv I want to go home. But they don't want me to go. And they're all around me. Pressing in. And they say, we know you're gagging for it,

come on, enjoy it.

Tom [Overlapping end of Viv's speech.] Enjoy it.

Viv And they do. It was you, wasn't it.

Tom No. It weren't me.

Frank What are you saying?

[Suddenly the lights go out. Stage in blackout.]

Tom. Wha's that!

Frank. Fucking lights.

Tom. I can't see a fucking thing.

Frank. Where's the fuse box?

Tom. How the fuck should I know I can't even find me matches.

[Rattle of match box and then strikes a light - eerie glow.]

Viv. Why did the lights go out?

Tom. It's an old place.

[Tom lights a candle with the match.]

Viv. Is that it? Is that it?

Frank Faulty wiring.

Viv. Is that really it?

Tom. How the fuck should I know.

Frank. Shut up! I heard something.

[Silence as they listen. Frank grabs the Uzi.]

Tom. I can't hear anything.

Frank. Shhh!

[Suddenly the window is smashed, Viv screams. A man bursts through the door, gunshots. Frank blasts away with the Uzi in the direction of the door, flame flashing from the muzzle in the darkness.]

Tom Oh fuck.

Viv [Viv continues to scream.]

Tom Oh fuck, I think I've been shot.

Frank. [To Viv.] Look after him.

[Frank goes out the door. After a pause there are some more shots. Sound of Viv sobbing and Tom groaning. After another pause the lights come on again, Viv tends to Tom and shortly after that Frank returns through the door. He looks at the body of the man by the door. Turns to Tom.]

Do you recognise him?

Tom. [Struggles up and peers at the body.]

No.

Frank. You sure.

Tom. I don't know him.

Frank Doesn't he work for Vollman?

Tom Fucked if I know.

Viv. Better get that shirt off.

[While helping Tom remove his shirt.]

D'you think they'll come back?

Frank. They're not going anywhere.

Viv. They were trying to shoot me!

Tom. It was me they shot!

Viv. We could've been killed!

Frank. Don't get hysterical.

Tom. I'm not feeling too good.

Frank. Look Tom it's just a graze.

Tom. [Looking at the blood on his side.]

I think I'm going to be sick.

[Tries to get up and faints.]

Frank. Some bloody hero.

Viv. Is he all right?

Frank. He's just fainted. Help me get him up.

[They prop Tom in a chair. Frank goes outside again.]

I'm just checking, stay here.

[Pause. Viv paces anxiously up and down. Frank returns with some rope.]

Here, help me with this.

[He starts using the rope to tie the unconscious Tom to the chair, Viv assisting.]

Viv. Why are we doing this?

Frank. Just do it.

Viv. Okay, okay.

[They finish tying up Tom.]

Frank. [Testing the ropes.] That should do it.

Viv. I don't understand -

Frank. Shut up! Sit down!

Tom [Recovers consciousness and begins to realise he is tied up.]

What happened? Wha'?

Frank Comfy?

Tom What the fuck's going on?

Frank Someone has betrayed us.

Tom No Frank.

Frank. Nobody knows we're here. Nobody! How'd they find out? Eh, eh!

Tom You can trust me Frank. You know I'd never fit you up.

Frank First time for everything in't there Tom.

Tom It could be her. I told you she was down the village.

Viv I warned you about him Frank.

Frank [To Viv.] Shut up! [To Tom.] Are there more on the way?

Tom. What you talking about Frank?

Frank. You heard. When these two don't call in, will there be more on their way?

Tom. I don't know, Frank, I don't know nothing about it. It's her! Not me! It's me they shot! If I was working for them they wouldn't've shot me for Christ's sake!

Frank. [Looking contemptuously at the body on the floor.]
Bloody amateurs.
[Goes over and kicks the body.]
Fucking amateurs.
[Kicks it again. Turning and glaring at Tom.]
I hate amateurs!

Tom. That's right Frank. They were fucking useless. No match for you.

Frank. Talk to me Tom. Tell me what you did.
[Silence. Tom stares anxiously at Frank.]
Gone all quiet have we? No stories to tell. Cat got ya tongue. You'll have to talk sooner or later. [Pause.] Talk you fucking bastard!

Tom. There's nothing to say, Frank. I haven't done nothing.

Frank. I don't believe you, Tom. I'm sorry to have to say it but I don't believe you. All this show of loyalty. It doesn't ring true Tom, you know it, I know it. You might as well admit it -

Tom. I don't know what you're talking about Frank.

Frank. Where's the mobile phone?

Tom I haven't got one Frank.

Frank Don't give me that.

Tom Honest.

Frank. Do you want some persuading? Like a bit of encouragement?

Tom. [Frustrated.] I don't know anything!

Frank We'll see; we'll see. Watch many films, Tom? You know, in the films it's amazing how much punishment people can take.

[Suddenly swings round and punches Tom in the face who groans. Blood trickles from his mouth.]

But we're not in the films. Are we Tom? Real life is sadly deficient in endurance, isn't it Tom? In real life everything hurts.

[Punches Tom in the face again. Frank steps back and casually, slowly, fishes out a pack of cigarettes, takes one out, lights it and pauses.]

It's funny. People think you need dungeons to torture people. All kinds of fiendish and elaborate devices. But you don't - do you? Pain is all around us. You only have to look. Everyday objects are full of potential. Every kitchen is a slaughterhouse. But I don't need to ransack the kitchen because I have the humble cigarette.

[Puffs away on the cigarette.]

How many cigarettes do you think are in circulation? Ever thought about it?

Must be millions, mustn't it. But you know what they say, smoking isn't good for your health. But there are times when you just have to have a cigarette.

Viv Frank?

Frank Shut up.

[Frank walks back towards the chair. Tom squirms on it, his foot knocking nervously on the chair leg, making a loud banging noise, bang, bang, bang. Frank pauses in front of Tom.]

Now, I'm going to be nice and ask you again. Why did you betray us?

Tom I didn't Frank - honest. You've got to believe me. I didn't. It must've been her.

[He nods his head towards Viv.]

Frank Don't you tell me what I've got to believe! I will decide what I do and don't believe. It's a shame, Tom, but I'm going to have to determine who is telling the truth and who isn't - starting with you!

Tom Please . . . Frank -

Frank. [Leans over Tom and shoves his face towards him.]

You are one stubborn fucker aren't you Tom? Now! I want you to tell me who you told and how you told them. Have I made myself clear?

Tom [Tom practically sobbing.] But I didn't!

Frank HAVE I MADE MYSELF CLEAR!

Tom [Sobbing.] Yes.

Frank [Frank holds the cigarette up in front of his face and blows on the end, making it glow red. Sound of Tom's foot tapping frantically on the chair leg, bang, bang, bang.]

It's a shame to spoil this.

Tom *Please, Frank..*

Frank You've got quite nice nipples - for a bloke.

Tom *Please!*

Frank [Frank stands in front of Tom and methodically burns Tom with the cigarette. Tom writhes in agony emitting high pitched squeals and shrieks of a kind that are dreadful to listen to. Frank stops, steps back, pauses, sound of Tom sobbing and gasping.]

Now I'll ask you again. Who are you working for?

Tom [Words snatched between sobs and gasps.]

You. I . . . work . . . for you. No one. Nobody. Just you.

Frank Just me.

Tom [Winching in pain.] Yes . . . Yes . . . Just you.

Frank I'm touched by your loyalty Tom. I really am. It gives me a warm glow inside.

[Mirthless laugh.]

Do I look stupid? Do I really look that stupid?

[Frank moves up to Tom with the cigarette again, starts burning him again, Tom screaming again. Viv pulls Frank away, tries to stop him.]

Viv Stop it Frank, please Frank, that's enough.

Frank [Frank turns and lashes out at Viv, knocking her to the floor.]

SHUT THE FUCK UP! He's spoilt everything – everything.

[Frank turns to Tom again.]

This was the last job you asshole! WHY'D'YOU 'AVE TO FUCK IT ALL UP!

[Frank prepares to burn him again. Viv gets up grabs the crowbar moves up behind Frank and swings it at his head. Frank drops to the floor.]

Tom Thank God Viv. Thank God. You're a star.

Viv [Standing over Frank, looking down at his body.]

What did you say?

Tom You're a star.

Viv That's what you said at the disco.

Tom What?

Viv [Staring back at Frank.]

Is he dead?

Tom I don't know. Untie me Viv.

Viv No.

Tom Please.

Viv No.

Tom Let me out.

Viv No.

Tom We have to get away.

Viv No.

Tom Out of here. It's not safe Viv, not safe.

Viv It was you, wasn't it? I thought there was something about you.

Tom Viv.

Viv You were the one, in Warminster. The one who started it all.

Tom What?

Viv How could you let them do that to me?

Tom I don't know what you're on about Viv.

Viv You enjoyed it.

Tom We've got to go Viv. More will be coming soon.

Viv You didn't just fuck me you fucked my life. My life!

Tom Viv. Look Viv. Let's talk about this later.

Viv I couldn't let him kill you 'cause you're mine. You've always been part of me, ever since that night in the camp, inside me like a disease that won't go away. A disease that don't kill you, just cripples you inside. I've been dead half my life 'cause of you.

Tom I told you it wasn't me. You're imagining it.

Viv No. I remember you. I remember it all. Just like it was yesterday.

Tom Viv, for Christ sake, Viv, listen to me. We've gotta get out.

[Viv goes to the crate and starts unpacking some Semtex.]

What you doing?

Viv Must be the hair that makes you look different.

Tom Viv, listen to me.

Viv [Viv starts moulding the Semtex and fixing it to Tom's chair.]
You're older but you're the same underneath. Let's see what's underneath.

Tom Viv, it weren't me.

Viv Think I've got the right amount?

Tom Viv, please Viv.

Viv Might as well go with a bang. Don't worry, when you're dead you'll wonder what all the fuss is about.

Tom Viv, come on Viv.

Viv [Picks up some detonators and continues to mould Semtex.]
When you're dead you'll know what it was like.
[Viv pushes some Semtex onto the seat between Tom's legs and sticks a detonator into it.]
There.

Tom Don't do it Viv, don't do it.

Viv [Viv sets the fuses into the Semtex on different parts of the chair.]
That's what I said, don't do it, stop, don't. [beat] Don't do no good though, does it?
[Viv activates the detonators and walks towards the door.]

Tom *Please!*

Viv [Lights begin to fade to black.]
I'd love to stay and chat about old times but I've got things to do.
[Exit Viv.]

Tom [Pause. Tom looks around frantically, squirming desperately against the ropes. Calls after Viv.]
Viv! . . . Viv! . . . Viv!
[Blackout. END.]

