

# Pickaninny:

A full length play with an accompanying critical analysis

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## **Critical Analysis**

### **INTRODUCTION: CRITICAL ANALYSIS IN CONTEXT**

*Pickaninny* was submitted as my MPhil (B) research thesis in September 2011.

Following comments from both internal and external examiners, it was requested that the thesis be revised and resubmitted. Whilst parts of the Critical Analysis that follows remain the same, some parts have also been expanded, this in order to accommodate the: edits, corrections and subsequent further development of *Pickaninny*.

## ORIGIN AND INTENTION

At its core *Pickaninny* remains a play predominantly about identity, family and inheritance.

I wrote it with the intention of exploring what it means to be mixed race, and more specifically, what it means to have grown up in a white English household, yet physically have the skin colour, of what the outside world, often deems as 'Asian.' Furthermore, I wanted to present a character that has been denied any exposure to her non-white life and culture, so in essence she looks 'Asian', but feels 'white' and English. Essentially the questions at the centre of this play are: If one is 'mixed race' should one have to choose one identity, one race, to identify with? Why do people consider those who are non-white, to be non-English? Overall, what does it mean to be English in contemporary England?

The play is autobiographical in many ways, primarily because I am "mixed race," I have had little contact with my Mauritian father and have been raised by my white English mother, stepfather and maternal grandparents. This aspect of my identity was highlighted to me as I began to apply for schemes in the arts, that artistic organisations had curated exclusively for those considered to be from an under-represented group within British society, specifically ethnic minorities. For me this begged the question: if I applied to 'Asian scheme' was I making a fraudulent application? Firstly on the basis that I am only 'half' and secondly that I had been brought up as 'English' and just happened to look 'Asian'?

This began to raise more significant questions relating to my identity. Who was I? Was I white? Was I Asian? Was I English? Why do I look 'Asian' and yet feel 'white'? If I am all three how do I navigate myself in a society that insists on

compartmentalisation? It was during this reflection that I realised there was a larger narrative to investigate here, and the following confirmed the scale of the identity transformation about to envelop the U.K and 'U.K citizens:'

The mixed race population is the fastest growing ethnic group in the world.

'In the 2001 UK Census, six hundred and seventy four thousand people were identified as 'mixed'. Demographers have identified the "mixed" group as one of the fastest growing of all ethnic groups, estimating that by 2010 it will have increased by more than 40 per cent (or by more than 80 per cent by 2020) compared with 2001.' (Song, M. 2007)

For me this demonstrated the importance and relevance of these questions in the wider world, both sociologically and politically. Who is it that will be inheriting the earth? If one looks even more globally, one of the most powerful men in the world, American president Barack Obama, is of mixed race. However even his own presidential election campaign, could not escape the questioning of racial identity, of what it means to be black and not black at the very same time.

'Am I the only person in the world who's noticed that Barack Obama isn't black? He's bi-racial. I don't see why his election has prompted such an orgy of self-congratulation in America. How can the election of a light-skinned man of colour assuage the guilt white Americans feel about slavery? Slaves were black. Barack Obama isn't descended from slaves.' (Young, T. 2008)

These are experiences which I believe have had little examination, certainly in the theatre, as well as across other scripted media forms. However it should be noted that Adrian Piper, a performance artist whose work does explores similar areas, has

been an influence on *Pickaninny*, particularly in terms of visual imagery within the play.<sup>1</sup>

*East is East* by Ayub Khan-Din is perhaps the most famous play that explores such issues, but *East is East* is about the task of navigating the two cultural and racial worlds, whereas it is my intention that *Pickaninny* is more specifically focused on feeling white whilst looking Asian. Another play, *Scrape off the Black* by Tunde Ikoli, looks more closely from the perspective of one upbringing, but, like *East is East*, it is written by a man and concerns itself with mainly male protagonists. With this in mind, I hoped to focus the debate I wished to present, around mixed race women, who suffer the double oppression of both racism and sexism.

What's more over twenty years later, there is a new generation of mixed race English people, new stories and a multiplicity of experiences to be probed.

Additionally, throughout the play issues of, ageing, racism, and class, specifically through the working class characters, are discussed. Theatre has always had a middle class focus both by those who make it and those who watch it. In the last five years, certainly at The Royal Court, there appears to have been an unapologetic agenda to put more middle class work on stage:

'Whatever work cultural organisations do to extend their audiences, the reality is that theatre, like the visual arts or independent cinema, has largely been a middle-class pursuit. Is this a bad thing? The educated intelligentsia that make up a core audience at such events are often the key movers and

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<sup>1</sup> Discussed later within the 'Writing From Instinct' chapter

shakers in society. Many of them are educators, work in the media or shape public policy.’ (Cooke, D. 2007)

Likewise playwright Ella Hickson appeared to share Dominic Cooke’s contention:

‘About 60% of this country is middle class – we shouldn’t be afraid of trying to reflect that on stage.’ (Hickson, E. 2009)

This trend is something I feel deeply uneasy about, and through writing *Pickaninny* I intended to address.

At the same time, in wider society there has been a dehumanisation of the working classes, indeed in ‘Chavs, the Demonization of the Working Class.’ Owen Jones discusses the way in which they have been pigeonholed as ‘Chavs.’

‘The British working class has become an object of fear and ridicule. From Little Britain’s Vicky Pollard to the demonization of Jade Goodey, media and politicians alike dismiss as feckless, criminalized and ignorant a vast underprivileged swathe of society that has become stereotyped by one hate-filled word: chavs.’ (Jones, O. 2011)

The characters in my play I hope represent a part of society that I feel has been erased and/or demonized in modern media and literature. Often, even when the plays themselves are about the ‘working class’, they are written by middle class writers and thus the story and the characters are viewed through a middle class prism. I want to challenge this situation and place an authentic working class voice back on the British stage.



Humour has been an important tool for me in this play, and the public readings of the play have enabled me to see its power in drawing in, and holding an audience.

However in writing the play it has also made me aware that there is a danger here of exposing working class people to patronisation from the middle classes. Following recommendations from the examiners in particular, this is something I have conscientiously tried to work against. The specific details and outcomes of this are discussed in the chapter relating to 'Dialogue, Language and Exposition.'

Overall I aim for *Pickaninny* to offer a new story, in relation to both the working class identity and the mixed race identity.

'In writing this play you are putting an incredible pressure on the familiar world of working class drama. White working class drama and a story about other ethnic minorities,' their stories and struggles, never seem to be the same story and it has been very hard to build a bridge between that and the other stories of modern Britain. However, because of your unique situation and experiences, you are flipping that on its head.' (Waters, S. 2011)

## WRITING FROM INSTINCT

One of the first things that I needed to conquer within my own writing practice was to banish my insecurities about the writing not being good enough. In my first attempts to write this play I struggled to write anything, all I did was think and contemplate the endless story possibilities, I needed to find a way of working that remedied this. This came about through drawing on, and trusting, my instincts, knowing that once I had something down, I could then mould and shape this into something more substantial. This aspect of writing was discussed in depth, by Lin Coghlan during a seminar:

‘If you are struggling to write anything, work with the first thing that comes in to your head, it’s very useful for us as writers to be encouraged not to think too hard, great art needs to be both chaotic and ordered. Give yourself permission to be chaotic and creative and imaginative. You need to play, you need to let go, be imaginative – safe in the knowledge that you will know how to craft this material into a play, when you do your crafting session. It is through the chaos that you find the stuff that will be truly imaginative and unique.’ (Coghlan, L. 2010)

Taking on board Coghlan’s comments I combined this with an influence from the performance and visual arts, an art form where many artists again work in the first instance from a place of instinct. I was particularly drawn to the principles of surrealism:

‘Style of art and literature developed principally in the 20th century, stressing the subconscious or non-rational significance of imagery arrived at by automatism’ (Stephens, A. 1998)

The work of artist Adrian Piper was also of particular influence here, principally because her work explored the complexities of being mixed race also. In the late 1980's Piper executed a number of pieces in social situations, most interesting to me was: *My Calling Card #1* (1986); in which having heard a racist remark she handed the perpetrator a card saying:

"Dear Friend. I am black. I am sure you did not realize this when you made/laughed at/agreed with that racist remark." (Piper, A. 1986)

In an almost reversal to my own situation, Piper considers herself black, whilst having light skin. Like Piper I wanted to question the idea that 'race [and therefore identity] is visibly marked on the skin' (Phelan 1993: 8) I too felt this to be a misguided and dangerous thought.

Therefore, as part of my writing process I created visual art works that helped to express elements, ideas and themes that I was finding it difficult to articulate through character and dialogue alone; and so I began to find a visual language as a way to express the core questions I had about being mixed race. The most fruitful examples of the images I made, and indeed those that have been carried through and now interwoven within the dialogue and action of the play include: when Zorah talks of there being an Asian in a hijab hanging from her rib cage. This as a way of expressing, what it feels like to have a part of your identity suppressed, but still, somewhere intrinsically present within you. (Image One<sup>2</sup>) Additionally, image two<sup>3</sup>, helped me to discover the notion of being a 'pure human,' in essence skinless and therefore without racial and superficial prejudice based on skin colour. This image is

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix

now core to the lasting image of the play and is indeed where we find Zorah at the end of the play. It is my intention that this image in particular begs the wider question of: is a 'skinless society' ever possible? As to me, skin colour in terms of the mixed race identity is utterly deceptive in defining what a person's true identity is.

## STORY

Clarifying the images in terms of story meaning came much later to me in the process of writing. Whilst working from my instinct had unlocked a visual language for the play, at the earlier stages it left me with a first draft with little except poetic imagery.

‘What is this play? I enjoy it moment to moment, I am persuaded by it, but I am not sure how I am meant to respond to it? You need to work out what it all amounts to. What are you trying to say? What is the story you are seeking to tell?’ (Waters, S. 2011)

Having discussed this draft with Steve Waters, it was apparent that what I had written was essentially a brainstorm, a sketch of all the things I wanted to explore in the play. My task now was to look at how I might structure these images into something satisfying for an audience.

To assist me with this I looked particularly at the theory of screenwriter Robert McKee and researched the basic principles of a ‘story.’ ‘A story is a series of acts that build to a last act climax or story climax which brings about absolute and irreversible change.’ (1997, p. 42)

It became clear to me that one of the fundamentals of storytelling is therefore intrinsically linked to change, audiences’ watch characters attempt to move from one state to another, in other words, what was necessary for my story, was to take my characters on a journey.

With specific reference to managing the structure of the images, the following question was put to me:

‘Are you seeking stylisation without earning it? The stylisation risks being frustrating in that context because...you want to know why you’ve adopted that approach and whether it’s just what comes out of your unconscious or whether there is more conscious purpose behind it.’ (Waters, S. 2011)

I needed to create a build in the story: a chance to get to know the characters and empathise with them, before I took them to a non-naturalistic environment.

With this in mind, I went back and looked in detail at each of my characters. It was my understanding that one of the fundamental principles of characters is to pursue objectives in the face of obstacles: characters often have some form of project to complete in the story, which in turn, defines both the story and the plot. As David Edgar highlights ‘What characters do is pursue objectives, or, as Chekhov said: tell me what you want, and I’ll tell you who you are.’ (Edgar, 2009, p.48) These desires can of course change and sometimes the character is not even consciously aware of what s/he desires throughout the play, in the end it is still these desires that will bring about that ‘absolute or irreversible change’ necessary for any story. ‘A character comes to life the moment we glimpse a clear understanding of his desire.’ (McKee, 1997, p.376) Additionally, as discussed during the seminar on objectives ‘If characters are not pursuing objectives, in scenes, it’s not a scene; it’s a conversation.’ (Waters, S. 2010) and therefore arguably the story of the play, the journey, is not driving forward, but instead meandering, ultimately perhaps resulting in the audience losing interest.

In relation to the stage imagery discussion here, a chief concern of the examiners that has subsequently been addressed concerned the symbolism within the play, and the resulting shift into more surreal and non-naturalistic territory. The symbolism

within the draft submitted was still unfortunately deemed 'crude' and inarticulate: 'Is this really saying anything coherent to the audience?' (Crowe, B. 2011) Whilst the move into surrealism prompted: 'The metaphor of the play is not yet realised through the action [and] appears here in very raw form.' (Wood, S. 2011) In order to therefore remedy these concerns I worked towards intrinsically embedding both the fox and Zorah's peeling off of her skin into the core of the play, following tutor Fraser Grace's recommendations: '[The] symbolism needs some meaningful action in the real world, meaningful impact, which comes full circle.' (Grace, F. 2012) In relation to Zorah's peeling off of her skin, I now present Zorah as having eczema, what this in turn allows is multifaceted. Firstly, eczema is an irritable skin condition that intensifies when someone is under stress. 'Research has pointed out that anxiety is likely to potentiate eczema and make it much worse.' (Rivera, R. 2011) As the pressure mounts on Zorah it gives a very real and physical reason as to why Zorah would want to remove her skin, as well as foregrounding the wider metaphor of the play. What's more, eczema is soothed by ice, 'which has a numbing effect on sore skin.' (Lim, E.2007) Therefore when Joan hands Zorah some snow/ice in the final moments of the play, as she has been trying to do throughout earlier parts of the play, I intend this to be symbolic of Zorah's dependence on her grandparents and inability to leave them. In terms of the fox, likewise this image is plotted earlier within the play with George and Joan discussing the need to get rid of the/a fox in a real sense. The fox is a dangerous beast as Joan's line demonstrates:

*Joan: Good to get rid, get rid of it finally. Scavenging, stealing, evil things they are, vermin, bastards, filthy scum of the universe. (Act 1, Sc.1, p.41)*

What's more, the fox is now more explicitly recognised to be a metaphor for the way in which George and Joan view Zorah's father. I hope to have achieved this by matching George's use of language and description of how he injured both the fox and Zorah's father.



## CHARACTER AND OBJECTIVES

In the second draft I examined my characters in detail and, most importantly their objectives. As discussed during Lin Coghlan's seminar:

'You start from character and through asking the right questions about that character, the plot emerges organically and naturally from the character, from what they want and from what's driving them. You should never have to ask yourself what do I need to happen next, as you are never applying events on top of them, they're giving you what needs to happen next, because they are driven by inner wants and needs.'

Furthermore, Coghlan also presents that without a clear tangible objective, the character cannot grow and therefore the fundamental principle of story cannot be achieved, that of change.

'The way you know who the character is, is through what they do. There is something that needs to be done and while that character is trying to do it, we get to know who they are and what's at stake. If we don't know what they want or where they're going, we can't get behind them' (Coghlan, L. 2010)

Using both conscious and subconscious writing techniques, I plotted, looking at each character's journeys, what they want and what they need. I wanted to make sure that each character had his/her own journey.

As I built up each of their worlds, together with a list of their idiosyncrasies, they became easier to write, and a potential journey began to emerge for each of them. I also applied everyday life situations to my character and analysed how they would react, what would they do, how they would behave. One of the strangest examples

was 'Where would my character cut their toe nails and why?' This question in particular unlocked George for me, a man with a dubious sense of hygiene, and always looking for a quick fix. This sequence subsequently found a form in the play. During the playwrights' workshop one actor even noted: 'When you see him cut his toenails at the kitchen table, you know exactly who he is.' (Patel, B. 2011)

She also commented on how:

'When you see them do such strange things, or follow through on their patterns of behaviour, these details of their lives and the fact that you see them make mistakes, makes them human, relatable and real.' (Patel, B. 2011)

I also wrote a monologue for each character and through them I discovered the secrets of the characters: the way in which George uses joviality to hide his simmering grief, the fact that he beat up Zorah's father in a racist attack; I also found Joan's fearfulness of change and indeed of the world, and how this reinforces her need to keep Zorah safe; and of course Zorah's secret, to make contact with her father. Once I established each character's core secrets, I thought about: 'What would be the worst possible thing that could happen to each of these characters' a suggestion put to me by Steve Waters, on my quest for a coherent story journey.

In the context of what I had already unearthed for George, I believed that this would be his granddaughter thinking him a racist monster. For Joan, I found that for her granddaughter to go and see her father was, in Joan's mind, risking her safety and therefore a deep fear. Whilst for Zorah, her grandparents dying, thinking badly of her and her thinking badly of them, essentially without the opportunity for a truth and reconciliation moment, would be her worst option.

All of these character elements were then shaped together in order to form the wider journey of the play as a whole and consequently each character's objectives. In its most simplistic form it is: Zorah: wanting to see her real father and Joan and George not wanting her to do this. The task then was to find the most compelling obstacles which I could put in her way, on the quest to achieve this objective and likewise what obstacles Zorah could present to Joan and George.

Taking into account the new knowledge I had of each character, I felt confident in approaching my second draft. I would work from the basic premise that Zorah was coming home to confront her grandparents with what she had learnt from her father, about her early life, and to discover what possible lies and secrets Joan and George have withheld from her.

However as a result of discussions with Steve Waters and the actors who had performed the second draft of the play, I discovered that there were problems with Zorah's character. Worryingly, nobody seemed to like, or empathise with her.

'I don't like the protagonist, she comes in at the end of the debate....with no intent to change or persuade, that means all you've got is confrontation. She has come home with her mind already settled.' (Waters, S.2011)

I realised that Zorah's immediate telling of her secret and the way in which she was confrontational towards her grandparents was a mistake. It was flawed, in two ways, as it didn't serve the story nor was it true to the character I had intended to create. I looked back at character development and what I had imagined her history to be, I realised that this is a character that would still have compassion for her grandparents, after all they were the ones that raised her. This new knowledge from her father is not something that sits easily with her, as it throws who she thought her father was in

to question and indeed who she thought her grandparents were, by the fact that she knows they might not have been telling the whole truth. Is this her life or is it somebody else making it up? Why would they do that?

Also it was put to me by another actor that she would be a much more sympathetic and believable character if: 'You saw her torn between the two, that's the tragedy, she doesn't know whose side she is on, both in terms of the politics of this family and the racial politics of the wider world.' (Dowse, J. 2011)

In terms of story, I also realised that the more interesting journey involved showing and building to how she would find the courage to face the inevitable confrontation that would follow by revealing what her father had told her.

Upon reading feedback from the examiners and Grace, it was apparent however that there were still issues to be addressed in the final draft. This, specifically in relation to Zorah's passivity and in action, something fatal for a protagonist.

'The play takes a long time to establish its character even after Zorah has entered. In the early stages, this role is rather too passive. Only when she begins to beg money does the play shift gear - Zorah becoming immediately more morally ambiguous, more active and therefore, interesting.' (Grace, F. 2012)

In order to address this issue I employed a number of devices, namely: Zorah's impending arrival, even before she is on stage is pivotal to George and Joan's action from the start. Furthermore, as the scene continues it is revealed that George's earlier actions (hiding of the phone charger) are a result of him wanting to halt her visit. When Zorah does eventually arrive, the first thing she does is begin to hunt for

something, later discovered to be her birth certificate, in this sense she is immediately active. Whilst she naturally at the start tries to conceal her objective, she then later, actively, in terms of the crafting of the play, disguises her need to find the certificate, despite being unsuccessful and foiled by Joan. Additionally by raising the stakes for Zorah, in that she is pregnant, I believe this also enabled me to make her more powerful and determined to achieve her objective. This in turn streamlined her desire and gave both her character and the play a clear central purpose and aim.

Specifically in relation to scene three, the examiners and Grace both considered George's collapse to be a *deus ex machina*: 'The jump-shift in the action of the play to George's death is out of suit with the pace of development in the rest of the play.' (Grace, F. 2012) I hope to have tackled this flaw however by George's collapse being a direct result of Zorah pursuing her objective. When she leaves George and Joan. having found her birth certificate, George and Joan are petrified of what harm might come to their granddaughter and naturally want to follow and stop her.

George's collapse therefore comes to symbolise the futility of Zorah's quest, that she can only press on by hurting and destroying the people she loves. This in turn leads her to see the situation as hopeless. Additionally, I hope by George's collapse now being an onstage event, this also reinforces that the collapse occurs as a result of him looking for Zorah. In essence, it again is a result, albeit negative, of Zorah trying to achieve her ultimate goal.

Overall, it is now Zorah's objective and therefore her actions that drive the play as a whole.

## DIALOGUE, LANGUAGE AND EXPOSITION

Once I had a clear indication of who the characters were and what journey I was going to be taking them on, writing dialogue became a much easier process for me.

However, in writing the play there were still some key issues raised in particular with regard to the issue of exposition. Throughout my writing experience I have always struggled with the negotiation of exposition and was eager to subscribe to the David Mamet school of thought:

‘[People think writers] are employed to communicate information...but note the audience will not tune into watch information...the audience will only tune in and stay tuned into watch drama...the job of the dramatist is to make the audience wonder what happens next. Not to explain to them what just happened, or to \*suggest\* to them what happens next.’ (Mamet, D. 2005)

However whilst on a theoretical level I could fully appreciate Mamet’s contention, when analysing the third draft of *Pickaninny*, scenes felt momentary. My fear of exposition meant that I censored characters from revealing too much about themselves and their pasts, taking perhaps a little too literally Mamet and playwright Leo Butler’s dialogue writing principles:

‘It’s a living thing you are creating, not just words on a page. Dialogue isn’t just conversation – its action. In every single line of dialogue is an action or a transaction.’ (Butler, L. 2010)

By subscribing to this theory too rigidly I found it did not help the story function well, something echoed when I discussed the play with Steve Waters:

‘George and Joan exchange short and sharp strategic blows, which are very theatrical, but after a time it can be unrevealing. They need to have the space to give more away, give way to their fears, to revelation.’ (Waters, S. 2011)

Therefore in order to address this, I went back through the play and looked at ways they might, particularly in the first act, reveal more, and where such revelation will achieve that balance of pushing the story forward, whilst not giving too much away and boring my audience. One of the most successful methods I found was revealing information through a character’s action, finding ways in which it was both true to the character and true to the situation that the character would reveal a piece of information. A successful example of this I believe is:

*Joan pulls out from a plastic Asda bag some very extravagant crackers*

*Joan: They were a tenner, but I got them for two quid. They start selling off stuff cheap these days, even before Christmas. She loves crackers though doesn't she? And look at the prizes - calculator, bottle opener, toe nail clippers, she can take them all back to university with her can't she? It'll all come in handy, won't it? Where is it then? Did you put it in the lounge for me?*  
(Act 1, Sc.1, p. 38)

Here, I am true to Joan’s character, she is a character that would delight in such things as crackers. It also reveals information that: she is not wealthy, or at least has a keen eye for a bargain; that someone is coming to visit them; a she; that she attends university, and perhaps even a hint that this person is of some great importance to Joan. The value of multi-functioning dialogue is underlined by Eric Bentley:

‘An Ibsenite sentence often performs four or five functions at once. It sheds light on the character speaking, on the character to, on the character spoken about; it furthers plot; it functions ironically in conveying to the audience a

meaning different from that conveyed to the characters.’ (Bentley, E 1965, p. 304)

A further issue raised in the third draft relating to dialogue and language when writing *Pickaninny* concerned ensuring that what each character said, the language they used, was true and representative of both their character as a whole and that their lines were placed correctly within the story arch. This was a problem I faced particularly with Zorah’s character, especially when she came to confront her grandparents about their parenting of her and her mother:

*Zorah: You want to keep everyone little don't you? Everyone in your little family. It's all about you. You don't let people grow up. You've got some twisted parent version of Peter Pan syndrome. (Act 2, Sc.1 p.12 dr.3)*

When reading the text with actors during the playwrights workshop, this came across as very contrived and therefore made her quite manipulative and unsympathetic, it also begged plausibility, as Steve Waters suggests in his book ‘The Secret Life of Plays:

‘Audiences naturally distrust characters who are too proficient in language; all too often articulacy in plays is seen as glibness. Largely this stems from our sense that points of intensity and emotion the intellect gives way to something more primary; if the language does not mirror this, the moment rings false.’  
(Waters, S. 2010 p.122)

Moreover, Zorah’s line was coming too early in the action and as mentioned previously, was too vicious an attack. During the playwrights workshop one actor even noted:



‘She’s too whiny and coming across as too much of a victim. She blames them too easily.’ (Dowse, J. 2011)

In considering this I came to the conclusion that it might be a much more interesting play and indeed more truthful play, if George and Joan were both right and wrong and it wasn’t just Zorah that carried the whole moral weight of the play. I took influence here from Greek tragedy and in particular *Orestes* by Euripides. I recognised how powerful it is because he doesn’t want to kill, but feels a sense of fate driving him towards it, he’s both in the right and in the wrong at the same time so it’s a very painful and genially tragic thing. I felt this would be a powerful state of being for my characters also.

Indeed, if one looks at the situation logically how can any of the characters be classified as either right or wrong? George and Joan are driven by fear and ignorance, which causes them to be racist, is this really their fault, or is it part of their experience and their generation? In the case of Zorah, she has the right to see her real father, but also burdens a huge debt to her grandparents.

Following this analysis I significantly looked at re-configuring the structure of the whole play, redesigning the revelation of information and looked at the placing of confrontation successfully in the timeline of the play.

As I worked towards delivering a revised draft for the examiners however, another key issue was raised in relation to exposition. Whilst I thought I had found the balance between revelation and exposition, this was clearly not the case. ‘We spend far too much time on matters that are of little consequence, and too little time engaging the themes and subtext with on stage action.’ (Woods, S. 2011) In essence this meant removing all scenes; dialogue and action that did not advance the plot,

and in turn what this achieved had multiple functions in addressing the other issues of the text. Notably, as discussed in the previous chapter Zorah and her objective became the central driving force of the story. As a result of this, the story in its entirety, i.e Zorah wanting to visit her father and embrace the other half of her identity, was no longer veiled for too long and instead the story as a whole, I hope, intrigues and sustains the audience's attention from the off. Additionally, by editing in this way, it has allowed Zorah to be much more active, no longer is she simply: 'Required only to observe and giggle at the passage of insults between George and Joan' (Grace, F. 2012)

In terms of Joan and George's language this was considered to be a significant flaw: 'Put downs, insults and low level jokes are sustained for too long.' (Woods, S. 2011) and moreover:

'George and Joan have been so unremittingly racist about the "Pakis" that the possible impact of their reaction to Zorah travelling to Pakistan is greatly lessened because they are too crude in their response to sustain an intelligent audience's dramatic interest.' (Crowe, B. 2011)

Not only did this language and dialogue displace genuine dramatic action as discussed previously, but it also made the characters and their argument easily dismissible. Therefore I set about restraining a lot of their racism and scatology, when it was necessary to use such language, I plotted it with rigour, looking closely at where it might be used to greater dramatic effect. This was also achieved using the following methods: I have made it much clearer that George and Joan aren't thinking of Zorah at all as a mixed race person, and therefore as someone who might be offended by their views. In fact, they would be heartbroken to think that Zorah

might include herself in that term – to them she isn't a 'Paki' at all. Furthermore, I have expanded on the fact that George and Joan's racism isn't just a case of being mean spirited, instead it is discovered to have risen from an excessive desire to protect Zorah, combined with ignorance, fear of the unknown, cultural isolation, lack of opportunity and overall shrunken world view. In essence, the things which Zorah has been able to acquire. Finally, by establishing that Zorah's father is virtually the only Pakistani with whom George and Joan have had any real acquaintance, their racism now also comes from the specific. In this sense: Zorah's father was a bad person and therefore all Pakistanis (or South Asian looking people) are likely to be bad people. As a result I trust that they are much more sympathetic people now and that this in turn makes the play's central dilemma more challenging and intelligent.

## SETTING, TIME AND SHIFT OF SETTING

The setting of the play is predominantly based in the family home. The house represents both Zorah's past and home, as well as being the natural setting for Joan and George. This gives the play a milieu which is a place of secrets, the house holds all the memories that have been created over the years, many of them containing lies, the physical environment is imbued with these, thus reinforcing their strength. Examining the house in detail also assisted me with the story: a key example of this is when George tells Zorah to smell the wall for traces of the sick that was there, in his memory of the past. It is as if the past is seeping through the walls, and George and Joan use this as a weapon to dissuade Zorah from visiting her father. Thus, therefore, the story of the house informs the characters and vice versa.

I used Christmas as the time to set the play because it is a time of ritual, and a ritual which the audience is familiar with. It was suggested at one point by Stephanie Dale that I should 'use the Christmas ritual to assist with structure', (Dale, S. 2011) and in fact it proved useful as it gave a fixed chronology to the play. It provides a set of tasks which Joan, in particular, is painstakingly trying to fulfil: the presents which never get opened, and the dinner which is ruined, thus making her surface objectives clear. Zorah's secret then totally disrupts this Christmas ritual, which is so fundamental to Joan, and to a lesser degree to George. Christmas also represents a time of family continuity and stability, Zorah's news threatens this, rendering George and Joan's anxiety about change evident and ultimately embodying the wider concerns of the play.

The move into the outside and the snow in the final scene is for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, the snow, I intend to work as a metaphor for the way in which

Zorah's Asian identity has been whited out. The play ends with Zorah being covered by white snow, which she tries to remove, but is not able to do so. This is intended to represent how in her relationship with her grandparents they will always see her as white; this is never going to change. Another reason why it is outside is because it is now in England, physically, and Joan's attempt to cover Zorah's skin with the very earth of England provided a powerful metaphor for what her grandparents have done her entire life. It also provided me with a different way of examining the issues, like in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the shift is to the unconscious, a magical, other world. The problems of the play are insoluble and moving to a more magical world highlights this – it is impossible to be skinless – and whilst regrettable, it is my contention that if you're mixed race you have to choose one identity or another, never can you be truly mixed race in, certainly in societal terms.

What's more, whilst not a specific request of the examiners, however something that has nonetheless aided the solving of their other recommendations is that of developing the socio-geographical world of the play. Through doing so I believe many issues raised by the examiners have been resolved, chiefly I believe the shift into the snow and subsequently the role of Epsom Downs as a whole has been greatly enhanced. Taking note from Paul Ashton's book: 'The Calling Card Script: A Writer's Toolbox for Stage, Screen and Radio.'

'Your story should have a sense of inevitability about where it ends up – but the surprise in how we get there is what will make it work rather than fail'  
(Ashton, 2011, p.145)

As well as observing comments from Steve Waters:

'I think the trouble is that too many of these ideas arrive in the last act and they need setting up, or there needs to be a plot element in which they appear' (Waters, S. 2011)

Through the following changes: starting the play in the snow with the fox, by having stage directions that depict Epsom Downs is within close proximity and also through dialogue, namely Joan's description of her arduous journey across the Downs, I believe it no longer seems out of kilter with the rest of the play, that the characters share their last moments on Epsom Downs. Additionally the role of Epsom Downs as a place of fear and danger in the eyes of George and Joan is symbolic of their fearful world image. On a practical level Zorah runs across the Downs in order to get the train station, however on a metaphorical level, I hope this image is communicating that Zorah is attempting to embrace the fearsome fallacies that have shaped her entire life.

## STAGE-ABILITY

A major concern for examiner Brian Crowe related to: '[Elements of the text would be] difficult to stage with any impact.' (Crowe, B. 2011) Following consultation with Grace:

'A playwright *does* have to consider how susceptible to staging a sequence of action is. Can the author imagine the conventions (conventions at least connected to the terms of engagement set in the rest of the drama) via which the closing sequence might be realised?' (Grace, F. 2012)

It became apparent that the theatrical elements that I had placed within *Pickaninny*, particularly those of a more demanding nature, as a playwright, I had to take responsibility for. This therefore meant considering with precision, not just what they represented, but also how they might be realised in production. Whilst I have not put this in the text itself, as this can by some be deemed as too controlling from a director/reader perspective, what therefore follows in this Critical Analysis is an account of how such elements might be resolved in context of production.

In terms of the snow that appears in scene three, I don't think it necessary for the stage directions to be fully realised, this in the sense of a full blown snow storm. I hope to have instead achieved the illusion of snow, and therefore the freezing conditions in which the characters find themselves in, by editing characters dialogue and rhythms. In essence, the full stops that now feature in the characters dialogue denote breathlessness caused by the sub-zero temperature.

With specific reference to:

*Snow falls heavier and heavier. Zorah's face and body is now completely covered in white snow. She gently tries to remove pieces of the snow, but it proves an impossible task, as more and more snow falls.*

I believe this is the only moment simulated snow would be required and could be achieved by using 'Plastic snow' 'Plastic snow... produce[s] three dimensional flakes that create a heavier snowfall and can be used for blizzards.' (Crownshaw, D. 2011) This type of snow I also suggest could be used when Joan and Zorah throw snowballs at the fox.

In terms of Zorah removing the skin from her face and torso, I believe this might be achieved through the use of liquid latex. 'A type of special effects makeup that is used to simulate skin.' (Geek, W. 2003) This can be built up using tissue paper and also can be flesh coloured. By building up layers and adding colour, one can peel away at them until underneath, revealing what looks to be bloody and irritated flesh.

In terms of Joan biting Zorah, which represents Joan's primal claiming of her granddaughter. I believe this might be achieved by 'Blood capsules' in which the actress would 'Bite into it to let fake blood ooze' (Ingram, J. 2010) As she perhaps holds Zorah close to her, she could in turn conceal her wiping of the fake blood onto the ear.

Lastly, in terms of the fox, in the prologue I believe the fox could simply appear on a screen. In scene three the fox no longer physically appears on stage and instead is just a sound effect. Furthermore I believe by relocating of the fox offstage, none of the potency of image is lost, instead it is perhaps enhanced. In this sense the



audience is encouraged and required to create the terror in their own mind. What's more, any physical representation is likely to be inferior to the real thing, whilst 'the mind, mind has mountains' (1986, p. 167)

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, writing this play has taught me many things, one of the most significant has been the importance of discovering and developing distinct voices for each of the characters. The value of this seems immense, because it draws audiences into the specific world of the play.

Whilst the rewriting process following comments from the examiners has been challenging, it has also been incredibly stimulating. Ensuring and reassessing that one's symbolism, imagery and wider metaphorical world of the play sits in balance with what comes before, has been particularly fruitful. I have acknowledged that, whilst stories must contain surprise in order to be of interest, at the same time such surprise must emerge from the inevitability of what has been presented previously. In essence, be intricately woven into the spine of the story, as opposed to simply being imposed, externally to the world of the play by the writer. I hope to continue to create both a visual language and non-naturalistic environments for all of my subsequent plays. Having gained the tools with which to achieve this successfully and coherently, I intend to remain utilising them in all future playwriting endeavours.

# Pickaninny

By

Nessah Aisha Muthy

## Characters

A red fox

George, English, white, 77 years old

Joan, English, white, 75 years old

Zorah, mixed raced, English and Pakistani, 21 years old

## Setting(s)

The Tadworth council estate, Surrey

Epsom Downs, Surrey

## Text Notes

(-) Indicates the next line interrupts.

(...) at the end of dialogue indicates a trail off. On its own it denotes a pressure, expectation or want to communicate.

(O/S) Indicates when a character is off stage.

Full stops in *Scene Three* indicate a change in dialogue rhythms, this in order to denote breathlessness caused by the freezing conditions.

## Prologue

*Epsom Downs. 6am. Winter. Heavy snow falls. A red fox stands frozen; it stares out into the distance. After a moment it cries loudly at length.*

*Fade to black.*

## Scene One

*4pm. Winter. The kitchen of a bungalow. GEORGE, 77, enters wearing tatty old jeans and a well-worn purple cardigan. He flicks the switch to a strip light, the light flickers and refuses to produce anything but a half light. He hits it again, harder than before, it subsequently shines brightly.*

*George is slightly frazzled; he breathes heavily for a moment, he gathers himself and then awkwardly handles an old Nokia 3310 phone charger. He looks out of the kitchen window; snow falls softly in the garden and beyond that onto Epsom Downs, which can be seen in the distance. He opens several kitchen drawers, he hunts for a particular document, he pulls out various unwanted documents. No luck. He hunts in a different drawer. He finds a small tin, he opens it up to reveal a wad of cash, his eyes light up. He takes a handful of the cash and places it in his back pocket, he stops, thinks. Note by note, he slowly and reluctantly puts the cash back, all but a five pound note. He stops. Thinks. Eventually, he puts the five pound note back as well. He continues to hunt through the rest of the drawer and again pulls out various documents. He eventually finds the document he is looking for in an envelope. He removes the document from the envelope and then puts the envelope and everything else back inside the drawer. He stops himself. He listens. He goes to the window and looks out. He closes the other kitchen drawers and quickly grabs a kitchen chair. He hides the phone charger and the document on top of the highest kitchen shelf, behind some large, blue flowered, bone china Colclough display plates. As he does this his hand lands on something else, from the shelf he retrieves some toe nail clippers and a water pistol, both of which are covered in dust. He smiles to himself.*

George: Little bitch.

*George climbs down from the chair, with the toe nail clippers and water pistol in his hands. He hides the water pistol behind a cushion on the kitchen chair. He then quickly climbs back up, ensuring that the phone chargers' wires are sufficiently hidden. He gets down from the chair. He checks the window once again, and then, as quickly as he can, sits at the kitchen table directly under the kitchen strip light. He removes one sock. He moves his non-socked foot several times until it is perfectly in line with the strip light.*

George: Perfect.

*He begins to cut his toe nails. He sniffs and inspects each piece of toenail that he removes; he places each toenail clipping neatly in a pile on the table. Throughout this time however, he keeps at least one eye on the window. George finishes cutting the last toenail on his left foot. He breathes. He goes to remove his other sock; however there is a hole in this sock and his big toe is peeping through. Result, he thinks. He decides not to remove the sock and intricately begins to cut the toenail.*

*Suddenly Joan, 75, clambers through the back door. She wears a brown hat, a faux fur long brown coat and large green wellington boots, all of which are dusted with white snowflakes. She is laden with shopping bags from: Asda; Costcutter and the Co-op. As Joan enters George jumps and scurries to hide the toe nail clippers.*

Joan: Where is she? Is she here? Is she here yet?

George: *(Distracted by the pile of toe nail clippings on the table)* Who?

Joan: Who? What do you mean who?!

George: No –

Joan: *(Calling)* Zorah! Zorah!

*George attempts to manoeuvre himself so that he is in front of the toe nail clippings.*

George: No, no, no love, no.

*Beat*

Joan: No? Not yet. No. Right. Well. *(Joan puts down her shopping and goes to the oven; she feels to see if it is on. Her back is turned away from George, as he frets about what to do with the toe nail clippings. After a moment Joan turns, and in a panic George knocks the toe nail clippings on the floor.)*

Joan: I told you to get this on, get this going I said! Quickly, pass me the fillos.

*Beat*

Joan: George!

George: What?!

Joan: Pass me the fillo prawns, out that bag; she could be here any minute! Quickly! Quickly! These are her favourites! Why'd you have to spoil everything! Ruin, ruin, everything!

*George rifles through the shopping bags and eventually finds the fillo prawns; he hands them to Joan who snatches them from him. George tries to pick up the toe nail clippings whilst her back is turned. However they are now stuck in the carpet. Joan turns, having put the fillo prawns on a baking sheet and in the oven.*

Joan: What are you doing?

George: Nothing.

Joan: Why've you got that look in your eye?

George: What look?

Joan: Like you're doing something naughty.

George: I haven't.

Joan: Yes you have.

*George begins to confess and buckle.*

George: It's the light...the good light...

Joan: What?

George: Nothing...nothing...

Joan: I've got my eye on you.

George: Which one?

*Joan indicates two eyes watching him with two of her fingers. She begins to remove her coat and exits to place it in the hallway. George attends to the toe nail clippings again; he takes as many as he can over to the bin.*

Joan: (O/S) Those prawns need fifteen minutes –

*Silence as George concentrates.*

Joan: (O/S) George, those prawns need fifteen minutes –

George: You what love?

Joan: (O/S and louder than before.) Don't forget to remind me, the prawns!

George: What?

Joan: (O/S) The prawns! Remind me, fifteen minutes!

*Beat*

Joan: What are you doing?!

George: Prawns!

Joan: What?

George: Prawns! Prawns!

*Joan re-enters. George jumps to attention.*

Joan: Not now, in fifteen minutes! I had to walk all across the Downs for them, Co-op and Asda had run outta everything! Had to go all the way



round back to CostCutter, so don't you blinking forget them, do you hear me? Do you know it was that snowy across the Downs, I could barely see me own hand in front of me face. Oh I hope she don't try and walk it, I told her to get a cab from Epsom, said I'll pay for it this end, it's actually dangerous out there, treacherous, n ya never know who's lurking about. Are you listening to me? George?

George: Yes, yes! `A course I am, how can I not? Your voice is like a sweet, sweet humming bird tweet, tweet, tweeting on the first day of spring int it `a, `a...?

Joan: Hmmm...

*Joan attends to her shopping; from a CostCutter bag she retrieves some very extravagant Christmas crackers.*

Joan: They were a tenner, but I got them for two quid, selling stuff off cheap even before Christmas these days. Look at the prizes: calculator; bottle opener; toe nail clippers. She can take them all back to university with her can't she? It'll all come in handy won't it? Where is it then? Did you put it in the lounge for me?

George: Where's what?

*Joan sighs.*

Joan: You know full well what.

*George points towards the window.*

George: Doreen's not been out with her Winkey. Probably thinks his heart will give up.

*Joan huffs.*

George: Them dogs only have little hearts, don't they?

Joan: Did you -

*Joan starts to bang the shopping away. George tries to speak over her.*

George: Did you get caught by Eve? Told you to wait, didn't I? Didn't I Joanie? She always, always, gets the bus at a quarter past three. But would you listen, would you heck.

Joan: Shu -

George: What do you reckon her smell is? Really? Hmmm? Is it piss or B.O? Probably a bit of both. To be honest, I can stand the smell, main

problem is she don't stop talking, you can't get a word in edgeways can you?

Joan: Oh shut up George!

George: I mean -

Joan: I said shut up!

George: I -

*George battles to speak over Joan.*

George: I just -

Joan: Shut up!

George: Oh I hate being in the dog house!

Joan: Well stop acting like a dog.

George: That's not nice -

Joan: I trusted you -

George: Joanie -

Joan: Don't you Joanie me. One thing. One simple thing I asked of you.

George: You know -

Joan: Just do it George!

George: But -

*Joan yanks George by his hair towards the loft hatch.*

Joan: Go in that loft and get that tree down, you, great, big asshole!

George: Oh! Oh! Let go! Let go!

*Joan yanks George's hair even harder than before. George just about manages to pull away from her grip.*

George: Let go! Let go! You little bitch! I'll smack your bottom for that! I will! I'll smack it hard...hard...

*Joan holds her head in her hands.*

George: Only trouble is you'd enjoy it -

Joan: George.

George: Joan.

*Beat*

George: Wouldn't you my love? Eh? Wouldn't you enjoy it?

Joan: I. AM. NOT. YOUR. LOVE

*George leans his face closely towards Joan's.*

George: YES. YOU. ARE.

Joan: Go and get it.

George: Whose love are ya then?

Joan: Oh for Christ's sake! Am I talking double dutch? She'll be here any second now!

*Joan viciously fills the kettle and puts it on to boil.*

George: Aren't you my beloved?

Joan: No. No I am not. Why's everything such a fight with you, such a struggle? Fifty years of fighting and struggling and carrying on.

George: Oh! That's hurtful! That's a hurtful thing to say. I'm nothing but loving and caring and kind to you –

Joan: George!

George: Fifty four years, fifty four years. Man and boy you've had me. You count yourself lucky girl. I'm a handsome lad you know.

*Joan turns away exasperated. She stares at the kettle and waits for it to boil.*

George: Doreen thinks so, she loved me new willy. Oh! Oh! Woolly, woolly, I mean!

*Joan turns back to face George.*

Joan: You're not funny –

George: No, no, you're right, I'm not. I'm hilarious!

*Joan turns away from George as she stirs her tea.*

George: Oi, give me that loving look you often give me.

Joan: What don't you understand?! I haven't got time to keep ordering you. I've got to wrap up all her Christmas presents, dig out all her birthday

ones and I've got to find those easter eggs. Oh! And the toilets blocked ya know.

George: It's fine.

Joan: No it's not! Every time I flush it sommin' keeps coming back at me like the bloody creature from the black lagoon. We can't have that, looks awful, dreadful, dreadful it does. It's your responsibility.

George: How do you figure that one?

Joan: Whatever it is down there, it's yours!

George: Prove it! Ain't got my name on it has it?

Joan: OH MY GOD! HIM!

George: What?! What him? Frightened the life outta me!

Joan: The bastard - ?!

George: What bastard?!

Joan: The bastard bleeding fox!? Did you put the poison down for him? I can just imagine him coming in here and nicking our turkey dinner. Yeah, great, terrific, terrific!

George: Oh him, yeah. Don't you worry your pretty little head about that one. I got him; I got him in the side alley Joanie. Bold as brass, stood right in front of me I said to him: "I'm gonna kick buckets and buckets of shit out of you, you filthy bastard." Got a rock and smashed him over the head with it, smashed his brains right out. Skin, flesh, blood everywhere, flew everywhere it did, did somersaults in the air.

*Silence*

George: What's the matter?

*Beat*

Joan: Nothing, good. Good to get rid, get rid of it finally. Scavenging, stealing, evil things they are, vermin, bastards, filthy scum of the universe -

George: That's what happens when people feed them you see, that's Doreen that is. Not scared of humans anymore, think they are human! Brazen as a pair of bollocks, it come up to me it did, hunting, ready to get me, so I hit it, hit it, hit it, hit it and hit it, till it didn't move no more.

*Beat*

Joan: Good, good, thank you, thank you. Now the tree -

*George retrieves the water pistol from behind the cushion.*

George: Ere, Joanie, Joanie, look what I got -

*Joan turns.*

Joan: Oh for Christ's sake you can put that away right now.

George: No -

Joan: Yes -

*George loads the water pistol up like a gun. Joan tries to take the water pistol away from George.*

Joan: Stop it -

*George moves away from Joan and bats her hands away.*

George: Look with your eyes not with your hands -

Joan: George!

*George moves towards the window.*

George: Little sods. There will be no carol singers at my door this year. Aren't you excited I finally found it?

Joan: Oh yeah, shitting me self.

*Beat*

Joan: Pack it in George; we've got things to get ready.

George *(In Arnold Schwarzenegger mode)* Fa la la la la la la la la la...

Joan: George!

*George shoots the water pistol one last time.*

George: La.

*Beat*

George: That was Arnie, that was -

Joan: More like Private bloody Pike. Listen to me George -

*George does more elaborate territorial movements.*

George: Stay where you are, don't you move an inch treacle tart.

Joan: We haven't got time to mess about!

George: That's what I'd say you know, when we'd do a raid on a brothel or -

Joan: Jesus, you're infuriating!

George: Who's Jesus? I'm George?

*Joan growls. She begins to lay out copious varieties of crisps including: Cheesy balls, Bacon bites and Salt and vinegar sticks. George goes for a crisp, Joan bats his hand away.*

Joan: Now look what you've made me do! I've got my cheesy balls mixed up with me chippy sticks! Ohhh!

*Joan waves her fist in George's direction and then begins to reorder the crisps. George goes for another crisp; Joan bats his hand away again, harder than before. George points the water pistol directly at Joan.*

George: Just one shot right between the eyes, like they got Obama.

Joan: Osama -

George: Osama -

Joan: Don't you bloody dare, don't you even think about it. If I find out even one drop of water has hit someone, there'll be hell to pay. Are you listening to me? That's if you're not stabbed to death by some hoodie! You'll ruin this Christmas.

George: Don't talk wet woman, I'm not gonna get stabbed. They're not gonna get close enough. I've got the advantage; I've got a watch tower. You try and riot me mate, you'll end up birched within an inch of your life. Them little feral brown faced rats, them, pure animals Joanie, they, they, listen, listen, they aren't even gonna get halfway down the garden path before I get them!

*George waves his fist in the air.*

Joan: Oh great, yeah, then we'll have a hypothermia charge on our hands.

George: There's no such thing as a hypothermia charge, there's an ASBO and I'm gonna put you on one of them anyway on account of your gob -

*Joan breathes heavily.*

Joan: We can't have a Christmas without a tree...we can't George, we just can't -

*Joan breathes heavily, exhausted.*

*Silence*

Joan: Please George, please. Just, please.

*Joan sits at the kitchen table.*

*Pause*

*George sits gently next to Joan.*

George: She probably won't be interested in -

*Joan goes to move away, George holds her arm gently; she venomously pulls herself away from his grip.*

Joan: Oh!

George: No listen, listen - !

Joan: Do you know, in all my life, I don't think I have ever met anyone as lazy, as pig headed, as bloody bone idle as yo - !

George: Eric Idle?

*Joan gives George a filthy look and growls at him.*

*Beat*

*George tries to gently hold Joan's face, but she pulls away.*

George: It's not that, you know it's not -

*Beat*

George: She's not a little girl anymore.

*Joan stands.*

Joan: She'll always be my little girl.

*Joan pulls her chair to the loft hatch and stands on it, despite being wobbly on her feet.*

George: What are you doing woman?!

Joan: If you want a job doing, do it yourself!

George: Your hip! What about your hip!? Get down! Get down! You'll go arse over tit in a minute and break your blooming neck!

Joan: Good.

George: Good? Good?! Oh yeah great, then where will we be? There'll be no chance of claiming off the life insurance you know?!

Joan: Like I give a shit! I'll be dead!

*George sighs.*

George: I'm warning you Joanie, get down, get down now! 1...2...3...Right, right, that's it, that is it, you've left me with no choice, I didn't want to have to do this –

*George begins to sing horrifically out of tune. He can't remember the words either, so just repeats the same lyrics to different parts of the tune.*

George: My old Mum's got spots on her bum, my old Mum's got spots on her bum, my old Mum's got spots on her bum, my old Mum's got spots on her bum...

*Joan looks back towards George.*

George: No, no, no you haven't, not anymore, got rid of them all with a load of sandpaper didn't I?

*Joan looks back towards the hatch and tries to climb up. George goes to grab her, she topples. George catches her, a tiny moment of tenderness between them.*

Joan: Oh this is your fault! You said, you said after Come Dine With Me, you said after Dickinson's Real Deal, you said after Deal or No Deal. "You pop down the shops Joanie." You said. "I'll have it down for you when you get back."

Joan: *(Close to tears)* WELL WHERE IS IT GEORGE!?

*Silence*

Joan: *(Closer to tears)* She could be just around the corner for all you know!

*Silence*

Joan: And, and, and the, the, the...what about the...

*Silence*

Joan: George...



*Silence*

Joan: George...

*Silence*

Joan: George!

George: What!?

Joan: The...the...

George: No.

*Silence*

Joan: Go and get it –

George: No.

Joan: But –

George: We don't want that up –

Joan: Why?

George: Not this year...

Joan: It's only a...

George: It's not -

Joan: Debbies -

George: It's not...

Joan: ...Candle...

George: It's not, it's not!

Joan: PLEASE!

*George rips his hand from Joan's.*

George: This is exactly why... *(He stops himself.)*

Joan: Exactly what?

George: Your blood pressure – I – I don't want you getting your hopes up!

Joan: Why?

George: Why? Why do you think?

Joan: I mean why would you say that?

*Beat*

Joan: Why?

*Beat*

Joan: Why George?!

George: Nothing!

Joan: Well what then? What? Did she call while I was out? What?! A, a, thingy me bob a...a...on the portable telephone...a...a text.

*Pause*

Joan: If you don't start speaking, so help me God, I'll get all those flaming dirty rotten nail clippings and ram them so far down your throat they'll be coming out your arsehole until next Christmas.

*George feigns a look of innocence.*

Joan: Oh don't play the innocent with me, you may look like a simpleton, but it don't mean you have to act like one.

*George shakes his head.*

Joan: I'm waiting.

George: It's nothing, it's nothing Joan.

*Beat*

George: It's just Doreen says they break up ever so early for Christmas and well

-

Joan: Oh! What does Doreen know?! She don't know her fannies from her farts!

George: But all this time Joanie –

Joan: Oh it's just because of her university, her examinations George.

*Beat*

Joan: Did Zorah call or did she not?

*Silence*

Joan: I will ask you one last time.

*Silence*

George: There was a funny call –

Joan: What funny call? What?

*Beat*

Joan: Oh it's you, you probably couldn't hear her!? I'll call her. Quickly hand me the address book –

George: Joan -

Joan: Now!

*George hands Joan the address book, she dials.*

Joan: It just keeps going to dead.

*Joan redials.*

Joan: What have you done to this bloody phone now!?

George: Oh Joanie!

Joan: Find me the portable; signal might be better or something.

*George frets, Joan hunts on the kitchen side.*

Joan: I've got it! I've got it!

*Joan tries to get the mobile phone working.*

Joan: Why's it bleeping? What does it mean it's bleeping? George? It's not letting me dial!? The screen!? George?!

*Beat*

Joan: Has it got enough electricity? George! Where's the electricity pumper? George!

George: *(Under his breath)* I dunno -

Joan: What?!

George: I dunno!

Joan: This is no good, this is no bloody good! I'll have to go and look for her –

George: Don't be so stupid, in this weather? Where you gonna go? All the way up to London?

*Joan exits. George frets. Joan returns with her coat.*

Joan: Your only granddaughter could be lying dead in a ditch, stranded in the snow for all you care! Or beaten, beaten to within an inch of her life. Funny phone call, all I've got from you is funny bloody phone call. What if she's been mugged!? Robbed!?

George: Don't be so melodramatic!

Joan: Melodramatic!? If you do so much as a fart on this estate, someone flaming well nicks it!

*George struggles to take Joan's coat from her.*

George: You're not going Joan; wandering the streets for hours on end, you'll catch your death. Think of your blood pressure. Do you remember what the doctor said to you? Do you? I forbid you.

Joan: Forbid!? Piss off forbid!

*The pair begin to fight. Joan hits George hard across the face.*

*Beat*

Joan: I'm not, I'm not losing this one George... I'm scared, something doesn't feel right, something feels peculiar, strange, peculiar, peculiar!

George: I knew this would happen I said –

Joan: What, what have you said? What has that big ugly trap of yours gone and said this time?

*Beat*

Joan: Did you speak to her? Did you actually speak to her? What did you say? I told you, just be thankful. Be thankful I said. I warned you not to say anything, not to ask questions. Do I have to write you a list?

George: A list of what?

Joan: A list of things I don't want you to bloody say!

*Beat*

Joan: Where did you get that water pistol from?

George: Wilkinsons, 2003.

Joan: I mean where did you find it?

George: Same place you hid my toe nail clippers -

Joan: You lying little shit, you know, you know exactly where that electricity pumper is don't you?! Don't you!

*Joan gets the chair and begins to drag it towards the top kitchen shelf.*

Joan: Why would you lie?!

George: Why would you hide my nail clippers?

Joan: Because I want you to take those talons to the chiropodist, not my kitchen bloody table!

George: Well I don't understand one word what comes outta her mouth.  
*(Imitating a very bad Asian accent)* It's all: abbubbdubbidubbi.

*Joan retrieves the phone charger.*

Joan: Why? Why would you lie so blatantly!? So connivingly?! What if she could only text?! How would she get through to us?!

*Silence*

Joan: Oh. Oh, she can only text can't she, that's why you've hidden this!? OH! Oh! GEORGE! What have you said? George, I'm begging you, just tell me the truth.

*Beat*

George: She started to ask some questions –

Joan: What questions?

George: I don't want her asking those kind of questions –

Joan: What questions?

George: Not with my heart and my asthma and, and your, your hip –

Joan: GEORGE! What questions?!

George: Old things, the past and things, things what we don't want dragging up. All that muck and dirt and stuff, stuff that's in the past now Joanie, in the past, it was upsetting me, my chest Joanie, -

Joan: Why? Why was she asking? Did you ask why? WHY?

George: I dunno -

Joan: Well we haven't got anything to hide, we, we, haven't, why didn't you say that?

George: I did! I did! But she kept digging an digging -

Joan: But there's nothing else to tell George, there's nothing to dig up, nothing, George -

George: HIM. BASTARD. Stuff about him. Old stuff. Stuff to forget. I just said, I just said, I don't want you making your Nannie ill, come when you're calmer, when you're calmer. I, I, I, I, - I'm sorry – I didn't know what -

*Joan sits on the chair she was standing on.*

*Smoke starts to emerge from the oven.*

George: She might, she might -

Joan: You know she, you she won -

*Long pause*

*The smoke alarm starts to sound.*

Joan: The prawns...

*Joan goes to the oven she pulls out a tray of singed filo prawns; she starts to throw them viciously at George.*

Joan: Idiot.

*Beat*

Joan: Absolute idiot.

*Beat*

George: Stop it, stop it –

Joan: Shit face –

George: Joan stop it, please, we'll never find them, they'll stink forever more...

*Joan breaks down. George watches her.*

*Fade to black.*

*A fox cries in the far distance.*

## Scene Two

*Darkness. 10.00pm. George and Joan's kitchen. A figure enters the back door with a key, a gust of snow follows. The figure hits the strip light, the light flickers and refuses to produce anything but a half light. The figure starts to open kitchen drawers and hunts through them. The figure puts their mobile phone onto charge. The figure attempts softness, but is unintentionally erratic. The figure stops, it scratches itself gently. The figure finds a torch in one of the drawers; it uses this light instead to hunt through the drawers. The figure turns the strip light off. From the hallway a further figure emerges and then another. Each is unseen by the other and unseen by the first figure.*

George: I'm only gonna warn you once, you little shit, I've got a gun and I ain't afraid to use it.

Joan: George!

*The sound of gushing water, followed by a scream. George jumps. Zorah, a mixed race girl, who wears a long overcoat which is covered in snow, hits the light switch harder than before. The strip light comes on straight away, without flickering. Joan stands soaked, having been hit directly in the face with the water pistol. Two open kitchen drawers surround Zorah. Zorah also possesses a slightly inflamed eczema rash on her face and arms; the extent of which is at first unnoticed by George and Joan.*

Joan: (To George) It's Zorah! You arsehole, you absolute arsehole! I knew it!  
(To Zorah) I knew it was you.

*Throughout the following Zorah begins to close the kitchen drawers she has opened as casually as possible.*

George: Well I'll be blowed! Where you been?! We been waiting for you! (To Joan) Oh my God. Oh my Joanie. Oh I am so sorry. Oh. Oh. I'm ever so, ever so, sorry.

Joan: (To Zorah) I thought I was dreaming `a first! I've got to hug you, to check you're really here! Did you get a cab? Does he want paying?

Zorah: No...

Joan: Oh Zorah! Silly girl, walking all this way in the pitch black!

*As Joan goes to embrace Zorah she directly faces George, who is showing more than he means to. She signals to him that he must cover up, but he doesn't understand.*

Joan: Jesus Christ George, put it away, nobody wants to see that old shrivelled up useless whiffer! *(To Zorah)* Honest to God.

*George covers himself up.*

*Joan notices Zorah's face and goes to stroke it soothingly. Zorah pulls away; she turns to grab Joan a hand towel from a rail. Zorah gently dries Joan.*

Zorah: Alright Nan? Alright?

Joan: Thank you -

George: Here let me –

*George tries to help dry Joan, she resists.*

Joan: Get back, get back to the sofa where you belong. Oh I could swing for him Zorah, I bloody well could you know.

*George goes to embrace Zorah, she pulls away, but just about manages to style it so that it looks unintentional.*

George: I thought you was a burglar -

Joan: *(To Zorah, indicating the water pistol)* Don't ask, just don't ask! From now on this is contraband.

*Joan takes the water pistol from George.*

*Beat*

George: Is it really her Joanie? Is it really our Zorah?

Joan: That's what I thought, but it is, it really is!

George: Well that's it. There's only one thing to do at a time like this! One thing -

Zorah: I -

Joan: Oh no, please George, no, George -

*George bursts into song and dance.*

George: Oh ain't it a pity she'd only one titty to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on. Oh ain't it a pity she'd only one titty to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on –

*Zorah can't resist a half smile.*

Joan: George! Will you stop saying titty! You'll get yourself excited!



*George ignores Joan and continues to sing and dance.*

George: Oh ain't it a pity she'd only one titty to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on, to feed the baby on.

Joan: George! Stop it! Now! It's a horrid thing to sing about your granddaughter!

George: I'm not singing it about her specifically, I'm just singing in general! She's got two tittys and she ain't got no baby, what she gotta worry about?!

*Joan half laughs. Zorah smiles. George continues to sing and dance, he grabs Joan's hand to dance with him; she's reluctant and only manages a few awkward moves. Eventually she pulls away.*

Joan: Oh stop it please George, it's going right through my head.

George: Alright, alright. *(To Zorah)* How you been my love? You've had me and your Nannie -

*Joan shoots George a look.*

Zorah: I -

Joan: Right well, take your bits off, George you take her coat.

Zorah: No, no, I'll keep my coat.

Joan: You are staying aren't you? Do you want me to make you something to eat?

*Zorah shakes her head.*

George: You cold or something girl? Ain't you got your string vest on?

*Zorah half smiles.*

Joan: Take her bags then, take her bags outta the way, put them in her room. Oh and while you're at it, put some decent clothes on yourself.

*George takes Zorah's bags from her, he goes to leave, but just before he does, he goes to kiss Zorah on her cheek. She pulls away.*

*Silence*

George: Oh go on, one for luck!

*Silence*

*George and Zorah stare at each other.*

Joan: Oh George! Leave her alone! She's scared awwhat she might catch!

*Silence*

*George stares at Zorah for an overly long moment.*

George: Why've you got a?

*On his own head George points to where a bindi might be.*

Zorah: I haven't...

*Zorah tries to conceal her face, but George manages to look again.*

George: Oh it's just a pimple!

Joan: George!

*George half laughs and exits. Joan embraces Zorah.*

Joan: It's your eczema isn't it? Playing you up again?

*Silence*

Joan: Don't matter, don't show, not really. Where's the cream the doctor give ya? Have you been keeping it under control?

Zorah: Yes –

Joan: Have you?

Zorah: Yes!

Joan: Why's it flared up then eh? Been getting stressed with your examinations? Stress makes it worse you know. Get it from ya, mu -

Zorah: I know, I know...

*Zorah scratches at her face.*

Joan: Don't itch it, don't, end up with a germ in it or something and then it might end up infected. What about some ice? I might have some ice in the freezer; you can put that on it?

Zorah: No, no thanks -

Joan: Might soothe it, might stop the -

*Joan hunts in the freezer.*

Joan: I'm sure I put some in here –

Zorah: Don't worry, don't worry about it, I -

*Joan pulls out an empty ice cube tray.*

Joan: Typical init eh? Just typical. I'll put some water in now, be ready by the morning.

*Joan pours water into the ice tray. Zorah continues to scratch her face.*

Joan: Stop it; you'll end up in a right state.

*Joan gently places a packet of frozen peas on Zorah's face.*

Joan: Here, keep them on it for now.

*Zorah pulls away at first but Joan persists.*

Joan: God I love you best in all the world. It's gonna be such a lovely Christmas now you're here. She maybe studying all her school teaching and philosophying, but she's not too big for a cuddle, that's what I tell Doreen ya know.

*Zorah pulls the bag of peas from her face.*

Joan: Better?

Zorah: Yes, thank you.

Joan: Help it for the time being anyway. I'll put them in the front of the freezer for ya, if you want them again. Have you got your cream with you?

*Joan places the frozen peas in the front of the freezer.*

Joan: Zorah -

Zorah: I'll get some.

Joan: Oh, what have I told ya!?

Zorah: It's fine, it will be fine. Na -

*Joan notices that some of the buttons on Zorah's jacket are fastened incorrectly. Joan attempts to attend to them, but Zorah pulls away.*

Joan: Still can't dress yourself properly! Am I gonna have to check if your knickers are on the right way n'all?

Zorah: Nan, I –

Joan: It's alright, Grandad still ain't learnt that one either. You're just like him you are. I dunno!

*Beat*

Zorah: Am I?

Joan: The spit. I just hope you ain't got his shrivelled up bits though!

*Zorah smiles.*

*Pause*

Joan: What did he say to you? On the phone? Nothing bad, nothing –

Zorah: Nothing, nothing.

Joan: Whatever it was he didn't mean it, not really, just scared, just worried, just...worried for you I spect.

*Zorah nods.*

*Pause*

Joan: Is everything alright?

*Beat*

Joan: Really?

*Beat*

Zorah: Nan -

Joan: Yes my darling -

Zorah: What's a, a -

Joan: What's a, what?

Zorah: What's a, a -

Joan: Cor, spit it out girl, what's the matter? It got bones in it or sommit?

Zorah: A pickaninny? What's a pickaninny?

Joan: A pickaninny? Well, well... that's a, that's a you!

*Joan laughs.*

Zorah: What?

Joan: Well, I dunno, maybe, maybe, a little half-caste child isn't it? Why?

*Beat*

Joan: Why? Where'd you hear that from?

Zorah: Just, just nowhere...

*Beat*

Joan: Are you sure you're alright?

*Beat*

Zorah: Where's the...

*Zorah looks around the kitchen.*

Zorah: Mum's...?

*Beat*

Joan: Oh...oh...

Zorah: Mum's...

*Beat*

*Zorah places her hand in the centre of the window shelf.*

Zorah: Mum's Christmas candle always goes here.

Joan: Oh...

*Beat*

Joan: Oh that's silly Grandad, he just forgot to get it out, we'll get it out tomorrow eh?

*Beat*

*Zorah hunts for the candle.*

Joan: Zorah, Zorah.

*Beat*

*Zorah turns to face Joan*

Joan: You sure you're alright?

*George re-enters.*

*Zorah goes to scratch her face, Joan bats her hand away.*

Joan: Don't.

George: What's the matter?

Joan: *(Pointing to Zorah)* Eczema.

George: Dear, oh dear, well I, I dunno what to suggest.

Joan: I've sorted it, ice always does the trick.

George: Oh right, that's a stroke a luck eh? Gosh alive Zor, your bags are heavy. What you got in there? Bricks I suppose, like I told ya, in case anyone attacks you?

*A fox cries in the distance.*

Joan: What was that?

George: Nothing, nothing.

*A fox cries in the distance.*

Joan: George?

George: Don't worry about it...

*A fox cries in the distance.*

Joan: It's that fox! I thought you said you got it!

George: Now...I did get him, hit him, a couple of times, but you know what there like, there blooming quick and crafty and I was, but Deal –

Joan: Bloody Deal or No Deal, bane of my sodding life!

*George listens.*

George: It's going, it's going...

*Silence*

George: I will, I will get it properly, in the morning –

Joan: Too bloody late by then –

George: First thing, first thing -

Joan: *(To Zorah)* I give up, I absolutely give up with him! Do you know what I am? I'm a blooming Noel Edmonds widow, that's what I am! Ohhh!

Right, I'm gonna make you a sandwich; you look as gaunt as one of those Africans off the comic relief. I've got cheesy balls, your favourite -

Zorah: Nan -

*Joan makes Zorah a sandwich*

George: One other thing... if you need a poo Zor, is there any chance you could hold onto it for me?

Joan: George!

George: I'm sorry to have to ask but -

Joan: *(To Zorah)* If you need to go, you go my love -

George: Well I thought we could take her round to Doreen's with us tomorrow? Give her, her present and what have you, that way if Zor needs to go, she can do it at Dor's.

Joan: Don't be so uncouth, you filthy little shit! *(To Zorah)* Still ain't fixed the toilet, only been asking him all blinking day!

George: No, no, it's not just that. There's no big long drop here and I'm not being funny. If she does a big jobby like she normally does, it'll stay there all night, the water won't carry it away.

Joan: We've got one of them already!

George: Exactly.

Joan: Ohhh!!!

George: *(To Zorah)* You're not up for a biggen tonight are you love? Otherwise I'll be the one that has to get the shovel and prod it and kill it.

Joan: Oh George! You'll put her right off her sandwich! You just fix that toilet pronto, like a told ya! Insolent you are, absolutely downright insolent!

George: The only other thing is we'll both have to have a bath in the morning, and hope that will flush it away.

Joan: NO! And I would hope that you would have a bath anyway!

George: No bloody fear, you seen the water bill this month?

Joan: No wonder you stink! Hopeless absolutely hopeless he is.

George: Oh no, that was just me arse, not me bits.

*Joan can't help but half laugh. Zorah half laughs. She embraces Joan. She cries a little.*

Joan: Eh what's all this for? George, look what you done to the poor girl? Made her scared to go blinking toilet!

*Zorah wipes her tears.*

Zorah: It's not, it's, it's alright Grandad, I'll hold it in.

Joan: Don't be so ridiculous.

*Joan embraces Zorah tightly.*

Zorah: I, er, I –

George: You what love?

Zorah: Love you -

Joan: Don't you be so sappy. You got to toilet whenever you want. He can bloody talk. Half the time, it smells like sommits died and rotted away up there.

George: *(To Joan)* You're the one what wants to get herself on that embarrassing bodies, *(To Zorah)* first time I ever saw her piles, I thought she'd grown a pair of balls. Do you ever watch that programme? It's ever so interesting.

Joan: You need to get down that doctors. If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times.

George: No I don't, I just need someone to massage me anal glands. I ain't going to that doctor, he don't speak a word of bloody English, *(To Zorah)* he's an Asian now –

Zorah: What?

George: An Asian. An Asian Doctor we got now. Trouble today you see, no one bloody does in this country anymore -

Zorah: What?

George: That's what happens, you see, I mean, you pay peanuts, you get monkeys -

Zorah: What do you mean?

George: You deaf? The Asians and what have you.



*Beat*

Zorah: What do you mean?

George: You know -

Joan: *(To Zorah)* It's coz he can't bloody hear, that's why, that's what he means -

Zorah: What do you mean though? What do you mean?

George: I -

Joan: He can't hear him, speaks very softly, can't understand him -

*Silence*

*Zorah stares at George.*

*Beat*

Joan: Here we are... cheesy ball?

*Joan hands Zorah a bowl of cheesy ball crisps. Joan heads over to Zorah and starts to search in one of the drawers. Zorah tries to conceal some of the documents she has taken out.*

Joan: Right, where's my star sandwich cutter? *(To Zorah)* a star for a star.

*Joan continues to hunt.*

Joan: Who's messed up my drawers? *(To George)* Oi! You, you been going through my drawers? You've made a right blinking mess, oh I'll have your guts for garters one of these days ya know, I bloody well will -

George: I ain't done nothing -

*Joan continues to hunt.*

*Joan notices some documents left out on the side. Zorah tries to hide them. Joan sees.*

Joan: What's all this out for? George? Your police documents, the wills, my passport? George!?

*Zorah scratches at her face.*

George: Nothing, nothing, it's nothing Joanie. Just give her, her sandwich.

Joan: Zorah? What you doing with all these things everywhere? These are important documents, we can't lose them -

*Zorah attempts to hide an envelope that sits on the kitchen side. Joan sees.*

Joan           What's that?

Zorah:        Nothing -

Joan:         What's that you've got in your hand?

Zorah:        It's nothing, don't worry.

Joan:         I am. What's going on? You two -

George:       Nothing Joanie, the sandwich -

Joan:         What's that? You hid? You hid it?

Zorah:        Nothing!

*Zorah scratches at her face.*

Joan:         Show me -

Zorah:        No -

*George rapidly attempts to tidy things away.*

George:       Let's just get all this stuff away -

Joan:         George!

*In the scuffle Zorah accidentally drops a large wad of twenty and fifty pounds notes, they fly in the air.*

*Pause*

Joan:         Why've you got that?

*Pause*

Zorah:        I'm just, just borrowing it, I'll pay it back.

Joan:         What for?

*Beat*

Joan:         What you borrowing it for? What do you need it for?

*Zorah holds up an envelope to George.*

Zorah:        Where is it Grandad?

Joan:         What do you need all that money for?

Zorah: (To George) I need it.

Joan: Need what? Will somebody please tell me what the bleeding hell is going on!?

*Zorah scratches at her face.*

Joan: (To Zorah) Stop it! You'll rip it raw.

*Joan retrieves the frozen peas and hands them to Zorah.*

Zorah: Please Grandad -

Joan: Need what, what George? -

*Joan goes for the envelope. Zorah pulls it away.*

George: (To Zorah) Why? Sneaking, sneaking -

Zorah: I just do.

Joan: What do you need the money for? What else do you want?! What are you talking about?

Zorah: Grandad...

*Silence*

Joan: Flaming bloody nora, am I gonna have to pull my knickers down and do a dance to get someone to blinking answer me!?

*Beat*

Joan: What's the money for? What does she want? GEORGE! TELL ME!

George: Her birth certificate, her birth certificate –

Joan: What do you need that for?

Zorah: I just need it, where is it?

*Zorah attempts to hunt through the drawer. Joan intercepts her.*

Zorah: For uni. For a project.

Joan: Is it? Is it?

Zorah: Yeah, yeah, I told him I was coming for it, I told him on the phone –

Joan: (To George) You didn't tell me that.

George: I didn't wanna worry you.

Joan: Worry me. Worry me!? And the money?

Zorah: I need it; I just need to borrow it for now –

George: It's not for a project. It's not Joanie, coming here in the dead of bloody night, rooting through all our things -

Joan: *(To Zorah)* Why would you do that?

Zorah: What?

Joan: The money.

Zorah: *(To George)* Where's the certificate?

Joan: Why? Just tell us why?

*Silence*

Joan: *(To Zorah)* What is it? We're going out of our minds with worry. What do you want with this? We'll give you double, if you need it, just tell us what it's for?

*Beat*

Joan: I've a good mind to call up that university, tell them what a state she's in, the pressure, the money -

Zorah: No, don't, don't be so stupid -

Joan: I'm not stupid. We're not being stupid Zor -

Zorah: I'm sorry, sorry; I was just borrowing it -

Joan: What is it darling? We're still gonna love you, no matter what. You can tell us absolutely anything, anything in the world, in the whole blooming universe.

*Beat*

George: It's sommkink, it's sommkink to do with the phone call, with, with, him, that bastard. She wants the certificate, for him, it's sommkink to do with him and it's not proper, don't make sense, none of it makes any sense!

Joan: Oh George...

*Silence*

Joan: *(To Zorah)* Is it? Is it him? Is it him?

*Silence*

Joan: We're not cross. We're not cross at you. We could never be cross at you.

*Silence*

Zorah: I, I er, I, I, need a passport.

George: Why?

Joan: Now? Right this instant?

Zorah: Yes.

Joan: Are you in some sort of trouble?

Zorah: No I -

George: What?!

Joan: George -

Zorah: It's, it's my, it's him, him...the...him...him...

*George breathes heavily.*

*Silence*

Joan: Oh...I knew it. I knew it. I told you George, didn't I tell you. Didn't I? In my gut. Sommink didn't feel right. Peculiar, felt it, felt it earlier, I told you, I knew it, I knew sommink. An omen mustn't it, mustn't it have been?

George: What does he want? What does he exactly want? That bastard?!

Zorah: It's, it's my Dad.

*George nods.*

Joan: What? What about him? He got to you did he? Got to you via the internet or something. I knew it, I knew we should never have let her go to that university George. I should have written a letter to the head, the head, like I did up at the school. Wants to take you over there I suppose? Wants to take you away and capture you, just like he did your Mum. You weren't allowed a passport for a reason Zor, you know that!

Zorah: No -

Joan: Sent a begging letter I suppose, just like he did your Mum! It's him; it's him that wants the money isn't it? Wants the money off you? After all these years, cheek of it! Dirty rotten cheek of it!

George: What's he said Zor? What's he exactly said to you?

Joan: Cause whatever it is, don't you believe it, not a word of it. Do you hear me? I knew this would happen one day, bit late to be a parent now. Don't you dare, don't you dare give him a penny. Do you hear me? Don't you go anywhere near him. *(To George)* Begging her! Begging his own daughter for money. It makes me sick, it makes me wanna vomit, filthy, dirt p... He'll give it all to his mother and you; you'll be a prize, a slave girl or something. Nah, nah, don't you believe it, don't you believe one word what comes outta of his cess pit. Perhaps we should call the police? George?

Zorah: NO! NO! NO!

*Zorah throws the frozen peas down.*

*Long silence*

Zorah: I want to see him. I need to see him. I want to go to Pakistan and I want to see him. It was me, I, I, got in touch with him. I found him on the internet, we've been speaking, he –

Joan: YOU WHAT?!

George: It's not a good idea; it's not a good idea Zor -

Joan: No way, no blooming way. Never, never, never in a million years. Do you know what will happen if you go there? He'll steal your passport and you won't ever EVER be allowed to come back. He'll have you married. Married off to some mucky eighty year old sultan. For cash, cash for him. Sex slave you'll be and we'll never see you again. He probably wants the cash to pay for her wedding. He's evil. He's pure evil. Promise, promise, you won't go. That's what they're like, I'm sorry but that's what they're like.

*Beat*

Zorah: He's dying.

*Brief silence*

*Joan laughs.*

*George laughs.*

George: Like he ain't used that one before, your Mum -.

Zorah: It's the truth.

*Beat*

Zorah: I need to go. I need to go. I need to go as soon as possible.

Joan: Why? Why? What's the hurry? What's the urgency? Why now? Eh?  
Why now?!

*Silence*

Joan: WHAT'S THE URGENCY?

*Silence*

Joan: Zorah!

*Zorah removes her coat; she reveals a large baby bump.*

Joan: Oh. Oh. You silly girl, you silly little girl.

George: I need to sit down.

*George sits, he rubs his chest. He reaches for his asthma inhaler; he takes two puffs in a rather melodramatic fashion.*

Joan: You're too young, you're too young. George, she's only a baby herself.

Zorah: I'm twenty one Nan.

Joan: Too young.

George: Where's, I mean, where's the -

Zorah: It doesn't matter.

George: Done a bunk I suppose.

Zorah: It doesn't matter!

Joan: We told you, we warned you, get your career first, boys are for later, oh  
Zorah -

Zorah: Nan -

*Zorah cries.*

Joan: It's alright, it's alright. How many weeks are you?

Zorah: Too long, long, long enough.

Joan: It's alright, it's alright. George, you'll just have get up in that loft and get that cot down, now and, and the booties and the bonnets and -

Zorah: Nan...

*Beat*

Zorah: I'm fine, I'm gonna be fine. I can still do my course, I finish in a few months and I can put the baby in a nursery -

Joan: Don't talk wet, you come back here, live with us.

George: How could you? I mean, how -

Joan: George!

George: *(To Joan)* Well!

Zorah: Just, just an accident, just silly, I just forgot, just an accident...

George: What about the, the f -

Joan: George!

George: Yes! Yes! That's my name you silly old trout! What ya tryna do, bleed it to buggery?! Now will you kindly stop repeating it and concentrate, we've got ourselves a crisis here!

Joan: You nasty little bitch, you know that's what you are don't you? Don't you?! Bleeding half price! Thick as shit and twice as slippery!

George: Oh shut it fish face -

Zorah: Stop it, stop it, you haven't, you haven't, you haven't got a crisis -

George: Where is he? The boy who's done this to you? Oh I'd like to get my hands on him, the dirty rotten toe rag.

Zorah: He's not, he's, he's a nice guy.

George: Oh yeah lovely -

Zorah: I can do it on my own; I want to do it on my own.

George: Leaving you to fend for yourself -

Zorah: We were never together!

George: Even better, even bleeding better! Well is he gonna, is he gonna take on his responsibilities or what? Is he gonna look after you?



Zorah: He asked me to marry him.

*Zorah laughs.*

George: What's funny about that?

Joan: Didn't you say yes?

Zorah: No.

Joan: Why not?

Zorah: He's still gonna support me, pay towards things.

George: He says that now. Heard that one before -

Zorah: Even if he doesn't I can, I can do this.

George: He's just got away scott free! Should have jumped at the chance to marry him.

Zorah: I'm not gonna marry someone I'm not in love with, just because I'm having his child.

George: Ludicrous! Absolutely ludicrous!

Joan: We're here; we're here for you, whatever happens.

George: I don't understand, I don't understand any of it!

Zorah: It's alright, it's all going to be alright, I think, I think it was meant to happen, because I was, I mean, I knew you'd be disappointed, I was gonna...tried stupidly at first and then and then properly, but I couldn't, I mean you can't, you can't, not to something that's got a brain and thinks and feels can you? Can you?

Joan: Course you can't -

George: Course you can, simple, easy. Ain't a baby it's, it's, just a blob, a blob of muck -

Joan: Please...

*Silence*

*Zorah stares at George.*

Zorah: And then it got me thinking, really thinking, couldn't stop thinking, thinking about the questions the babies gonna ask me and I thought I wanna be able to answer them. So I started looking and I found him,

found him just in time. If it had been any other time it would have been too late, I'd never have been able, be able to even see him, but now, now I've got the chance to see him... my Dad, my Dad I mean.

Joan: Now, you listen and you listen here good. It's not just you, you gotta think of that baby now. You mustn't, mustn't go putting yourself in that kind of danger. That's my great-grandchild in there -

Zorah: I need to see him! I need to. You don't understand. You won't understand but I need to.

George: You don't need to, we'll look after you.

Zorah: Listen, just listen to me for once. I need to.

Joan: You don't -

Zorah: LISTEN. I wanna be able to tell this kid, what he's really like.

*Beat*

Zorah: Where it comes from.

Joan: It comes from you and your... fella and us.

Zorah: I wanna be able to tell it why it looks like this (*She pinches and scratches at her skin*) and not like you.

Joan: Oh that don't matter, it don't matter.

Zorah: It does to me.

George: It might look like us; it might be white, might it?

Zorah: Is that what you'd like is it? IS IT?!

George: I, I, I -

*George shakes his head; he rubs his chest more vigorously.*

Joan: George.

Zorah: I wanna tell the baby, I wanna tell the baby what he's like, before it's too late -

Joan: He's evil Zor, pure pure evil. I'll tell ya -

Zorah: I want to tell it! I want to tell it myself. If he's bad, I wanna tell it, why he's bad, not through you, not through what you've told me. I just wanna tell it the truth.

Joan: I can't let you take that risk. We told you the truth.

Zorah: I'm sorry, I'm sorry but I need the certificate and I need to apply for the passport. First thing after boxing day. I need it!

Joan: I can't let you have it. We can't, can we George? Not now, especially not now.

George: That's right, that's right.

Joan: You're just confused, manipulated. Your baby brain and that. We won't let him get to your mind anymore; we'll put a stop to it all -

Zorah: I am not confused! He's dying! I haven't got much time!

George: I'm sorry love, but whatever he's told you, it's a pack of lies...

*George embraces Zorah awkwardly, she pulls away.*

Zorah: I spoke to a nurse!

George: That was probably his liar of a sister.

Zorah: He's got a sister?

George: Yeah, great big fat lump of a thing and a tash like Hitler.

Zorah: But why? Why would he lie?

George: Because that's the kind of person he is...

*Zorah shakes her head.*

Zorah: He's a teacher, a teacher in Pakistan. Like I want to be, except he teaches, taught maths, before he got can... And he breeds chickens, all different kinds of chickens in his back garden.

George: Zor, I wouldn't lie to you.

Joan: I've told you all your life Zor, he's poison, pure poison. They all are -

Zorah: What does that make me then?

George: You? What do you mean you? This is all for you, this is us trying to protect you.

Zorah: I meant what am I? What am I then? What am I? Am I, am I - ?

George: What do you mean, what are you? What does she mean Joan?

*Beat*

George: You're you. You're not one of them. You're ours.

Zorah: What does that mean? What does that even mean?

George: What do you mean, what does it mean? He's a very bad man. It's as simple as that. I'm sorry but it is. Why do you think we took him away from you? He's bad news, really bad news.

Zorah: Why?

*Beat*

Zorah: Why?

*Beat*

Zorah: Why?

*Beat*

Zorah: Because he's a paki.

*Silence*

Joan: He's bad. He just is! We love you, we love you, we always have.

Zorah: What's this then? Eh? Eh?

*Zorah indicates and pinches her own skin roughly. She scratches. George tries to stop her.*

George: Stop it! Stop it! You're not, it's not, you're not a -

Joan: We don't mean you, it's not you!

George: We mean the real p -

Zorah: I'm a real one, real paki stood right here in front of ya!

Joan: You're not! Stop saying that. You're twisting our words, you're twisting them. Just like he does. You're beautiful. You're absolutely beautiful and you're gonna have a beautiful baby.

*Beat*

Joan: Who's gone and said that word to you?! Who dare say that word? They're ignorant, just ignorant.

George: I'll lump one of these right on them.

*George waves his fist in the air.*

Zorah: ...I need the birth certificate, I just need it. Give it to me. Please.

Joan: I can't Zor.

Zorah: PLEASE!

*George shakes his head.*

Joan: You're stunning, isn't she George?

George: Stunning.

Joan: See, you're lovely long brown hair and you're beautiful brown eyes...she's striking, absolutely striking...and you're skin, skins perfect, absolutely perfect, just the right colour, warm, lovely and tanned, isn't it? Isn't it George?

George: Of course. Loads and loads of people sit in the sun for hours, trying to get your colour. I don't see why it bothers you, coz it as sure as hell don't bother us.

Zorah: *(To George)* Doesn't it?

*Pause*

Joan: Don't be daft! Why don't we open some presents eh? Just a few?

Zorah: Does it Grandad? Does it?

*Beat*

Zorah: Grandad.

George: Don't' be so foolish.

*Pause*

Joan: I've a good mind to get up that university myself, tell the headmaster that someone's being racist to you -

Zorah: You don't understand, you just -

George: A gang of them? Ganging up on you -?

Zorah: No! It's not that simple! You just don't get it do you? You're just...you're not me, you're not this, in this, how can you ever understand this?!

*Zorah claws at her skin.*

Joan: Don't, don't, don't, George the peas! Give me the peas!

*Joan tries to stop Zorah's clawing and hand Zorah the peas, Zorah pulls away.*

Zorah: I don't know, I don't, people don't think I'm English alright... "Where are you from?" "England." "No I know, but where are you really, really from?" "England" and they look at me, look at me like I'm a liar or a really naïve adopted person.

George: They just don't understand Zor, they're just thick. Born and bred here, that's what you say, born and bred here -

Joan: Who's this? Who says this?

Zorah: Everyone! Everyone! Not everyone... just...everywhere...just...I didn't tell ya this, coz I thought it might upset ya, but, but, before I came in here, Doreen was sat outside, in her front garden, just sat there in the snow. I tried to go over to her, see if she's alright, tried to help her. She didn't remember me, clung onto her handbag dead tight, wouldn't let me come near her, wouldn't let me say hello. She kept spitting at me, actually spitting and saying: "Get back you filthy Pickaninny, get back!" "Get back to your own, to your own kind, you bastard Pickaninny!" Then some woman came rushing out, I tried to explain, I wasn't hurting her, but the woman just ignores me, ushered her back inside as quickly as she could, didn't tell her to stop though. So Doreen kept shouting and spitting: "Get back you filthy Pickaninny, get back!" "Get back to your own, to your own kind, you bastard Pickaninny!"

*Pause*

George: She's not very well, is she Joan? Joanie? She's got the early onset of Alzheimer's or something. We phoned her daughter didn't we? *(To Joan)* had to, in the end. *(To Zorah)* Sometimes all she does is stand out there in that garden scratching her thrupenny bits and playing with her titties, don't she Joanie? Joanie?

Zorah: What's my own kind? Where are they? That's what I am Nan, that's what I am, that's what's here, isn't it? Isn't it?

*Zorah claws at her skin.*

Joan: No, you're making it worse, the stress, you're making it –

Zorah: Yes I am, that's what I am, I asked you, and you said -

Joan: I didn't mean it, I didn't mean it not like that, I didn't mean it -

Zorah: It's not just the, the, the, wh...the engli...it's the Paki bastards as well ya know, even the Pakis think I'm a Paki, think I'm one of them.

Looking at me, wondering why I ain't wearing a sari or hijabby, or whatever it's called. (*Bad Indian accent*) "Do you speak Gujurati?" (*Own accent*) "No" (*Bad Indian accent*) "Do you speak hindi" (*Own accent*) "No" (*Bad Indian accent*) "Just English then?" (*Own accent*) Yeah...and I barely speak that love."

Joan: That's right, you play, you play them at their own game.

Zorah: And I just wanna scream in their faces: I'm English! So shut ya dirty Paki mouth.

George: That's what you should do, you should -

Zorah: I'm so fucking English, I don't even know what their insults mean.

*Beat*

Joan: I -

Zorah: Where's your mum from is the classic...I say "Epsom," their face drops, not quite as exotic as they'd hoped. I say it again, "Epsom, Surrey" with this army of an English defence league inside of me, all marching, marching for: ENGLAND! ENGLAND! ENGLAND! I'M ENGLAND TILL I DIE! RULE BRITANNIA! BRITANNIA RULES THE WAVES! BRITON NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, SHALL BE SLAVES!

*Joan tries to lead Zorah to a chair. Zorah looks closely at her skin.*

Zorah: But, but, but, but, but -

Joan: Sit down darling, sit down, calm down, everything is going to be alright. George, get her a glass of water, look what he's done to her, look at the state of her.

*Zorah sits.*

Joan: Look at me, look at me; you're not to speak to him again. Do you hear? You've got to think of the baby, the stress -

Zorah: Do you know what I do sometimes? I do, I do, I play the game back like you said. I stand right in the middle of the busiest carriage I can find and I play. I walk through all the other carriages to make sure it's the busiest, and they moan and they huff, because my bag is big. I mean, I make sure it's big. I hope I make them wonder, what if, will I wish I moved? Shall I take the risk? And then when I've got the carriage I want, I stand there, eyelash to eyelash with them and I smile...gentle not...because I know, I've got this English secret dripping all over my brains you see and I smile and I smile...until I see a Muslim beard, and

I sit down because I'm scared, and I'm English, back with everyone else.

*Beat*

Zorah: I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, I'm standing there and I'm and standing there and I'm this?! –

George: You're scaring me, you're scaring me and your Nannie –

Zorah: Yeah?

*Beat*

Zorah: I'm scared!

*Zorah drinks the glass of water.*

Zorah: Martin, that's the baby's Dad's name. Martin. He's white, I know you were wondering.

Joan: We don't care! We don't care if he's green with pink spots! We don't care if you're pink with green spots! I don't know how to get through to ya!

Zorah: He's white. He had to be, and do you wanna know why? Because I'm petrified of Asian men, petrified of Asians, terrified of all of them! In case ones gonna get me, gonna take me away, like you told me, like you told me to be.

*Beat*

Joan: We didn't say it to scare you; we said it to protect you!

Zorah: And my baby, my baby might be a little bit Asian might it and I can't be scared of that can I? Can I? I can't be scared of my own baby. I'm an Asian scared of Asians...I'm scared of myself...

George: You're English! A beautiful English girl, a rose, an English rose...

*Zorah indicates her skin.*

Zorah: But this is here, this is here and this isn't, this isn't...

George: Why don't you go and lie down, sleep, sleep will -

Zorah: And this makes me...and I can't, I can't.

*Zorah tries to lift her skin.*



Zorah: And it's not going anywhere...because I'm not, I'm not, I'm half... THIS IS HERE!

*Zorah indicates her skin.*

Zorah: And it's here and here and here and, and that's why, why, I should go, go and see him, maybe it's my last chance. I need to, I need to go –

Joan: No, no, you're just confused and you're hurting and he's got into your brain and muddled you all up.

*Joan squeezes Zorah tightly.*

Zorah: Please, please I'm begging you, I need the certificate, I need it, I need it -

Joan: I know him Zorah, I know that kind of Muslim, Asian, evil, sick, warped. I've seen it, see him with my own eyes.

George: He could be a terrorist now for all you know! He was always going on about how we were not to give you bacon or sausages or Billy Bear, and it was such a shame, coz you loved your bacon and your Billy Bear.

Joan: You mustn't, you mustn't go, he could drug ya, take your passport, you wouldn't be able to fight, you're too little, you wouldn't be able to, and the baby, what about the baby?

Zorah: I need it! I need to go.

Joan: Just wait, just think about it.

Zorah: *(To George)* Tell me, tell me where it is!

*Beat*

Zorah: *(To Joan)* He's hidden it! I told him on the phone, that I needed it and now he's gone and hidden it!

George: I haven't, I haven't Joan.

Zorah: You can't hide it from me! You can't! You can't do this! I have a right to my own birth certificate.

Joan: No, no, listen...

Zorah: No you listen! You, you don't understand, you, separate to this, I, I have a right, a, a, human right, to see it, to have it, to see it! Give it to me now.

Joan: You're Dad's not telling the truth Zor, I know he's not, I know it in my heart.

Zorah: You're not telling the truth! He told me you two haven't told the truth.

Joan: Well of acourse he would, we just want what's best for you.

*Beat*

Zorah: He told me some things, things I didn't wanna have to say -

George: Its lies.

*Beat*

Zorah: What is?

George: Whatever it is he's said.

Zorah: You don't know what he's said -

George: No, but I'll have a bloody good guess. Cause what you'll soon come to realise my girl is that he don't, your Dad, tell little white lies, he tells great big black ones.

*Pause*

Zorah: He said you'd say that. He said you'd say exactly that. How did he know that?

George: Because he knows, he knows how to press all the right buttons. He's clever, yeah, dead, dead clever, but he's sly.

Zorah: Please, please just give me the certificate. PLEASE!

*Silence*

Zorah: He told me, told me everything...told me...told me...

George: Told you what?! WHAT?

Zorah: Told me how you and all your policeman mates beat him, beat him to within an inch of his life. Did you? Did you?

George: And you believe him?

Zorah: I'm asking you!

George: I'm telling you!

*Beat*

George: And you, you believe some p - *(George stops himself)*

Zorah: He said you'd say that too. He said you'd said so many lies between the pair of you, that to you, to you two they'd become the truth.

George: And you believe him?

*Beat*

George: Well do you?

Joan: George -

George: No Joan, no, I'm not having it, not again. I'm not having him, him, ruin our lives all over again. *(To Zorah)* You remember this and you remember good, he never, ever, ever came back for you did he? Eh? Eh?

Zorah: I just wanna see my Dad. My Dad, my...

*Beat*

Zorah: He's still my Dad -

George: Who fed you and clothed you and put a roof over your head, for all those years? Eh? Where was he when you fell over in them jelly shoes we didn't want you to have and half your face was on the pavement? Or when you shaved your legs all wrong and you had all that blood pouring down them, cut like ribbons? Eh? Who chops up your poos eh? Eh? Who? You just remember, he never came back for ya never, we loved you, we love you.

Zorah: He was scared -

George: Scared my eye. He was a coward and he was dangerous. He made your Mum ill and he will make you ill if you go with him. Never, never in a million years will you have my blessing -

Zorah: I have to, I have to go -

Joan: No, no you don't. We're you're family! We wants what's best for you.

Zorah: But you're not, you're not my Mum and you're not my Dad, I'm sorry, I'm sorry -

George: Yes we are! We're as good as you'll ever get!

Joan: *(To Zorah)* He may not be your Dad, but he's done a darn sight better than he ever could -

Zorah: How do you know that? How can you ever, ever know that?

Joan: I just do.

*Beat*

Zorah: Please, please let me have it -

Joan: He's always done his best by you.

George: We both have.

Zorah: I just, I just wanna know who I am. What I am. Why can't you understand that?

Joan: You're English, you're perfect, that's what you are -

Zorah: But I'm not! I'm not! And when you say that, when you say paki or -

Joan: We don't mean -

*Zorah claws viciously at her skin.*

Zorah: GOD!!! I just wanna rip it all off, all of it!

*Beat*

Zorah: Be skinless, be human!

*Beat*

George: He's poisoned you. Poisoned your brain. Brainwashed. I watched it happen to your mother, I'm not gonna let it happen to you -

Zorah: He said that's not true, what you've told me isn't true -

George: He would -

Zorah: He said...

George: He said what?!

Zorah: He said it was you! You two were the reason she was ill, sick and damaged.

Joan: Us?! I explained to you, I explained it all when you were a little girl. There was something wrong with her brain, when she was a little girl and all the chemicals went wrong. And when your Dad got to her, he just brought it all out worse; he made her anxieties and her depressions worse. Got her hooked on his weird foreign drugs and his sick, sick religion that made her loop the loop. Got her trapped, held

her more or less a hostage, confiscated her car, took everything, everything from her! Tried to take you! That's what it is in their culture, women ain't got no power, it's only the man that matters. If you go there, if you step foot in that country, you mark my words the same will happen to you.

Zorah: He said he rescued her.

George: Rescued her?

Zorah: From you two.

*George laughs.*

George: You listen here girl and you listen good. The doctor, the old one, before the new one, told us to rescue her and you. He said the best thing you can do is go and get her. Take them both away and don't let them have anything more to do with him -

Zorah: He said you stole us from him -

*George laughs.*

George: Stole, you hearing this Joan, it would be comical if it wasn't so serious. We, me and your Nannie went and got you one morning, early, knocked on the door, your Mum opened it, whispered to her: (*George whispers*) "Go and get the baby," She got you, we put you both in the car and we drove off. We rescued you, not the other way round. Alright? Alright?

Zorah: He said you were the reason she was ill, you two and how you suffocated her and your fear, fear of everything and everyone. Your anxiety and how you have to control everything, made her a nervous wreck, (*Pointing to Joan*) how she wanted to keep her a little girl and wouldn't let her grow up. My Dad freed her of that. (*To George*) Said you didn't even want me, didn't want a pickypaki, whatever, in your family.

George: How can you say? How can you even dare to say? After all we've done for you?

Zorah: Did you want me? Did you?!

Joan: Of course! Don't make the blindest bit of difference, not to us.

*Beat*

Zorah: He said you're little petrified people, petrified of life, of change, ignorant, dumb -

George: We're not DUMB! WE'RE NOT DUMB! We did it for you, we looked after you. We did everything for you. We loved you!

Zorah: He said you took me and him away from Mum, her family, her chance That's why she...why she...

*Joan slaps Zorah.*

*Joan weeps.*

*Beat*

George: NO! It's what he thinks! It's what he's told ya, told ya a pack of lies! He kil...he did it, he caused it! Not us! Look what you're doing to her, look what you're doing to your Nannie. I'll tell ya somemink about him shall I? I'll tell ya a few things. That I never had the heart to tell you. We paid him, we paid him to piss off back to his own country and get the hell out of this family's life. No beating, no nothing. And do you wanna know where every penny of our money went? On his second wife. Like all your Mum's money. Your Mum never had money for her food, for your milk, that's where that went too. We went back to the house once, and do you know what we saw, his new wife's wedding dress hanging up in her wardrobe, your mum's own wardrobe.

Zorah: Is that true Nannie? Is it?

George: This is the truth, so help me God this is the truth! I gave him a chance but he stole every last ha'penny. I gave him another chance, and another. I even let him see you, but only here, not taking you off somewhere, coz he threatened, he threatened (*Bad Asian accent*) "Women have no power in my country, I will take her and I will never bring her back." And do you know what he used to do? Cause I wouldn't let him take you? Do you know what kind of Dad he was? He used to make you sick on purpose and wipe it all up my kitchen walls. To his own baby, he made his own baby sick, just to get at me.

Zorah: You're lying.

George: I'm not. That's what made your Mum, your Mum...ill, ill, that kind of behaviour, not us. Please, please, PLEASE don't go Zorah, I know his kind, I know them.

Zorah: You're lying!

*George goes over to the kitchen wall.*

George: Go on sniff it, sniff the wallpaper, I promise you; promise you still stinks of it after all these years! Go on!

Zorah: No -

George: Sniff it!

*George grabs Zorah, he holds her face to the kitchen wall. Zorah resists.*

Zorah: GET OFF! GET OFF! GET OFF ME!

Joan: George! George! The baby!

*George let's go of Zorah.*

George: Just wanna make her see sense, *(To Zorah, gentler)* just wanna make you see!

Joan: *(To George)* Stop it! *(To Zorah)* It's true, it's true, I saw it with my own eyes! *(To George)* But please, please, please stop it George! STOP IT NOW!

*Long pause*

*Zorah catches her breath.*

*Pause*

George: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry I –

*Joan embraces Zorah, they stay like this for a moment. George tries to join, Zorah pulls away.*

Joan: Don't go, don't, don't, please, don't go –

*Pause*

Zorah: He said that's what you said to him: "Make you see sense, make you see sense boy. I'm gonna kick buckets and buckets of shit out of you, you filthy paki bastard."

*George shakes his head.*

Zorah: Said you said: If you don't piss off back to where you came from, you'll fit him up with something, some "heinous crime" and he'll go to prison. He said he was scared...petrified.

*George shakes his head and rubs his chest.*

Zorah: He's got a scar right here, right here where you hit him with your truncheon.

*Zorah points to her forehead.*

George: He don't half tell some lies -

Joan: How could you see it? How, how, could he show you that?

Zorah: Skype.

Joan: The what?

Zorah: Video calls, it doesn't matter. I just need the certificate.

Joan: Why can't you do that? Do that with him your videos, that's alright isn't it George? George? You don't need to go all that way.

*Beat*

Joan: *(To Zorah)* Do the videos, the video -

Zorah: I need it! The money, I'll just borrow the money, I'll bring it back -

Joan: Just, you mustn't go there, you mustn't dare.

*Beat*

Zorah: The baby he said, the baby was covered, covered in blood, skin, flesh everywhere, flew everywhere it did, did somersaults in the air. Crying with all the noise and the commotion it was, but you wouldn't let him see to it, wouldn't let him near.

*Zorah cries.*

George: It's a lie!

*George goes to hug Zorah, but Zorah flinches. Joan goes to protect her. George stares at the pair. George stares painfully at Joan for a long moment, she tries hard not to meet his eyes. He weeps holding his chest in his hands.*

*Joan holds Zorah.*

Zorah: I just thought you were my Grandad, my Grandad, my Grandad...

George: I am, I am, I'm your Grandad, that's me, I'm Grandad, I am.

*George gently holds his hand to Zorah. Zorah stares at it for a long moment. George tries to clasp his hand in Zorah's, but she refuses to grip it.*

George: I would never hurt you; I would never harm a hair on your head.



Zorah: What's the truth?

*Silence*

Joan: We paid him. We paid him off.

*Zorah cries and embraces Joan.*

Joan: Because we loved you, we love you Zorah.

*Pause*

*Zorah holds Joan's face in her hands.*

Zorah: He told me, he told me, though, my names Zorhra, not Zorah...

*Zorah tries to pull away from George and Joan. Joan refuses to let go.*

Joan: No, no, no, no.

Zorah: I've got to Nan, I've got to. I'll come back, I'll come back, I promise, I promise, but I got to -

Joan: No, please, please, you're not gonna come back, that's the problem, he's not, I promised, I promised myself, swore, swore I'd never let you go, never -

*Beat*

*George holds his chest.*

Zorah: Please, please, tell me where it is, please. Tell me where the certificate is...

*Silence*

*Zorah begins to hunt through the kitchen drawers.*

Joan: Don't you remember? Don't you remember when he took you to Brighton that time? He took you for hours and hours, we had the police out searching for you. He was meant to take you, just for the morning, the morning only, because we was gonna take you swimming in the afternoon, you loved ya swimming. But he kept you and you had a car crash and he petrified you, you were only two and eventually, eventually he brought you back, but you came back dribbling, and you dribbled and shook for weeks and weeks after, don't you remember that? Don't you remember what he did to you? Don't you remember? Don't you remember? Remember? Remember?

*Zorah continues to hunt. She unplugs her mobile phone and puts it in her pocket.*

Zorah: You tell me this, but I don't see it through me, I see it like a story, pictures in my head, I see me, but I'm not me, I'm watching, watching it like a film, I'm not -

*Zorah climbs a chair she hunts at the top of the kitchen cabinet, Colclough plates accidentally fall to the floor and smash in her ravenous search. George attempts to pull her down. A struggle ensues. George grabs hold of Zorah. The kitchen is tipped upside down. Joan screams.*

Joan: Remember! Remember!

*Zorah pushes George away and eventually finds the certificate. She tries to get past George who stands firmly in the doorway towards the hall.*

Zorah: Please, please let me pass. I need to get my bags! Please!

*Zorah tries to push past George harder than before.*

Zorah: PLEASE!

*Beat*

Zorah: Keep it then! Keep it! I don't need 'things,' I just, I just... I don't know how to tell you, I don't know how to say, the words, feels like, feels like there's this dead Asian, inside of me, inside just hanging. Just hung. Just here. Rope. Hung by rope from the rib cage.

George: YOU ARE NOT AN ASIAN! You are only half. Half of you is us, half of you is me. Your eyes, they're not Asian eyes, they're your Mum's eyes. Don't you remember? Don't you remember, we used to say, we used to say and your Mum was there. Give her back her eyes, give your Mummy back her eyes.

*Zorah pretends to rip her eyes out and gently throw them at George and Joan.*

*George winces.*

Zorah: Here you go then, here you go...

*Zorah can't stop scratching at her face; it's more painful and itchy than ever before. Joan gently handles the peas.*

Joan: They're warm, they've gone warm, I'll get some more, I'll get the ice cubes -

*Joan goes to the freezer.*

*She pulls out the ice cube tray, and tries to pick up an ice cube; however the cubes are not yet solid.*

*She weeps.*

Joan:           Something else, something else.

*Joan hunts in the freezer, she goes to hand Zorah some frozen fish fingers, however at this moment George collapses. This is unseen by Zorah, as she puts her coat on and opens the back door. A strong gust blows a mass of white snow inside.*

Joan:           GEORGE! GEORGE!

*Zorah turns. She attends to George. He stands.*

George:        I'm fine, I'm fine.

*Zorah turns to leave again.*

Joan:           Where are you going? Don't go, tell her George, don't go, don't go.

Zorah:         I've got to go, I've got to -

Joan:           There won't be any trains now, there won't -

Zorah:         There are, there are -

Joan:           You mustn't, you mustn't, the baby, the cold. It's so cold, ever so, ever so cold. Please. Please. I'm begging you.

*GEORGE squeezes Zorah tightly, tighter than ever before. A long struggle follows, as Zorah tries to get to the door, it becomes half hug, half tussle. Zorah breaks free for a brief moment, she makes for the door.*

Joan:           Don't, don't please...don't go the Downs way, whatever you do, it's dark, dangerous, couldn't, couldn't see me hand in front of me face, the snow, you'll get lost, we'll never find you...Don't go, don't go!

Zorah:         I've got to go Nan.

*George regains his grip on her and the battle continues. The pair stop and for the briefest of moments and hug fully. George grows increasingly breathless throughout. The struggle then continues for a long moment, until eventually Zorah is able to pull fully away from George and exit into the snow.*

*George catches his breath.*

*Joan cries.*

George:        (To Joan) I'll get her, I'll get her back.

*George exits into the snow. Fade to black. A fox cries in the near distance.*

### Scene Three

*Epsom Downs. 11.00pm Heavy snow falls. George hunts for Zorah who is nowhere to be seen.*

George: Zorah! Zorah! Zorah! Zorah!

*George breathes.*

George: Zorah! Zorah! Zorah! Zorah!

*George breathes more heavily than before.*

George: Zorah! Zorah! Zorah! Zorahhhhh!

*George wheezes violently.*

George: Zorahhhhh!

*George grabs his chest tightly and collapses on the floor.*

*After a moment Joan discovers George, she gasps as she hurries to him*

Joan: George! George!

*Joan screams and then weeps.*

Joan: Zorah! Zorah! Zorah! Zorah! HELP! HELP ME! HELP ME! PLEASE!  
PLEASE! HELP ME! GRANDAD!!! GRANDAD!!! IT'S GRANDAD!!!  
GEORGE! GEORGE! PLEASE! HELP ME! GRANDAD!!! GRANDAD!!!  
IT'S GRANDAD!!! PLEASE! HELP! HELP ME! HELP! GRANDAD!!!  
GRANDAD!!! GRANDAD!!!

*Joan continues to weep helplessly for a long moment.*

*Eventually, Zorah slowly returns.*

*Upon seeing George on the ground, Zorah rushes to him.*

Zorah: Grandad, Grandad, Grandad, Grandad.

*Zorah breathes. Joan looks on. Zorah quickly removes her coat and scarf; she wraps them around George's body. Zorah stares at George and then shakes him vigorously.*

Zorah: Grandad, Gran.dad, Gran.dad, Gran.dad.

*Zorah lets go of George. She starts to hunt in her pockets.*

Zorah: Where's my. My. Phone?!

*Zorah searches ravenously in the snow. She looks at George's body, at the coat. She gently searches for her mobile phone in a pocket. She retrieves it, she dials 999.*

Zorah: (On the telephone) Hello. Ambulance. It's...my...my...my Gran.dad, Zorah, Zorah Minhas. He's collap.sed. He's. Seventy. Seven. The. Downs. Epsom. Downs. I. I don't. know. Near. Near. The. Estate. I. Can't. What. What. Do. I. No. Ok. No. No. Heart. His Heart. Attack. Attacks. And. Asthma. Yes. Ashtma. Please. Cold. Cold. Ok. Ok. Hurry. Hurr. Rry.

*Zorah puts the phone to one side.*

Zorah: (To Joan) Ambulance. (To George) ambulance is coming.

*Zorah attempts to remove her tightly fitted jumper from her body. She struggles to remove it. She indicates for Joan to hold the sleeve. Joan remains in a little trance.*

Zorah: (To Joan) Take. It!

*Beat*

Zorah: (To Joan) Take. It!

*Zorah shakes her arm at Joan.*

Zorah: (To Joan) Take. My - !

*Joan takes Zorah's sleeve. Zorah quickly removes her jumper. She wraps it tightly over George's body. Zorah stands, she shouts out to the Downs.*

Zorah: HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP!  
HE.LP!

*Zorah breathes. JOAN shivers. Zorah moves further away from George and Joan, she shouts again:*

Zorah: HE.LP! HE.LP - !

Joan: Co.me ba.ck! Co.me ba.ck! Co.me ba.ck!

*Zorah huddles back with GEORGE and JOAN.*

Zorah: HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP!  
HE.LP!

*Zorah breathes. JOAN screams with her, but is much weaker.*

Zorah and Joan: HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP!  
HE.LP! HE.LP!

*Joan stops breathless. Zorah continues.*

Zorah: HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP! HE.LP!

*Zorah coughs. She loses her breath. Joan goes to scream. ZORAH places her hand over Joan's mouth.*

Zorah: Nan, I'm gon.na see, I'm gon.na go and see. If I ca.n. If I can ge.t  
some.one, so.me h.elp –

*Joan wraps herself around George, Zorah wraps herself around both George and Joan.*

*Pause*

*The snow continues to fall.*

Zorah: Na.n, gon.a

*Zorah tries to pull herself away.*

Joan: N.o.

Zorah: Fo.r he.lp.

Joan: N.o. D.on't lea.ve us. Pleas.e. Do.n't lea.ve u.s. he.re.

*Joan leans as close to Zorah as she can.*

*Joan moans with the pain of the cold.*

Joan: O.h. o.h. o.h. o.h. o.h. o.h.

Zorah: S.ee. Go.t. t.o..t.o...

Joan: D.o.n't. g.o. ple.as.e ple.as.e. D.o.n't. Aban.do.n. Us.

Zorah: I'm go.nna co.me bac.k

Joan: Th.e ba.by, th.e ba.by, y.ou mus.tn't.

*Zorah tries to gently pull away.*

Zorah: *(To herself)* O.H G.OD.!

*Beat*

*Zorah attempts to stand, Joan holds her down tightly.*

Joan: Th.e ba.by, th.e ba.by.

*Beat*

Joan:            Ju.st a lit.tle whi.le... ju.st st.ay fo.r a lit.tle whi.le... m.e an.d you ca.n  
ke.ep hi.m war.m, w.e go.t t.o ke.ep hi.m w.ar.m - ha.ven.'t w.e –

*Zorah pulls away harder than before. Joan grabs her. She bites Zorah's ear. It bleeds.*

*Zorah roars with pain.*

Joan:            W.e'll di.e if y.ou lea.ve u.s.

*Beat*

Joan:            Sor.ry. So.rry. Bu.t w.e defin.ite.ly wil.l. We. W.ill Ambu.lan.ce  
Ambu.lan.ce. So.o.n. So.on. So.on. Y.ou. Sa.i.d. Wa.it. Wa.it.

*Long pause*

*Zorah huddles closely with Joan and George. The snow continues to fall.*

*After a long moment a haunting cry is heard in the nearby distance.*

Joan:            Wh.at's that?

Zorah:          No.thin.g. No.thin.g.

*Zorah huddles closely with Joan and George. The snow falls even heavier than before.*

Joan:            G.et th.at snow o.ff hi.m. Get tha.t sno.w off Gra.nd.ad.

*Zorah gently removes snow from George's neck and face. The snow continues to fall.*

*Silence*

*A haunting cry is heard in the nearby distance.*

*Joan shivers and gives an almost frozen whimper.*

Zorah:          Sha.ll we si.ng a s.on.g? Co.m.e on Gra.nd.ad, sin.g, a.a.a.a...

Joan:            O.h n.o. pl.ea.se.

Zorah:          Wh.a.t was th.a.t? Ho.w. di.d it g.o Na.n? Ho.w d.id i.t g.o...

Joan:            H.e ma.kes the.m up, I don't kn.ow the.m –

Zorah:          Yo.u do, you d.o...

*Beat*

Zorah: Yo.u do.

*Zorah hums the tune to 'Ain't it a pity.'*

*Zorah starts to sing.*

Zorah: A.in't i.t a pi.ty sh.e'd, s.he'd o.n.ly -

*Joan sings softly, Zorah follows her lead singing loudly and out of tune.*

Joan and Zorah: Ain't it a pi.ty sh.e'd o.n.ly one titt.y to fe.ed the ba.by on,  
to fe.ed the ba.by on. A.in't it a p.ity sh.e'd onl.y one tit.ty  
to fee.d th.e ba.by on, to fee.d the ba.by on.

*The cry grows even closer.*

*Joan shivers more viciously than before. Zorah embraces her. The snow continues to fall.*

Joan: He lo.ve.d you. He lo.ve,d you w.ith all his he.art.

Zorah: He's n.ot dea.d, h.e's n.ot gon.na die, w.e'r.e ke.eping h.im war.m

Joan: Do.n't think, do.n't let hi.m, don't thi.nk. H.e di.d it o.ut of lo.ve, W.e did e.ver.yth.ing o.ut of lov.e.

*Joan shivers viciously.*

Zorah: I'm so.rry. I'm so.rr.y.

Joan: Lo.ve.d you. Lov.ed yo.u bes.t in all t.he worl.d.

*Beat*

*Joan nods.*

Joan: W.e was scared.Ju.st. S.car.ed. Told him. I.I.I. Told him. Ma,de him.  
Me. Said get rid of h,im. G,et rid. Bas.tar.d Or I'll ta.ke th.e ba.by and  
run aw.ay. Eas.ier to hide, jus.t th.e tw.o of us, eas.ier to prote.ct you,  
ea.sier. Sa.fer. Sa.fer. Sa.fer. I ma.de, ma.de h.im. Ma.de him hurt him.  
Ju.st en.o.ugh to sca.re hi.m of.f. Pe.tr.ify h.im. Awa.y. Awa.y. Fr.om  
yo.u. G.et ri.d. G.et ri.d. G.et ri,d of da ve.rmi.n. Ve.rmi.n. H.e w.ou.ldn't  
te.l.l ya be.cau.se he was pro.tec.ting m.e. Bu.t I ma.de hi.m, be.cau.se  
I lo.ve.d yo.u, di.d.n't wa.nn.a lo.os.e you, d.id.n't wa.nt y.ou  
tak.en...lo.ve.d yo.u...

*Joan holds Zorah's face in her hands. The snow continues to fall.*

Joan: Lov.ed you. Lov.ed yo.u be.st in al.l the w.or.ld.



*Silence*

Joan:           Pl.e.a.se do.n't g.o. Do.n't le.a.ve us. Lo.ve y.ou. Lo.ve yo.u be.st in al.l  
                  th.e wo.rld. Lo.ve you, lo.ve y.ou, lo.ve yo.u –

*Zorah gently places her fingers on Joan's lips.*

Zorah:           Lo.ve yo.u, lo.ve yo.u, lo.ve yo.u to.o, I'm s.or.ry, I'm s.or.ry, I'm s.or.ry.

Joan:           No.t go.ing, no.t go.ing n.o, n.o –

Zorah:           N.o...

*Zorah takes off her t-shirt, she places it over George, on her torso she now wears nothing but a vest. Zorah and Joan huddle around the body for what seems like an eternity. Snow falls heavier and heavier. Zorah's face and body is now completely covered in white snow. She gently tries to remove pieces of the snow, but it proves an impossible task, as more and more snow falls.*

*After a long moment the haunting cry, grows closer and closer, until one loud shriek is heard.*

Joan:           Wh.at?

*The cry is heard even closer.*

Zorah:           No.thi.ng.

*The cry is heard even closer.*

Joan:           Hol.d -

*The cry is heard even closer.*

Joan:           Hol.d -

*The cry is heard even closer.*

Joan:           Ba.sta.rd!

*The cry is heard even closer.*

Joan:           Ba.sta.rd!

Zorah:           G. -

Joan:           Ba.sta.rd!

Zorah:           G. -

*The cry is heard even closer.*

*Zorah stands, but Joan pushes her back.*

Joan: (To Zoah) B.AC.K!

*The fox growls at Joan.*

*Joan growls out into the distance. The fox growls at Joan.*

Joan: Ba.sta.rd!

Zorah: G. -

Joan: Ba.sta.rd!

Zorah: G. -

Joan: (To the fox) B.AC.K!

*The fox's growl grows closer. Joan gather snows and begins to repeatedly throw snowballs into the distance. The fox and Joan continue to bark and snarl at one another, eventually as Joan weakens Zorah too throws a snowball at the fox. The fox whimpers and its cry can no longer be heard. It is Zorah that throws the last snowball. Zorah sobs. Joan falls to the floor, she begins to shiver uncontrollably. Zorah removes her remaining vest; all she now wears is a black bra. Zorah places the vest around a shivering, almost unconscious Joan. Zorah weeps as she claws and scratches more viciously than ever before at her now intensely irritated skin, her torso is also ravaged by eczema.*

*She continues to scratch and scratch, until eventually, she pulls all of her skin off.*

*All that remains is raw flesh on both her face and torso, as far as her breasts. She roars.*

*Long pause*

*All Joan can manage is a few noises of despair at what she sees Zorah do. After a long moment, Joan uses all her remaining strength to gather up some snow. She digs deeply in the snow and the snow she gathers is also littered with English earth. She gently places the snow on Zorah's raw flesh, she holds Zorah in her arms.*

*Long pause*

*Joan tenderly holds and examines Zorah's baby bump. She holds the bump and Zorah lovingly in her arms; she rocks them for a long moment.*

Joan: Co.me he.re. Co.me he.re. S.sh. S.sh. O.k, O.k, O.k, O.k.

*Beat*

*Joan gathers more snow and places it on Zorah's raw flesh.*

Joan: E.very.thi.ng go.ing t.o b.e o.k n.ow. E.very.thi.ng go.ing t.o b.e o.k  
n.ow. E.very.thi.ng go.ing t.o b.e o.k, o.k, o.k, o.k, o.k, k, k, k, k, k, k, k,  
k, k, k...L.ov.e yo.u, lo.v.e you b.es.t in a.ll th.e w.or.ld

*Long pause*

*In the far distance there is a single flash of white and blue light.*

*Fade to black.*

*The end.*

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## Appendix

Image One:



Image Two:

