

STIMULI

Choose **one** of the following three stimuli and devise a piece of drama based on it. You should work in groups of between two and six performers. Your piece should last approximately 15 minutes.

In the Written examination, you will be asked questions about your piece that will cover both practical and theoretical issues.

Stimulus 1

Quotation: 'Better three hours too soon than a minute too late'
From William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* [Act 2, Scene 2]

Stimulus 2

Poem: *When I Think About Myself* by Maya Angelou

When I think about myself,
I almost laugh myself to death,
My life has been one great big joke,
A dance that's walked,
A song that's spoke,
I laugh so hard I almost choke,
When I think about myself.

Sixty years in these folks' world,
The child I works for calls me girl,
I say "Yes ma'am" for working's sake.
Too proud to bend,
Too poor to break,
I laugh until my stomach ache,
When I think about myself.

My folks can make me split my side,
I laughed so hard I nearly died,
The tales they tell sound just like lying,
They grow the fruit,
But eat the rind,
I laugh until I start to crying,
When I think about my folks.

Stimulus 3

Photograph: *The Potato Farmer* by Stuart Franklin (1991)



EXTRACT**Taken from *American Days*, by Stephen Poliakoff**

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Stephen Poliakoff's play *American Days* was first performed in London, in 1974. The play is set in London on a day and night in July.

The location is the Listening Room of IBC, an international record company in London. The Listening Room is a large, very plush room, used for auditioning and entertaining artists, and covered from wall to wall in blue carpet. Among the features of the room are a piano, a fridge and an aquarium.

Three teenagers have travelled to the IBC offices from various places around the UK, hoping for an audition and a record deal. The drama explores the ruthless and inaccessible world of the music industry and the way in which young people can be manipulated as they attempt to enter it.

The play is in two Acts. The extract consists of the whole of Act 1.

Characters

Tallulah	17 years old, her hair is dyed a bright orange. Broad intelligent face, loud laugh.
Gary	18 years old, medium height, thin. Mercurial manner, a charming smile.
Lorraine	17 years old, about five feet high. Very pale sharp face, dark intelligent eyes.
Ian	29 years old, short hair. Fashionable well-cut suit, bright green shoes. Educated accent, laconic self-mocking smile.
Sherman	Late thirties, small stocky figure. Enormous energy, dark piercing eyes, a very strong presence. His accent is classless.
American (Moss)	Talks to Sherman on the phone from the USA.

ACT 1

Scene 1

The large Listening Room of IBC, an international record company in London. Blue carpet. Gold discs on the walls. A sleek, long room with plants and an aquarium.

TALLULAH, *aged seventeen, is sitting at the piano. As the lights come up, she's plonking down on one note and then a second note, idly doodling on the piano. For a long moment we watch her bent over the piano. GARY enters, carrying a guitar.* 5

GARY: Don't mind me.

TALLULAH: [*Glances round at him, then back at the piano*] I wasn't.

GARY: Are you here for the same reason I am? 10

TALLULAH: I expect so. I don't know. [*She plays a note.*]

GARY: [*Sees fridge.*] Why is there a fridge here? [*He pulls the fridge's door.*] It's locked. Wonder what's inside. [*Looks into aquarium*] They've got snails in here. They must have eaten all the fish. [*Taps glass, pause*] Have you felt this carpet? It sort of oozes under your feet, doesn't it, feel it. It's down all the corridors, it's on the walls of some rooms. 15

Pause

TALLULAH: I was shown right in here.

GARY: I've come to see this important guy – I got an invitation.

IAN enters. He is in his late twenties, fashionably dressed, he smiles a pleasant, professional smile. 20

IAN: There you are. Now, one of you is either very early or extremely late. In fact it's quite possible you're both late. [*He smiles.*] Which, in the circumstances, is quite helpful. So we'll forgive you. Anyway, welcome to IBC – glad you could visit us, to sound a formal note for a moment. Hope it will prove profitable for all of us. This is what we call the Listening Room, newly decorated as you can see, which we use for all our interviews and discussions [*He smiles.*] and the odd midnight session. [*Slight pause*] You must be Gary and Tallulah then. 25

GARY: Yes, I'm Gary. 30

LORRAINE *enters.*

IAN: [*Calm, but quite sharp*] Now what the hell are you doing here?

LORRAINE: I have an appointment.

IAN: Not any longer. You're Lorraine, right?

LORRAINE: Yes. 35

IAN: Didn't you get the telegram we sent? Your interview's been cancelled. [*Pause*] We've had to cancel it.

LORRAINE: What, you mean you didn't want me to come after all?

IAN: Because time is shorter than I anticipated. Why didn't you get the telegram? I sent it personally. 40

LORRAINE: [*Quiet*] So you want me to go again.

Slight pause

- IAN: No – now you're here, you're here. Some squeezing will have to go on. [Looking at them all] So first, here are some name badges if you can just fill them in, with your first name. [Smiles] In capitals if possible, that saves us a lot of time. 45
- GARY: [Taking badge, quite polite tone] Right, OK, are you him, then, the guy we're meeting?
- IAN: [Smiles] Not quite, no. I'm the guy who spotted you. [Looking at GARY] I tried to meet you for a drink afterwards I remember, but I don't think you showed. Now you're being seen by Don Sherman, which means you're in luck, because he's the top guy you can see. 50
- TALLULAH: Good ... great.
- IAN: [Carrying on] I just hope he'll have time to see all of you – properly.
- TALLULAH's face immediately falls. 55
- IAN: I'm sure he will. People have waited five years to see him, and I'm not joking, but fortunately you're not in that position. He will have heard your tapes, so he's prepared, he knows something of your music. [He smiles.] When you see him it's important to keep him here, not waste his time, answer his questions, because once he leaves he just doesn't come back. Not a chance. You remember that – OK? 60
- TALLULAH: I'm beginning to feel a bit peculiar.
- IAN: There's no need for any of you to feel hostile about being here because though you may find the surroundings a bit alienating, we're very used to that. [He smiles.] And know how to handle it. So don't worry. [Slight pause] Now if those of you that haven't done so could check in at security, picking your way over the alsatians, you can get your identity cards, then you'll be able to use our full facilities. Our restaurant – visitors' section – squash courts, television room and the bar, free of charge. [He smiles.] If you don't do that, you'll have to pay through the teeth. [The loudspeaker telephone rings.] 70
- SHERMAN: [Off stage, speaking via the telephone] Ian ... Ian.
- IAN: Yes, I'm here.
- SHERMAN: There you are. I've tried every room in the building. What on earth are you doing down there? 75
- IAN: I didn't know you'd arrived.
- SHERMAN: No, we just got in – come on up. It's rather nice and empty up here.
- IAN: No, Don – I'm here with these kids, Don – the ones you're going to see, remember?
- SHERMAN: What kids? I have no intention of seeing any kids. 80
- IAN looks embarrassed but keeps his cool.
- SHERMAN: [His voice continuing] I have no kids on my schedule – Ian!
- IAN: [To kids] If you could all check in now with security.
- GARY: [Looking at telephone, grins] Does that mean five years of our lives are going to go? 85
- IAN: Go on.
- GARY exits with LORRAINE, both looking worried.
- TALLULAH: [Not moving, she stands across the room looking at Ian.] I've already done that, checked in.
- SHERMAN: [His voice has been continuing.] Ian, are you there? ... What are you doing? 90
- IAN: Yes, I'm here. You remember the kids I wanted you to see, there are three of them.

SHERMAN: Three of them! I haven't conceivably got time to see three of them.
 IAN: I know it's a bit difficult – and you've just got in. [*His voice suddenly sharp*] But you've got to see them. [*He smiles.*] And it would be a real help to me, for obvious reasons. 95

SHERMAN: Not that again. I keep on telling you not to worry.
 IAN: I know and I hope you're right – but you must see them, Don. [*Silence*] Are you still there? 100

TALLULAH: [*Into loudspeaker telephone, right over it*] Come on – come on down here, we're waiting.

SHERMAN: Who's that?
 TALLULAH: Me.
 IAN: That was one of the kids. 105

SHERMAN: Really. And you're waiting to see me?
 TALLULAH: Yes – I'm here – in this Listening Room.
 SHERMAN: And you want me to come down? [*Pause*]
 TALLULAH: Yeah. [*She is right up to telephone.*] Quickly. [*Pause*]
 SHERMAN: Good. Good. Fine. I shall try to make it. 110
 TALLULAH: [*Standing by loudspeaker telephone*] Hello? Have you gone? [*Silence*] He's coming now.
 IAN: [*Leaning against wall, smiles*] That was close.

BLACKOUT

Scene 2

GARY *is standing by the door, staring down the passage.* 115

GARY: He's coming. I can see him ... [*He moves sharply away from the door and across the room.*] He's coming right now.

Pause, nobody enters

TALLULAH: Well, where is he then?
 GARY: [*Remains across the room away from the door*] He must have stopped. 120
 Got stuck in the passage. [*Pause, watching the door*] Maybe he caught himself on the radiator.

TALLULAH: Maybe he turned back.
 LORRAINE: I don't believe he's out there. [*Glancing over to door*] What does he look like? 125
 GARY: Look like ...? He's sort of squat looking. A bit misshapen. Little chubby legs.

SHERMAN *moves into the room as GARY is saying this last line.*
 LORRAINE *is standing against the far wall. Strong sunlight across room.*
 SHERMAN *stops for a split second as he enters the room and glances round, hardly seeming to register the kids. He moves into the room. He is holding a bundle of letters, two of which he has already opened. He does not look at the kids at all, but moves across the room and puts the letters down on a small table. He stands looking down at the table, silence.* 130

SHERMAN: [*Not looking at them*] What day of the week is it? 135
The kids look at each other. He doesn't look at them.

GARY: Friday.

- SHERMAN: [Quiet] Friday. [He undoes letter with paper knife, making sharp movements. Smiling to himself in a matter-of-fact way] I can't get people here to understand that I like opening my own letters. [He is working his way through mail, summing up the contents of each letter with a very quick glance.] If you try to pick a single envelope up, your secretaries grab it back at once. And they just won't let go. You have to tear it out of their hands. [Flick of paper knife – fast] So I hijack my post on its way down the passage. [He undoes letter, a wadge of bank notes comes out, he pushes it to one side.] More wasted money. [He opens another letter.] During the worst of the bomb scares, this company had a special American come over to open all our mail. He was about nine feet tall. Blond. He opened every letter for a year. He used to wear white gloves. Artists get sent a lot of strange things. He's doing the same job now in our Rome office. He'll lose a hand soon. [He looks up, but hardly seems to take in the kids.] Terrific. [He smiles.] Smell of the new carpet – if anything it's stronger than last week. 140
- TALLULAH: [Quite loud] Does he know we're here do you think? 145
- Silence. SHERMAN ignores this, he moves over to the fridge.* 155
- GARY: He's got a key. [He grins.] They must be a group of special people that are allowed to get in.
- The fridge is empty except for a bottle of milk.*
- SHERMAN: [Suddenly loud] I don't believe this! It's empty! It always happens in London. That's the second time in ten days! Each time I come back. They are meant to fill them up at the beginning of each week. I cannot believe that that is beyond them. [Sharp smile] I can only operate with a full fridge. It makes anything I have to do in here bearable. [He smiles.] I have lived off the contents of one of these for a month. [He smiles.] Never needed to go out of the building. [He picks up the phone and speaks into it.] No, which one are you? Sharon? Genista? Well, which are you? There's nothing in the fridge down here you realise. Yes, in the Listening Room. Except for a bottle of milk. No. I've just got in. Yes. Well do something now. And give me the new New York number. [Smiles] No, you just have to say it once. [He punches the number out on the phone.] Hello, it's DS here. No, I just got in. Is Moss there? No, no. I'll let him finish, for once. I'll hold. [He puts down the receiver and lets it lie on the table. He has poured milk into a glass and is sipping it. Moving from table sipping milk] I met three Germans on the plane. Young Germans. One of them was incredibly overweight. And you know what they were doing? They were going round the world without a break in fifty-six hours! They'd taken a bet to go round the world without stopping. Rushing from one plane to another. They'd flown to Tokyo, then to Sydney, then across to Brazil, then to Los Angeles, and now they were coming back to Frankfurt via London. The last leg of their trip. They were really extraordinary, they'd become completely hysterical. Giggling and bouncing up and down in their seats and leaning across and tugging at my arm. They were wearing little party hats, coloured paper hats, and they had no control over their actions at all. Tickling each other furiously and rolling out into the middle of the gangway and they were all red round the eyes – totally gummed up. [He smiles.] It was fantastic. All for a bet! They were going to win it too. [He drinks the glass of milk.] 160
- GARY: Are we allowed to talk amongst ourselves while you're speaking? 165
- 170
- 175
- 180
- 185

Silence

SHERMAN: [*Looks at them*] Two girls and a boy. 190
 GARY: [*Half to himself*] At least he isn't blind.
 TALLULAH: Do you know who we are? [*Pause*] Have you listened to our tapes?
 LORRAINE: [*Quiet*] We were asked here you know. Sent for.
 GARY: Has he forgotten he's on the phone? [*Grins*] You're on the phone to New
 York! [*Pause*] 195
 SHERMAN: Have you got name badges?

They have all taken theirs off.

GARY: You want to know our names?
 SHERMAN: No, I want to see your name badges. I don't remember names. Could
 you put them on? 200
 TALLULAH: [*As she pins her name label on*] I'm Tallulah.
 SHERMAN: [*Reads off LORRAINE's badge*] Lorraine.
 GARY: I'm Gary.
 SHERMAN: [*As if he hasn't heard*] Have you got a name badge?

GARY *puts it on.* 205

SHERMAN: [*Reads*] Gary. I need to see names.
 GARY: [*Suddenly*] I wish you'd finish your phone call.
 TALLULAH: I don't think it really is to New York. [*Pause*] Are those noises from New
 York? [*Noises over telephone*] You've had it lying there for five minutes
 you know. You'll get your phone cut off. 210
 GARY: They probably get cheap rates because they use it so much – probably
 have their own private phone cable running under the Atlantic.
 LORRAINE: Have you listened to our tapes yet? [*Pause*] I don't think he knows why
 we're here.

TALLULAH: He doesn't seem to answer any questions at all. 215
 SHERMAN: [*He has been staring at them for the first time. He turns away.*] I've
 listened to a lot of tapes today, already. And I've only been in the building
 forty-five minutes. We get 200 tapes a week. People who have sent in
 little brown parcels of themselves singing. Often they're singing in the
 bath. [*Sharp*] I mean it. That's because that's where they sing best. We
 hear the water sloshing around in the background and the tape often
 smells of bath foam. They're all listened to. 220

*AMERICAN VOICE comes stabbing out of the telephone and during
 SHERMAN's telephone conversation it often mumbles in the background.
 SHERMAN moves round the room as he talks very fast, his manner
 quickening, speedy, professional, a totally different tone from the one
 for the kids. He raises his voice when he is far from the phone, drops it
 lower when he is close.* 225

AMERICAN: Hello ... are you there? ... hello ...
 SHERMAN: Moss, it's me. Yes ... I just got in. [*AMERICAN VOICE mumbles*] No –
 I arrived here just now – and there is nothing in the fridge! [*Smiling*]
 Nothing! No, a great yawning hole. Not even any ice, which takes some
 doing.

AMERICAN: It's different in Chicago.
 SHERMAN: [*Speedy, laughing*] No, the best one is in Michigan. [*Straight on*] You
 seen about Zat's single? As I said, it topped quarter of a million in a
 week. [*He moves abruptly.*] No, it's peaked. It won't do more. No, there'll
 235

be the usual slight wobble in and out for the next month. He's definitely broken Europe now. I thought this would be the one. Even Holland. Holland was really holding out, but he's broken that too. Only Australia. He seems to be out to lunch in Australia. Out to lunch completely. Only 25,000. I know ... three warehouses full of the single over there, it's pouring out of the windows apparently – they'll have to melt them. The promotion was wrong over there – they didn't listen as usual. *[His tone changes and becomes harder.]* Now Moss, are you listening to me? I have recommended ... on my recommendation ... we are going to terminate that contract. Yes, the artist we discussed last week, subject X, since I'm being observed as I talk ... *No*, it's been drying up for years for him. *No*, he was trailing badly even then. We have no reason to renew, I fall asleep when I hear anything of his now, we don't dare tour the idiot any more. *[Louder, firmer]* WE HAVE NO REASON TO RENEW. Yes, I remember that tour, of course. He looked wonderful. Yes, it's been settled. Now about the sleeve I was talking about – Yes – *No*, I phoned from the airport – the sleeve was rubbish. I didn't know what it was! *No*, I really didn't. I thought it was a lawnmower. I had to be told what it was. And the way she looked. She looked like a shoplifter – incredibly shift. Also if you hold it the wrong way up, upside down, it looks as if she's been cut in half. *No*, they should put her hands on the cover sleeve – *no*, I'm serious, the only bit of her that the camera likes, long bony hands, very white, very long fingers, like they belong to a dead person. Quite eerie. You should ask to see them next time. Yes – they can be holding something interesting ... Right, *no* I'll phone Zurich myself. I'm catching the last flight out tonight. Maybe earlier. *[He suddenly glares up at the kids.]* It depends. Goodbye. *[He slams down the phone.]*

The kids have been watching this fast performance in stunned silence. They continue to look at him in silence.

SHERMAN: *[Smiles]* There's no need to be nervous.

TALLULAH: We're not.

SHERMAN: It seems to be a nice day. *[He draws the blinds and curtains. The sunlight is entirely shut out, and the room is plunged into darkness.]* These curtains are already getting old.

TALLULAH: What are you doing?

The room is in almost total darkness.

SHERMAN: *[As he finishes drawing the curtains]* I spoke to one of you before I came down.

TALLULAH *is about to speak.* SHERMAN *has his back to them, he snaps.*

SHERMAN: I *don't* want to know which one it was. *[He turns.]* It's no secret that I didn't want to see any of you today – so if you would rather leave ...

TALLULAH: *[Loud]* *No.* *[Slight pause]* We wouldn't.

SHERMAN: *[Steely]* Now, when I ask you to do something, whatever it happens to be, I want your co-operation.

GARY: *[Grinning]* Do we have to be careful what we say and do, from now on?

SHERMAN: *[Suddenly]* I'm afraid before I go any further, you'll have to take those boots off.

TALLULAH: Who are you talking to ... !

SHERMAN: Could you please take those boots off?

- GARY: He can't be serious can he?
- TALLULAH *is wearing black gumboots.*
- SHERMAN: They are just distracting – I'm afraid I can't work with them – they'll have to come off. They confuse me. 290
- TALLULAH: [*Slowly takes boots off*] You get a kick out of this do you?
- SHERMAN: [*Sharp*] Small black gumboots, just like the Queen Mother; whenever people think of the Queen Mother, they think of her gumboots. [*He smiles.*] I have seen statistics. 295
- TALLULAH: [*Looking straight at him*] Is that all right or do you want me to take anything else off?
- Pause*
- SHERMAN: [*Matter-of-fact*] No. No, don't leave them where I can see them – put them in the fridge. [*Very sharp*] What was your name? 300
- GARY: [*He has just taken his badge off.*] Gary.
- SHERMAN: Then put it back on. [*He stares at them for a brief moment, then moves away.*]
- GARY: [*Half to himself*] Sadist.
- SHERMAN: [*Swings round*] Who said that? 305
- Slight pause*
- GARY: Me. It was me.
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] You're quite wrong. That is not something I am.
- GARY: [*Straight back*] That's all right then, they told us you just walk out without warning. Just like that. Bang. They said we've got to keep you here somehow otherwise we've blown it. Because you never come back ever. 310
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] You may get a warning.
- Uneasy pause for a second*
- LORRAINE: He's got yellow socks on – you know.
- TALLULAH: [*Nervous smile*] Yellow socks – what does that mean about him? 315
- SHERMAN: Could you go and stand against the far wall? All of you. Just go and stand against it ... Look at me.
- They line up on the far side of the stage against the wall. He looks across at them in a group, long pause*
- SHERMAN: Have any of you got a police record? 320
- LORRAINE: What do you want to know that for?
- GARY: [*Sharp grin*] Do we have to consider our answer carefully?
- SHERMAN: I need to know. It makes a difference to the company attitude. Have any of you?
- GARY: [*Half under his breath*] What the hell is he doing? 325
- LORRAINE: [*Quiet*] No – I have not.
- TALLULAH: No, I have not. [*Mock*] I swear on whatever you've got to swear on.
- Pause, SHERMAN looks at GARY.*
- GARY: [*Deliberately slowly*] I do ... not have one! He's giving us a shrewd look ... see, a piercing look. [*Nervous grin*] How are we doing so far then? 330

- TALLULAH: [*With mouth spray, raising it to her mouth*] I'm going to use this if I'm allowed to, it's for my throat, *my voice*. If I'm ever 'lucky' enough to perform for you. It contains eucalyptus.
- GARY: [*To SHERMAN*] That's not a criminal drug.
- Slight pause, SHERMAN turns. TALLULAH is holding her arm. LORRAINE has looked away. SHERMAN feels telephone receiver restlessly.* 335
- SHERMAN: [*His tone alters, business like*] Tallulah, come here, please.
- He is in the middle of the stage; she has to cross to get to him. She hesitates.* 340
- SHERMAN: No, come here.
- TALLULAH: Come where?
- SHERMAN: [*Staring at her*] Just here. Don't worry, just come here. Nothing is going to happen to you. I'm not going to do anything.
- GARY: Don't get too close. 345
- TALLULAH stands in the middle of the floor, opposite him.*
- LORRAINE: He's going to interrogate you.
- SHERMAN: Don't worry about the others. [*He is standing over her, staring at her hair.*] Have you ever dyed your hair a different colour?
- TALLULAH: Yes. Bright red. 350
- SHERMAN: Bright red.
- TALLULAH: Yes. [*Pause*] I like violent colours.
- SHERMAN: And what's its natural colour?
- TALLULAH: [*Straight back at him*] It doesn't have one. I've forgotten what colour it was. Maybe it was white. 355
- GARY: You have to be careful. It's the getting-to-know-you stage. [*He grins.*] Remember, people have waited five years to see him.
- SHERMAN: [*He moves her head sideways.*] What would you look like with your hair long?
- TALLULAH: Different probably ... worse. 360
- SHERMAN: Where did the name Tallulah come from? It's not your real name, is it?
- TALLULAH: Off a railway bridge. It said 'Tallulah Lives' in letters thirty feet high. I thought if I called myself that people would think it was about me – like an enormous free advertisement.
- GARY: [*Grinning*] Careful, don't talk too long, he may get restless. 365
- SHERMAN: Where do you come from?
- TALLULAH: I come from Yardley. [*Sharp smile*] Heard of it?
- SHERMAN: Birmingham.
- TALLULAH: Right first time.
- SHERMAN: You live with your parents? 370
- TALLULAH: You telling me or asking me?
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] Telling you. [*Pause*] Do you work?
- TALLULAH: In the evenings. In a pub. Washing up mugs.
- SHERMAN: Mugs?
- TALLULAH: [*More out of nervousness than aggressiveness*] What else do you want to know? I've never sung in public – I've never performed live. I paid for my own tape out of my own money. When I perform live, I want to have a few really loud explosions go off and a light show. 375
- GARY: What's he grinning for? Did you see his small grin; he made a sort of little sideways grin. 380

- TALLULAH: [*Small smile*] Can I go back against the wall, please?
 SHERMAN: Certainly.
 GARY: [*As she moves, jokingly*] How did she do then?
 SHERMAN: [*Looking across at LORRAINE's name badge*] You've got it upside down.
 I can't read it. 385
- LORRAINE: Lorraine. [*Quiet*] It's my real name.
 SHERMAN: Lorraine – could you come here, please?
- LORRAINE *comes up to him and stands by him.*
- SHERMAN: How old are you?
 LORRAINE: I'm seventeen. 390
 SHERMAN: Really? You don't look seventeen.
 LORRAINE: So people tell me, all the time.
 SHERMAN: How seventeen are you?
 LORRAINE: Five months – and quite a few days.
- Slight pause* 395
- SHERMAN: If you're under sixteen – it doesn't matter you know. Particularly.
 GARY: Yes it does, doesn't it?
 SHERMAN: Just don't lie to me.
 LORRAINE: [*Genuine*] I'm not lying to you ... Why should I lie to you?
 SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] To make sure I don't throw you out. 400
 LORRAINE: [*Quiet, a little nervous*] I didn't think you were going to. You didn't ask her age.
 SHERMAN: No. [*Not unpleasantly*] Your teeth are pretty dirty. You should get somebody to clean them up for you.
- LORRAINE: [*Quiet*] I'll remember. 405
 SHERMAN: Where do you come from?
 LORRAINE: Sheffield.
 SHERMAN: Have you ever been in London before?
 LORRAINE: No.
 SHERMAN: How tall are you? 410
 LORRAINE: [*She is uncertain how to answer, because he can see she's very short.*] Quite tall. Very tall ... What do you expect me to say? You can see, can't you?
 SHERMAN: Yes. You're not very substantial.
 LORRAINE: That's right. 415
 SHERMAN: Can you take that off?
- She is wearing a coat over a T-shirt.*
- LORRAINE: What, now?
 SHERMAN: Now, yes.
- LORRAINE *slowly takes the coat off, quite embarrassed being watched by the other kids.* 420
- SHERMAN: [*Watching her with total detachment; the coat comes off*] That's better.
 [*He turns sharply, speedily*] Fine. [*Has back to them, with finality*] Right.
- GARY: What about me then? [*Realising he isn't going to get called*] Aren't I going to get asked into the middle? 425
- SHERMAN *has moved across the room.*

- GARY: Hey! I haven't had my turn – my personal questions – you've missed me out.
- SHERMAN: [*Quietly, pouring more milk*] I haven't missed anything out. 430
- GARY: [*Charming smile*] I come from Isleworth ...
- SHERMAN: Isleworth?
- GARY: I started wanting to be a musician during Mr Skinner's classes. He was completely bald, rather ugly in fact ...
- SHERMAN: [*Suddenly turns, loud, cutting him off*] What is all this talk about being a musician? It's completely ludicrous. None of you are musicians. You're just raw, totally inexperienced. 435
- GARY: But we're here aren't we? [*Slight pause*] You must want some young artists – fresh talent. You must need to sign some because you're seeing us aren't you? 440
- Pause*
- TALLULAH: You were careful, weren't you?
- GARY: It's all right. He's not edging towards the door; we're OK.
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] What's your name?
- GARY: Not this again, I don't believe it. [*He moves across.*] Here. Why don't you keep it in front of you, then you can keep checking, can't you? [*GARY is by the telephone as he puts his name tag down in front of SHERMAN.*] 445
Can I call New York? I said I'd call about this time. Let them know how it's going.
- TALLULAH: [*Worried at his boldness*] Ssssh ... 450
- SHERMAN: [*Tiny smile*] Would you like to go to New York?
- GARY: [*Grins*] Are you making an offer?
- TALLULAH: [*Grins*] He won't do, like that!
- GARY: I've been already, anyway, to America, to New York.
- SHERMAN: [*Smiles*] You've been? Good. When? 455
- GARY: [*Surprised*] When? A few months ago.
- SHERMAN: [*Still smiling*] And what was it like?
- GARY: What do you mean?
- SHERMAN: What's it like? Tell me about it. I want to know.
- Slight pause* 460
- GARY: [*Decisive*] You want to know? OK. Everything ... everything's open really late for a start. And I mean *everything* ... opticians, all-night opticians, vets, dentists – they only start to really get going about midnight! ... Patisseries, agricultural machinery shops, piano-tuners, all-night window cleaning classes, that's when they teach you how to clean skyscrapers, they do! You can go and look up your birth certificate at two o'clock in the morning. Yes! And you can book in and have plastic surgery done, all-night zoos, double-glazing ... You can go bathing in this department store at one o'clock in the morning. There's all-night ballet in the parks – heliports – you can go into any café in the centre at three o'clock in the morning and it's full of helicopter pilots! [*GARY stops.*] 465
- SHERMAN: [*Unblinking*] Yes?
- GARY: Yeah!
- SHERMAN: Yes. And ...
- GARY: And the garbage disposal lorries are enormous, with red lights all over them. They're fantastic ... they ... they have cigarettes this long – really long cigarettes about ten inches, and ... tennis rackets, really hard metal tennis rackets. Can't buy any wooden tennis rackets any more – can cut people's heads open with them if you lose a point. 475

- They're very bad losers, over there ... er ... the police are all *really crude* ... 480
- TALLULAH: [*Helping him out*] People making films in the streets all the time.
- GARY: Yeah – and the hospitals. Got giant hospitals – which have their own cinemas. [*Carrying on fast*] And you get houses with trees growing on their roofs, and of course pet alligators swimming in the baths and up your trouser leg. 485
- TALLULAH: And you can get green chocolate now in the drug stores.
- GARY: [*Sideways glance*] Have you been there? [*Looks back*] And you pass old women of about seventy or eighty out in the street wearing Kaftans, just walking along the pavement. You see, I have been! And when it rains there, these really heavy drops come down – this big – the size of boiled sweets. They're quite dangerous! And there're dead people in the rubbish bins in the park of course, just dropped in there amongst the soda cans, with their legs hanging over the edge. [*He smiles.*] It's great there. Electric! 490
- Silence*
- SHERMAN: It would have been simpler, and saved time, if you had just said, no I haven't been. 495
- The phone rings. SHERMAN answers phone immediately, a voice only half audible blurts out occasionally during the following conversation.*
- SHERMAN: [*Tone changes, indicating surprise for a fraction of a second as he is caught off his guard.*] Hello – Dave? ... It was clever of you to track me down ... Yes, I've heard. Yes. No, I'm afraid that is what is happening. We cannot renew – we cannot renew your contract ... There is nothing we can discuss really. No, it wasn't – no – it was on *my* recommendation. [*Pause as he listens, SHERMAN's tone is direct and unsoftened*] I felt that you and the company hadn't got anything to offer each other any more. Or to put it more brutally, we cannot afford you. Sales just haven't been good enough. No, I know ... but, overall, they've been on a continuous slide, for as long as I can remember ... And that's how it works. [*Pause*] No, I don't think we can see each other. No, I wouldn't like to meet, no. Because there is nothing we can talk about any more. No. If I thought a change in the image would work I would have suggested it. No, I had ideas. But you're just not that sort of artist. [*Sharp*] What do you want me to say? I could say how sorry I am, but that wouldn't be true. I am *not pleased* of course, but I am not going to mess you around. I think it just had to be done ... No, I'm drinking milk ... You wanted to talk to me and I'm telling you the truth. Yes, that's why I don't talk to people afterwards because I just upset them. No, I'm afraid it has to be final. My regards to your wife. [*Puts down phone, immediately picks it up again – tone very animated, but not upset*] Genista! I do not want anybody to be told where I am, and there are *no exceptions*. Is that clear? And I do not want any calls put through here, no matter what they are about. [*He glances up at the kids.*] Until I say otherwise ... 500
- The kids are uneasy, a bit nervous about what they've just seen.*
- LORRAINE: [*Quiet*] He's just chopped somebody off. 505
- SHERMAN moves away from the phone. He moves across the room to the window seat and sits down. During the following exchange*

- between the kids, his head suddenly goes back, his eyes close, his body completely still.* 530
- TALLULAH: How much do you get paid? [*She turns.*] How much do you think he gets paid?
- GARY: About a quarter of a million ... to start with.
- LORRAINE: Look ...
- They look at him. He is sitting in the chair, his head back, eyes closed, totally still. Silence – they stare at SHERMAN.* 535
- TALLULAH: What's the matter? What's happened to him?
- No reaction from SHERMAN*
- LORRAINE: He must be faking it – mustn't he?
- GARY: [*Looking at him*] Faking what? 540
- TALLULAH: Hello. [*Calls out to SHERMAN – uneasy smile*] Hello?
- GARY: Do you think he's still watching us – even though his eyes are shut?
- TALLULAH: [*Moves up to him cautiously – looks at SHERMAN's face stretched back*] He'll look like that when he's dead.
- LORRAINE: [*Uneasy smile*] Let's hope he hasn't had a heart attack. 545
- TALLULAH: He's very well shaved – must have done it on the plane. [*She picks up the milk.*] Shall I splash some of this over him, bring him round?
- TALLULAH is standing by SHERMAN with milk about to flick some across his face – but as she moves to do so, his head jerks forward, and a second later he gets up sharply.* 550
- SHERMAN: [*Totally ignoring her, makes straight for the phone*] Right. [*He lifts receiver and bursts into confident and reasonably fluent French, ordering coffee and saying which room he is in. He is well into his third sentence and speaking fast, when he stops abruptly.*] Of course ... I'm sorry – I thought I was in our Paris office for a moment, yes, the carpet is the same colour blue – and the furniture is in exactly the same position. [*Smiles*] No, I think the aquarium may be different. No, some black coffee – for one. Thank you. [*He puts down phone sharply. He smiles.*] I feel terrific. [*Suddenly remembers he didn't ask on the phone.*] Which place is this anyway? [*Indicates phone*] That girl had an American accent. 555
- LORRAINE: I don't believe you don't know where you are.
- GARY: He knows.
- TALLULAH: [*Intrigued*] Yes – what city is out of the window?
- SHERMAN: [*Swings round and stops by the closed blinds*] Out there ... [*He stares for a second trying to think.*] It must be London – each city smells different. [*Pause, he focuses on them as if remembering. Very deliberately, with a smile on his face, he says their names.*] Lorraine ... and Tallulah ... and Gary. 565
- GARY: [*His eyes meet SHERMAN's, loud*] I've just realised something! [*To SHERMAN*] What you're doing ... I don't know what I've been thinking all this time – [*Straight at SHERMAN*] You're only going to take one of us, aren't you ... at the most. We're all in competition with one another, aren't we? [*Pause, sharp*] Aren't we? 570
- SHERMAN: [*Surprised for a split second at Gary*] Not necessarily. 575
- GARY: [*Sideways to LORRAINE*] Did you hear that! 'Not necessarily.' [*To SHERMAN*] What sort of answer is that?

SHERMAN *smiles slightly.*

- TALLULAH: Is that right, what he says?
 GARY: He probably thought, right at the start, of maybe putting us together, seeing if there was the possibility of a group, he was making 'visual comparisons' or whatever they call it, but he's decided against it already – haven't you – when you put us up against the wall? 580
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] Are you asking me or telling me?
 GARY: You're not meant to see us like this you know – you're meant to have us in one at a time, totally separate, and interview us. 585
- SHERMAN: [*Loud, but with slight smile*] 'Meant to'! What on earth is this 'meant to'? There are no *methods* in this business, there's no green handbook with rules in it. Anybody telling you different is lying. I meet people from time to time – though I do my best to avoid them – who talk about 'nudging' artists and 'coaxing' artists. [*Straight at them, quiet*] Well, I don't. 590
- GARY: You *want* us to compete with one another, he really does, that's what he's setting up, you can't do that. [*To LORRAINE*] He's exploiting us, isn't he?
 SHERMAN: [*Suddenly loud, speedy*] Exploiting you! I'm *exploiting you*! Should have witnesses shouldn't I? I should ring for one of the five lawyers in this building. You're free to go whenever you like, aren't you? I don't believe you're being kept here by force. If you don't like the way we work here, go to another label. Be one of the eight thousand other kids or whatever number it is each week, pestering people with their tapes, pushing them into one's face as one is trying to drink a cup of coffee. [*He moves, his voice changes.*] Exploiting ... [*Dangerous*] I don't want to hear the word again. [*Slight pause, he is by the window*] If one was choosing athletes it would be simple. You just have to see which one runs the fastest – jumps the highest, but this is a little more complicated. 600
- LORRAINE: [*Watching him*] So we *are* competing against each other. 605
- No reaction*
- TALLULAH: Have we got your assurance that we aren't going ...
 SHERMAN: I don't give assurances.
 LORRAINE: Of course he's not going to give us an assurance. 610
 SHERMAN: Any of you are free to leave this room now – if you are not happy. [*Slight smile*] Taking on a large company isn't easy – nor should it be. I don't sign very many artists. [*Pause*] A contract with us could obviously transform your lives. [*Pause*]
- GARY: [*Looking at TALLULAH and LORRAINE*] I don't think we should go along with this – being made to compete against each other. I really don't. [*Nervous grin*] I think we should consult amongst ourselves. I mean for a start, what I'm doing is a lot different from what they're doing. [*To TALLULAH*] I'm sure it's good – but with me, standing me up against walls you can't really tell ... [*GARY leans against the wall, close to SHERMAN.*] 615
- SHERMAN: [*By window*] You worry too much.
 GARY: Who?
 SHERMAN: You. You're worrying too much about how you're doing.
 GARY: [*Sharp grin*] I think it's a really mad – absurd way of doing things ... if you ask me. [*SHERMAN turns, pause. GARY, a little surprised at himself, grins.*] So you want me to leave now? Right. Do you ...? [*Pause*] I expect you want me to go now. 625
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] No. [*Pause*] You're wrong. [*SHERMAN exits slowly*]
 TALLULAH: [*Calls after him*] Wait... [*TALLULAH turns, furious*] You've done it. That's 630

- it isn't it! He'll disappear now. We'll never get him back, won't even get near him again. You've blown it.
- GARY: No I haven't. [*He moves.*] I don't think I have. [*Looks around him*] They've probably got a few hidden microphones, we're being studied on our own.
- TALLULAH: You handled him completely wrong, you know. You were really clumsy – really crude the way you did it. 635
- LORRAINE: Yes, I don't think you did it at all right.
- GARY: I don't trust him.
- LORRAINE: I think he'll be all right. We don't *know* if he's only going to take one of us.
- GARY: Of course he is. [*Smiles*] Only one. Really weird – the way he went into that coma or whatever it was. 640
- LORRAINE: If he comes back we've got to make him stay here.
- TALLULAH: [*Loud*] He never comes back, remember. [*To GARY*] Go and have a look for him.
- GARY: Why me? [*Slight grin*] I'll get lost! You go. [*He begins to sing few bars of a song, as he moves nervously. It is one of his own songs, with strange, wistful lyrics.*] 645
- TALLULAH: Shut up.
- GARY *continues to sing.* SHERMAN *re-enters with IAN.* SHERMAN *is holding paper cup of coffee that he drains completely with one abrupt movement during the next exchange.* IAN *is standing in a well-cut suit with notebook.* 650
- TALLULAH: What's *he* doing here?
- IAN *smiles, standing next to SHERMAN.*
- LORRAINE: Where've you been? 655
- SHERMAN: That needn't concern you.
- GARY: He's got reinforcements. [*To SHERMAN, indicating IAN*] What's he going to do?
- IAN: I have merely come to hover, and to help out if necessary ... make a few notes. 660
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] He is here for your protection.
- The kids are surprised.*
- LORRAINE: Or yours.
- GARY: [*Mocking*] Come to help him *choose*.
- IAN: Of course not. 665
- SHERMAN: He is quite concerned you do well.
- IAN: [*Slight smile*] Naturally. It is because of me that you are here.
- GARY: [*To IAN*] And if you want my opinion, I think he likes her [*Indicates TALLULAH*], half likes her [*Indicates LORRAINE*] and really loathes the sight of me. 670
- They all look at SHERMAN, he just smiles a slight smile, then moves sharply, his manner is flowing, moving back into top gear. More competitive feel between the kids.*
- SHERMAN: [*Straight at GARY*] You play the guitar.
- GARY: Yeah, that's right. 675
- SHERMAN: Do you play the guitar?
- TALLULAH: No. [*Then more competitive*] I have played it once, one day last year I ...
- SHERMAN: Right. [*He looks at LORRAINE.*]

LORRAINE:	No.	
SHERMAN:	Just checking. [<i>He moves, sharp</i>] And the piano, do you play the piano?	680
GARY:	No.	
TALLULAH:	No.	
LORRAINE:	Yes.	
SHERMAN:	Right. [<i>He moves away, as if about to ask something else, then he suddenly turns and looks straight at LORRAINE.</i>] OK, play it now. Play me a tune. You can play me anything you like. [<i>Moment's silence</i>]	685
LORRAINE:	[<i>Glances over</i>] On that piano?	
SHERMAN:	Where else?	
LORRAINE:	OK. [<i>She moves over to piano and briskly sits down at piano, TALLULAH and GARY are watching, fascinated.</i>]	690
IAN:	You can take your time.	
LORRAINE:	[<i>Tenses herself by the piano</i>] This stool's a bit low for me ... but I think I can manage. [<i>LORRAINE looks at the keyboard.</i>] The keys are dirty. [<i>She tries a note, a single note, presses it down.</i>] It's not in tune.	
IAN:	[<i>Watching her</i>] It's always kept in tune. [<i>He smiles.</i>] One of the rules of the house.	695
LORRAINE:	You ought to get it fixed.	
SHERMAN:	[<i>Louder</i>] Play me a tune.	
	LORRAINE, who has been behaving confidently up to this moment, is poised over the keyboard. For a second she sits there, and then plonks on the piano, a terrible racket, patently unable to play properly.	700
IAN:	[<i>Spontaneous exasperation</i>] She can't play.	
	LORRAINE continues for a second after this, then stops. She sits by piano, waiting for the onslaught.	
SHERMAN:	[<i>Steely, quiet</i>] You shouldn't lie to me – what <i>is the point</i> if you're going to lie? You might as well leave right now.	705
LORRAINE:	[<i>Uncertain whether this means she's been sacked</i>] Do I ...	
SHERMAN:	[<i>Loud</i>] Do you what?	
	There is a moment's pause. LORRAINE is a small figure standing by the piano.	710
LORRAINE:	[<i>Very quiet</i>] Do you want me to go?	
SHERMAN:	[<i>After a slight pause</i>] Go back and stand over there. [<i>Watching her</i>] No – right back!	
TALLULAH:	[<i>Quiet as she rejoins them</i>] You shouldn't take risks.	
IAN:	[<i>To LORRAINE, his voice sharp, exasperated by her</i>] That was a silly thing to do, if I may say so – wasn't it? How on earth did you think you were going to get away with that? It was obvious we'd ask you to play sooner or later. You don't want to waste Mr Sherman's time you realise. His time is worth more than anybody's in the building! You're quite lucky to be here at all.	715
SHERMAN:	[<i>Swinging round</i>] He wants you to do well. [<i>He smiles.</i>] And he has his reasons.	720
IAN:	[<i>Slight smile, trying to sound cool in front of the kids</i>] One or two, certainly.	
SHERMAN:	[<i>Slight smile</i>] He was willing you on just now.	725
TALLULAH:	We're trying.	

SHERMAN *is standing by* IAN.

SHERMAN: [To IAN in a quieter personal tone, not unpleasant, with a smile.] You shouldn't worry – you can usually tell if they are planning to do something, make a change – they stop replacing the equipment in your office. You don't get those large red drawing pins delivered to you any more, you just get given the plain ordinary ones and recycled envelopes. They start giving you the dregs. 730

The kids are watching, uncertain what they're talking about.

IAN: That's not happening yet – I don't think it is ... 735

SHERMAN: [Moving, his adrenalin flowing] Good, good ... [Suddenly to kids, indicating IAN] You know what this man used to do – he used to tear up lawns with pneumatic drills, yes, at college and scrawl his name on chapel walls didn't you – and he wore his hair really long and walked barefoot over electric railway lines. 740

IAN: [Brazening it out, trying not to look embarrassed] Yes – and he's now wearing a suit that fits almost too well.

SHERMAN: And eagerly interested in how you're doing.

GARY: [To IAN] You must be really worried then mustn't you?

IAN: [Quiet] Why? 745

GARY: [Indicating SHERMAN] Because he hasn't found out anything about us at all – or about what we want to do.

SHERMAN: [By the window] Hasn't he? [He stares at GARY.] Take you for example. I know almost everything I need to know already. [Slight pause] I've also listened to your very muddy tape. [Slight pause] 750

GARY: Yes ... [He glances at LORRAINE, half jokey] Is this it? [Pause] Is he going to do it?

SHERMAN: [Tone direct, but not sneering] You want to sing songs that are 'relevant' ... the social angle ... the lay-off-the-kids category. [Matter-of-fact] That is what you want to do. [He turns.] I saw a group somewhere, some city, they were singing an anti-fascist song, and in the middle they completely forgot what they were singing about and started strutting around the stage playing with their microphones. That's how much they were concentrating. Two lots of twins they were, with very pale, baby-like faces. [Quiet, to himself] They were almost interesting. 760

GARY: I thought we were talking about *me*.

SHERMAN: [Staring straight at him again, sharp] And to make that stuff sell now, it has to be really *unexpected*, done with a difference.

GARY: *But I can*. You have no idea what I'm like. When I play I can be all sorts of things, different things, can be really quiet, really subtle, so you hear every word, and I can be LOUD, really outrageous, I can shock ... 765

SHERMAN: You can shock can you? [Pause] How?

GARY: How? I just do.

SHERMAN: [Suddenly] OK. Do it – do the most outrageous thing you can think of. Shock us. 770

GARY: [Startled grin] Shock you – in here. No – I'm not going to start playing party games.

SHERMAN: I'm not asking you to. [Slight smile] I thought you'd welcome the chance.

TALLULAH: Yeah.

GARY: You did – did you? [He glances round.] You serious? 775

SHERMAN: Of course. When I first arrived in London, I was amazed to see three little girls smoking on the underground. But you'll find it more difficult to shock me now.

GARY: [Mocking, not believing him] You want me to do something really

- outrageous – and then I’m going to get marks for it afterwards! [*Suddenly to IAN*] What you think of this then? You think it’s a good idea of his? 780
- IAN: [*Smiles, stares straight back at him*] I’m looking forward to it.
- GARY: He’s looking forward to it! [*Suddenly*] OK.
- SHERMAN: But no nudity.
- GARY: What do you mean? 785
- SHERMAN: Because it’s so predictable.
- TALLULAH: Could get him into trouble couldn’t it?
- GARY: You better give me a list of all the ‘shocking’ things I’m allowed to do then.
- SHERMAN: [*Quiet*] Everything else. 790
- GARY: [*Suddenly realises from his tone he is serious*] Really? [*He moves purposely – grinning.*] You mean I’m allowed to wreck the furniture and everything. Right. [*He is grinning, looking for something. He picks up a chair and tosses it on to floor.*] How shocking do you want it to be, medium shocking – or really very shocking? [*He moves round room, he smiles.*] You really are a git, do you know that? You’ve been waiting to do this haven’t you? 795
- SHERMAN: You’re not going to reduce us to quivering heaps like that. In fact I really doubt you’ll manage it.
- GARY: [*Fast, moving*] I could kill a few snails for a start. [*Taps aquarium hard*] Melt a few of these down. [*He takes gold disc off wall and drops it on floor.*] And make you drink it. [*He moves a chair sharply, grins at them all as he moves.*] What are you hoping for? What’s the favourite? [*He stops.*] I think I’ll cut one of my fingers off, do a bit of bleeding, that’s always a good one, wounds, especially self-inflicted ones. [*Flicks out matches*] I’ll set light to the carpet ... he thinks he knows what I’m going to do. [*He gently touches LORRAINE’s face, looking at SHERMAN, aggressive towards him, not LORRAINE.*] If I hurt her, damaged her, that would be really shocking because she hasn’t done anything wrong. But I’m not going to. [*He moves near IAN. He flicks IAN’s pen out of his hand and smiles.*] Or I could inconvenience him. [*Pause*] Do you want to be? This’ll all be in the company magazine you know. 800
- TALLULAH: What you going to do, Gary? Because don’t.
- SHERMAN: [*Slight smile*] You really think those are still outrageous things to do? You seriously thought they would shock me? 805
- GARY: Yeah.
- Silence, SHERMAN smiles to himself, turns, and moves.*
- GARY: Did you see him do that? Give a tiny smile.
- LORRAINE’s head goes down, as if she’s about to faint.*
- SHERMAN: What’s the matter with you? 820
- Pause*
- LORRAINE: [*Very quiet*] I just feel ...
- SHERMAN: Are you ill?
- LORRAINE: [*Very quiet*] No ... no, I don’t think so.
- SHERMAN: [*Stares at LORRAINE, trying to decide if she’s just trying to get his attention.*] Are you unwell or not? 825

Pause

- LORRAINE: [*Looks at him straight in the face*] No, I'm not.
- SHERMAN: [*Moves briskly to the piano, his tone business-like*] Ian, could you come here and work this thing? [*Indicating piano*] 830
- IAN: [*Self-mocking smile*] What I've been waiting for!
- SHERMAN: [*Carrying on, business-like*] Lorraine, come here. [LORRAINE moves.] That's enough. [*She stops.*] Stay there. You're going to sing for me now. Just with the piano – so we'll be able to see the raw article. You know the words of 'Yesterday', I hope? [*Without waiting for her answer, although LORRAINE nods, he recites the lyrics of the first verse in a totally matter-of-fact voice, the words crisply distinct. He pulls a microphone from side and laying it down in front of him.*] If I think it would be worth it I may want one of you to use this. 835
- IAN: [*At piano, his manner professional*] Now you know what to do – take your time, I'm going to set a medium fast tempo – the key's 'f' – and I advise you to try. 840
- IAN *plays opening bars, LORRAINE turns face away.*
- SHERMAN: [*Loud*] What's the matter? Maybe it wasn't your voice on the tape you gave us. Maybe you can't do anything. 845
- LORRAINE: [*Quiet back at him*] It was my voice. [*Pause*] You just haven't given us any warning.
- SHERMAN: Warning! Why should I give you a warning? What the hell are you here for?
- LORRAINE *stands still, silence* 850
- SHERMAN: Right now.
- IAN: This speed OK?
- IAN *plays and LORRAINE sings 'Yesterday', trying extremely hard, standing still, compact, a small sharp figure. Her voice is adequate. She finishes singing after the first verse; it hasn't taken long. Complete silence, everybody looking at SHERMAN, who is by window.* 855
- LORRAINE: He was going a little fast for me. [*Slight pause – SHERMAN doesn't look at her.*] Can I start again?
- SHERMAN: No. [*He turns.*] Please just go back against the wall. Now you, please. [*Indicating GARY*] 860
- GARY *stands where LORRAINE was standing. The girls stand in silence next to each other, TALLULAH is tense.*
- GARY: Can I not sing that song? – it's not the sort of thing I'm into.
- IAN: [*Cutting him off*] No, just sing the same song, and try to relax, you sure you know the words? 865
- GARY: We'll see won't we?
- He starts to sing the song as IAN plays – a nervous but rather beautiful voice comes out, and putting everything he's got into it. SHERMAN turns and looks at him to interrupt him after a very short time.*
- SHERMAN: Can you stop moving around so much? 870
- GARY: I usually have something in my hands. [*Glancing at microphone*] Maybe if ...
- SHERMAN: No.

- IAN *starts playing again, GARY misses his entrance.*
 GARY: Wait a minute – I can't remember it. [*He becomes tense.*] 875
- SHERMAN *repeats the opening two lines sharply, piano starts.*
- GARY: Aargh! ... it's gone. Why did you interrupt ... I can't do it at the moment. [*With real passion*] You really shouldn't have stopped me. [*He looks up.*] Go on, you better say *next please*, like they're meant to. [*Moment's silence, GARY moves*] 880
- SHERMAN: I hope you're watching this, Ian.
 IAN: I don't know what's the matter with them.
 TALLULAH: I'm waiting.
 SHERMAN: Tallulah, would you stand where Gary was standing?
 IAN: Are you ready – are you really concentrating? Try to concentrate. 885
- TALLULAH *opens her mouth, she sings about a line and a half of 'Yesterday'.*
- SHERMAN: Stop! [*She stops.*] Just stop.
- TALLULAH *stares at him in disbelief and resentment.*
- SHERMAN: Here. Will you use this, please? 890
- TALLULAH *takes the microphone. She begins 'Yesterday', but suddenly switches into a contemporary song. She has a very good, strong voice, she moves round away from the central position as her confidence grows – she puts everything she can into it, not looking at him in case he stops her, using her voice, both loud and quiet, her face determined and eager, really exerts energy. She sings for about a minute and a half, growing really loud towards the end. She stops, panting and sweating. Silence, they all look at her.* 895
- SHERMAN: I said 'Yesterday'.
 TALLULAH: You didn't stop me. [*She hands him the microphone.*] 900
 SHERMAN: Here's a handkerchief – wipe your face. You shouldn't wear clothes like that.
 IAN: [*Quietly*] Well done.
 GARY: [*Suddenly*] It must be really late – night-time by now.
 SHERMAN: [*Moves over to the window with an abrupt movement*] You think so do you? 905
- He lets up the window blind, sun pours into the room, bright evening sun. They look startled and blink in it. SHERMAN is by the window.*
- SHERMAN: When I accept people they don't usually say anything, not at first, just stand there chewing. [*Slight pause*] When I turn people down sometimes they giggle and say 'I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you said, could you say it again', sometimes they thank you, taking so long they'll hope you'll change your mind. And sometimes they are abusive and shout and spit and kick chairs over. 910
- LORRAINE: That's very helpful. 915
 SHERMAN: [*Briskly exiting*] I'll see you tonight. [*He exits.*]
 GARY: [*Looks round*] That means we're staying. We've all survived, that can't be right. [*Nervous*] Have we all survived?

- IAN: Thank you – that was good, excellent – you did well in the end ... great ... well done. [*He smiles.*] Good. 920
- GARY: [*Not unpleasantly*] He's really pleased, look. How many of us is he going to take?
- IAN: [*Looking round*] Just try to relax now.
- GARY: [*Not unpleasantly*] Go on – run after him if you want to, we don't mind.
- IAN: I'm not in the habit of running after people. 925
- GARY: [*He smiles at him.*] Then we'll go together – because I'm going too! Come on. [*He catches LORRAINE's arm.*] You ought to come too. I'm going to have a real look round. [*He exits.*]
- IAN: I'll see you tonight. [*He exits.*]
- TALLULAH and LORRAINE alone on stage together, the evening light. 930
- TALLULAH: [*Excited, smiling*] I feel sore all over. And really stiff. [*Lightly*] I don't think he likes me, he looked sideways like that, when he saw me looking at him. I couldn't see what he was thinking.
- LORRAINE: [*Quietly*] You did very well. He likes you ... you're OK.
- TALLULAH: [*Excited*] What the hell anyway! We're here. I've missed my job tonight, you know. I only did half the shopping this morning. I always do it for the whole family on Fridays. [*Loud, by the window*] We should go out shouldn't we? It's so warm now! [*Smiling*] What place is out there! [*Mimics SHERMAN*] Where are we – which city? [*Moment's silence*] I bet he knew all the time. We should go and see London, paint the town green. *Startle* people in bus queues – hijack a taxi. [*She looks at LORRAINE.*] And all the other things people do here, should go together. 940
- LORRAINE: Yeah, we could. Probably wouldn't let us back in here again though if we were late.
- TALLULAH: Walking along with my hair like this, you and me, watching people *think* about picking us up, and we just walking straight past them. 945
- LORRAINE: Yeah, we could.
- TALLULAH: [*Grins, excited*] Some other time though.
- Music – classical music suddenly wells up, somewhere in the distance, but quite loud. TALLULAH looks around.* 950
- TALLULAH: [*Loud*] What the hell is that?
- Music continues, welling up from somewhere in the building.*
- LORRAINE: It must be their *classical* record division. [*She looks towards the door, slight pause.*] It's a big place.
- They look at each other across the big room.* 955
- FADE

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