

## SCENE ONE

*Burntisland, Fife. July. The comfortable living room of a solid stone house. A sofa and two armchairs. A table laid for four. An 18th birthday banner. Cards on the mantelpiece.*

*Doors to a kitchen, a hallway leading to the street, bedrooms.*

*Enter SHONA, 23, to discover her mother, MARGARET, late 40s, tending a stroller containing wee ADAM, a baby we will not see.*

SHONA No sign of Lady Muck, then, eh?

MARGARET She's at her football.

SHONA Oh, aye? Is that where she is?

MARGARET And what's that supposed to mean?

SHONA It's the football keeps her late is it? I never thought of that one. Mind you -- her? You're likely right enough.

MARGARET *(tickling baby's face)* We all know what kept you out late of an evening. Your sister's not like you.

SHONA Thank God for that.

MARGARET Amen to that. *(pause)* She'll be with her friends.

SHONA Her what? They only let her play cause it's her ball. Where's my Dad?

MARGARET He's on his way.

SHONA Best be here before her ladyship arrives, or there'll be merry hell.

MARGARET It's her birthday, Shona. Let her be.

SHONA We'll get it all again. Poor wee me, Daddy doesn't love me.

MARGARET Your father loves her more than plenty.

SHONA I wish he'd tell her, then, and shut her greeting face.

*Margaret moves away from the push chair.*

MARGARET I take it your visit up north wasn't entirely satisfactory.

SHONA There's not a single bloody thing about Deek's satisfactory, mum. I don't know why I bother with him.

MARGARET We none of us know why you bother with him. How is he?

SHONA Couldn't tell you. Thirty minutes I was sat there, thirty minutes and not a bloody peep out him.

- MARGARET I thought visiting time was two hours.
- SHONA Bus was late. Security was a nightmare. Then all he bloody wanted was his fags.
- MARGARET I'm sure he was pleased to see you.
- SHONA And the band played believe it if you like. Three weeks it is since he last set eyes on me. And in I walk, expecting, "Aw doll, you're a sight for sore eyes," and did he even say hello? Nope, not him. How many fags d'you bring, he says, and that was him done. He just sits there, smoking, never offers me one, then moans when I took one -  
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- MARGARET You're not smoking again.
- SHONA The odd wee one now and then, eh?
- MARGARET You're not starting smoking again. You've wee Adam to think about.
- SHONA Hold your horses. I only done it to annoy Deek. Get a bit reaction off him. At least he bloody spoke to me when I done that. Rest of the time, he just sits there, looking over my shoulder every time some woman comes in.
- MARGARET I bet he couldn't take his eyes off you.
- SHONA They days are done, ma. He's no interested in me any more. I'm not going up there again. I'm not. Every bit of skirt, he gives the once over, down and up and down again, sitting there with his eyes on stalks and his tongue on the table. He's going to get his head kicked in, I tell you, or worse. Their men seen him slavering. He'll be getting a panelling tonight.
- MARGARET I'm sure Derek can take care of himself.
- SHONA It's a new world, that there, mum. That's a bad place, that. Deek's a big man in Burntisland, but there's wee, baldie evil men in there with him. They'll have him for toast. I'm not going up again, I'm not. Three hours each way? That's not me. Sat on a bloody bus full of hard-faced wee bitches would stab you as soon as look at you. I'm done with him.
- MARGARET He's Adam's father. Whatever he's done, he's wee Adam's dad.
- SHONA Don't you give me that. You hate the sight of him.
- MARGARET He's not what we'd have wanted for you.
- SHONA He's not what I want for me. Stuck up there leaving me stony broke. Stupid, stupid man. (*beat*) Listen, you couldn't, you know, just a wee bit?

- MARGARET We're all tightening our belts, Shona. You know what times are like.
- SHONA Aye, I know. I know. Bank of Dad's not paying out what it did.
- MARGARET Your dad can't help feeling Derek's family need to chip in their bit.
- SHONA *(looking at Adam)* I think we've had all we're getting out of Deek. *(pause)* I'm dumping him. Three year he's up there, and that's only if he gets good behaviour, which, as we know ....? Five years if he's a bampot, and if there's one thing we both know about Derek Bainfield, it's that a bampot's exactly what he is. Five years? We'll be different people.
- MARGARET Do him good to be a different person. *(pause)* Who are you seeing?
- SHONA What?
- MARGARET Who are you seeing? You've never yet dumped a man without another one on the go.
- SHONA Well. That is just pure insulting, that is, by the way, and if you don't mind. I can get by without a man.
- MARGARET Who is he?
- SHONA Callum McLarnon.
- MARGARET Who?
- SHONA You know him. Dad took him on, Christmas time.
- MARGARET The wee apprentice lad? He's a wee boy.
- SHONA Oh, no he is not, let me tell you.
- MARGARET Oh, for Heaven's sake, Shona. Does your dad know?
- SHONA No. Don't you tell him, neither, mind. I don't want Deek's brothers on Callum's case.
- MARGARET Your dad's hardly going to tell the likes of them.
- SHONA No, but he'll tell Davy Sangster and Jimmy Greig and the rest of they auld wummin up the Longboat that his dopey daughter's gone and dumped that eejit criminal scumbag and got herself a nice, respectable boyfriend, and then some bawheid'll tell Dode and Brian, and then Callum'll get his windows put in and his car smashed up and his head kicked in, and that'll be me dumped.
- MARGARET Nice to know it's that wee boy you're looking out for, there!
- SHONA I need to look out for myself as well, mum. And wee Adam.
- There's a key in the door, and enter ADAM, 40s, a robust, cheery man.*

ADAM           Where's my girl?

SHONA          Right here, Dad.

ADAM           Shona? Is that you, is it? Is that you, and the wee man?

*Adam hugs Shona, then kneels to make a fuss of baby Adam.*

ADAM           What's a working man have to do to get a drink around here? I've a thirst on me could dry your washing.

MARGARET     You've managed to slake it a bit on your way home.

ADAM           I'd a wee pint in the Longboat. Need some preparation for the night, eh? Where is she? Where's the birthday girl?

MARGARET     She's still at her football. She'll not be long.

*Adam stops fussing over his grandson, bonhomie dying.*

ADAM           We told her to be in for half-past six.

MARGARET     Her friends'll of got her something.

SHONA          If they've got her a friend, she'll be lucky.

ADAM           We told the girl. Half-past six o'clock.

MARGARET     They'll be celebrating with her. It's not every day you're 18, Adam.

SHONA          Oh, aye. That crowd'll be cracking open a diet Irn Bru as we speak. Passing round the sugar-free gum.

ADAM           The girl should be home. She should be in. We told her half-six. She says she'd be here for half-six.

MARGARET     Adam, you are not shouting at her tonight. It's her birthday. Get in there and have a cup of tea and calm yourself down.

ADAM           It's not right. The girl takes you for granted. Treats this place like a hotel. *(arm around Shona)* This one can get up to Peterhead and back and still turn up on time. *(pause)* How was he?

SHONA          Himself. More's the pity.

ADAM           No improvement, then, eh? *(pause)* They should chuck away the key. Then chuck him away after it. *(pause: wee Adam)* How's the wee man, doing, then eh? How did that stupid big toe-rag produce you, eh, wee man?

*He bends once more to coo at his grandson.*

*As he does, the door opens again, and ARLENE enters. She's 18 today, gawky, not dressed to impress, but sparkily and belligerently intelligent.*

- SHONA        And look what the cat dragged in.
- ADAM         Where have you been?
- ARLENE      Out.
- ADAM         Einstein speaks.
- MARGARET   Adam, go and have a cup of tea, please.
- ARLENE      I was at my football. We won, by the way. Hurray for us.
- SHONA        I'll get wee Adam out in the kitchen. Settle him.
- MARGARET   Your dad can take him. Adam!
- ADAM         Come on, then, wee man. Just you and me, away from this monstrous regiment of women.
- ARLENE      Regimen.
- ADAM         What?
- ARLENE      It's regimen of women. You always say regiment, but the phrase is regimen of women.
- ADAM         Do pardon me for speaking, Professor. I'll mind I keep my ignorance to myself in future. What's a bloody regimen, any road, when it's at home.
- ARLENE      It's the rules we set to keep men straight.
- ADAM         *(to the baby)* Regiment, regimen. Potato, po-tah-to. What difference does it make, eh, wee man? It's women in charge one way or the other.
- ARLENE      Don't give me that. Men run everything.
- MARGARET   So we let them think.
- ADAM         That's the way it is, right enough. That's the way of it. And that's you told. By a woman!
- Adam takes little Adam out to the kitchen.*
- MARGARET   Have you got to upset him the second you're in the door?
- ARLENE      I'm just telling him what's right.
- MARGARET   Don't make him think he's stupid.
- ARLENE      He says these things and he gets them wrong. Drives me round the bend.
- MARGARET   He's not had all the advantages you've had.

- ARLENE Oh, aye, I was forgetting. They put him up a chimney when he was three and the only time he was in a school was when he went to fix the windows.
- SHONA He'd a good time when he was a kid. You should have tried it. You might have liked it.
- ARLENE Maybe I could have a baby instead of any Highers, as well, then.
- MARGARET Stop it, Arlene.
- ARLENE She started it.
- MARGARET And you're big enough to finish it. So stop it, and stop it now. I want one night's peace. *(pause)* And be nice to your Dad. You're needing him in a good mood.
- ARLENE It'll keep.
- MARGARET You need to tell him. Tell him tonight.
- SHONA Tell him what?
- MARGARET Sooner the better. Tell him tonight. It's your birthday. He'll be in a good mood once he's had his tea.
- SHONA Tell him what? What's she done?
- ARLENE None of your business.
- SHONA What's she done? Tell me it's something good. Oh God, let it be something really, really bad.
- MARGARET You'll never guess.
- SHONA It canna be sex, for who'd have her? It willna be drugs or drink. Don't tell me; she's joined the Scottish Tories.
- ARLENE I'm going to Uppsala.
- SHONA You're going to what?
- ARLENE I'm going to Uppsala.
- SHONA And in English, that would be?
- MARGARET It's a university, Shona.
- SHONA You were dead right when you says I'd never guess. Who knew her depravity could stretch to a university?
- MARGARET It's in Sweden.
- SHONA University in Sweden? Who are you kidding? Not happening. He'll never let you.

- ARLENE        Nothing to do with him. My choice. I'm 18 -- look, banner on the wall says I'm 18. Independence Day for me.
- SHONA        Oh, for Christ's sakes, no bloody independence again.
- ARLENE        Free at last to go where I want, do what I want.
- SHONA        For somebody loves Scotland so much, you cannae wait to get shot of the place.
- ARLENE        I'd stay if we were free. I told you all what would happen if we weren't.
- SHONA        Aw, change the record, Nicola Sturgeon.
- ARLENE        Settled for a generation. Settled for a lifetime, maybe, but what about me? What say did I get when you were selling Scotland down the Clyde?
- SHONA        You got plenty say. You never shut up for two year before it, and you've not shut up since.
- ARLENE        I never got a vote.
- SHONA        Poor wee deprived wee me never got a chance to tick a wee stupid box.
- ARLENE        You could have voted for me.
- SHONA        If I had of voted, I'd've probably voted no.
- ARLENE        You still don't know! How can you not know? How can you still not make your mind up?
- Pause.*
- SHONA        Who's paying for it, then? Sweden's no going to be cheap.
- ARLENE        I've been saving.
- SHONA        You've not been spending it on clothes, that's for sure. *(pause)*  
Saving what?
- ARLENE        I've got my job.
- SHONA        You're not paying for Swedish university off a Saturday job. It'll be him, won't it?
- ARLENE        I'm not asking Dad.
- MARGARET    We'll see you right if you're needing it.
- ARLENE        I want to stand on my own two feet