

'Rapture'

A one act play

by Jim Blythe & Dani Doughty

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Characters

Adam Collins
Dr Marlowe
Dr Evans
Matt Collins
Gemma Collins
Ruth Collins

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OVERTURE

*THE STAGE IS DARK, EXCEPT FOR A SINGLE SPOT, WHICH PICKS OUT **ADAM** IN A STRAITJACKET. WE HEAR THE VOICE OF **DR MARLOWE** FROM OFFSTAGE.*

DR MARLOWE. Adam? Adam Collins? Can you hear me?

ADAM. (*WHIMPERS SOFTLY*) What? What do you want?

DR MARLOWE. Do you know me Adam? Do you know who I am?

*THERE IS A PAUSE. THEN **ADAM** BEGINS TO LAUGH HYSTERICALLY.*

DR MARLOWE. I need you to focus now, Adam.

*THE LAUGHING DIES AWAY, SLOWLY AS THOUGH **ADAM** IS DEFLATED SOMEHOW.*

DR MARLOWE. Adam? Do you know why you're here? Do you remember today?

ADAM. I... I ... remember ... I don't know...

DR MARLOWE. (*SIGHS*) Adam, we talked about this yesterday. Remember? Yesterday and the day before and the day before that. Don't you remember that?

ADAM. I ... remember... something... I remember...Matt.

DR MARLOWE. That's right Adam; your brother Matt.

ADAM. (*MURMURS*) Matt.

DR MARLOWE. Why did you kill your brother Adam? Do you remember?

ADAM. Remember... I remember... the Rapture?

DR MARLOWE. No Adam, concentrate. This is the last time we're going to go through this. Do you remember what we talked about yesterday?

ADAM. Yesterday?

DR MARLOWE. I have to file a positive report on your progress today Adam or this will be our final session. If I can't do that you'll have to go back into isolation. That what you want?

ADAM. (*FRIGHTENED*) No!

DR MARLOWE. One last hour Adam, that's all we've got. So tell me what happened. Tell me why you killed Matt.

ADAM. Why did I...? He... he... it was his own fault. His own fault.

DR MARLOWE. His own fault? That you killed him? What could he possibly have done to deserve that?

ADAM. Deserve that? He's one of the lucky ones. I did him a favour. Better dead than like this.

DR MARLOWE. Adam, I can't help you if you don't tell me what happened.

ADAM. What happened? I don't... Ruth. I remember... Ruth.

DR MARLOWE. Your wife, Ruth?

ADAM. She was so ill. She was so...

ADAM TAILS OFF.

DR MARLOWE. So, what?

RUTH'S VOICE IS HEARD FROM OFFSTAGE.

RUTH. Adam.

ADAM FROWNS. HE ISN'T SURE WHAT HE IS SEEING OR HEARING. DR MARLOWE SOUNDS QUIET AND DISTANT.

DR MARLOWE. Adam? Adam?

RUTH. Adam.

ADAM. Ruth. I'm so sorry... I'm so sorry...

DR EVAN ENTERS. HE RELEASES ADAM FROM THE STRAIGHTJACKET. ADAM DOESN'T REACT AT ALL. STRAW LIGHTING. ADAM DROPS HIS HEAD INTO HIS HANDS. DR EVAN PUTS A HAND ON HIS SHOULDER.

SCENE 1

DR EVAN. I'm so sorry Mr Collins ... Adam, there is nothing more I can do. It's just too aggressive.

ADAM. I... how long then?

DR EVAN. 6 months, 8 at best.

ADAM. More chemo then? Anything...

DR EVAN. (*GENTLY BUT FIRMLY*) Adam, we've tried everything. More chemotherapy will just make the last few months less comfortable. She didn't respond to the last doses at all well. All we can do at this stage is ensure that her final days are as good as they can be. I'm sorry.

ADAM. (*TRYING TO FIGHT BACK TEARS*) ...does she know...anything?

DR EVAN. Yes, Adam. Ruth wanted us to tell you. To explain everything. She was afraid that she had let you down.

ADAM. Let me down? She ... I love her so much. *I've let her down.* She's my wife and I can't help her...

DR EVAN. (*INTERRUPTING*) ...yes, yes you can, Adam. You can try to make her last days more comfortable. Take her away somewhere, visit friends, *be together.*

ADAM. I... yes, thank you Dr Evan. So when can I take her home?

DR EVAN. I think tomorrow would be best, she's still very tired.

ADAM HESITATES AS THOUGH HE ISN'T QUITE FINISHED.

DR EVAN. Adam?

ADAM. Six to eight months?

DR EVAN. Live as though it's four, hope for eight. I'm sorry.

LIGHT CHANGE. PURPLE LIGHTING. ADAM CROUCHES AND ASSUMES STRAITJACKET POSITION. DR EVAN EXITS UNNOTICED.

SCENE 2

ADAM. She's dead, isn't she?

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Yes. She is. You knew that.

ADAM. Yes. (*PAUSE*) I killed her.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Is that what you remember?

ADAM. I ... don't know. I remember...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Go on.

ADAM. The Rapture...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) This is getting us nowhere.

ADAM. I... how do you know that? Who are you?

DR MARLOWE. (VO) You know who I am Adam. I'm trying to help you. Focus now.

ADAM BECOMES AGITATED. HE BEGINS TO MAKE NOISES SLOWLY BUILDING TO A SHOUT.

ADAM. NO!

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Adam! Calm. I can't help you if you keep doing this.

ADAM. NO! I want to go back. Leave me alone. You can't help me. No one can. I don't want this anymore. Let me die. Please. If you want to help me, let me die.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) You know I can't do that Adam. This is for your own protection...

DR MARLOWE IS CUT OF MID-SENTENCE BY ADAM'S MANIACAL LAUGHING.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Adam. Adam!

ADAM. No more! No more! You can't help me...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Alright. Let's go back to Ruth. She was ill. What happened next? Can you tell me that Adam?

ADAM. Next? I... I went to meet ... Matt... he...he was waiting for me...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) And what happened? Did you argue? Fight?

ADAM. Did we...?... No. It wasn't like that back then. We were there for each other back then... before...

GRADUAL LIGHT CHANGE, STRAW LIGHTING. MATT ENTERS FROM THE DARKNESS. ADAM CROSSES TO MEET HIM.

SCENE 3

A PARK, THE SOUND OF BIRDSONG AND GENERAL PARK NOISES. DSR THERE IS A ROCK WITH A FISHING GNOME STANDING ON TOP OF IT.

MATT. Really? Oh man. I don't know what to say.

ADAM. It's okay Matt, I'm just glad you're here. Thanks for walking with me; I just needed to clear my head before Ruth comes home tomorrow. Jesus...

MATT SLINGS HIS ARM AROUND ADAM'S SHOULDERS AND PULLS ADAM GRUFFLY TOWARDS HIM.

MATT. 'S alright mate. That's what big brothers are for. I wish I could do more... you know... make this all go away... you know...

ADAM. Yeah, me too.

THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT PAUSE BETWEEN THE TWO MEN AS THEY ARE BOTH LOST IN THEIR OWN THOUGHTS FOR A FEW SECONDS.

ADAM. All well with Gemma?

MATT. Aw, mate, you don't have to talk about that now. Not now...

ADAM. Matt, it's fine, really. Me and Ruth love that you're having this baby. Don't shut us out because of...

MATT. Mate, I'm not shutting you out, I just don't want to... you know...rub it in or anything...

ADAM. You're not. We're happy for you both, it's the only good thing in our lives right now. When is she due, exactly?

MATT. Mate...

ADAM. Please. Please Matt....

MATT. Okay, sorry. About 7 weeks – what's that ...Easter time, I suppose?

ADAM. Fantastic. At least Ruth'll be... around to see it... Do you know what it is yet?

MATT. Yeah, it's a baby!

ADAM. You bloody know what I mean, you arse.

MATT. It's a boy. We're having a boy!

ADAM SLINGS HIS ARM AROUND MATT AND MIMICS THE FIRST HUG.

ADAM. That's great! A boy. Someone to carry on the great Collins' name, hey?

MATT. Yep. Someone's got to keep the bloodline... fuck, mate, sorry, you know I didn't mean it like that... right?

ADAM. No, no, I do know. Stop treating me with kid gloves, you wouldn't be Matt if you didn't talk shit most of the time.

THE BROTHERS SMILE AT EACH OTHER.

- MATT.** Cheeky fucker! Come on, it's getting nippy, let's go home.
- ADAM.** Home... no... I think I'll stay here for a while. You go. I'll see you in a couple of days when Ruth has settled back in again. Let's have dinner or something?
- MATT.** Top! You sure you won't come now?
- ADAM.** I need to think. I'll see you later.

EXIT MATT.

LIGHT CHANGE - PURPLE. ADAM SLUMPS BACK INTO HIS STRAITJACKET POSTURE. HE SEEMS LOST IN THOUGHT.

- DR MARLOWE.** (VO) We've been through all this before Adam. I need to know what happened next.
- ADAM.** I ... don't remember.
- DR MARLOWE.** (VO) You have to remember Adam. This is our last to uncover what happened. This is your last chance Adam.
- ADAM.** I... I...
- DR MARLOWE.** (VO) Tell me what happened.
- ADAM.** I wandered round the park for a while... I... I... ended up at Matts. I didn't want to be on my own.
- ADAM.** We talked about a wish... you know... what would you do if you only had one wish...

WE HEAR MATT AND GEMMA FROM OFFSTAGE

- GEMMA.** £10 million.
- MATT.** Be rich and famous.
- ADAM.** Cure Ruth.
- DR MARLOWE.** What has this got to do with anything?
- ADAM.** I... I don't know (*FROWNS*) There was something else. Something...
- DR MARLOWE.** What? This is important Adam – tell me.
- ADAM.** (*ANGRY*) You wouldn't believe me.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) *(PAUSE)* So you do remember.

ADAM. I think...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) *Tell me.*

*LIGHT CHANGE. STRAW LIGHTING. **ADAM** SITS FOR A WHILE, RESTLESSLY FIDGETING, UNTIL HE BURIES HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS AND BEGINS TO CRY. THROUGH THE SOUND OF CRYING THERE IS THE GROWING SOUND OF RAGE UNTIL ADAM STANDS UP AND KICKS THE GNOME DSR THROUGH SHEER FRUSTRATION. THE ROCK UNFURLS AND REVEALS A GIANT **GNOME**.*

GNOME. You bastard! You absolute bastard. That really hurt.

***ADAM** STUMBLES BACKWARDS, SCRAMBLING ACROSS THE STAGE ON HIS BACKSIDE. THE **GNOME** LOOKS AROUND, RUBBING HIS BACK.*

GNOME. Oh, that's nice; not even a bloody apology. You rude bastard!

ADAM. What the ... who are you? You're not the... you can't be...

GNOME. Apologise!

ADAM. Erm, sorry... where did you come from?

GNOME. Come from? You just kicked me!

ADAM. But ... I just kicked the gnome, there... oh...

GNOME. Yes, you bloody did. There I was, just minding my own business. And now, just to add insult to almost very serious injury, we have to work out a way of keeping you quiet.

ADAM. Keeping me quiet? What?

GNOME. So you don't go blabbing that you've seen me.

***ADAM** STARTS TO LAUGH IN SHOCK.*

ADAM. Blabbing! Who is going to believe me?! Oh I can see it now: Guess what everyone, I kicked a gnome and it turns out... he was real...

GNOME. Shhhhhh! Shut up, shut up! This is exactly what I'm talking about. We'll have every nutter for miles around coming to have a bloody look. Wishes all over the bloody place. That won't do at all.

ADAM. Wishes? What the hell are you... I don't get any of this. I must be hallucinating. Maybe the trauma is getting to me.

GNOME. Look, mister, tell you what I'll do, me being the nice, well bought up and all round sporting sort of gnome what I am. I will grant you one wish of your choosing and in return, you just er...forget all about me.

ADAM. What? You can grant me a wish?

GNOME. Yep.

ADAM. Any wish?

GNOME. Yep.

ADAM. Really. Any wish at all?

GNOME. Yeah, sorry if I've made this difficult to understand in any way. A wish. Any wish. Any wish at all. So, what do you want?

ADAM. What, so if I asked for all the money in the world, you'd give it to me?

GNOME. That what you want?

ADAM. No! I was just asking for an example.

GNOME. Phew! That's a relief. Last time someone made a wish like that it all went a bit pear – shaped.

ADAM. How do you mean?

GNOME. Well, ever heard of Yenver?

ADAM. No never. Where is it?

GNOME. My point exactly – it's gone innit.

ADAM. What?

GNOME. It was the most precious metal on the planet, more even than gold or platinum.

ADAM. Rubbish! Never heard of it!

GNOME. There's a very good reason why you haven't heard of it, smart arse. It no longer exists on this planet.

ADAM. What are you on about? Shit, I have gone mad, seriously, seriously traumatised.

GNOME. Yes, well, anyway, as I was saying: I had to give a wish to a tramp once – completely pissed he was. He asked for all the yerver in the world to be transported to a secret location that no-one knew about. So, Poof!, I transported it as requested, least I could do under the circumstances. It's now on some planet that no-one knows about and the memory of it on this planet has been totally erased in spite of the fact that it used to be the basis of the world super power economies. He started to give me some backtalk saying that the whole point of the wish was that HE would know where it was. Well, that's not what he wished for was it, the tit. How was I s'posed to know! So now he just wanders around mumbling about it and no-one knows what he's on about. So, what are you going to wish for? Before you say anything, just listen a minute – this is the small print: You get one wish. It is non-returnable; non-refundable; I don't do credit notes. You have 24 hours in which to make the wish but if, in that time, you should mention *me* to anyone, you will die. Horribly. Painfully. Nastily. In a way that isn't very nice at all actually.

ADAM. I'm going mad.

GNOME. Focus now please. Did you hear what I just said. You've got a wish to make. Do you want to make it now?

ADAM. Oh what the hell! If I had a wish I would wish that Ruth...

GNOME. Careful now. You, my friend are not in the stablest frame of mind. Take the 24 hours. Really think about it. That's my advice to you.

ADAM. I... yes, yes alright then. Twenty four hours, then I meet you back here?

GNOME. That's right. Just remember, sunshine, tell no-one about me or...

ADAM. Yes, yes, painfully, horribly, nastily. Got it.

LIGHT CHANGE - PURPLE. THE GNOME MOVES INTO THE DARKNESS AND DISAPPEARS. ADAM SLUMPS BACK INTO HIS STRAIGHTJACKET POSTURE. HE IS ROCKING BACK AND FORTH. HIS AGONY IS ALMOST PALPABLE.

SCENE 4

MENTAL ASYLUM.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) (DISBELIEVING) A gnome?

ADAM. I... I said you wouldn't believe me.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Adam, I'm trying to help you and you are wasting my time. We're never going to get to the bottom if you continue with this nonsense. What really happened in the park?

ADAM. I told you. I went to the park. With Matt...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Go on. With Matt. What did you talk about?

ADAM. Ruth... Gemma... us....

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Then?

ADAM. And then there was the gnome.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) (*SIGHS*) Let's leave that for the moment shall we? When did you see your brother next?

ADAM STOPS ROCKING. HE IS SUDDENLY VERY CLEAR.

ADAM. It was later that day... that evening.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) You seem very sure about that Adam.

ADAM. It was... it must have been... because...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Because...?

ADAM. We talked about what happened in the park.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) You told them about the gnome?

ADAM. No. No, I couldn't. The warning.... But we talked about...

ADAM BEGINS ROCKING AGAIN. HE CHOKES BACK TEARS.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) What Adam? What did you talk about?

ADAM. I went to the house.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) The house?

ADAM. To Matt and Gemma's. I remember... that was when it all started to get worse...

GEMMA'S VOICE IS HEARD FROM THE DARKNESS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE. SHE CAN VAGUELY BE SEEN IN THE DARKNESS.

GEMMA. Adam.

ADAM FROWNS. AS EARLIER, HE ISN'T SURE WHAT HE IS SEEING OR HEARING. HE STARES OUT INTO THE DARKNESS.

ADAM. Ruth?

GEMMA. Adam.

ADAM. Ruth, I... I'm so...

QUICK LIGHT CHANGE, STRAW LIGHTING. GEMMA IS REVEALED. SHE IS HEAVILY PREGNANT. SHE MOVES TO ADAM PUTTING AN ARM AROUND HIM AND HELPING HIM TO RISE.

SCENE 5

MATT AND GEMMA'S HOUSE. THREE CHAIRS ARE SET.

GEMMA. Adam, are you alright?

ADAM. Gemma?

GEMMA. No offence honey, but you look like shit. Come on in.

ADAM. (VAGUELY) Yes.

MATT ENTERS AS GEMMA LEADS ADAM INTO THE HOUSE. THEY SIT, MATT & GEMMA EITHER SIDE OF ADAM.

MATT. You alright mate? We weren't expecting to see you.

ADAM. I'm...I'm ok. I just needed to talk to someone. Is it ok? You two weren't...

GEMMA. Adam, it's fine. Really. You know we're here for you anytime you need us.

ADAM. Thanks.

GEMMA. I'll put the kettle on.

GEMMA RISES. MATT HALF-RISE.

MATT. I'll go. You shouldn't in your condition...

GEMMA. I think I can handle the kettle.

MATT. Are you sure?

GEMMA. Well, I don't want to sound like I'm boasting but...

MATT. You know what I mean.

GEMMA. (SMILES) Matt, I'm pregnant, not retarded. I can make a cup to tea. Just look after your brother, yeah?

GEMMA EXITS. THERE IS A SHORT SILENCE.

MATT. You ok then?

ADAM. (SNAPS) Oh yeah, I'm just fine.

MATT. Sorry. Stupid question.

ADAM. Sorry. Stupid answer. I didn't mean to... *trails off* I just can't take it, you know. Losing her. She's everything to me and I've just got to watch her die.

MATT. I'm so sorry mate. I don't know what else to say. I can't imagine how it feels. I couldn't handle it if it was happening to Gemma.

*DURING THE NEXT SPEECH **ADAM** SUBTLY MOVES INTO HIS STRAITJACKET POSTURE BUT REMAINS SEATED. HE BEGINS TO SWAY AND BECOMES THE **ADAM** WE HAVE SEEN IN THE ASYLUM. THE LIGHTING SLOWLY CHANGES TO PURPLE. **MATT** FREEZES.*

ADAM. But it wasn't happening to Gemma though was it? And I wouldn't have wanted it to ... of course I wouldn't. I know...I know they were feeling... the weight of all this too but not in the same way. I was USELESS. Couldn't help them, couldn't help Ruth, couldn't do...anything except grieve for Ruth while I watched her slowly leave us all. I wanted to tell him to stop talking and just...heal us. But he couldn't though, could he?

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Did you resent your brother Adam?

ADAM. A bit, maybe. He was sitting right next to me, a million miles away. I may have been a bit jealous...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Jealous?

ADAM. He could close his door after I had gone, you see. I don't know... maybe a little...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) And is that why you killed your brother?

ADAM. No. I did that because at that moment I hated him. Hated him.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Why did you hate him? What did he do?

ADAM. I blamed him. For everything. In that one moment it was so obvious, it was all his fault.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) His fault? Why was it his fault, Adam?

ADAM. That night... It was that night...

DR MARLOWE. (VO) What happened that night?

ADAM. We talked about the wish. I couldn't tell them about the gnome but we talked about... you know... if you only had one wish...

ADAM TRAILS OFF, FROWNING IN CONCENTRATION. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD TO CLEAR IT AND THE PURPLE LIGHT FADES SLIGHTLY. GEMMA TAKES HER SEAT TO THE OTHER SIDE OF ADAM. MATT RE-JOINS THE ACTION.

ADAM. If you only had one wish...

GEMMA. £10 million.

MATT. Be rich and famous.

ADAM. Cure Ruth.

GEMMA. Stop world poverty.

MATT. Be able to go invisible anytime.

ADAM. Cure Ruth.

GEMMA. Never grow old.

MATT. Unlimited wishes.

ADAM. Cure Ruth.

GEMMA. Another chance.

MATT. Unlimited socks.

THE PURPLE LIGHT INCREASES.

ADAM. And so it went on and on. The only wish I'd ever want was to cure Ruth. And I decided that would be it... that would be my wish... save the woman I loved...

ADAM TRAILS OFF AND STARES INTO SPACE. THERE IS A PAUSE.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) So what happened?

ADAM. Matt. All I wanted to do was...

THE PURPLE LIGHT FADES SLIGHTLY.

ADAM. Cure Ruth.

MATT. Why not cure everyone?

ADAM IS JOLTED OUT OF HIS THOUGHTS. STRAW LIGHTING.

ADAM. What?

MATT. Well, if you're curing Ruth you could cure everyone.

ADAM. Well... I suppose.

GEMMA. An end to cancer. That's a good wish.

ADAM. Yeah, it is.

MATT. Yeah, but then... why stop at cancer? You could cure everyone of everything.

ADAM. Everyone.

GEMMA. No more AIDS...

MATT. ...no more cancers...

GEMMA. ...no more... er, of the other ones.

ADAM. All terminal diseases...ended.

MATT. That's what I'd do mate, if I only had one wish.

GEMMA. You wouldn't get your unlimited socks.

MATT. I'd manage.

ADAM. (*THOUGHTFUL, TO HIMSELF*) All terminal diseases, ended.

PURPLE LIGHTING. GEMMA AND MATT RETREAT INTO THE DARKNESS.

ADAM. And that was it. That was the moment that changed everything.

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Because of the wish?

ADAM. That's right. If Matt hadn't said that... All I wanted was for Ruth to be well again, that's all. But then.... (*TRAILS OFF*)

DR MARLOWE. (VO) Then, what?

ADAM. I didn't realise what would happen. I went back to see the gnome the next day. I should never have gone back but what choice did I have? I wanted Ruth well so badly.

GRADUAL LIGHT CHANGE, STRAW LIGHTING. **ADAM** STANDS.

SCENE 6

A PARK, THE SOUND OF BIRDSONG AND GENERAL PARK NOISES. **ADAM** BEGINS PACING AND GLANCING AT HIS WATCH. HE LOOKS AROUND AND BACK AT HIS WATCH.

ADAM. (MUTTERING) Come on... come on... where the hell is he...

ADAM GLANCES ROUND AND SEES SOMEONE. HE MAKES EYE CONTACT AND SORT OF SMILES. HE APPROACHES THEM.

ADAM. Excuse me, sorry, you haven't seen a... *breaks off and laughs quietly*... gnome around here anywhere have you?... About so tall... hat... what?... no, a real one... he was around here the other day and...

ADAMS HEAD MOVES TO FOLLOW THE PERSON WALKING AWAY FROM HIM.

ADAM. ...that's a no then is it?... Yeah, same to you mate. *to himself* So this'll be me on my own in a park, asking strangers if they've seen a gnome. Jesus, what's happening to me?

ADAM LOOKS AT HIS WATCH ONE MORE TIME AND SHAKES HIS HEAD. HE TURNS 180 DEGREES TO WALK OFF AND NEARLY WALKS INTO THE **GNOME** WHO HAS ENTERED UNNOTICED BEHIND HIM.

GNOME. Careful you tit. Oh, it's you, the gnome-beating bastard come for your wish no doubt. I was starting to think you weren't coming.

THE **GNOME** PULLS A FOB WATCH FROM HIS POCKET AND EXAMINES IT.

GNOME. Blimey, you've cut it a bit fine ain't you? One last hour, that's all you had.

ADAM. (QUIETLY) One last hour.

GNOME. So what do you want then? Let me guess, 10 million quid? To be rich and famous? Stop world poverty?

ADAM. No, none of those, I want...

GNOME. Really, none of them? They're the top 3. Well if you don't count unlimited wishes, another chance, invisibility and unlimited socks. God, am I sick of hearing that old crap.

ADAM. Right. Well...

GNOME. But if they're not for you than that's all fair and good I suppose. So what is it then?

ADAM. My wife, Ruth. She's dying.

GNOME. And you want her to stop dying?

ADAM. Obviously, yes.

GNOME. Nothing obvious about that one. You'd be surprised what some men would wish upon their wives.

ADAM. Really?

GNOME. Oh yeah. Some of it's ok, some of it's pretty unpleasant and some of it's just goddamn kinky. Got to keep an open-mind in this game.

ADAM. Right.

GNOME. So that's the wish is it. The wife stops dying?

ADAM. No, no, that's not it.

GNOME. Are you trying to wind me up or are you just wasting my time?

ADAM. No, not at all.

GNOME. Cos you said that's what you wanted.

ADAM. Well yes I do but...

GNOME. This is getting us nowhere. Look, I can't help you if you don't tell me very clearly what it is you want.

ADAM. And I can't tell you if you don't shut up and give me a chance.

GNOME. Charming. Go on then, spit it out.

ADAM. I want all terminal diseases cured immediately and forever.

THE GNOME GRINS A CRUEL GRIN.

GNOME. Do you now? Well that's a beauty of a wish.

ADAM. Can you do it?

GNOME. Of course I can do it. Are you sure you want me to?

ADAM. I'm sure.

GNOME. You'd better be. There's no turning back. All terminal diseases cured immediately and forever - that what you want?

ADAM. (*LESS CERTAIN*) Yes. (*PAUSE*) I think...

GNOME. No more time for think sunshine, it's done.

ADAM. What, just like that?

GNOME. Just like that.

ADAM. Oh! I was expecting...

GNOME. What?

ADAM. ... Just something a bit more... sparkly!

GNOME. Yeah well, while you're dissing my lack of spectacle, your beloved wife has been cured.

ADAM. Ruth. Oh my god... She's cured? Really cured?

GNOME. What ever she was riddled with, she'll be riddle free now. You should go to her.

ADAM. Yes... yes, I should. Oh my god.

ADAM MOVES AWAY FROM THE GNOME WHO SLOWLY DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKNESS.

GNOME. No need to thank me. Oh you didn't. That's handy then.

THE GNOME EXITS. LIGHTS CHANGE TO PURPLE AND ADAM DROPS INTO HIS STRAITJACKET POSE.

ADAM. And she was. She started to get so much better. I was so scared in those early days that she might... might not... And I was so grateful. Grateful for the gnome and for a second chance. (*BITTER*) Course I didn't know then what he'd done. And he knew as well, he tricked me. I just wanted Ruth back... I remember when she came home again for the first time...

RUTH IS SEEN FAINTLY IN THE DARKNESS.

ADAM. I was afraid that she would be so weak at first but she seemed stronger, I never thought I'd see her like that again... not ever.

SLOW CHANGE TO STRAW LIGHTING

ADAM. Even when we realised what had happened it seemed worth it at first, just to have her back. Ruth...

SCENE 7

ADAM AND RUTH'S HOUSE.

*THE LIGHTS CHANGE AND WE SEE **RUTH**. **ADAM** STANDS AND MOVES QUICKLY TO SUPPORT HER.*

ADAM. Matt and Gemma were there to welcome her home...

***ADAM** PICKS UP A SMALL SUITCASE AND WALKS FROM SL TOWARDS CENTRE STAGE WITH **RUTH** BEHIND HIM, **MATT** AND **GEMMA** ENTER SR*

GEMMA. Hey, it's so good to see you (*HUGS **RUTH***). It must be good to be back home at last?

RUTH. Gemma! You look so well, look at your bump! Matt! Scruffy as ever...

MATT. Hey Gorgeous! Like the new hair -do...

ADAM & GEMMA. Matt! For God's sake....

***RUTH** IS LAUGHING AS SHE REACHES UP TO THE SCARF COVERING HER BALD HEAD*

ADAM. No, wait, that's not right.

*CAST FREEZE ON STAGE, LIGHTS GO DOWN, SPOT ON **ADAM** – PRESENT TIME AGAIN BRIEFLY*

ADAM. They weren't there when she first came home. It was just us. The two of us.

***MATT** AND **GEMMA** LEAVE THE DARKENED STAGE SL*

RUTH. (*UNFREEZES FROM THE POSE STILL LAUGHING*) Stop fussing! I can manage. I'm not an invalid you fool. Not yet anyway.

ADAM. (*TURNS TO LOOK AT HER, VISIBLY WINCING. EMBRACES HER, WHICH SHE RETURNS LOVINGLY*). I know, I know. I've just missed you being here so much. (*THEY KISS*).

RUTH. I've missed you too. You can't imagine. Shall we go upstairs...? (*RUTH IS PLAYFUL, SMILING, CLEARLY ENJOYING THE PHYSICAL CONTACT*).

ADAM. (*STUNNED*) What? You mean...?

RUTH. *(GIGGLING, RUNNING HER HANDS OVER ADAM)* Yup, I most certainly do. C'mon... *(TAKES ADAM'S HAND AND TRIES TO LEAD HIM OFF SR).*

ADAM. But... but ... you've only just come out of hospital. Aren't you tired or something? I don't want to hurt you Angel. I love you.

RUTH. I love you too. Let's go upstairs. C'mon.

ADAM. But...but...

RUTH SILENCES HIM WITH ANOTHER KISS

RUTH. Sshhh! I feel fine. Great in fact. Best I've felt in a very long time. So come on Big Boy. Let's go. To our bed. Now!

RUTH KISSES HIM AGAIN AND ADAM RESPONDS TENTATIVELY AT FIRST THEN MORE PASSIONATELY, THEY MURMUR TO EACH OTHER PULLING AT EACH OTHER'S CLOTHES – I LOVE YOU, I'VE MISSED YOU ETC AND MOVE SL DURING THE EMBRACE UNTIL...

MATT. (VO) Anybody home?

ADAM. Bollocks!

GEMMA. Cooo- eeee! Only us...

RUTH. Adam?

ADAM. I forgot, they said they would pop in tonight. Bugger! I'll get rid of them.

RUTH. No. It's fine. But keep it warm for me, eh?

RUTH IS SNIGGERING AS MATT ENTERS SR FOLLOWED BY GEMMA. RUTH AND ADAM ARE PULLING ON THEIR CLOTHES AND ADAM INDICATES TO RUTH THAT HE IS TRYING TO HIDE AN ERECTION. RUTH STANDS IN FRONT OF HIM, GRINNING AT MATT AND GEMMA

GEMMA. Hey, it's so good to see you *(HUGS RUTH)*. It must be good to be back home at last?

RUTH. Gemma! You look so well, look at your bump! *(HUGS MATT)* Matt! Scruffy as ever...

MATT. Hey Gorgeous! Like the new hair -do...

ADAM & GEMMA. Matt! For God's sake...

RUTH IS LAUGHING AS SHE REACHES UP TO THE SCARF COVERING HER BALD HEAD

RUTH. It's fine! It's a Matt thing!

MATT. You look like Bobby Charlton.

GEMMA. Matt, Christ's sake, know when to shut up!

MATT. What? I like Bobby Charlton; England's greatest ever striker!

GEMMA. For Christ's sake, know when to shut up!

MATT KEEPS WAITING FOR GEMMA TO BE ABOUT TO SPEAK TO RUTH BEFORE CUTTING IN EACH TIME

MATT. Over 100 international caps!

GEMMA. It's not appropriate.

MATT. The only England player to feature in 4 World Cup Finals.

GEMMA. I am going to smack you so hard!

ADAM. Manchester United's all-time top scorer.

MATT. Good point.

RUTH. Adam!

ADAM. What?

RUTH. (*RUFFLES MATT'S HAIR*) I can take it from Matt but...

GEMMA. Ooh, and the only England captain to lift the World Cup!

RUTH LOOKS AT GEMMA IN MOCK INDIGNATION. MATT AND ADAM ROLL THEIR EYES.

GEMMA. Sorry.

ADAM. That was Bobby Moore.

GEMMA. What?

MATT. Bobby Moore was the only England Captain to lift the World Cup you big spaz.

GEMMA. Shut up.

RUTH. Well thanks for your sympathy everyone, much appreciated.

ALL LAUGH. THE TALKING AND LAUGHING FADE WITH THE LIGHTS AND THE CAST SLOWLY FREEZE ON STAGE. SPOT ON ADAM.

ADAM. When they left, we made love. It was so good. Ruth seemed full of this boundless love and energy and she just wanted me to have it all. In my mind I can still feel her soft, frail body, smell her...love her.

RUTH MOVES INTO ADAMS ARMS AND NESTLES INTO HIM.

ADAM. I was so frightened that it wouldn't last... we were warned she could go into remission again anytime. But of course it wasn't remission...

STRAW LIGHTING. MATT AND GEMMA UN-FREEZE. RUTH MOVES TO GEMMA AND PUTS HER HAND ON THE BUMP.

RUTH. How are you feeling sweetheart?

GEMMA. Oh, you know: fat, lumpy, virtually immobile.

MATT. And just a little bit whingey, eh?

RUTH & GEMMA. Shut up Matt!

RUTH. Hey, it's not so bad though, eh? New life, right there. *(SADLY)* Lucky you.

GEMMA. *(SQUIRMING A LITTLE)* No, you're right. I wasn't complaining... sorry *(TAKES RUTH'S HAND AND SQUEEZES).*

RUTH. Don't apologise, it's ok. It's just...you know... would've been nice for me and Adam to have ...

GEMMA. Yeah well, you would have got the better end of the deal. This here is a mini-Matt. Did Adam tell you?

RUTH. Oh God, imagine! He'll pop out making embarrassing comments to the nurses.

GEMMA. Yeah: Put another stitch in there darlin', she'll never keep my dad happy with that.

GEMMA, RUTH AND ADAM LAUGH. MATT LOOKS A BIT HURT.

RUTH. Look at us, eh: fat and bald. These guys don't know how lucky they are! *(LAUGHS)*

PURPLE LIGHTING. MATT, GEMMA AND RUTH EXIT. ADAM SINKS INTO STRAITJACKET POSE. HE SMILES AT THE MEMORY.

ADAM. Ruth didn't want to attend the next appointment. Didn't want to be reminded that it may not last, but I made her. I made her go.

DR EVAN ENTERS STAGE LEFT, RUTH ENTERS STAGE RIGHT. MOTIONS FOR RUTH TO SIT WHILE ADAM ASSUMES HIS PLACE NEXT TO RUTH

DR EVAN. Mrs Collins... Ruth... I don't really know what to say...

ADAM PUTS HIS ARM PROTECTIVELY AROUND RUTH, SHE BRACES HERSELF – VISIBLY TAKING A DEEP BREATH, THERE IS A PAUSE.

DR EVAN. I don't think I've ever seen anything quite like this, and you aren't the only ones, happily. I am glad, though somewhat mystified, to tell you that you have made a full recovery. There is no trace of the cancer at all, no signs that there ever were cancerous cells in your body. We have checked and rechecked recent tests and ... well... nothing. You are a perfectly healthy young woman.

RUTH. What?

ADAM. Are you sure?

DR EVAN. As I say, we've checked and re-checked; there's no doubt about it. I have the results here. Look.

RUTH TAKES THE SHEAF OF PAPER OFFERED AND SCANS THE PAGES

RUTH. So... I was ill...

DR EVAN. Yes, very ill.

RUTH. And now I'm not.

DR EVAN. No.

RUTH. Just like that?

DR EVAN. So it seems.

RUTH. Seems?

DR EVAN. Is, Mrs Collins, is. Please understand that I have no idea how this has happened. However, you are completely cured.

ADAM. And it won't come back?

DR EVAN. I can't make you any promises Mr Collins but there's no reason to suppose that it will. As I said earlier, you aren't the only ones to have borne witness to this...miracle – for want of a better word. All six terminal cancer patients under my consultancy have also fully recovered. My colleagues in other departments have also seen their patients fully recover from Huntingdon's disease, HIV and advanced AIDS to mention a few. This wholesale recovery is also being seen to occur in hospitals around the country. We are utterly at loss to explain it. No doubt the media will have a field day, but no matter. Go home, enjoy the rest of your lives.

EXIT DR EVAN

BLACKOUT

SCENE 8

MATT AND GEMMA'S HOUSE. THE TWO COUPLES ARE ALREADY SEATED.

MATT. What? Just like that?

ADAM. That's what Ruth said.

RUTH. Gemma, I'm so excited. We could try for the baby now, now that I'm "a perfectly healthy young woman". You know, I felt so much better when I left hospital but I just put it down to being at home again, with Adam.

THERE IS AN AWKWARD PAUSE AS MATT AND GEMMA LOOK AT EACH OTHER

RUTH. What? What's the matter? Have I said something?

MATT. Nah, Sweetheart, you're alright. Just had a bit of strange news today, that's all.

ADAM. Is everything alright mate? What's the news?

GEMMA. As far as we know everything is alright, it's just that, it's just...

RUTH. Gem?

RUTH TAKES GEMMA'S HAND, GEMMA LOOKS AT MATT TO FINISH DELIVERING THE NEWS

MATT. Well, the baby. He hasn't grown in the last month or so. At all.

ADAM. What do you mean?

MATT. He hasn't grown. Nothing's changed. He's exactly 33 weeks old still according to the scan, even though he should be roughly 38 weeks old and he's due in two weeks.

ADAM. I don't understand. Is he alright? Healthy...alive?

MATT. Oh yeah, all that, just, not growing, not getting any older, sort of thing. Ah, it'll be okay I should think. Nothing to worry about, probably.

RUTH. Yeah, course he'll be fine. He's a Collins after all, eh?

RUTH IS STILL HOLDING GEMMA'S HAND AS GEMMA NODS SLOWLY, LOOKING ANXIOUS. LIGHTS FADE, SPOT ON ADAM AS OTHERS LEAVE THE STAGE.

SCENE 9

THE ASYLUM.

DR MARLOWE. I'm confused Adam; what has any of this got to do with why you killed your brother?

ADAM. What...? What do you mean?

DR MARLOWE. All this business with your wife and your brothers unborn son. I fear it's getting us nowhere and we're running out of time.

ADAM. But this is it. This is the reason. I'm trying to tell you what happened.

DR MARLOWE. Wishes and gnomes and babies that haven't grown?

ADAM. *(VERY AGITATED, ANGRY)* Yes, fucking wishes and gnomes and babies. That's what all this is about. Even if you don't fucking believe me, you could at least fucking listen to me, it's what you fucking wanted after all.

DR MARLOWE. You need to calm down Adam.

ADAM. *(GROWLS)* You wanted to know why what happened and I'm trying to fucking tell you.

DR MARLOWE. *(SHARPLY)* Adam!

ADAM STOPS SUDDENLY, BREATHES DEEPLY AND SINGS A LINE FROM THE QUEEN SONG SOFTLY TO HIMSELF.

ADAM. *Who wants to live forever?*

DR MARLOWE. *(SHARPLY)* Adam! Concentrate.

ADAM. Mm? Don't you see? I made the wish and it came true. No more terminal diseases... including the disease of old age. That's the problem, no one is aging. That's what happened to Matt's boy even in the womb. To all of us. We've just stopped getting any older from the moment the wish was granted. The bastard. He knew.

DR MARLOWE. Who knew? Matt?

ADAM. *(AS THOUGH HE IS SPEAKING TO A SMALL STUPID CHILD)* Of course not Matt, how would Matt have known? I'm talking about the gnome.

DR MARLOWE. And I'm talking about Matt. That's what we need to focus on here Adam - Matt. Please try to remember that I want to help you. *(HINT OF THREAT)* We are trying to keep you OUT of isolation.

ADAM. *(MAINTAINS THE EXASPERATED TONE OF SOMEONE EXPLAINING TO A SMALL CHILD)* But that's what I'm trying to tell you. Look, it's fairly straightforward: We were all cured. All of us. No more deadly diseases anywhere. No AIDS, no cancer, no cholera, nothing. No one could explain it. No one except me...

DR MARLOWE. I see.

ADAM. And no one is aging; the world is in stasis; babies will remain babies, grannies will remain grannies but life is still the fragile thing it's always been. People still starve – that's not a fatal disease is it? People still get run over by buses. Anything that isn't a fatal disease. *(THE TONE AND ATTITUDE DROP SLOWLY AND QUIETLY HERE)* Did you know that aging is a disease? I didn't. Not until... *(ADAM BEGINS TO ROCK AGAIN, WHIMPERING)*

DR MARLOWE. Go on.

ADAM. It was all over the news. The papers. Everything. You must know. You must do. And that was when the Rapturists sprung up. After the first few months where everyone thought it was... a miracle, then we realised what it meant. The Christians decided that it was the Rapture and they were all left behind.

DR MARLOWE. And what has this got to do with...

ADAM. *(IGNORES DR MARLOWE)* The chosen ones disappear off to God's kingdom in the sky and the sinners are left here on Earth. But they were just sick, evil freaks. The things they did in the name of religion. Poor Gemma...

DR MARLOWE. Adam, please try to stay focussed, we're running out of time. What happened next?

ADAM. Next? It was all going to be perfect. It all was perfect, for a while. My Ruth. Ruth... It's not fair.

DR MARLOWE. Tell me about Ruth.

ADAM. She was well again. My Ruth. Back where she belonged, with me. We started trying for a baby. After a few months it became obvious that it was never going to happen, but you know what? It didn't matter because I loved her more than enough. I loved her. But it was hard rebuilding our lives in a completely different world. I wanted everything to be just the way it had been and Ruth wanted that too, I think. But around us, everything else had changed.

SCENE 10

STRAW LIGHTING. RUTH RUSHES IN CLOSE TO TEARS AND GOES STRAIGHT TO ADAM WHO HOLDS HER.

ADAM. Ruth? Ruth? For God's sake...

RUTH. It's horrible... horrible...

ADAM CONTINUES TO HOLD RUTH AS SHE REGAINS SOME CONTROL.

ADAM. Are you alright? What's happened?

RUTH. It's those people, those... Rapturists.

ADAM. What have they done? Christ, are you ok? You're not hurt?

RUTH. No, I'm alright – what would they want with me! There was one their rallies on the high street, you know, all that bullshit they spout about releasing the innocents from the wombs of the so called sinners. It's insane.

ADAM. It's fucking murder, that's all it is. Doesn't matter what you dress it up as.

RUTH. Then they dragged this woman on the stage... she must have been nearly due when... (*CHOKES*). She was screaming and struggling and... the crowd turned nasty...

RUTH BREAKS OFF, TRAUMATISED BY THE MEMORY. ADAM CONTINUES TO HOLD HER.

RUTH. I ran. I just had to get away from there. That poor woman. I didn't even try to help her... I couldn't....

ADAM. It's not your fault, there was nothing you could have done.

RUTH. It's just so... I thought these people were supposed to be Christians! I thought one of the commandments was not to kill. Why are they doing this? Why?

RUTH STARTS TO CRY, BURYING HER HEAD IN ADAM'S SHOULDER. HE QUIETLY CONTINUES TO CONSOLE HER AS THE LIGHTS SLOWLY CROSS FADE TO PURPLE.

ADAM. It's alright angel, it's not your fault. It's not your fault...come on ...(*LEADS RUTH OFF, THEN BACKS ON TO THE STAGE AS THOUGH HE IS STILL TALKING TO HER*). It's all my fault.

ADAM SLUMPS DOWN IN A CORNER.

ADAM. It was all my fault.

DR MARLOWE. I thought you said it was all Matt's fault.

ADAM. Matt's fault... my fault... I... I don't know anymore.

DR MARLOWE. Whist transference is a common psychological reaction Adam, it is no justification for murder.

ADAM. I'm not saying that it is. Don't you understand, I'm just trying to tell you how completely fucked up everything got. I mean, it was all totally out of control. And if me and Ruth were feeling it, Christ... that's nothing compared to what it was doing to Matt and Gemma.

SCENE 11

MATT AND GEMMA'S HOUSE. GEMMA (SL) HAS JUST LOBBED A PLATE AT MATT (SR). MATT DUCKS AND BACKS OFF.

MATT. What the hell's wrong with you now? You moody cow.

GEMMA. If you don't know, you insensitive pig, then what's the point?

MATT. What am I? Fucking psychic now? Just tell me!

GEMMA. It's fairly obvious, I would have thought...

MATT. (*INTERRUPTING*) What is? What is obvious? Apart from the fact that you are a psycho! Chucking stuff at me like that. What's wrong with you? You've been bloody awful for months now. I have to watch what I say all the time in case you throw another one of your legendary strops. Fuck's sake. I asked you if you wanted to come down the pub for a drink. What's wrong with that?

GEMMA. (*VOICE BREAKING, STRUGGLING WITH TEARS*) You stupid bastard! How can I go for a drink with *this* still inside me? How can I even leave the house with those...people...murderers...out there? What if...? What if...? (*FINALLY BREAKS*). I daren't leave the house after dark. I daren't.

AFTER A BRIEF PAUSE, MATT GOES TO GEMMA AND TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS, MAKES COMFORTING NOISES

MATT. I'm sorry love. I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking about them. I just...was trying to keep everything...you know...normal.

MATT AND GEMMA FREEZE, ADAM INTERRUPTS.

ADAM. Just a minute...is this the way it happened? I can't quite... Or did Ruth say...

MATT. *(PUSHES AWAY FROM GEMMA)* I want a fucking normal life! I want to go out; I want you not to be such a bitch all the fucking time. Let's just be normal, remember normal, do you?!

GEMMA. Normal! Nothing's normal anymore. I've been nearly eight months pregnant for the past two bloody years! How is that normal? And now these bloody ...'Rapturists' ... marauding the streets. How is that normal?

MATT. Get rid of it then! Give us all a fucking break. It was your choice you dozy cow.

MATT AND GEMMA FREEZE

ADAM. No...no...no he wouldn't have done that... he probably tried to...

MATT. *(SOFTLY, CONCILIATORY)* Gem, you decided to keep the baby there. You were offered the choice sweetheart...

GEMMA. *(INTERRUPTING)* Choice! What choice? The first wave of babies they ... *(GESTURES A KNIFE SLITTING ACROSS THE ABDOMEN)* took out... died, the rest are still in incubators, never changing, never growing. And now they have to have armed guards to stop the Rapture people from killing them. What choice is that?

MATT. *(KEEPING HIS VOICE EVEN BUT WITH A HINT OF RESIGNATION)* I know sweetheart, I know, but...

GEMMA. *(INTERRUPTING)* What? What do you know? Do you know the fear of stepping into your own bloody garden, just in case... And...and I'm fat. Lumpy. Ugly. Useless.

MATT. Not to me.

GEMMA. What?

MATT. Not to me. I think you're amazing. I do.

GEMMA. Really?

MATT. Course I do. You're so brave. And you're pretty fit too. Even with the lump. I love you Gemma.

GEMMA. I love you too. I...I'm sorry, I just...

MATT. *(INTERRUPTING)* I know. *(EMBRACES HER AGAIN)* I'm sorry too. You know what? Why don't we just pop round to see Adam and Ruth. That'll cheer you up, eh?

GEMMA. I don't know. It's dark out. I ...I don't want to leave the house while it's dark.

MATT. Okay, well we could pop in tomorrow. I'll put the kettle on, shall I?

GEMMA. I'll give them a ring, let them know.

MATT. Let's get an early night. *(THEY KISS).*

BLACKOUT – EXEUNT

SCENE 12

*ADAM AND RUTH'S HOUSE, ADAM AND RUTH SITTING.
MATT RUSHES IN (SL) LOOKING WILD, SHOUTING.*

MATT. Help us! Oh God, please, somebody help us! *(FREEZES)*

ADAM. No wait... that's not how it happened... . It was quiet. Just me and Ruth.

*ADAM TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS, MATT BACKS QUIETLY
OFF STAGE.*

ADAM. C'mere Mrs Collins, you gorgeous little...

RUTH. *(TETCHY)* Gerroff! You maniac! I'm trying to get dressed.

ADAM. Why? There's no need. I can think of better things to do...

RUTH. Again?!

ADAM. What? It's Saturday, we've got the whole day...

RUTH. No we haven't. Oh didn't I tell you? Matt and Gemma are popping over for lunch...

ADAM. Bugger! What do I do with this? *(INDICATES HIS CROTCH)*

RUTH. Put it away for later! Look, Gemma's been having a bit of a hard time, what with the pregnancy and those bloody Rapture people on the loose. Matt thought it would cheer her up a bit.

ADAM. Fair enough. Want me to do anything?

RUTH. Yeah, you could clean some spuds – potato salad?

ADAM. *(KISSES RUTH)* All the glamorous jobs, hey?

*MOVES SR, AT WHICH POINT **MATT** BURSTS IN SL
LOOKING WILD, BLOOD ON HIS HANDS*

MATT. Help us! Oh God, please, somebody help us!

***RUTH** SCREAMS AT THE SIGHT OF THE BLOOD ON
MATT'S HANDS*

ADAM. Jesus! What? What is it?

MATT. It's Gemma. They got Gemma. Right outside. There. She won't stop bleeding. I don't know what to do. Call an ambulance for fuck's sake!

***MATT** RUSHES OFF SL, **RUTH** GOES TO FOLLOW HIM BUT
ADAM STOPS HER.*

ADAM. No! Don't go out there!

RUTH. Adam! Don't be stupid. Get out of the way. Call the ambulance.

EXITS SL

***ADAM** COMES DCS.*

ADAM. It was...so... The Rapturists had surrounded Matt and Gemma. They held him and made him watch – in broad daylight – whilst she screamed as they slashed open her swollen belly...

STANDS UL.

*ADAGIO FOR STRINGS BEGINS TO PLAY. PHYS THEATRE
FUNERAL, MEMBERS OF CAST ENTER SR IN BLACK
HOODS UPEND A CHAIR AND BRING DOWN THE CLOTH,
PLACING WREATHS AND FLOWERS ON THE TOP OF THE
CHAIR. **ADAM** AND **RUTH** ENTER SL AND SR. **MATT**
ENTERS AND STANDS IN THE CENTRE. GEMMA AND THE
BABY'S COFFIN ARE CARRIED ACROSS THE STAGE. **MATT**
CHOKES BACK A SOB AND EXITS. **RUTH** SIGNALS FOR
ADAM TO GO AFTER HIM BUT HE SHRUGS, UNSURE
WHAT TO DO. **RUTH** EXITS AFTER **MATT** AND IN
SILHOUETTE WE SEE THEM HUG AND THEN KISS.*

BLACK OUT

SCENE 12

***ADAM** RETURNS TO SPOT POSITION. HE IS CRYING.*

ADAM. It should have been me. I wish it had been me.

DR MARLOWE. It's not uncommon for survivors of a trauma to feel guilty. But you didn't kill Gemma, did you?

ADAM. What? No! They did. The Rapturists. I told you.

DR MARLOWE. Yes. Yes you did. You were all very close to this point?

ADAM. Yes.

DR MARLOWE. How did Gemma's death affect your relationships with each other?

ADAM. We were never the same again, how could we be? Everything changed.
(*BITTER LAUGH*) Nothing had changed for years and then suddenly overnight everything changed.

RUTH ENTERS, CLEARLY UPSET. SHE SEES ADAM AND TRIES TO EXIT QUICKLY BUT HE STOPS HER.

ADAM. You ok?

ADAM NOTICES RUTH IS UPSET.

ADAM. Ruth? What's wrong?

ADAM MOVES TOWARDS RUTH BUT SHE TURNS AWAY.

RUTH. (*SIGHS*) Nothing. It's...nothing.

ADAM. Had a bad day?

ADAM PUTS HIS ARMS AROUND RUTH FROM BEHIND. SHE DOESN'T REACT.

RUTH. It's nothing Adam, just leave it. Please.

ADAM. Have a hug. It's free...

ADAM TRIES TO HUG RUTH BUT SHE PULLS AWAY, ANGRY.

RUTH. For God's sake.

ADAM. What?

RUTH. I'm not in the mood, alright! Just leave it.

ADAM. I didn't mean it like that, I meant... Talk to me. Please.

RUTH GIVES A HOLLOW LAUGH.

RUTH. I don't think that'd be a very good idea.

ADAM. OK. Maybe we could nip down the Queens? A drink might take your mind off... whatever it's on.

RUTH TURNS TO FACE ADAM, ANGRY STILL.

RUTH. What's the point Adam, what's the bloody point?

ADAM. I don't...

RUTH. It used to be brilliant - get drunk and forget all your worries for a night. But now... now, you can get as drunk as you like; there isn't enough alcohol in the world to get away from all this.

RUTH GESTURES AROUND HER.

RUTH. Hell, the bloody stuff can't even kill you anymore unless you choke on your own vomit. *(LAUGHS)* It was so much more fun when it was bad for you.

ADAM. Ruth, what's happened? What's wrong?

RUTH. What's wrong!? This is wrong Adam. Everything. All of it. All wrong. Everyday for the last thirteen years I have seen Gemma... on the pavement. And your poor brother... God I can't bear it...tearing himself apart, growing more and more bitter. Nothing else has changed in the last fifteen years except... Gemma. The world turns, the sun rises, we do the same things, go to the same places, nothing changes. How can you ...just... carry on?

ADAM. Easy. I have you, Ruth. I love you.

RUTH STARTS TO CRY.

ADAM. I can handle eternity... anything ... if I have you.

RUTH. You bastard.

ADAM. What?

RUTH. You stupid fucking... How is that supposed to help?

ADAM. I... I don't...

RUTH. What's the point?

ADAM. The point? Of what?

RUTH. What's the point of eternity together? What exactly is it supposed to achieve? What's the point of going down the Queens, of going to work, of getting up each day? All those little things I really appreciated when I first got better - watching a sunset, the rain on my face, just walking in the fresh air - I am so tired of all of it. The fun and the laughter; that all lost it's shine years ago! The stupid things I've done just to feel...something. Anything. Other than this boredom, pointlessness. I'd never even thought about it - when you can't die what the hell is the point of being alive. I'd go back to being ill again just so I could feel something.

ADAM. Don't say that.

RUTH. It's true. I need to feel something good again Adam. I've tried so hard to feel something and everything just leaves me feeling worse.

ADAM. What do you mean?

RUTH. Worse about myself... about the world... it doesn't matter. Nothing does.

ADAM. And me? How do you feel about me Ruth?

RUTH. You? I don't... I don't know.

ADAM. Do you love me?

RUTH. Christ! I don't even know what that means anymore. I'm sorry, I really am. Just know that I never did anything to hurt you; that's not what it was about.

ADAM. What...?

RUTH. I've been trying to make sense of something that doesn't make sense to anyone and... I didn't know what to do. I just turned to... it doesn't matter. I can't keep doing it Adam, I just can't.

ADAM. I don't know what you mean.

RUTH. I loved you so much. Never forget that. You're a good man, a wonderful husband and you don't deserve this.

ADAM. Ruth, please...

RUTH MOVES TO ADAM AND TAKES HIS HAND.

RUTH. Look. You go down the Queens. I could do with some time alone. Here.

ADAM. I'd rather talk this through. Sort it out.

RUTH. Adam please. Go. Maybe things will be different when you get back.

ADAM. I don't want to go to the fucking Queens, I want to be with you. I need to talk to you; I don't know what's happening... I really don't like leaving you in this strange mood. Tell me you'll be alright...

RUTH. Adam please. I know what I need to do now and I need some time. Alone. Do this for me.

RUTH KISSES ADAM - A SAD FINAL KISS.

RUTH. I'm sorry about all of this. Please believe me. Just give me a bit of time alone.

***RUTH TURNS AND WALKS OFF WITHOUT LOOKING BACK.
ADAM LOOKS AFTER HER UNSURE WHAT TO DO. HE
DROPS TO HIS KNEES WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.
LIGHT CHANGE TO PURPLE.***

ADAM. I should've gone after her, I knew it at the time and then... The thing is, it made everything so pointless - all the pain and the suffering that everyone had gone through - that I'd put everyone through; it was all so that she'd be well. So that we could be together. But she didn't want me... not any more. I walked around for hours... I wanted to be with her but... I didn't know what to do. So I just wandered for hours like a fucking idiot while she...

ADAM BREAKS DOWN.

DR MARLOWE. What? What happened Adam?

ADAM. You know what happened.

DR MARLOWE. I've read reports, I've seen pictures but I don't know what happened Adam. Tell me.

ADAM. I came home. I was plucking up the courage to see Ruth, to face more of her anger. I thought she'd gone to bed. I went up to her. I was too late. Too late. I let her down. I made the wish. (*PAUSES, STRUGGLING*) I let her down so many times in the years after and then, right at the end, when I should have been there, I let her down one last time.

LONG PAUSE

ADAM. I tried everything I knew but... when the paramedics arrived they didn't even try to resuscitate her. The futility and fragility of it all...life. I only wanted one thing and everything I tried was for nothing.

A SILENCE.

DR MARLOWE. You're doing very well Adam.

ADAM. (*ECHOING MARLOWE, MOCKINGLY*) Doing very well?

DR MARLOWE. Do you remember what happened next?

*AFTER A MOMENT **ADAM** NODS RELUCTANTLY*

DR MARLOWE. Everything?

***ADAM** NODS AGAIN AND GULPS*

DR MARLOWE. Tell me Adam.

***ADAM** FALTERS A COUPLE OF TIMES.*

ADAM. I turned to Matt for help, for comfort.

DR MARLOWE. And?

ADAM. He was useless. He was always useless all his life. I should've realised then but... Maybe I did. Then there was the funeral.

DR MARLOWE. That's right Adam, the funeral. Tell me about the funeral.

*SLOW LIGHT CHANGE. **ADAM** STAYS CROUCHED. **MATT** ENTERS EQUALLY BOWED DOWN AND STAYS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE.*

ADAM. It was horrible. All the comforting words and stale platitudes! I didn't want or need any of it. I just wanted Ruth. Matt was even quieter that day - worse than me...

THE BROTHERS ARE SILENT FOR A SHORT TIME. NO EYE CONTACT.

ADAM. Matt? (NO ANSWER) Matt?

MATT. What?

ADAM. What do I do?

MATT. About what?

ADAM. How do I cope now? Without her?

MATT. How the hell should I know?

MATT** GLARES AT **ADAM

ADAM. When you lost Gemma...we lost Gemma...how?

***MATT** GLARES A MOMENT LONGER THEN STARTS TO LAUGH.*

ADAM. What?

MATT. Gemma fell out of love with me long before those murdering wankers got their hands on her. She hated me those last months. Eternity's a long time to have to spend with someone.

ADAM. What? That can't be true.

MATT. Can't it? When you make those vows on your wedding day you never think about forever do you. Guess you never really had to until this happened.

ADAM. Yeah.

MATT. I tried so hard to be the best I could for her, I really did.

ADAM. I know how you feel.

MATT. You? You haven't got a fucking clue. It's not just the pain, the loss it's... the guilt. I had to live with what I couldn't do for Gemma and in the end she just hated me. (*BITTER, IRONIC, SPEAKS IN A CHEESY AMERICAN ACCENT*) She stayed with me for the sake of the baby. Hah!

ADAM. I had no idea.

MATT. No, you really didn't. But still, at least I knew Gemma hated me. You... you, had no idea how Ruth felt.

ADAM. What?

MATT. She couldn't take it, just like Gemma. And she couldn't take forever with you. How could you not have known that? The woman you loved?

ADAM. Don't you dare. Not today.

MATT. Oh wake up! At Gemma's funeral... I was so lost, so confused. And so was Ruth.

RUTH ENTERS. SHE MOVES TO MATT. ADAM WATCHES FROZEN.

RUTH. How are you coping though? Really?

MATT. Really? (*LAUGHS BITTERLY*) Badly. Really, really badly. But you know the worst thing about it?

MATT TAKES RUTHS HAND.

MATT. I feel so relieved. Not having to think about what happened to our baby any more, not having to think about the life we should have had. Does that make me a bad person?

RUTH HUGS MATT.

RUTH. No. No, of course it doesn't. No one's thinking the way they used to. But you did your best, Matt. That's all anyone can do.

MATT. I guess.

RUTH. Don't blame yourself; it's ok to feel the way you do. Nothing's the same anymore. You wake up to the same day as yesterday and that's all you've got stretching on in front of you. Forever.

MATT. (*QUIETLY*) Forever

RUTH. How does anyone handle that?

MATT. How are you handling it?

RUTH. (*SADLY*) Really, really badly. Mostly I just try not to think about it.

THEY ARE SILENT FOR A MOMENT. MATT SLIPS AN ARM AROUND RUTH. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER. THEN THEY KISS. AS THE KISS BREAKS, RUTH EXITS.

ADAM. No. It's not true.

MATT. Yes. It. Is. She understood. And you still don't. Look at you.

ADAM. How could you? After everything that had happened... (*SHOUTS*) How could you?

MATT. It was just something we both needed. It was... it was like a release - it wasn't love or... or anything like that. It was just something we had to do to cope with...

ADAM. You fucking bastard. You knew how much I loved her, what she meant to me...

MATT. She loved you too. That's not what it was about, don't you see.

ADAM. What the fuck does that matter?

MATT. Everything's changed Adam, you can't judge what we did on old fashioned values, alright?

ADAM. And what the fuck are you doing telling me an hour after we fucking buried her!

MATT. I had to tell you; it's been a nightmare - the guilt, the...

ADAM. Poor you.

MATT. There's no need to be like this mate.

ADAM. Don't fucking call me mate - you aren't my mate. And what the fuck do you expect me to be like?

MATT. Look this isn't my fault.

ADAM. Isn't your fault? What, fucking my wife wasn't your fault?

MATT. No. It's your fault.

ADAM. What?

MATT. You and your stupid little wish. Do you remember Adam? You talked to us about your one wish and then suddenly all this started.

ADAM TURNS HIS BACK ON MATT, WALKING TO THE SIDE OF THE STAGE.

ADAM. Shut up.

MATT. What did you do? You managed to cause all this and for what?

ADAM. I said shut up!

MATT. So don't blame me - don't blame anyone. This is all your fault.

ADAM ADVANCES ON MATT. HE HAS A KNIFE IN HIS HAND.

ADAM. Shut up, for fucks sake.

MATT BACKS AWAY.

MATT. Don't be an idiot Adam, put that down.

MATT BACKS OFF STAGE. ADAM FOLLOWS HIM OFF. WE HEAR A MUTED CRY FROM MATT, A SHORT SILENCE AND THEN ANOTHER ONE. ADAM RE-ENTERS HOLDING THE NOW BLOODED KNIFE. HE DROPS TO HIS KNEES AND MOVES THE KNIFE TO HIS WRIST. HE BEGINS TO SHAKE. FOR A FEW SECONDS HE STAYS IN THAT POSE. THEN HE DROPS THE KNIFE AND SILENTLY WEEPS. DR MARLOWE AND DR EVAN ENTER AND STRAITJACKET HIM. THEY MOVE TO EITHER SIDE OF ADAM AND DISCUSS HIM AS THOUGH HE WASN'T THERE.

DR EVAN. Ah, patient 517, Collins, A, Mr. Your diagnosis Dr Marlowe?

DR MARLOWE. It is my clinical opinion that patient 517 is dangerously unbalanced and delusional.

ADAM. (SOFTLY) No.

DR MARLOWE. His motive for murder appears to be an affair between the victim, Collins, M, Mr, deceased and the patients wife, Collins, R, Mrs, deceased.

DR EVAN. I see.

ADAM. (WHIMPERS SOFTLY) It's not that simple.

DR MARLOWE. It is every bit that simple although whether the affair was real or imagined is hard to tell.

ADAM. But the rapture... the gnome... the wish...

DR EVAN LOOKS QUESTIONINGLY AT DR MARLOWE.

DR MARLOWE. As I say, patient 517 is delusional.

DR EVAN. The purpose of these sessions was to find out the motive for cold-blooded murder...

ADAM STARTS GETTING LOUDER WITH EACH LINE

ADAM. But those things... they're the whole point...

DR EVAN. ...and to ascertain whether or not...

ADAM. Didn't you listen to a fucking word I've said.

DR EVAN. ... patient 517 can be treated and rehabilitated back into society.

ADAM. (SHOUTS) Didn't you listen?

ADAM TURNS TO FACE DR MARLOWE FOR THE FIRST TIME AND REALISES IN SHOCK THAT HE IS LOOKING AT THE GNOME.

DR MARLOWE. In my opinion that is highly unlikely.

ADAM. (SHOCKED) You. No. That can't be... (TO DR EVAN) Just listen to me will you, listen to me...

DR MARLOWE. I think we've listened to enough from you.

DR EVAN. What is your recommendation Dr Marlowe?

ADAM. He tricked me... he's tricked all of us...

DR MARLOWE. The fact that patient 517 has chosen to waste my time in his last hour with me talking about gnomes and wishes...

DR EVAN. Gnomes and wishes?

ADAM. It's him, he was the one... the one who...

DR MARLOWE. I'm afraid so - delusion, as I said. The more important fact is that patient 517 shows no remorse whatsoever for the crime he has committed, no remorse whatsoever for his victim - no remorse in fact for anyone other than himself...

ADAM. That's not true.

DR MARLOWE. It is my recommendation that patient 517 be permanently placed in the secure wing...

ADAM. No!

DR MARLOWE. ... in solitary confinement...

ADAM. No, please, no!

DR MARLOWE. ...where he can pose no further threat to anyone.

ADAM. No... please.. not that... (*TO DR EVAN*) Please don't let him do this.

DR EVAN. Very well Dr Marlowe, I'll make the necessary arrangements.

DR MARLOWE. Thank you.

ADAM. No, please no.

DR EVAN EXITS.

ADAM. Why? Why are you doing this?

DR MARLOWE. Can't have you causing any more problems now can we Adam? Going round injuring innocent people.

ADAM. But not this, please, anything but this.

DR MARLOWE. This?

ADAM. Locking me up for ever. It's.. it's...

DR MARLOWE. Yes?

ADAM. Just kill me. Please.

DR MARLOWE. That what you want?

ADAM. Please.

DR MARLOWE. I would've thought by now, Adam, you would know better than to make unwise wishes.

DR MARLOWE SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY AND BEGINS TO MOVE TOWARDS THE EXIT.

ADAM. What do you want from me?

DR MARLOWE. I'd hoped to see some form of penitence by now but all I see is self pity. There's nothing more I want to see from you Adam. May you find some peace in time.

DR MARLOWE EXITS.

ADAM. No. Come back. Please. I'll say anything just don't...

THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

THE END