

**'Paper, Scissors, Stone'**

**A one act play**

**By Jim Blythe**

Paper, Scissors, Stone by Jim Blythe

Characters

Will

Simon

Jon

Michelle

Tina

Kirsty

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**WILL SITS ALONE AT A PUB TABLE WITH THE REMAINS OF A PINT IN FRONT OF HIM. HE IS READING A COPY OF 'THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO'. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS SIMON THE PUB LANDLORD APPROACHES.**

**SIMON.** Evening Will.

**WILL.** Evening.

**SIMON.** I'm glad you're in tonight. You know you were saying the other day that you're looking to buy yourself a motor?

**WILL.** Yeah.

**SIMON.** Well, Strange Dave's in tonight and he was saying he's got one for sale.

**WILL.** Oh well in that case no, definitely not.

**SIMON.** Why not?

**WILL.** I bought a car off of Strange Dave once before.

**SIMON.** Oh really? What sort of car?

**WILL.** A stolen one. It wasn't til I got it home that I realised the owner was in the boot.

**SIMON.** Dear oh dear. I expect that affected the acceleration.

**WILL.** It was a bit sluggish but I never got to find out if that was the reason - I didn't drive it again.

**SIMON.** The owner wanted it back I expect.

**WILL.** He was quite adamant about that, yes. The police backed him up and I nearly ended up getting arrested for kidnapping and theft.

**SIMON.** Blimey. (*THINKS*) Still, you've got to laugh.

**WILL.** Not really, no.

**SIMON.** I'll tell him you're not interested then.

**WILL.** If you would.

**WILL GOES BACK TO HIS BOOK. SIMON HOVERS.**

**SIMON.** Where's Debbie tonight?

**WILL.** Debbie?

**SIMON.** Yeah.

**WILL.** I've no idea.

**SIMON.** Why don't you give her a bell, see if she wants to come down?

**WILL.** I can't.

**SIMON.** Why not?

**WILL.** I don't have her number. You do it.

**SIMON.** Me?

**WILL.** Yeah.

**SIMON.** How would I know her number?

**WILL.** I've no idea; I don't even know who she is.

**SIMON.** Debbie.

**WILL.** Yeah I caught her name but it's really not helping.

**SIMON.** Course you know her.

**WILL.** I don't.

**SIMON.** You do. You were going to marry her.

**WILL.** Do you mean Vicki?

**SIMON.** Vicki?

**WILL.** Yeah, Vicki.

**SIMON.** No I'm pretty sure it was Debbie.

**WILL.** I think I'd know.

**SIMON.** What?

**WILL.** I think I'd know who I was going to marry.

**SIMON.** You only think you'd know? Maybe you should double check. I think you'll find it was Debbie.

***WILL SHRUGS AND GIVES UP***

**WILL.** Well possibly. It doesn't matter anyway; we're not together any more.

**SIMON.** Really? What happened?

**WILL.** You know what happened. You were there.

**SIMON.** Me? Are you sure?

**WILL.** Course I'm sure.

**SIMON.** Oh. Well, that's a shame. I liked Debbie.

**WILL.** So did I.

**SIMON.** Never mind though. There's plenty more cows in the slaughterhouse.

**WILL.** "Fish in the sea" is the more common analogy.

**SIMON.** Yeah but I've never liked seafood.

**WILL.** All the same, you could come up with something better than "cows in the slaughterhouse".

**SIMON.** I've always thought it's rather fitting.

**WILL.** The "cow" or the slaughterhouse" bit?

**SIMON.** Both. What we need to do is find you a new cow.

**WILL.** A new cow! Listen to yourself man.

**SIMON.** You think it's inappropriate to continue with the analogy?

**WILL.** I think it was inappropriate to even start with the analogy but we've gone too far to change that now. And what makes you think I even want a new cow, er... woman!

**SIMON.** You're looking a bit down; it might help.

**WILL.** The reason I'm looking a bit down is because of women, I don't think I'm ready to start all that nonsense again.

**SIMON.** Sure you are. Did no one ever tell you that moving on is an important part of the healing process?

**WILL.** I think it's been mentioned.

**SIMON.** And the sooner the better at that. I assumed that was why you're here tonight.

**WILL.** What's so special about tonight?

**SIMON.** It's karaoke night.

**WILL.** Oh god, it's not is it?

**SIMON.** You know it is – I told you last night.

**WILL.** Ah yes of course. I wasn't listening

**SIMON.** I'm a bit worried about it if I'm honest.

**WILL.** Why's that?

**SIMON.** Well it was a bit pricy to hire the stuff so I've borrowed a machine off a mate of mine and I decided to burn the discs myself from one of those file sharing sites.

**WILL.** And was there a problem with the site?

**SIMON.** No, that was fine. The thing is that the disc drive on my laptop seems to have developed a personality of its own. Which might be alright if it wasn't a somewhat destructive personality. Which hates CDs.

**WILL.** Right.

**SIMON.** So the range of songs available is a little limited.

**WILL.** A little limited?

***SIMON TAKES AN A5 PIECE OF PAPER FROM HIS POCKET AND HANDS IT TO WILL. HE GLANCES QUICKLY AT IT.***

**WILL.** What, that's it?

**SIMON.** Yeah. It'll be alright though, everyone likes Abba.

**WILL.** I can't stand Abba.

**SIMON.** Yeah, everyone likes Abba.

**WILL.** Jesus. Just when I thought karaoke couldn't get any worse!

**SIMON.** You're not looking on the plus side young Will.

**WILL.** There's a plus side? (*THINKS*) The chances of me dying in the next hour are fairly small I think.

**SIMON.** Karaoke brings the ladies in. They love it.

**WILL.** But I hate it. Therefore any woman who loves karaoke is unlikely to be my ideal woman.

**SIMON.** Dear oh dear. You are on a downer aren't you! You know what would sort you out?

**WILL.** Being left alone to finish my book?

**SIMON.** Close. An older woman.

**WILL.** Older than what?

**SIMON.** Older than you is all I was thinking – no need for us to set a limit.

**WILL.** No need to go chasing after older woman either.

**SIMON.** You can't go chasing after older women Will. They'll get worn out. And then they're no good for the one thing they're really good for.

**WILL.** Dying and leaving you a fortune in their will?

**SIMON.** You might be thinking a little older than I am. I am of course talking about l'amour.

**WILL.** I really wish you weren't.

**SIMON.** Now it just so happens that my beloved Jackie has a friend who has just come on the market and might be interested in a little fun with a younger man.

**WILL.** No Si, really no. I've just watched my mum turn into a sad, desperate, man hunter since she and my dad split up and I've no wish to meet anyone like that.

**SIMON.** You sure? She's quite nice.

**WILL.** Quite nice?

**SIMON.** I've seen worse.

**WILL.** You need to work on your sales pitch mate.

**SIMON.** What?

**WILL.** You're not tempting me with your description.

**SIMON.** Oh. Well, I've never been very good at describing people. Might be better if you meet her face to face.

**WILL.** I don't want to meet her face to face.

**SIMON.** You sure? I could give her a call; see if she's free tonight?

**WILL.** Don't trouble yourself.

**SIMON.** It's no trouble; anything for one of my regulars.

***SIMON HEADS TOWARDS THE EXIT***

**WILL.** Anything?

**SIMON.** Most things!

***SIMON EXITS***

**WILL.** Leaving them in peace not being one of them apparently.

***WILL SIGHS AND GOES BACK TO HIS BOOK. MOMENTS LATER JON ENTERS. HE SEES WILL AND HEADS TO THE TABLE.***

**JON.** Alright tosser?

***WILL SIGHS AND PUTS HIS BOOK DOWN.***

**WILL.** Alright mate?

**JON.** Do I look alright mate?

***WILL LOOKS JON UP AND DOWN***

**WILL.** You don't look your normal self. I noticed the improvement straight away

**JON.** Get bent.

**WILL.** I was only joking.

**JON.** Oh right I get it. Like humour, but different...

**JON SITS**

**WILL.** What's up with you?

**JON.** I've been staying at my new pad.

**WILL.** Is it nice?

**JON.** No. It's the smallest bedsit in the world. But on the plus side it comes with a free rat.

**WILL.** A rat?

**JON.** Yeah, noisy, squeaky, flea-infested bastard. I call it Holly.

**WILL.** A-ha! The divorce going alright?

**JON.** Alright?

**WILL.** Yeah.

**JON.** No. No, it's not going alright. It's like having your bollocks yanked out through your wallet.

**WILL.** Sounds like the sort of kinky thing some people would pay good money for.

**JON.** I am paying good money for it you half wit. Half of everything I've ever earned and some extra on top of that.

**WILL.** She's getting more than half?

**JON.** Yes. She is. Because some selfish bastard didn't want to be cited in a divorce hearing.

**WILL.** You're not still cross about that?

**JON.** Surprisingly Will, I am a little yup. More than half my stuff - gone!

**WILL.** You see, I wouldn't mind that.

**JON.** What?

**WILL.** If I'd married Vicki and then she'd have taken half my stuff. I wouldn't mind. My stuff's all shit you see. It would've been worth it for the sex.

**JON.** You don't have sex when you're married Will. At least, not with your wife. You have arguments instead.

**WILL.** Really?

**JON.** Trust me.

**WILL.** I don't.

**JON.** What?

**WILL.** Trust you. Never have.

**JON.** Really?

**WILL.** God, no.

**JON.** Oh! (*THINKS*) That's probably fair enough actually.

**WILL.** Thank you.

**JON.** The point is though Will, why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?

**WILL.** Is it some sort of bovine theme night in here?

**JON.** What?

**WILL.** Simon was using cow analogies earlier.

**JON.** I think you'll find a lot of married men use them.

**WILL.** You have no soul do you!

**JON.** OK, if you want something a little more meaningful then my philosophy is this. At certain times in our life, certain people are right for us. That time might be a week, it might be a month, it might be a year but it might not be forever. Once it's not right for one party, or both, then you move on.

**WILL.** What about couples who are together for 50 years or more?

**JON.** They're just being stubborn I suppose. The point is that at one time I was the right man for Holly, then you were the right man for Holly, then that guy from the chippy was the right man for Holly, then those two Polish builders were the right men for Holly, then that bird from the hairdressers was the right woman for Holly...

**WILL.** Sorry, what's the point here?

**JON.** I'm not sure; I lost track somewhere. I think it might have been that we all move on at different speeds.

**WILL.** You didn't waste much time yourself did you?

**JON.** No point wasting time mate, when it's gone it's gone.

**WILL.** So when am I going to meet this new bird of yours?

**JON.** Kirsty? You're not.

**WILL.** What? Why not?

**JON.** Because you slept with my wife and that puts you pretty low in the trust stakes.

**WILL.** Fair enough. What's she like though?

**JON.** Filthy, mate. Absolutely 100% filth.

**WILL.** She sounds nice.

**JON.** She is nice. Very nice. Obscenely, filthily nice.

**WILL.** Cool. I can't wait to see how you fuck this one up.

**JON.** Not going to happen. I am strictly a one woman man these days.

**WILL.** Of course you are.

**JON.** And if I don't tell her about this place then I've always got a safe house haven't !!

**WILL.** Really?

**JON.** Definitely.

**WILL.** And what's to stop Kirsty just wondering in here one night and finding you dribbling over someone else?

**JON.** Don't be stupid Will - no one just wanders into this pub. It's the worst pub in the city.

***SIMON WANDERS IN***

**WILL.** That's not fair.

**JON.** It's true. Si, what was that award you won last year?

**SIMON.** Worst pub in the county.

**JON.** I stand corrected.

**SIMON.** Third year running I've won that. Would you like to see the certificates?

**WILL.** No thanks Si, we're good.

**SIMON.** I won for the lack of atmosphere, poor service and the extraordinary lack of hygiene.

**WILL.** I see.

**SIMON.** But I make up for it with my charity work. Have you entered the competition yet?

**JON.** Competition?

**SIMON.** I collected all of the cockroaches I could from the cellar and I've put them in that jar on the bar. All you've got to do is guess how many there are and you could win a teddy. Quid a go - all money goes to the local kiddies home.

**WILL.** How have you managed to stay open?

**SIMON.** More through luck than judgment I'd say.

**JON.** Hard to argue with that. Can we get another couple of beers here please?

**SIMON.** Coming right up.

***SIMON TAKES THEIR GLASSES AND EXITS***

**JON.** You see? There's no chance of Kirsty coming in here or indeed any other woman worth dribbling over. It's the ideal safe house.

**WILL.** Fair point.

**JON.** Why else do you think I drink here?

**WILL.** Because you're banned from most of the other pubs round the city.

**JON.** That's not true.

**WILL.** It is.

**JON.** Alright it is. A bit.

**WILL.** A bit?

**JON.** Alright, it is. Mostly.

**WILL.** Mostly?

**JON.** Alright then, entirely but the point is that this pub suits my needs. It's close, it's cheap and I can't get into any further female related issues here.

**WILL.** If you say so.

**JON.** I do say so. I tell you mate I've thought of everything. Well, I say everything, I mean most things. Well, I say most things I mean the minimum I think I can get away with. Which is pretty much nothing.

***SIMON ENTERS WITH TWO PINTS OF BEER***

**SIMON.** Here we go gents.

**JON.** Cheers.

***WILL AND JON CLINK GLASSES AND DRINK. SIMON HOVERS.***

**SIMON.** I expect you'll be wanting to pay for those will you?

**JON.** This is your problem you see Simon – you're always expecting things. No one ever lived a long and happy life in a constant state of expectation. Expectations only end up leading to disappointments and from there into a state of constant despair and anger at the futility of life. And that is only the start of a downward spiral leading to self-loathing and hatred of those around you who have the serenity not to expect but to accept. For it's only through acceptance that one will find the peace of mind to love not only ones fellow man but also ones self.

**SIMON.** Right. They're £3.20 each.

**JON.** Are they indeed! Well alright, but I fear for your peace of mind. Will, would you do the honours please?

**WILL.** What? I thought you were getting these.

**JON.** What part of 'Holly's taking me to the cleaners and it's all your fault' are you struggling to understand?

**WILL.** Oh alright then. Si, I wonder would you mind...

**SIMON.** The tab?

**WILL.** Thanks awfully.

**SIMON.** I expect you'll be wanting to pay that off at some point?

**JON.** See there you go again, expecting your way into an early grave.

**WILL.** I'll pay it off Si, don't worry about it.

**SIMON.** Alright then. Oh, by the way Will, nearly forgot - Jackie's friend will be down in about half hour.

***SIMON EXITS. JON LOOKS ENQUIRINGLY AT WILL***

**WILL.** What?

**JON.** Jackie's friend?

**WILL.** That's what he said.

**JON.** And who, exactly, is Jackie's friend?

**WILL.** Haven't a clue.

**JON.** Really?

**WILL.** Really. Look Si's got this idea in his head that I need to meet a new woman to get my mind off Debbie.

**JON.** Who's Debbie?

**WILL.** Vicki, sorry. He also seems to think that an older woman is exactly what I need so he's invited some friend of his wife's down here to meet me.

**JON.** I see.

**WILL.** Well go on then; take the piss.

**JON.** I wasn't going to take the piss. It's just...

**WILL.** What?

**JON.** It just strikes me that there are better ways to meet women than in a shit pub like this. And there are better women to meet than the landlord's wife's aging friend.

**WILL.** I know, it wasn't my idea.

**JON.** You should've come with us to that cricket match mate.

**WILL.** I refuse to believe that a cricket match is an ideal place to meet women.

**JON.** It was an international Twenty20 cricket match. Now I don't know if you've seen these games on the telly mate but they have these dancers in front of the crowd who get up and prance around and that whenever something interesting happens.

**WILL.** Really?

**JON.** Oh yeah. Now these are some seriously good looking girls, my friend. So I find myself in a section of the crowd right in front of these dancers. Seriously, they were so close I could touch them. I wouldn't be allowed to of course - Kirsty would be furious. That's girlfriends for you.

**WILL.** They can get a bit tetchy about things like that.

**JON.** I know. And the silly thing is that if positions were reversed I'd be cool with that.

**WILL.** What?

**JON.** I wouldn't mind at all, you know, if Kirsty wanted to touch girls and yet I'm not allowed to do it. I tell you, it's political correctness gone mad.

**WILL.** OK.

**JON.** But you as a single man, you could've gone for it.

**WILL.** Are you seriously advising me to start groping dancers at cricket matches in full view of the crowd and TV cameras?

**JON.** Sure. Why not?

**WILL.** Why not? Jesus! If I leave it to you and Simon I'll be single for ever. And probably in prison.

*WE HEAR THE SOUND OF MICROPHONE FEEDBACK, OFF AND THEN **SIMON** TALKING THROUGH THE MIC.*

**SIMON.** (VO) Hello everyone. On behalf of Jackie and myself I'd like to welcome you to karaoke night at the George & Dragon.

*WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE CHEERING AND APPLAUDING. **JON** AND **WILL** LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND ROLL THEIR EYES.*

**SIMON.** (VO) Thank you very much, thank you.

**WILL.** He thinks he's bloody Elvis.

**SIMON.** (VO) If you'd like to do a song just select the code from the song list and bring it to me at the bar. Now let's get this party started with the popular Abba hit 'Dancing Queen'.

*THE MUSIC STARTS AND WE HEAR **SIMON** SINGING  
'DANCING QUEEN'. IT IS DREADFUL.*

- JON.** What the...
- WILL.** It's his song.
- JON.** He's singing? I assumed he was getting a shock from the amp.
- WILL.** With a bit of re-wiring we could make that happen.
- JON.** Might be the kindest thing to do – put him out of my misery.
- WILL.** If I'd known it was karaoke night I wouldn't have come down here.
- JON.** I knew, I just didn't think it would be worse than another night fighting the rat for the best seat on the couch.
- WILL.** And is it?
- JON.** No. Not even close. I never thought I'd miss that little guy but I'd swap this to feel him gnawing on my shin bone.
- WILL.** He gnaws your shin bone?
- JON.** We're bonding.
- WILL.** Bonding.
- JON.** Yeah. That's just his way of telling me he wants me to catch Weils disease and die.
- WILL.** That's sweet. And what is Weils disease?
- JON.** Number one rat disease in this country. Symptoms include fever, muscular pain, loss of appetite and vomiting.
- WILL.** And have you had any of those?
- JON.** Only vomiting but I think that was more whiskey induced than anything else.
- WILL.** Maybe you shouldn't let him gnaw your shin bone.
- JON.** Oh that's a good idea Will, I hadn't thought of that! I don't let him you fool! He just does it. Usually whilst I'm sleeping.
- WILL.** You shouldn't let him sleep with you.

**JON.** I don't let him sleep with me. He just does it.

**WILL.** Maybe you shouldn't let him in the bedroom.

**JON.** I don't let him in the bedroom! What do you think, I've got some sort of rat flap fitted to the bedroom door so he can come and go as he likes! I don't let him gnaw my shin, I don't let him sleep with me, I don't let him in the bedroom, I didn't even let him into the bloody bedsit in the first place!

**WILL.** Why don't you just put some poison down?

**JON.** I can't.

**WILL.** Why not?

**JON.** It was on the inventory when I moved in, I'll lose my deposit.

**WILL.** Why did you move in knowing there was a rat that you couldn't get rid of?

**JON.** For the same reason I'm here on karaoke night – I'm an idiot.

**WILL.** Oh.

*THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT PAUSE. **SIMON IS STILL MURDERING 'DANCING QUEEN'.***

**WILL.** Are you going to do a song then?

**JON.** Course I'm not going to do a song. Are you?

**WILL.** God, no.

**JON.** Shall we drink up and go somewhere else?

**WILL.** We can't can we; you're banned from everywhere else.

**JON.** We could go and get a ruby.

**WILL.** It's a bit early for a ruby.

**JON.** Fine. We can go back to mine and drink whiskey til our brains leak out of our ears.

**WILL.** Sounds a bit depressing.

**JON.** What, more depressing than this?

*PAUSE. **SIMON IS STILL GOING.***

**WILL.** Fair point.

**JON.** Drink up then.

***JON AND WILL START DRINKING FAST. THE MUSIC SUDDENLY CUTS OUT.***

**SIMON.** (VO) Oh. Erm... I think that's it.

*THERE IS A SMALL AMOUNT OF UNENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE.*

**SIMON.** (VO) Right, who's next? (PAUSE) It's Sharon and she's going to sing for us... oh, bugger, 'Dancing Queen'.

*WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE CHEERING AND APPLAUDING. JON AND WILL LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND ROLL THEIR EYES.*

**WILL.** Ready?

**JON.** Yup.

***JON AND WILL RISE. AS THEY DO SO MICHELLE AND TINA ENTER LAUGHING AND SIT AT THE NEXT TABLE. THEY ARE IN JON'S EYELINE BUT BEHIND WILL. IN THE BACKGROUND THE KARAOKE CONTINUES.***

**JON.** Nope.

***JON SITS. WILL IS PUZZLED.***

**WILL.** What?

**JON.** You head off mate, I'll stay a bit longer.

**WILL.** Eh?

***WILL TURNS TO SEE WHAT HAS CAUGHT JON'S ATTENTION. HE TURNS BACK TO JON. HE DOUBLE TAKES THE GIRLS AGAIN AND SITS.***

**WILL.** No it's ok mate, I'll stay too. Don't want to leave you on your own.

**JON.** You don't need to stay on my account mate.

**WILL.** No, no, I insist.

**JON.** But you wanted to leave.

**WILL.** Oh don't be so childish. There are two of them and two of us; it's not going to be a problem.

**JON.** I guess. Mine's gorgeous. Don't think much of yours mind you.

**WILL.** Which one's mine?

**JON.** On the left.

***WILL** TURNS IN HIS SEAT SO HE AND **JON** HAVE THE SAME LEFT.*

**WILL.** No, no, no. That one's yours.

**JON.** I don't think so.

**WILL.** But I like the other one.

**JON.** So do I. And I saw her first.

**WILL.** But you've already got a girlfriend.

**JON.** Not in this pub I haven't.

**WILL.** I thought you said you were a one woman man these days.

**JON.** I meant one at a time. A threesome's likely to finish me off with my asthma.

**WILL.** And what were you saying about there being no one worth bothering about in here?

**JON.** I was right at the time I said it. Now you just sit here quietly while I go and get us all a drink.

**WILL.** All?

**JON.** Both. I meant both.

**WILL.** So you expect me to sit here and do nothing while you go over and start buying her drinks?

**JON.** Not at all - you make it sound like some devious plan.

**WILL.** And that wouldn't be like you at all!

**JON.** Fine, you go and get the drinks then.

**WILL.** Oh yeah, right. So that whilst I'm out of the way at the bar, you can make your moves on her!

**JON.** Well, someone's got to go and get the drinks.

**WILL.** We could just wait for Simon to come over.

**JON.** The karaoke queen is busy with his microphone - he won't be over again for ages and in the meantime my glass is empty.

**WILL.** Well I'm not going.

**JON.** Fine.

***JON STANDS***

**WILL.** And nor are you.

***JON SITS***

**JON.** Oh for God's sake, this is ridiculous.

**WILL.** You're right; we need to sort something out.

**JON.** We don't need to sort anything out - I bagsied her first.

**WILL.** You can't bagsie a woman.

**JON.** I already have.

**WILL.** What if she doesn't fancy you?

**JON.** Oh please!

**WILL.** We need to find something fairer. Shall we toss a coin?

**JON.** I haven't got a coin.

**WILL.** Me neither. How about eeny meany miney moe?

**JON.** What are you, an infant? We'll do paper, scissors, stone.

**WILL.** Alright then.

***JON AND WILL BOTH PUT A HAND BEHIND THEIR BACKS***

**JON.** On three?

**WILL.** Of course.

**JON.** Alright. One... two... three.

***JON AND WILL PUT THEIR HANDS OUT ON FRONT OF THEM. JON HAS SCISSORS, WILL HAS STONE.***

**JON.** Right, so that's scissors and, and... stone. Now scissors cut everything don't they?

**WILL.** Not stone they don't.

**JON.** Are you sure? They're very sharp scissors.

**WILL.** There wouldn't be a lot of point in the game if scissors cut everything would there!

**JON.** How about if I took my scissors and shoved them straight in your...

**WILL.** Look there's no point being a twat; you lost fair and square.

**JON.** Piss off.

**WILL.** You could always have a crack at her mate.

**JON.** Are you trying to be funny?

**WILL.** I'm succeeding from where I'm sitting. Just think of it this way Jonny boy; it's fate keeping you on the straight and narrow.

**JON.** I really, really hate you.

**WILL.** I hate you too.

**JON.** Well go on, get over there - savour your victory.

**WILL.** Aren't you going to join me?

**JON.** No, I think I'll sit here and be bitter for a while.

**WILL.** Come on, I could use a wing man.

**JON.** I can't believe this. Me, reduced to the status of wing man by a game of paper, scissors, stone.

**WILL.** Just shut your eyes and think of Kirsty!

**JON.** Not a bad idea. (*CLOSES EYES*) Yeah, that helps. (*CROSSES LEGS*) That helps quite a lot actually.

**WILL.** Ok tiger, that'll do. Let's go to work.

**JON.** After you.

***WILL AND JON STAND AND MOVE CASUALLY TO MICHELLE AND TINAS TABLE. THE GIRLS ARE IN MID-CONVERSATION.***

**MICHELLE:** ...so I said, "If you're going to be like that about it you can stick it".

**TINA.** That's fair enough, you can't put up with never knowing where you are or what's going on. You deserve a bit more commitment than that.

**MICHELLE.** It is fair enough isn't it - I'm not being a bitch?

**TINA.** No. Course you're not. You can't keep being stood up like that, or taken for granted.

***WILL AND JON LOOK AT EACH OTHER - THIS IS SOUNDING HOPEFUL.***

**MICHELLE.** I know. I'm tired of being treated like shit. Where do you go meet someone decent round here?

**TINA.** Not here I wouldn't have thought!

***MICHELLE AND TINA LAUGH. JON AND WILL LOOK LESS CERTAIN.***

**MICHELLE.** Bit of a dive isn't it!

**TINA.** It's got to be the worst pub in the city.

**WILL.** Erm, in the county actually.

***MICHELLE AND TINA NOTICE WILL AND JON FOR THE FIRST TIME***

**TINA.** Sorry?

**WILL.** This pub. It's the worst in the county.

***ALTHOUGH WILL IS ANSWERING TINA HE IS ADDRESSING MICHELLE. JON IS EQUALLY ONLY INTERESTED IN MICHELLE.***

**TINA.** Really?

**WILL.** Honest. It's won awards and everything. *(PAUSE)* I'm Will.

**MICHELLE.** Oh hi. I'm Michelle, this is Tina.

*THE GUYS PAY NO ATTENTION TO TINA.*

**WILL.** Right, yeah, hi.

**JON.** Hi Michelle, I'm Jon.

**MICHELLE.** Hi. *(PAUSE)* And this is Tina.

**JON.** Jolly good. Would you like a drink?

**MICHELLE.** Oh, thanks but...

**WILL.** Cos I'm buying but Jon was going to the bar to get them.

**JON.** No I'm not.

**WILL.** Yes you are.

**JON.** Am not.

**WILL.** Remember the stone.

**JON.** Bugger the stone.

**WILL.** Not sure how that would be possible. Look, it was your idea.

**JON.** Oh alright.

**WILL.** Good. So, what are you having?

**MICHELLE.** It's ok, we're fine for a drink.

**WILL.** We?

*WILL REMEMBERS TINA IS THERE*

**WILL.** Oh yeah, of course, Tracey.

**JON.** Tabby.

**TINA.** Tina.

**WILL.** That's the one. Did you want a drink?

**TINA.** Sure, why not?

**MICHELLE.** Really?

**TINA.** Might be fun.

**WILL.** It'll be fun.

**MICHELLE.** We were moving on in a minute though.

**TINA.** We can have one more.

**WILL.** Maybe two.

**TINA.** Come on Mich, just for a bit.

***TINA GIVES A MEANINGFUL GLANCE AT WILL. MICHELLE REALISES.***

**MICHELLE.** What, really!? Oh, ok then.

**WILL.** Brilliant. What would you like?

**TINA.** Pint of Stella for me.

**MICHELLE.** Gin and Tonic please.

**WILL.** And I'll have the usual. Cheers.

**JON.** Right.

***JON FUMES FOR A MOMENT BEFORE EXITING***

**WILL.** I'll just get a seat.

***WILL GOES BACK TO HIS TABLE AND GRABS HIS STOOL***

**TINA.** Like mine, don't think much of yours.

**MICHELLE.** Which one's mine?

**TINA.** The one at the bar.

**MICHELLE.** So that one's yours?

TINA. That's right.

MICHELLE. Thing is...

***WILL IS BACK. HE PUTS HIS STOOL NEXT TO MICHELLE. HE CONTINUES TO AIM HIS CONVERSATION AT MICHELLE***

WILL. It's alright, I'm back.

MICHELLE. Thank goodness.

WILL. I haven't seen you down here before.

TINA. No, I don't usually drink here.

WILL. Or you either.

MICHELLE. No, well, I don't usually drink here either.

WILL. It's my local.

TINA. So I'd find you down here a lot would I?

WILL. Someone would. If they wanted to.

TINA. And would that be alright?

WILL. It would depend on the someone wouldn't it!

MICHELLE. Why do you drink here if it's the worst pub in the county?

WILL. It's convenient.

TINA. You live close by?

WILL. Fairly, yes. Maybe we could head back there in a while, you know, get away from the karaoke?

MICHELLE. You're quite forward aren't you!

TINA. But we could consider it.

WILL. Course we could. (*REALISES*) What do you mean, we?

TINA. We could all head back to yours, see what happens.

**WILL.** Oh, erm... no. I didn't mean all of us.

**TINA.** Just the two of us?

**WILL.** Well, two of us certainly.

**TINA.** Yeah, ok.

**WILL.** You'd be alright with that?

**TINA.** Yeah, sure. Why not! If Michelle doesn't mind?

**WILL.** Well yeah obviously, that's a given.

**TINA.** What a gentleman you are. You ok with that Mich?

**MICHELLE.** Yeah, whatever you like; I've got to leave after this one anyway.

**WILL.** Excellent. (*REALISES*) What?

**MICHELLE.** I've got to head off, you guys do what you like.

**WILL.** No, hang on that's not...

***JON RETURNS WITH A TRAY OF DRINKS – 3 LAGERS AND A VERY OTT COCKTAIL. HE PUTS THEM IN FRONT OF THE OTHERS AS HE SPEAKS***

**JON.** Drinks everyone. (*GIVING **TINA** A LAGER*) Erm... thingy, whatever your name is. (*GIVING **WILL** THE COCKTAIL*) Dickhead. (*GIVING **MICHELLE** LAGER*) And for Michelle.

**MICHELLE.** Thanks.

***WILL DOUBLE TAKES AT HIS COCKTAIL. **MICHELLE** AND **TINA** LOOK AT IT AND SMILE. JON GRABS A STOOL AS HE AND **WILL** TALK***

**WILL.** What the hell is this?

**JON.** It's your usual.

**WILL.** It isn't my usual; it's got a banana in it.

**JON.** They've run out of stirrers

**WILL.** And San Miguel?

**JON.** Hush now, drink your Screaming Pooftah

**WILL.** My what!?

**JON.** Budge up mate, make room.

***JON PUSHES HIS STOOL IN BETWEEN WILL AND MICHELLE. WILL GLARES AS JON SITS. TINA SHUFFLES CLOSER TO WILL***

**JON.** So, Michelle; tell me a bit about yourself.

**MICHELLE.** Well...

**WILL.** She doesn't usually drink here.

**JON.** What?

**WILL.** She prefers nicer pubs.

**JON.** Good, thanks Will. Sorry, Michelle you were saying?

**MICHELLE.** Look, I think before...

**WILL.** The sort of pubs you can't drink in.

**JON.** Shut up Will.

**WILL.** On account of you being banned.

**MICHELLE.** Banned?

**JON.** Ha ha! No but seriously....

**WILL.** I'm sure Michelle isn't interested in men who are banned from lots of pubs.

**MICHELLE.** Look, to be honest I...

**JON.** Well, I'm sure Michelle isn't interested in little squealers who don't know when to shut up.

**MICHELLE.** Guys, come on.

**WILL.** Well, I'm sure Michelle isn't interested in men who can't abide by the rules of 'paper, scissors, stone'.

**MICHELLE.** What?

**WILL.** They're simple enough rules for goodness sake!

***TINA DECIDES SHE'S HEARD ENOUGH AND NUDGES WILL.  
HE TURNS TO HER, NOT IN THE BEST OF MOODS AND  
DESPERATE TO GET BACK TO MICHELLE***

**WILL.** What?

**TINA.** Nice cocktail.

**WILL.** Want to swap?

**TINA.** No. But we could share.

**WILL.** Yeah that's not very hygienic.

**TINA.** There are two straws.

**WILL.** But only one banana.

**TINA.** We can still share it.

**WILL.** No we can't.

**TINA.** You can eat it if I can lick the cream off first.

**WILL.** That's a disgusting idea, what's the matter with you!

**TINA.** More to the point, what's the matter with you?

**WILL.** With me?

**TINA.** Yeah. One moment you're inviting me back to yours and then you're squabbling with your friend cos he wants to get with Michelle. What's wrong with that?

**WILL.** I'm not... Look, I think there's been some sort of a misunderstanding.

***WE HEAR SIMON TALKING THROUGH THE MIC.***

**SIMON.** (VO) Our next act tonight is Will....

***WILL SWINGS ROUND IN HIS SEAT IN HORROR***

**WILL.** What!?

**SIMON.** (VO) ... with that classic Abba number 'Dancing Queen'.

**WILL.** How the...? (*TO JON*) You bastard!

**JON.** What?

**WILL.** Did you...?

**JON.** Well, I know how you love a bit of Abba mate.

**SIMON.** (VO) Come on Will, we're all waiting for you.

**TINA.** Go on Will, it'll be a laugh.

**WILL.** For you maybe.

**MICHELLE.** Come on Will, you'll have the last laugh.

*THE FIGHT GOES OUT OF **WILL** IMMEDIATELY **MICHELLE** ENCOURAGES HIM*

**WILL.** Really?

**MICHELLE.** Definitely.

**WILL.** Oh. Ok then.

***WILL STRIDES OFF.***

**SIMON.** (VO) Here he is. Let's have a big round of applause for Will.  
*WE HEAR A SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE OFF. **JON, MICHELLE AND TINA** APPLAUDE AND CHEER. THE MUSIC STARTS AND **WILL** BEGINS SINGING*

**JON.** How exactly does he get the last laugh?

**MICHELLE.** It's a pride thing.

**JON.** Eh?

**MICHELLE.** It's very brave for a gay man to get up in a pub like this and sing an Abba song. So good on him.

***JON BURSTS OUT LAUGHING***

**TINA.** He's not gay.

**MICHELLE.** Are you sure?

TINA. He's asked me back to his later.

*JON LAUGHS HARDER*

TINA. What's the matter with you?

JON. Nothing. Really. Oh this is just too perfect.

TINA. What is?

JON. Nothing. Look Michelle, given that Tina and Will have their night sorted out, maybe you and I can keep each other entertained?

MICHELLE. Entertained?

JON. Yes.

MICHELLE. No.

JON. No?

MICHELLE. No.

JON. Oh! Why not?

MICHELLE. Because I'm already with someone and even if I wasn't you're just not my type.

JON. Not your type? Oh, come on!

TINA. (SARCASTIC) Hard to believe isn't it.

JON. I'm sure you hear that line a lot.

TINA. What?

JON. You're not exactly a ravishing beauty are you!

TINA. I do alright.

JON. Loose birds normally do.

TINA. You what?

*JON TURNS HIS BACK ON TINA TO CONCENTRATE HIS ATTENTION ON MICHELLE*

JON. You're with someone?

**MICHELLE.** Yes. It's not going all that smoothly but I'm not ready to walk away just yet.

**JON.** Treats you badly does he? You can do so much better. How about if I give you my number and we can head out sometime?

***JON GETS HIS PHONE OUT. WE HEAR WILL ON THE MIC***

**WILL.** (VO) Oi!

***WILL ENTERS, ANGRY. THE MUSIC CUTS OUT. WE HEAR SIMON ON THE MIC***

**SIMON.** (VO) That was Will, with 'Dancing Queen'

***SMATTER OF APPLAUSE. WILL HITS JON***

**JON.** Ow! What was that for?

**WILL.** You know what that was for.

**JON.** I don't.

**WILL.** You lost, I won. I get to go after the pretty one; you go after the dog if you want!

**MICHELLE.** The pretty one?

**TINA.** The dog?

**WILL.** Erm... no offence. You've already got a bloody girlfriend anyway.

**MICHELLE.** You've got a girlfriend?

**JON.** Kind of.

**MICHELLE.** Kind of?

**JON.** Yes.

**MICHELLE.** So why are you trying to hit on me?

**JON.** (*MUMBLES*) Don't know.

**MICHELLE.** Sorry?

**JON.** (*LOUDER*) Don't know.

**MICHELLE.** Don't know! Well, I'll tell you what, you keep your number and head out on your

own. Or with your girlfriend maybe!

**WILL.** Unlucky mate. Maybe we could go out sometime?

**MICHELLE.** Us? I thought you were after Tina?

**WILL.** God, no.

**MICHELLE.** Why not?

***WILL LAUGHS. HE REALSIES THE GIRLS AREN'T LAUGHING AND STOPS SUDDENLY***

**WILL.** What, seriously?

**MICHELLE.** Yes, seriously.

**WILL.** Well, she's a bit...

**MICHELLE.** A bit what?

**WILL.** (*MUMBLES*) Don't know.

**MICHELLE.** Sorry?

**WILL.** (*LOUDER*) Don't know.

**MICHELLE.** Don't know. God, you two are pathetic!

**JON.** In an endearing way?

***MICHELLE IS ABOUT TO REPLY WHEN KIRSTY ENTERS***

**KIRSTY.** Michelle?

**MICHELLE.** Kirsty?

**JON.** Kirsty?

**KIRSTY.** Jon?

**JON.** I wasn't trying to get off with her.

***KIRSTY LOOKS PUZZLED AT MICHELLE AND THEN TINA***

**JON.** Or her. Definitely not her.

**KIRSTY.** Right.

**WILL.** He was actually.

**JON.** Shut up. What are you doing here? You didn't know I drink down here.

**KIRSTY.** I... I didn't come here looking for you.

**JON.** On thank God.

**KIRSTY.** (*TO MICHELLE*) I was looking for you.

**JON.** You know each other?

**MICHELLE.** You know this clown?

**KIRSTY.** Yeah. Umm... this is awkward. I didn't think you two would ever meet. Michelle, this is Jon, my boyfriend. Jon, this is Michelle, my girlfriend.

**MICHELLE.** What?

**JON.** What?

**MICHELLE.** You and him?

**JON.** You and her?

**MICHELLE.** That's... that's...

**JON.** Bloody brilliant!

**KIRSTY.** Look, I'm sorry; I wasn't going to carry on like this. I've just been a bit confused lately and I needed to... well, check.

**MICHELLE.** Check?

**KIRSTY.** Yeah you know. Like anchovies.

**MICHELLE.** Anchovies?

**KIRSTY.** Yeah. You know, you've had them before and you know you don't really like them but every so often you try them again just to see whether or not your tastes have changed.

**MICHELLE.** And?

**KIRSTY.** I think anchovies are disgusting.

**JON.** Me too. We have so much in common.

**KIRSTY.** The anchovies are metaphorical Jon.

**JON.** I don't care how they've been prepared; I always find them too salty.

**KIRSTY.** Mind you, I'm not sure the anchovies I tried were exactly top notch.

**MICHELLE.** But have you got them out of your system.

**KIRSTY.** Oh I think I'm off them for good now.

**MICHELLE.** That doesn't make it alright you know.

**KIRSTY.** I know. I'm really sorry.

**MICHELLE.** I can't believe you'd treat me like this.

**KIRSTY.** I'll make it up to you, I promise. Can we go somewhere, talk it through?

**MICHELLE.** (PAUSE) I guess so.

**JON.** Erm, yeah, I'm a little bit upset about this too actually Kirsty.

**KIRSTY.** You? Right. The thing is...

**JON.** I think maybe the three of us should sit down somewhere quiet and private and talk it through.

**KIRSTY.** Jon...

**JON.** I suggest my place. It's close by and we won't be disturbed. We can have a few drinks and talk and see where it leads us.

**WILL.** What about your "one woman at a time" thing?

**JON.** What about if you shut up!

**MICHELLE.** What were you doing with this guy?

**KIRSTY.** You should be thankful I didn't meet a decent one.

**JON.** Eh?

**KIRSTY.** Look Jon. The fact is that I'm not really all that attracted to you, the sex was average at best and I was going to end it when we met tomorrow.

**JON.** Tomorrow?

**KIRSTY.** Yes.

**JON.** Are we still on for that?

**KIRSTY.** I don't think there's much point.

**JON.** You could bring Michelle.

**KIRSTY.** Forget it Jon, there is no way you are getting the two of us back to yours.

**JON.** Damn.

**KIRSTY.** It's over Jon. It was always going to be.

**JON.** I don't believe you about the whole gay thing. This is just a cowardly way of dumping me.

**KIRSTY.** It's true.

**JON.** Well I need more convincing.

**KIRSTY.** Oh do you?

**JON.** Some video footage or something would do.

**KIRSTY.** (SIGHS) Goodbye Jon.

***KIRSTY HOLDS OUT A HAND TO MICHELLE WHO TAKES IT***

**MICHELLE.** Tina, I'm sorry, are you going to be ok if I...

**TINA.** Yeah, sure, whatever.

**MICHELLE.** I'll give you a bell tomorrow.

***TINA SHRUGS. KIRSTY AND MICHELLE EXIT. JON AND WILL LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SHRUG. THEY LOOK AT TINA THEN BACK AT ONE ANOTHER. THEY SHRUG AGAIN. THEY BOTH PUT A HAND BEHIND THEIR BACK AND WE SEE THEM SILENTLY COUNT TO THREE. JON MAKES PAPER, WILL STONE. THEY BOTH SHRUG AGAIN. JON MOVES AND SITS ON THE STONE NEXT TO TINA WHO IS TEXTING***

**JON.** So, Tracey...

**TINA.** Tina.

**JON.** Whatever. What are we doing for the rest of the night?

**TINA.** Piss off, you twat.

**JON.** Jesus! Who lit the fuse on your tampon?

***TINA SLAPS JON.***

**TINA.** You've got a bloody nerve!

***TINA STANDS TO LEAVE. WILL STANDS TOO***

**WILL.** Look, Trisha...

**TINA.** Tina!

**WILL.** Really? Are you sure?

**TINA.** Course I'm sure!

**WILL.** Oh well, have it your own way. I'm sorry about Jon, he's a bit of a knob but he means well. Maybe I can get you a drink?

**TINA.** You want to get me a drink? Me? The Dog!

**WILL.** Don't be so hard on yourself.

**TINA.** Your words dickweed, not mine!

**WILL.** I meant dog in a good way.

**TINA.** A good way?

**WILL.** (*STRUGGLING*) Yeah, you know - cute... strokeable... clever...

**TINA.** Clever? Dogs aren't that clever.

**WILL.** Sure they are. You can teach them to do tricks like balancing biscuits on their nose and rolling over and helping blind people get about and... stuff.

***TINA SLAPS WILL***

**TINA.** Twat.

***TINA EXITS LEAVING HER COAT. AS JON AND WILL TALK  
THEY MOVE BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL TABLE***

**WILL.** What did she do that for?

**JON.** No idea mate. Think I dodged a bullet there – what a psycho!

**WILL.** Honestly, you try to pay a woman a compliment! No wonder she's single.

**JON.** As indeed are we. Again.

**WILL.** Yeah, didn't see that coming. Michelle and Kirsty. Blimey!

**JON.** Blimey indeed. I've got mixed feelings on that one.

**WILL.** Mixed feelings? Why? I thought you said you wouldn't mind if Kirsty wanted to touch other women.

**JON.** And I stand by that. But you know what it's like when you've just split with someone - you don't really want to think about her and her new lover. But in this case, I really, really want to think about her and new lover.

**WILL.** Me too!

**JON.** That's really not appropriate Will. Think about your own ex with her new lesbian lover and keep your filthy thoughts off of mine.

**WILL.** My ex hasn't got a new lesbian lover. At least, not that I'm aware of.

**JON.** You clearly haven't met the right woman yet.

**WILL.** No, I tend to pull heterosexuals generally speaking.

**JON.** And you can't even hold on to them. At least I have a decent excuse in this case - my girlfriend was gay.

**WILL.** I think we managed to offend all of them tonight. Even Kirsty and she wasn't here long.

**JON.** It's a certain knack we've developed over the years.

**WILL.** True. We do seem to have a certain way with the ladies don't we!

**JON.** If they can't take it, sod them.

**WILL.** I guess. As the old saying goes, "tay tay tay tay t t t t tay tay, take or leave us only please believe us, we ain't ever gonna be respectable".

**JON.** I think it's wrong in this day and age to quote Mel and Kim.

**WILL.** Hey, if quoting Mel & Kim is wrong, I don't want to be right.

**JON.** You're weird.

*WE HEAR **SIMON** THROUGH THE MIC*

**SIMON.** (VO) Now then all you Abba fans, let me hear you give a cheer for Jon who's going to be doing 'Dancing Queen' for us. Jon, where are you?

**JON.** This your doing?

**WILL.** I couldn't possibly say.

**JON.** I see. I'll be right back.

***JON** EXITS CARRYING HIS BEER. AFTER A MOMENT WE HEAR **JON** THROUGH THE MIC*

**JON.** (VO) Ladies and gentlemen; this ones for all of you.

*THERE IS A CRACKLING NOISE, A SMALL EXPLOSION AND A CHEER FROM THE CROWD. **WILL** PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. **JON** ENTERS WITH HIS PINT GLASS EMPTY AND SITS*

**WILL.** Simon's going to very cross.

**JON.** Probably.

***SIMON** ENTERS. HE IS VERY CROSS*

**SIMON.** What did you do that for?

**JON.** Isn't that what you're supposed to do?

**SIMON.** Pour half a pint of beer into the karaoke machine? No, it isn't.

**JON.** Oh.

**SIMON.** Have you any idea how much those things cost?

**JON.** No, not a clue. How much?

**SIMON.** Erm... I'm not sure. Will, any idea?

**WILL.** How the hell would I know?

**SIMON.** You like a bit of karaoke.

**WILL.** No I don't. I hate it.

**SIMON.** Really?

**WILL.** You know all this, I told you earlier.

**SIMON.** Did you? So what are you doing here on karaoke night?

**WILL.** I didn't know it was karaoke night.

**SIMON.** I told you.

**WILL.** I know you told me; we had this whole conversation about half an hour ago.

**SIMON.** Did we? Oh! I can't have been listening. (*TO JON*) Anyway, you; you're banned.

**JON.** Why?

**SIMON.** You blew up my karaoke machine.

**JON.** Have you never heard of justifiable homicide? Look Si, I did you a favour.

**SIMON.** How was that doing me a favour?

**JON.** There were people in here ready to kill you if they heard Dancing Queen again. I saved you from that fate.

**SIMON.** Don't be silly - no one was going to kill me.

**WILL.** I was.

**JON.** Me too.

**WILL.** And I thought I saw Strange Dave hefting his cudgel.

**SIMON.** Really?

**JON.** So you see, by destroying that machine I saved you.

**SIMON.** You could have just unplugged it.

**JON.** You could've not plugged it in in the first place and then we wouldn't have had all these problems.

**WILL.** You see Si, it's all your fault really.

**SIMON.** My fault?

**WILL.** Definitely.

**SIMON.** Well, you could knock me down with a feather.

**WILL.** Could I really?

**SIMON.** If it was a very large, very heavy feather made of wood or metal or something and I wasn't expecting it, then yes.

**WILL.** I'm not sure that's ever likely to happen.

**JON.** Given that feathers aren't actually made of wood or metal what you'd actually be doing is hitting him with a bit of wood or metal.

**SIMON.** I might be a bit upset if you did that to be honest.

**WILL.** Well don't worry; I'm not going to hit you with a bit of wood or metal.

**SIMON.** You'd better not. What did I ever do to deserve the threat in the first place!

**WILL.** I didn't threaten you.

**SIMON.** You did. You threatened to hit me with a bit of wood or metal.

**WILL.** I'd never do that. It's not in my nature.

**SIMON.** Oh I get it, you're all talk.

**WILL.** Look, you're the one who bought the wood and metal into it in the first place.

**SIMON.** Oh! So it's my fault is it? Blame the victim!

**WILL.** What?

***SIMON WANDERS OFF MUTTERING***

**JON.** He just gets stranger by the day. Shall we get off then?

**WILL.** Nah, might as well stay now the karaoke's dead.

**JON.** Ah yes, of course. (*CHUCKLES*)

**WILL.** What?

**JON.** You'll want to stay for your hot date.

**WILL.** It isn't as hot date. Look, when she gets here I'll explain that it was all a big misunderstanding.

**JON.** And if that doesn't work?

**WILL.** I'll swallow my pride and pretend you're my boyfriend.

**JON.** You will not!

**WILL.** Fine. Cheers mate.

***JON PICKS UP WILLS BOOK AND FLICKS THROUGH IT***

**WILL.** Are you still writing that book you were talking about?

**JON.** Oh, what the children's classic? Yeah, I'm still playing around with the idea.

**WILL.** How are you getting on?

**JON.** Well, I started to think that maybe I was going in the wrong direction with it.

**WILL.** Oh right.

**JON.** Yeah. I was thinking of changing the main character so instead of a hedgehog called Tinkle, maybe he should be a man. Called Dave.

**WILL.** OK.

**JON.** And instead of him being friends with a dormouse called Sparkle, he had a Swedish girlfriend called Anka.

**WILL.** A-ha.

**JON.** And instead of trying to find the hidden treasure, they just sort of... had sex. A lot.

**WILL.** Sorry, this was the series of children's books you were writing?

**JON.** Well, I have been pondering changing my key demographic too.

**WILL.** Really? It's quite a limited idea though, for a series of books isn't it?

**JON.** Not really, no. They could have a lot of sex in a variety of places.

**WILL.** Of course, yeah, I wasn't thinking of that.

**JON.** Than I thought, would it be better as a screenplay?

**WILL.** So essentially, you've gone from the idea of writing a series of classic children's books, to writing a porn film.

**JON.** A series of porn films.

**WILL.** And that makes all the difference.

**JON.** It keeps my creative juices flowing.

**WILL.** That isn't another one of your masturbation euphemisms is it?

**JON.** (*THINKS*) It is now.

***SIMON ENTERS CARRYING A BEER. HE PLACES IT IN FRONT OF JON***

**SIMON.** Compliments of the house.

**JON.** Cheers. What's wrong with it?

**SIMON.** Nothing's wrong with it.

**JON.** Something must be wrong with it Si; it's been through your pumps.

**SIMON.** Fair point. Alright, nothing that isn't wrong with all the rest of the beer.

***JON TRIES A SIP. IT IS ALRIGHT***

**JON.** And why are you giving it to me?

**SIMON.** Because you were right. Strange Dave had bought his hanging rope in from the car and you know what that means!

**JON.** Another lynching!

**SIMON.** Exactly. And the police have said that if anyone else gets lynched in this pub then they'll consider shutting me down.

**WILL.** Maybe you should consider getting that tree cut down.

**SIMON.** It's not the trees fault is it, if my locals keep hanging people from it?

**WILL.** I suppose not. Do I get a free beer as well?

**SIMON.** Not until you save me by destroying some pub property.

**WILL.** I'll keep my eyes peeled for those opportunities.

**SIMON.** Good man.

***SIMON LOOKS PUZZLED FOR A MOMENT AND THEN REACHES INTO HIS POCKET PULLING OUT HIS MOBILE PHONE. HE READS A TEXT MESSAGE QUICKLY***

**SIMON.** Ah, it's the moment you've been waiting for young Will - Jackie's friend is here.

**WILL.** Oh joy.

**SIMON.** I'll go and get her, I'll be right back.

***SIMON EXITS***

**WILL.** Oh God. Shall we leg it?

**JON.** Definitely not. This is far too much fun.

***TINA ENTERS AND MOVES TO THE TABLE SHE WAS SAT AT. SHE COLLECTS HER COAT CHECKING THE POCKETS***

**WILL.** Uh-oh, looks what's back.

***JON GLANCES ROUND. HE GRINS***

**JON.** £20 says you can't turn things around and pull her.

**WILL.** I agree with it. Your £20 owes itself some money.

**JON.** Fifty.

**WILL.** What?

**JON.** £50 says you can't pull her.

**WILL.** I thought you were skint?

**JON.** I am. I could do with the extra £50.

**WILL.** I can't can I, this bird that Si's set up will be here in a minute.

**JON.** So if you're successful you get out of that little fix too.

**WILL.** Good point. OK then, you're on. (*TAKES JON'S BEER*) I'm taking this for courage.

**JON.** And you're replacing it as soon as you get back.

***JON AND WILL SHAKE HANDS. WILL GETS UP AND MOVES TO TINA WHO SPOTS HIM AND ROLLS HER EYES***

**TINA.** Don't even think about it.

**WILL.** Look, I've come over to apologise.

**TINA.** Have you?

**WILL.** Yes. I'm really sorry, I behaved incredibly badly earlier and I know that I can't change that. I've got no excuse, I was a twat - you were quite right to point that out.

**TINA.** You called me a dog.

**WILL.** I like dogs. Been a dog person all my life. Always had a pet dog since I was a nipper.

**TINA.** Really?

**WILL.** Oh yeah, dogs all the way. Not like cat people - what the hell are they on?

**TINA.** I've got cats.

**WILL.** And very nice they are too. Cats, yeah, always been a fan.

***TINA SMILES***

**TINA.** I ought to batter you.

**WILL.** I know. And if you want to I won't stand in your way. But as an alternative you could make me buy you dinner tomorrow and grovel to you for as long as you think's appropriate.

**TINA.** Dinner and grovelling, eh?

**WILL.** On me.

**TINA.** That does sound pretty good.

**WILL.** Really?

**TINA.** Sure. Why not!

***WILL GRINS AND TAKES A LARGE MOUTHFUL OF BEER. AS HE DOES SO SIMON ENTERS FOLLOWED BY WENDY***

**SIMON.** Will, this is your date for the evening, Wendy.

***WILL SEES WENDY, HIS EYES WIDEN IN SHOCK AND HE  
SPRAYS HIS MOUTHFUL OF BEER IN TINA'S FACE***

**TINA.** What the...?

**WILL.** Mum?

**WENDY.** Hello dear.

*CURTAIN*

FINIS.