

WHITLEY BAY

By 140174814

Characters

ALEX

Scene one: (almost) 10

Scene two: 20

Scene three: 30

JESS

Scene one: 8

Scene two: 18

Scene three: 28

Setting

The first two scenes take place in Alex's bedroom in the family home. In the second scene the bedroom is messy. The third scene takes place in the kitchen of Alex's flat.

SCENE 1

ALEX's bedroom in the family home. ALEX stands in the middle of the room. He is wearing a black funeral suit that is too big for him. JESS is behind him, also in funeral clothes, trying to do a handstand against the wall.

Jess: Alex, look! Look I can nearly do it. Watch.

JESS fails at doing a handstand.

Jess: It's too hard when you've got a skirt on. Can you hold my legs up if I kick off?

PAUSE

Ally?

JESS looks at ALEX. JESS picks up a 'Fruit Shoot' bottle lid from the floor.

She slides it over her thumb. She stands in front of ALEX.

Watch this!

JESS holds out the lid on her thumb.

Now you see it.

JESS quickly throws her thumb over her shoulder, and conceals the lid in her fist. She brings her thumb back.

Now you don't!

JESS throws her hand back over her shoulder bringing the lid back.

Now you see it.

JESS throws her thumb over her shoulder and conceals the lid again.

Now you... don't. What shall we play? You can choose, I'll play anything, apart from the Star Wars game. What do you want to play Ally?

BEAT

Ask Mum if we can play out, come on.

JESS walks towards the door.

Will you get the scooter out the shed? I did it last time so now it's your turn.

ALEX begins to cry. JESS looks worried. JESS walks towards ALEX and reaches out a hand as if she's going to comfort him.

Ally...

JESS pulls her hand back.

Shall we play an imaginary game? I could be the teacher and you can be the boy I'm teaching. Or... can we play big cats?

JESS waits briefly for ALEX to respond. ALEX is still crying.

Let's vote. Put your hand up if you want to play the teacher game... put your hand up if you want to play big cats?

JESS puts her own hand up.

Okay so I'll be a tiger and I'm trying to protect my cubs, this is my den, and you can be... you can be a panther! And then when we get to the middle here we've got to fight. So if you go in your den here.

JESS takes ALEX by the hand and guides him to the opposite corner. She makes him sit down.

Prowl about and then when you see me you have to start creeping over.

JESS crawls about pretending to look after her cubs. ALEX slumps forward, crying.

You have to prowl about Alex, pretend you've suddenly seen me, go on!

JESS continues to play, ALEX continues to cry.

Fine, I'll see you.

JESS crawls about then stops, pretending to see ALEX. JESS creeps silently towards ALEX, then leaps on him. JESS scuffles; roars and growls, trying to draw ALEX into play fighting.

Come on, you've got to fight me!

ALEX lies on the floor, sobbing loudly. JESS moves away.

You think of a game. I don't know what to play. You choose. Please Alex, I can't think of anything. You're the oldest you decide.

ALEX begins to hyperventilate. JESS stands up.

I'm going to ask Mum if I can do Hama beads, do you want to come?

BEAT

I'll tell Mum you've gone to bed. Night Ally.

JESS switches off the light; we can hear ALEX hyperventilating in the dark.

SCENE 2

ALEX's bedroom, in the family home. The room is a mess. It is lit by a bedside lamp.

From offstage we hear banging and shuffling.

Jess: *(Offstage)* Just try and be quiet.

JESS and ALEX enter stage. ALEX is drunk, he leans on JESS who tries to lead him quietly to his bed. ALEX trips and crashes to the floor. He lies on the floor, laughing loudly.

Jess: *(Hissing)* Get up, get up!

JESS heaves ALEX to his feet, ALEX keeps laughing.

Jess: Alex you're being an actual dickhead.

ALEX laughs even harder.

Jess: Be quiet!

Alex: Shhh!

JESS guides ALEX towards his bed.

Alex: Jess you are THE funniest person I know. Look at you with your- shhh-

Jess: Just get into bed.

ALEX lowers himself on to the bed, then grabs JESS. He tickles her and tries to make her play fight.

Jess: Get off me you prick!

ALEX keeps his arm round her, scrubs her hair with his fist, laughing. JESS fights her way free. She stares at him, furious. JESS looks away and folds her arms across her chest. ALEX scrambles by the side of the bed, unscrews the lid off a bottle of Vodka.

Jess: This room is disgusting. I can't believe Mum and Dad still let you live here.

ALEX puts the lid of the Vodka bottle over his thumb and holds it out to JESS.

Alex: Now you see it.

ALEX throws the lid over his shoulder.

Alex: Now you don't.

ALEX pulls his thumb back.

Alex: Now you- oh shit, where's it gone?

ALEX scrambles about on the floor. JESS looks at the room in disgust.

Jess: They don't charge you rent, you don't even do your own laundry /

Alex: *(Laughing)* Laundry?!

Jess: You're not living in the real world you know. You're spoilt and-

ALEX pulls the bottle of Vodka out from down the side of his bed.

Alex: C'mon let's get pissed together and then you'll stop nagging me.

Jess: *(Scared/disgusted)* You keep that in your room?

Alex: I bet half the students in your block have a bottle of Vodka in the wardrobe.

Jess: You're not **at** Uni though are you?

JESS turns away and starts folding clothes and pushing them into the chest of drawers. ALEX stands on the bed, fiddling with a CD player on the shelf above his bed.

Jess: I'm working my arse off at Uni whilst idiots like you wallow about-

The intro to 'Mr Brightside' by The Killers blasts out from the CD player.

Jess: *(Slowly)* Turn it off.

ALEX stares at her, daring her to make him. He turns up the volume.

Alex: I'M COMING OUT OF MY CAGE AND I'VE BEEN DOING JUST FINE!

GOTTA GOTTA BE DOWN BECAUSE I WANT IT ALL!

Jess: Turn it / off!

Alex: IT STARTED OUT WITH A KISS / HOW DID IT END UP

Jess: Turn it off!

Alex: LIKE THIS? / IT WAS ONLY A KISS, IT WAS ONLY A KISS!

Jess: Mum and Dad are asleep!

Alex: Come on Jess everyone loves this, it's sick.

Jess: I'm sick of you thinking you can-

Alex: WHILE SHE'S HAVING A SMOKE AND HE'S TAKING A DRAG /

JESS scrambles on to the bed and lunges at the CD player. ALEX pulls her back and they wrestle each other to reach it. ALEX puts one hand on JESS' head and holds her at arm's length.

Jess: Alex, seriously!

ALEX suddenly lets JESS go, she falls forward but he catches her and falls with her off the bed.

Alex: SAVED YOUR LIFE!

JESS jumps to her feet and pulls the plug on the CD player. ALEX stays sprawled on the floor, laughing. JESS stands next to the bed looking hurt.

PAUSE

Jess: Why do I have to act like the sensible, older one?

Alex: Because you've got your head up your arse and you don't know how to have fun anymore.

Jess: I have plenty of fun, I just don't have a drink problem.

Alex: I'm just a teeny tiny bit drunk Jess, you don't need to sign me up for AA meetings just yet.

Jess: You're completely wasted.

Alex: It's nearly Christmas; everyone gets pissed at Christmas.

Jess: I don't.

Alex: No you spend time memorizing sonnets and-

Jess: You're just jealous because you're still stuck in the same town with the same people.

Alex: (*Posh accent, mocking*) Gosh darling I'm awfully jealous aren't I? Because your life is so wonderful with your 'laundry' and Chaucer and pesto-

Jess: You're pathetic.

Alex: I know you are but what am I?

Jess: You're not a teenager anymore. You can't just go out every night and get drunk or high-

Alex: Yes I can, look.

Jess: It's not fair on Mum and Dad. It's not fair on me. I'm home for two weeks and so far I've spent every evening-

Alex: Aw poor golden child, off writing about Shakespeare and shit-

Jess: Oh grow up, the whole world doesn't revolve around you Alex, you need to get off your arse and do something.

Alex: I might go for a drive.

PAUSE

Jess: Are you fucking kidding me?

Alex: Wanna come for a spin?

Jess: You're not even- you're not even grateful, are you? You were given a second chance at life Alex, you of all people should know what happens when people fuck about on roads-

BEAT

Jess: Alex I didn't mean-

Alex: Get lost now Jess. I'm going to bed.

Jess: Alex, I'm-

Alex: Goodnight.

ALEX switches the lamp off.

SCENE 3

In ALEX's flat, JESS and ALEX are sat at the dining table. The table is covered with the remnants of a meal.

Jess: That was incredible.

Alex: Thanks.

Jess: I mean it, much better than that place we used to go to.

Alex: I'll get Tony to put that on the menu, 'Chef's sister says the tagliatelle is better than the Italian round the corner'.

Jess: Very funny.

ALEX stretches and yawns.

Alex: I'm at work at six.

Jess: Yeah, I best be heading off.

They both stand, ALEX begins to stack the plates. JESS hovers awkwardly.

Jess: *(Rushed)* I went to Whitley Bay yesterday.

Alex: Sorry?

Jess: *(Clearly)* I went to Whitley Bay yesterday.

ALEX freezes, then continues clearing the table, noisily.

Jess: It's just a normal place to everyone else, they've all just forgotten. There were so many kids playing by the beach and stuff... I thought maybe if I saw it for myself, maybe I'd-

PAUSE

Jess: I'm sorry Alex. We should have talked about this ages ago but the longer-

ALEX points at the salt and pepper pots.

Alex: Pass me those.

JESS passes them to him.

Jess: After the funeral Mum said, ‘Don’t try and talk to him about this, it’ll be easier for him if we don’t talk about it’. I knew deep down it wasn’t right but how could I /

ALEX passes JESS a cloth without looking at her.

Alex: Wipe the table down please.

Jess: Alex we need to talk about /

Alex: WE don’t need to talk about anything. You need to show yourself out and I need to sort this mess. It’s late.

Jess: Ally /

Alex: Don’t fucking call me that.

Jess: That’s what I always /

Alex: You lost the right to call me pet names. Wipe the table down or fuck off.

JESS wipes the table, ALEX continues to clear up. JESS finishes and hands the cloth back to ALEX. ALEX takes the cloth without looking at JESS and begins tucking the chairs under the table.

Jess: When you’re ready to talk-

Alex: I’m not taking part in your shitty therapy session so /

Jess: Eight year old me didn’t know/

Alex: And what does twenty eight year old you think? That you could just walk in here, give a speech about how you’re here for me and it’s good to talk?

Jess: I thought it was time that I /

Alex: We had a kid’s party at the restaurant on Saturday. It was a Star Wars theme, which basically meant Tony did some light saber balloon modelling and we renamed all the pizzas after characters. The birthday boy cried because I gave him the slice of cake with Chew Bacca on and not Han Solo. I said to Tony afterwards what the fuck

does that kid have to cry about? He said don't be such a tight bastard; he's only ten. I imagined this ten year old having to watch his best friend dying in front of him. Then I imagined him having to go to his own birthday party two weeks later and being expected to act like he was having a good time. I imagined him holding in every thought, every picture that came into his head for the rest of his life because nobody ever let him talk about it.

BEAT

All I should have had to cry about on my tenth birthday was whether or not I got the slice of cake with Han Solo on it.

BEAT

Do you know what it's like knowing your best mate died because the driver swerved to miss you?

BEAT

No, you don't know because you never fucking asked.

JESS starts to cry.

Alex: Don't you start crying, that's a bitchy thing to do.

Jess: I can't help it I'm /

Alex: Stop crying.

Jess: I'm /

Alex: Stop.

Jess: Al /

Alex: Just stop it.

Jess: I can't just stop it!

Alex: Exactly.

PAUSE

JESS crying, she sinks down onto a chair. ALEX sighs.

Alex: Great, now I feel like a tosser.

JESS continues crying. ALEX scratches the back of his head, looks away from her.

Alex: Look it's fine, just go home. I'll clear this up and then we can pretend it didn't happen. We've had enough practice.

JESS wipes her eyes and reaches over to the wine bottle. She unscrews the lid, puts it on her thumb. She does the vanishing trick.

Jess: Do you remember when you taught me this?

Alex: I wish I never had.

Jess: It was the day you took me to the park and I bust my lip. I couldn't stop crying, there was so much blood I thought I was going to die. And then you stood in front of me and you did this trick. I stopped crying. I stopped feeling scared. You made it all vanish.

Alex: You can't make it vanish you just hide it.

BEAT

Jess: I wanted to make all the horrible stuff you were feeling go away, just like you did; but I didn't know how. I'm sorry I didn't Ally. I'm really sorry.

JESS cries.

PAUSE

ALEX walks over and hugs JESS. JESS clings to him, still crying.

Alex: I don't want you to fix anything. I just need to know you're- that if I need to say stuff out loud...

JESS nods expectantly.

Alex: I mean I don't feel like I have anything to say right now but, next time.

JESS nods. ALEX holds the palm of his hand flat out to JESS. She places the lid on it. They look at it.

END