

FOUR O'CLOCK CLUB

SERIES 5

TX9 "SOCIAL WORKER"

Written by

Julia Kent

1 EXT. ELMSMERE. DAY 1. END OF DAY

1

Kids run out, going home, shoving, pushing, kicking bags.

2 INT. ELMSMERE - 4OCC ROOM. DAY 1. AFTERSCHOOL DETENTION 2

MR BELL is sat behind his desk, looking grumpy, staring at a TABLET COMPUTER. FLEUR, ELEESHA NERO, ELI and OWEN sit at a desks with some NS extras. NERO is in school uniform but with a pink-tinged shirt.

FLEUR

(to Nero)

Oi Bubblegum. What you been done
for then? Impersonating a
milkshake?

BELL

(without looking up)
Detention. Stop wittering.

Fleur looks annoyed.

NERO

I'm gonna kill Dex.

OWEN

How's it his fault?

NERO

He bought tons of discount washing
powder, turns everything pink. But
he won't stop using it! Cos "that'd
be a waste."

Clem comes in with a bit of paper from Mrs Goodman. Hands it to Bell.

CLEM

Alright? Goodman said to give you
this. Think she wants you.

BELL

Detention!

CLEM

What?

BELL

You were late.

CLEM

Yeah cos your overlord wanted me to
give you a note! That ain't fair!

A commotion starts to build outside. We catch a glimpse of a few girls with placards wandering past. The rest of the kids in detention wander over to the window, interested -

CROWD OUTSIDE (O.S.)
Kick sexism out / Girls love
football too / Nunn's a sexist pig!

FLEUR
(at the window)
Oi Sir. You gonna do anything about this?

BELL
(not looking up)
I've told you Murphy. Be quiet.
Detention. In fact, take two.

FLEUR
I am DONE with this world!

ELEESHA
Sir! If Mrs Goodman wants you, you should go. You'll get in trouble.

Bell angrily slams his tablet down.

MR BELL
FINE.

He heads out the door.

Everyone looks at each other - a still moment - and then immediately takes the opportunity to pack up and leave.

Eli has hold of Nero's shirt tails.

ELI
Seriously, you gotta sort this.
Lock him in a cupboard til he stops it. That always works on me.

Nero looks thoughtful. The boys exit.

ELEESHA
Somethin' has PROPERLY got up Ding-Dong's goat.

The girls are last out. They pass Bell's desk. See he's left his tablet. Stop.

FLEUR
He's left his tablet.

Beat. Then they all rush to the table. Clem picks it up.

CLEM

(reading)

'Greetings! I'm Crispin, and I'm
highly allergic to egg whites.'

The girls look at each other.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Oh. My. Days. He's online datin'!

3

EXT. ELMSMERE - PLAYING FIELD. DAY 1. AFTER SCHOOL.

3

Several boys are on the pitch football training.

A GROUP OF GIRLS in PE KITS including MARY stand on the sidelines, waving HOMEMADE PLACARDS featuring anti-sexist slogans: "No to Sexism." "Equal Rights For Girls." "It's Handball Not Manball." "Girls Kick It." "Calling Time On Sexism." "Red Card To Sexism." "Early Bath For Nunn."

PROTESTING GIRLS

(continuing throughout)

Balls for all! / Girls for goals! /
Nunn's a sexist pig!

Nunn runs past laughing -

NUNN

Oh please. You wanna oggle the
boys, find a better excuse.

AMBER, VIOLET and DARNESH wander past, dressed for their way home.

Mary offers placards to Amber and Violet -

MARY

Join the war?

VIOLET

Thanks. I think I'll pass.

AMBER

Football? Nah. Not for me.

NUNN

(overhearing)

Especially not for you, Baker.
This is a man's sport. And you're
even punier than most females.

Amber and Violet share a look, grab placards.

AMBER
Yay football!

VIOLET
Girls like kicking!

Darnesh takes a PLACARD too.

DARNESH
(shouting)
C'MON YOU BLUES!!
(off Amber's look)
What? I just like shouting.

MRS GOODMAN hurries up, attracted by the noise.

MRS GOODMAN
Girls! Girls! Man. Boy. I'm all for
the free expression of emotions but
what's going on?

MARY
Nunn won't let girls on the
football team.

PROTESTING GIRLS
Booooo! / Rubbish! / Not fair!

MARY
Offside!

NUNN
(outraged)
How can I be offside? I'm the
referee!

MRS GOODMAN
Graham, love -

NUNN
Here we go -

MRS GOODMAN
- this is a new era. You don't have
to stick to the repressive old
rules. Girls - I'm sure if you come
to practice tomorrow, Mr Nunn would
love to find you a role. Go team!

NUNN
Oh for -

Everyone celebrates. Lots of cheering.

Mr Bell arrives.

MRS GOODMAN
Ah Crispin. All under control
thanks.

Bell throws up his hands in frustration, stomps off again.

VIOLET
Wow. Didn't think I'd be striking a
blow for women's rights today.

AMBER
Who cares about women's rights? We
totally OWNED Mr Nunn!

They high five.

DARNESH
And got yourself on the footy team!

Darnesh goes to high five them. Amber and Violet just look at each other. Huh.

4

INT. ELMSMERE - SCIENCE ROOM. DAY 1. AFTER SCHOOL

4

DEXTER sat on a desk. He is dressed completely like normal Dexter, but his CLOTHES ARE TINGED PINK. He's helping LIZZIE with an experiment. He's holding a TEST-TUBE whilst she DRIPS LIQUID FROM A PIPETTE into it. Lizzie has SAFETY GOGGLES on.

She takes the TEST-TUBE from him, and pours the contents into a BEAKER OF LIQUID which goes from GREEN to VIOLET.

DEXTER
(trying to be romantic)
I love those goggles. They really
bring out your.. uh.. face-

She looks at Dexter for the first time. Takes the goggles off-

LIZZIE
You're pink.

DEXTER
Ah. BUT I saved 3.78 on the weekly
shop! And it's barely noticeable. I
mean, you only just spotted it.

LIZZIE
That's because I wasn't paying
attention to you before.

DEXTER
Oh.

Nero (his pink-tinged shirt still visible) bangs into the classroom and hurls his bag onto a chair.

NERO

Oi Cherry Blossom. I'm bikin' home.
You take that.

He bangs out again. Dexter cracks.

DEXTER

You know, I'm about one selfish,
ungrateful bit of behaviour away
from just... giving up!

LIZZIE

Well. The solution's clear to me.

Lizzie shakes her beaker at him.

DEXTER

It's actually kind of purple.

LIZZY

No! What I mean is - a practical
demonstration. That's the best way
to teach anybody anything.

On Dexter.. Thoughtful.

5

EXT. SUPERMARKET. DAY 1. LATE AFTERNOON.

5

Nero, now in out of school clothes, is looking at a SHOPPING TROLLEY with some alarm -

NERO

Say what now?

DEXTER

You're doing the shopping. I'm
having a coffee. I've got a voucher
for a free frothocino.

NERO

Woah. That's some serious bank.

DEXTER

Here's the list. Here's the money.
Get everything. Handle that?

Nero bristles.

NERO

All over it.

He grabs the shopping trolley, heads into the shop.

6

INT. ELMSMERE - 4OCC ROOM. DAY 1. AFTERSCHOOL

6

Fleur is typing on Bell's tablet with Eleesha's input -

ELEESHA

Put "poet". No, wait put.. er..
"mystical poet born under a desert
moon."

CLEM

Don't know why you're botherin'.
He's a teacher. He don't deserve
happiness.

FLEUR

Yeah, but think.. If he was
happy... maybe he'd chill out with
all the flipping detentions?

Bell enters. Immediately clocks them - Snatches the tablet
and reads it.

BELL

You've INVADED my private data!
And... you've ruined it! 'I own a
big horse?!"

ELEESHA

No one wanted to know 'bout your
allergies sir. That just ain't
allurin'.

BELL

Detention! For life. Now get out.

ELEESHA

Aw no, sir -

SFX - PING. Bell frowns -

ELEESHA (CONT'D)

A message! Oo! Can we read it sir?

BELL

Out!

The girls leave, giggling as SFX - ANOTHER PING. Bell looks
at his tablet. Sits down. Starts reading.

RAP ONE: "I've Got A Message"

BELL

Goodness I have my first message!
Sent requests in the past,
Gave details of my likes and
dislikes but still... alas..
No one bit or batted an eyelid for
over a month..
Well now I have a message!!
(MORE)

BELL (CONT'D)

Could it be love?
I've been waiting a long time
Ever since the messy divorce of my
Ex-wife.
I know I've tried, tried and tried
again.
Grew a beard once, thought that
would wind them in.
Women love beards yes?! Try
again...
I didn't get a nibble. But this
time's different.

I've got a message... Finally
I've got a message... Finally
I've got a message...
Got a message...
G Got a message...

Yes!! A woman wants to meet me
And it's not my mother for
afternoon tea..
It's a lady... she's responded-
She seems nice- she seems honest..
Perhaps those three cupids are
working their magic..
Alright Crispin calm down don't
panic..
Wait, what should I write now?
Everything is based on a lie and
she may raise an eyebrow?
But under close examination-
I am a like a big horse the way my
intellect gallops
And hurdles a difficult challenge,
A mystical poet, The way I mark all
the homework,
So I'm not telling fibs and I may
not get another chance like this.
What's happening is real, she's
interested.
Relax, breathe and send message now

(We see Clem, Fleur and Eleesha dressed up as cupids, with little wings, flying about and singing an angelic chorus, firing arrows at women who then swoon all around Bell. Bell hi-fives the winged girls.)

Dexter is sat down finishing a FROTHY COFFEE.

WAITER

Another?

DEXTER

Can I use the same voucher?

WAITER

No.

DEXTER

Then no.

Nero comes back with two SHOPPING BAGS.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Ah, Nero! How'd you get on?

NERO

Pretty awesome, yeah.

Dexter looks in a bag -

DEXTER

Chocolate pudding?

(looks in the other bag)

More chocolate pudding! Wow! But -
where's the actual shopping? That
can't be all you got...?

9

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 1. LATE AFTERNOON

9

BANG! THE FRONT DOOR SLAMS OPEN into a messy hall - or it would slam, if there weren't a huge PILE OF POST in the way -

Nero and Dexter storm through, with the shopping, obviously mid-fight -

NERO

What kind of yo-yo trusts a kid
with the shoppin' money for the
whole week?!?

DEXTER

I wanted you to see how hard it
was!

NERO

Yeah, well, surprise surprise, I
messed it up. And now we're broke!

Nero slips on a bit of post. He snatches up a handful of letters, waves them in Dexter's face, lets them cascade to the floor.

NERO (CONT'D)

Why don't you ANSWER some of this?

DEXTER

Cos it's all junk! I'm going to the
loo. You start the washing up.

He exits. Nero rolls his eyes, heads into the kitchen.

10

INT. CARTER FLAT - KITCHEN. DAY 1. AFTER SCHOOL.

10

Nero enters. Mr Bell is at the table, tapping away on his tablet. Bell ignores him. There's an ENORMOUS PILE OF WASHING UP. Nero looks at it. Grimaces. Gingerly extracts a dirty spoon and cleans it with his sleeve. Gets a pudding out of the shopping, starts eating it.

Dexter stalks in holding several empty washing powder boxes.

DEXTER

The toilet's blocked. I assume
that's something to do with you?

NERO

Think it's more "to do" with that
cruddy washing powder you bought.

DEXTER

You poured it all down the toilet?!

NERO

Oops, hand musta slipped.

Dexter's speechless. And then -

DEXTER

I give up. I'm going to bed.

Dexter exits.

NERO

Whatever.

Bell ignores them both, continues to tap away.

Nero finishes his chocolate mousse, throws the spoon in the sink, heads to his room.

BELL

(reads what he's typed)

Roses are red...

Violets.. are blue...

Wear a red flower...

And I'll see you!

(beat, less poetically)

..tomorrow at six pm at the above
address. Yours sincerely, Crispin
Bell.

11

EXT. ELMSMERE - FRONT CAR PARK. DAY 2. MORNING.

11

Kids herd in for a new school day.

Nero slouches into school, with Eli and Owen.

NERO
(mid rant)
Man's an absolute noogie. Total
stresscalation.

OWEN
Yes, how unreasonable of him to
complain about you spending all his
money and blocking his toilet.

Nero makes a face at him. Mrs Goodman passes, laden with
briefcase etc, arriving for work. With her is a competent-
looking woman dressed informally but smartly.

MRS GOODMAN
Nero. Brilliant. This is Shona,
your new social worker. Come to my
office at noon, please.

NERO
What? Why? Hang on-

But she's gone. On Nero, looking at Eli and Owen -

NERO (CONT'D)
This must be about Dexter! He's
been messin' up, right? They must
be checkin' up on him!

ELI
Well, nice knowing you. Hey - could
you send me a camel from Kuwait?

NERO
...not if I cover for him. Make up
some quality stuff.

OWEN
Lying? To a social worker? You
can't do that.

Nero and Eli look at each other -

12 INT. ELMSMERE - MRS GOODMAN'S OFFICE. DAY 2. LUNCHTIME. 12

NERO
(mid speech)
-he's a gourmet cook, of course.
(thinks)
But in a *healthy* way. And he's SO
tidy-

They're sat on the beanbags. Shona's taking notes on a
clipboard with a RED FLOWER on it.

SHONA
Mmmhmm?

NERO

And er.. okay, it's only him and me right now... but he's getting married! Yeah. Really soon. So then we'll be, like, a proper family.

SHONA

(still taking notes)

Mmmhmm.

NERO

(really reaching now)

And he like... Sings to me? When I can't sleep? Stuff he's composed. Got a new one for tonight, actually. He's so great.

Pause. Shona looks up - Nero holds his breath.

SHONA

Well! That all seems... extraordinary.

Nero grins.

SHONA (CONT'D)

Just the home visit now.

NERO

Home... visit...

SHONA

Yes.

(checks her diary)

...which I see is tonight. Now, have I got Mr Harris' number -

She pulls out her phone ready to call Dexter.

NERO

Tell you what. I'll tell Dexter.

NUNN

There you go ladies.

REVEAL: Amber, Violet and the other girls, angry, dressed in cheerleading uniforms, holding pompoms. Darnesh looks on.

NUNN (CONT'D)

Stay that side of the line. I don't mind you enjoying yourselves, but I don't want you on the pitch and spoiling it for the boys.

Nunn runs off towards the school.

DARNESH

Nice pom poms.

AMBER

Enjoy ourselves? What sort of
idiots does he think we are?

Ingrid runs up, in cheer gear -

INGRID

Are you freaking kidding me!
(facing the pitch)
GO TEAM!!! Give me an E! Give me an
L...

The other girls look at each other. This is disgusting.

14

INT. ELMSMERE - CORRIDOR/ICT CLASS. DAY 2. AFTERNOON LESSON¹⁴.

Nunn is dribbling a football up the corridor when Mrs Goodman intercepts him.

MRS GOODMAN

Graham sweetheart? This question of
getting girls involved in football -

NUNN

All sorted Love. They're out there
now, shaking their pop poms.

MRS GOODMAN

No, I mean, Cheerleading'll do
wonders for the kids' teamwork.
But... we really can't have the
girls doing separate activities.

NUNN

What?! You mean - ?

MRS GOODMAN

Blur those gender boundaries. I
know you've got it in you. Gooooo
Graham!

She exits leaving Nunn looking disgruntled.

NUNN

I'll give her blurred genders!

Owen, Eli and Nero round the corner walking to class.

NUNN (CONT'D)

Garland. Over here.

Owen stops to talk to Nunn. Nero and Eli keep going.

NERO

Eli - you gotta keep Dex away from the flat. He'll just blow it by showing how lame he is.

ELI

On it like a car bonnet.

Owen comes back from his chat, looking shell-shocked.

NERO

Owen, you gotta bring a quiche round tonight. One of your special ones. And some nerdy games, chess and stuff.

(off Owen's look)

What?

OWEN

I don't have to do football ever again!

NERO

Nice.

OWEN

No. Nunn just made me captain of the cheer squad!

ELI

What?! That's awful!

OWEN

I know! I don't have any routines planned!

He gathers his stuff and leaves -

NERO

Hey, what about my quiche!

15

EXT. ELMSMERE - FRONT CAR PARK. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

15

The bell goes, kids stream out of the building.

Dexter walks towards his car with Lizzie.

DEXTER

Can't you just come round and fix the toilet for me? We could do it together. Hey, it could even be...

He looks around. No one's listening. He waggles an eyebrow.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

...romantic.

LIZZIE

No. Your house is extremely messy.
And Mr Bell frequently leaves his
undergarments on the radiator.
Night!

She wanders to her own car. Dexter walks towards his car. Eli and Nero are hidden nearby. Nero gives Eli the nod and Eli staggers into Dexter's path.

ELI

Sir... sir... I feel well shady.
(cough cough)
Could you take me home?

DEXTER

You don't look too bad to me. Get
the bus - it'll be just as quick.

He carries on towards his car. Eli exchanges a panicked look with Nero. Nero flaps his hands - do something!

ELI

Which... way... to the bus?

He swoons. Dexter rushes to catch him. Eli clutches him -

DEXTER

Okay.. Let's get you to hospital.

ELI

What!? Hospital?! No, just home,
home's fine.

DEXTER

Can't take any chances.

He helps Eli towards his car. Nero gives Eli a thumbs up - brilliant! - Eli not so sure -

16

EXT. ELMSMERE - PLAYING FIELD. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

16

Owen is now in cheerleading costume too (shorts not skirt). He addresses his squad, including Amber, Violet, Mary & Ingrid

OWEN

I've come up with a starter routine
to ease us in. Not saying we enter
any competitions just yet!

He laughs. They don't. He takes a deep breath.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Give me a G!
Give me an O!
Let me hear you say 'GO' -

They just stare at him in silence. He carries on anyway.

OWEN (CONT'D)
 That's right! Unite! Let me hear
 you say 'fight'! Gooooooooooooo -
 ELMSMERE!!!

Big pom shimmy, finishing on both arms up in triumph. It's a natural place for applause. The girls do not applaud. They start talking amongst themselves.

MARY
 I'm going to see Mrs Goodman. This is a disgrace.

The girls start walking off, leaving Owen, deflated. On Amber and Violet, slowly trailing off. Amber turns to camera..

17 INT/EXT. RAP SEQUENCE. AMBER'S DILEMMA/SOLUTION.

17

"Cheerleading" RAP

AMBER
 Give me an O give me a U
 and give me a C give me and H -
 OUCH

Look at the mess we're in...
 We gonna have to do dances and
 wagging
 Pompoms on the touchline
 embarrassing..
 Cheerleading why?
 It's so humiliating... Hey hey
 hey!!

VIOLET
 Give me a D me a R
 give an A give me a T - DRAT

We we're having a normal day
 Minding our own business!
 Couldn't just walk past could we
 And mind our own business!
 We don't even like footie,
 Should have known things would go
 very terribly

AMBER
 Give me an R A T S - RATS

We look like idiots tried to get
 out it
 But Nunn pulled us backed into it,
 What's worse we're gonna be bossed
 about by Owen...
 Complete nerd.
 (MORE)

AMBER (CONT'D)

Not cool - Goodman told Nunn what to do,

**Nunn told Owen what to do
 Owen thinks he knows it all.
 We've got to tell Goodman this
 ain't right,
 Can't just moan I can't do it on my
 own.
 Girls unite-
 Let's show Goodman a clever
 routine/
 Persuade her to support our team,
 I've got an idea**

VIOLET

I love an idea

AMBER

A bright idea - BOOM

18

EXT. ELMSMERE - PLAYING FIELD. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

18

AMBER

**(turning back to Owen)
 What was that you said 'bout
 competitions?**

19

INT. ELMSMERE - 4OCC ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

19

A group of kids enter the detention room, Eleesha, Clem and Fleur are in their midst. They all stop. Staring.

REVEAL: Bell, sat on his desk with a little mirror and tweezers, humming and plucking his eyebrows.

BELL

**Yes? You look like you've never
 seen a man groom himself before.
 What do you want?**

FLEUR

You gave us detention?

CLEM

Yeah, for life?

BELL

(mild)

**Oh please. Get out. Detention is
 cancelled.**

He carries on plucking and humming. The girls turn to leave, look at each other, amazed.

ELEESHA
(whispering)
He's happy! It's working!

FLEUR
It's freakin' me out.

Bell continues to groom.

20 INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

20

The doorbell rings.

Nero opens the door -

NERO
(very polite)
Hello! Oh, it's you.

It's Owen, still in cheer uniform, carrying pompoms and a couple of bags of other stuff. Nero grabs the bags, looks in them.

NERO (CONT'D)
Quiche - Chess - Backgammon...
Right, go and set stuff up through there. And tidy up! Come on!

Nero hurries into the kitchen. Owen follows slowly, chuntering to himself.

OWEN
Hi Owen. How are you Owen? Thanks for the quiche Owen.

He shakes his pom poms feebly.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Yay Owen!

21 EXT. ELMSMERE - PLAYING FIELD. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

21

Nunn is collecting footballs in a net. He starts dribbling -

NUNN
- he's on the ball. Nunn shoots..
He SCORES!

Applause from behind. Nunn turns to find Mrs Goodman and the cheerleading girls, Amber and Violet. Absolutely unembarrassed.

MRS GOODMAN
Boys on the cheer squad!

NUNN

Yup!

MRS GOODMAN

I think that's just.. *amazing!*

NUNN

Oh. Good.

MRS GOODMAN

So I've entered your squad into a competition. Amber here gave me the details.

NUNN

Oh did she?

Nunn turns a slow, baleful look on Amber. Who grins.

AMBER

And we should probably send Mr Nunn on a cheerleading course shouldn't we Miss?

MRS GOODMAN

Ooh, excellent idea. We might struggle to find the funding though...

AMBER

How about you take it from the football team?

NUNN

Whoa, I er... Maybe I've taken on too much.

MRS GOODMAN

Oh. Do you think?

NUNN

Uh. Yeah. I might just... put the girls on the football team. Build up to the cheerleading.

All the protesting girls from earlier run off and start kicking balls that scatter the field.

GIRLS

CHEER! / Hurrah! / Take that you MAN.

Amber and Violet stay behind.

MRS GOODMAN

Really? That's disappointing. But... If you're sure. Thank you Graham.

She leaves. Amber and Violet turn to go with her. Nunn looks evil.

NUNN

Oi! Not so fast.

The girls turn.

NUNN (CONT'D)

You're on my team now. And I think you need some extra training sessions, get you up to scratch.

He starts throwing footballs at them.

NUNN (CONT'D)

Twenty laps! Dribbling! And if you cry you get twenty more!

On Amber and Violet. Not quite so happy after all...

22

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

22

<Ding Dong!> Nero straightens his tie, takes a deep breath, opens the door.

Shona is there, with her clipboard.

NERO

Hi, hello! Dexter's just held up for a bit. At church. The vicar needed a hand with his... candles.

23

INT. CARTER FLAT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

23

Nero and Shona enter the living room which is now really tidy. NB Owen has left his pompoms on a chair.

NERO

So, this is the living room. We like to keep it tidy.

Owen emerges from the kitchen. Shona takes in Owen's outfit.

NERO (CONT'D)

And this is my friend Owen. He's a scout. Very well behaved.

OWEN

Hello. I'd offer you a cup of tea only there doesn't appear to be any milk. Just chocolate pudding.

He puts an arm round Owen.

NERO

Ha ha ha Owen's just leaving.

OWEN

(being supportive)

No, I can hang on for a-

NERO

Mate. Big favour: could you nip to
the shop? Get us some milk?

He pushes Owen out the door to the hall, shoos him down it.

OWEN

But I -

NERO

Great! See ya, bye!

Owen leaves through the front door.

Nero turns back into the room. He smiles. His phone rings. He looks at the caller display.

NERO (CONT'D)

That's Dexter now. I best take
this.

(into phone)

Yeah, I found the home-made
quiche. Looks well healthy and
delicious.

24

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

24

Eli is on his phone, watching Dexter in a queue at the desk.

ELI

You what? I just called to say, you
got about an hour before I leg it.
I ain't having no life saving hip
operations for you, Nero Johnson.

25

INT. CARTER FLAT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

25

Shona gestures to Nero. She wants the phone.

SHONA

Could I have a word?

NERO

Um... He's really busy.

SHONA

Go on - just a quick hello.

NERO

(into the phone)

Er.. Hey DEXTER. I'm just handing you over to SHONA the social worker. She wants to say hello to you, DEXTER.

He hands it over, braced -

26

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

26

Eli's eyes go wide. He looks at the phone as if it were a snake, then puts it gingerly back to his ear.

ELI

(in his normal voice)

Hello? Yes... this IS Mr Dexter Harris. I'm very well, thank you.

(puzzled)

Yes, the vicar's well too. When will I be home...?

(relaxing into the act)

Oh, soon enough, your honour. Now..

I've got to got to go polish my briefcase. They don't call me Mr Harris for nothin. Byeee!

Eli hangs up with a satisfied air. Looks round.

REVEAL: Dexter is behind him. He's returned from the desk, heard everything. Eli gives an innocent smile.

27

INT. CARTER FLAT - KITCHEN. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

27

Nero is continuing with his tour. The kitchen is now tidy.

NERO

And this is the Cooker...

Fridge.... Quiche-

Shona's examining photos-

SHONA

Who's here?

NERO

Ah, like, my aunty Liz... Josh and Nathan... my mum.

SHONA

No pictures of Mr Harris' fiancée?

NERO

They're keeping it a bit quiet at the moment. At the same school an' that.

(MORE)

NERO (CONT'D)

Anyway, like I said, it's all perfect. You'll probably wanna be getting off?

SFX - the front door opening. Nero looks horrified - runs towards the hall -

28

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

28

Nero runs into the hallway to find Mr Bell coming in -

NERO

What you doin' here? What 'bout 4 o'clock club?

BELL

Cancelled. I've got better things to do tonight.

Shona comes through -

NERO

(panicking)

This is Mr Bell. He er...

Mr Bell sees her clipboard. Ah! His date!

MR BELL

Ah, the rose! Very novel. I'm enchanted to meet you!

(finger waggle)

Even though you're ear-ly.

SHONA

(looks at her watch)

Er...

MR BELL

And I wasn't expecting a clipboard!

SHONA

(a bit taken aback)

..I like to take notes.

MR BELL

Really? Won't you come through?

Mr Bell ushers Shona towards the living room. Nero, mystified, follows them.

29

INT. CARTER FLAT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

29

Shona sits on the sofa. Mr Bell swans about, putting on music, lighting candles. Nero stands in the doorway, baffled -

SHONA

So you and Dexter both teach at
Elmsmere?

BELL

Hmm? Harris? Yes.

SHONA

Have you lived here long?

BELL

Good grief, no.

SHONA

Must be nice for you, Nero -

Nero looks utterly perplexed. What is going on?

MR BELL

Martini?

SHONA

Er.. A bit early for me.

MR BELL

Yes of course. I'm a little
nervous! My first time. Have you
done this before?

SHONA

Uh, yes? Hundreds of times.

MR BELL

Oh. I suppose I should have
expected that. Now I must go
freshen up. After all that.. um...
horse riding.

Nero looks baffled.

MR BELL (CONT'D)

Johnson? A word...

30

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

30

Bell shuts the door, waves a tenner at Nero -

MR BELL

Here's a tenner. Now push off.

NERO

What?

MR BELL

I don't want you ruining things
with my date.

NERO
Your.. date?

MR BELL
Yes, Mr Bell has a date! Is that
really so surprising?

NERO
No! Of course not. Your date.
Absolutely.

MR BELL
Exactly. So go on. Scram.

NERO
Um... okay...

Nero starts to head to the front door, slowly, puts his hand on the latch... Bell goes into the bathroom. Nero swiftly reverses, goes back into the living room.

31 INT. CARTER FLAT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL. 31

Nero comes in to find Shona -

NERO
So! All done? The loo's busted so I
wouldn't stay too much longer..

SHONA
He's.. quirky. How long have he and
Dexter been a couple?

NERO
What? WHAT? No! Mr Bell just,
like.. Lives with us. On the couch.

Shona looks round. The newly tidy living room does not look like Mr Bell lives there.

SHONA
Nero. Don't be so worried. In this
day and age everyone's very
accepting of same sex
relationships.

NERO
Uh... Right. Yeah.

SFX - THE FRONT DOOR.

DEXTER (OS)
(angry)
NERO!

Nero horrified that Dexter is here.

32

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

32

Nero runs through, finds an angry Dexter and chastened Eli.

DEXTER

What's going on? Eli's just had me
on some wild goose chase and - oof!Nero pushes Dexter back out of the flat into the public
corridor.

33

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE CARTER FLAT. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL 33

Nero pushes Dexter out into the public corridor.

NERO

The social have come to check up on
you. They heard 'bout how you been
messing up.

DEXTER

Oh. Oh no.

NERO

Yeah. And they were about to send
me away, but I've pretty much
sorted it.

DEXTER

But -

NERO

All you need to know is: you're
really tidy, you're engaged to Mr
Bell and you sound like Eli being a
man. Now come on, let's go!

On Dexter - dilemma!

34

INT. RAP SEQUENCE. SECRETS AND LIES. DAY 2

34

DEXTER

Nero lied his face off
Am I supposed to go along with this
charade of
Secrets and lies responsible thing
to do
Tell the social worker the truth
Lies cause trouble.....
Like the time I accidentally took
the keys to the school gates home,
The next morning we all had to
climb over to get in
My fault, little did they know
I can't go through that again, Need
to be honest,
(MORE)

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Since honesty is the best policy,
 But what if they send Nero away for
 lying
 Or worse still blame me for his
 dishonesty
 I'd hate for him to have to leave
 all his friends
 Yet again and feel like I've failed
 as a parent.
 Being a good one that's a great
 achievement
 So do I have to keep the real truth
 secret?
 For the sake of me and Nero's
 relationship
 Do I lie my face off and make it
 stick?
 Or do I tell the truth, act like a
 grown up?
 A proper adult would go in there
 and own up...

35

INT. CARTER FLAT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

35

Shona and Eli are sitting waiting. Dexter enters the room
 breezily, with Nero behind -

DEXTER

(Eli voice)
 Och hellooo! It's reet nice tae
 meet ye!

Eli recoils in shock.

36

INT. CARTER FLAT - BATHROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL

36

Mr Bell is in the bathroom, giving himself a pep talk in the
 mirror. In the background we can see the toilet, which is
 covered with pink crust.

MR BELL

You can do this. You're a lion.
 King of the jungle. A silverback
 male. You're irresistible.

Checks his teeth. He turns to go, sees the horrible toilet,
 and floor, retches -

37

INT. CARTER FLAT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. AFTER SCHOOL.

37

Shona, Eli, Dexter and Nero sit in the living room.

SHONA

(to Eli)
 And how do you know Nero?

ELI
Four o'clock club.

SHONA
What's that?

ELI
After school / detention.

NERO
(leaping in)
/ CHEER CLUB. With Owen.

SHONA
Cheer club?

NERO
Yep. Where all the well-behaved
kids hang out.

Eli gets it. Tries to be helpful.

ELI
Yeah, NOT detention. Cheer club! He
could even show you a routine!

Nero glares at Eli.

NERO
Yes. Yes I could.

Eli hands him the poms, encouragingly. Nero shakes them.

NERO (CONT'D)
Give us a...

He looks at Eli -

ELI
P? B? Q?

Dexter steps in to rescue Nero.

DEXTER
Och, ye cannae really do your
cheers in here mon. And besides -

Mr Bell comes in. Dexter stops talking to hide his accent.
Bell pretends to be chilled out, but addresses Dexter through
a fixed smile

MR BELL
Mr Harris, why is the lavatory
blocked?

Dexter smiles, shrugs, grins at Shona and makes a 'that's
life' kind of gesture.

MR BELL (CONT'D)
You didn't think to get is sorted out?

Dexter smiles, slaps himself on the forehead as if to acknowledge he's an idiot.

MR BELL (CONT'D)
You have nothing to say for yourself?

Dexter tuts, blows through his lips, makes a resigned face as if to suggest he has nothing more to add.

MR BELL (CONT'D)
(to Shona)
I'm so sorry. Shall we leave for the restaurant?

SHONA
Um? I find these meetings are best handled in the home environment.

MR BELL
Oh. Well, I'll rustle us up some dinner here then.

SHONA
There's no need.

MR BELL
My dear girl. Please.

He exits to the kitchen.

SHONA
(to the others)
I really don't want dinner. Maybe I should have a word with -

She goes to rise. Nero leaps in to stop her.

NERO
Hey Dex! Time for...
(tries to think of a way to cover)
...a song!

Dexter looks at him - what now?

NERO (CONT'D)
Hope you don't mind. I told Shona 'bout... your songs. The ones you write to get me to sleep.

DEXTER
(Eli voice)
Ooooh. Those. Ye little wee scamp ye.

Shona looks at him expectantly. He stands in the middle of the room. An awkward silence. Starts improvising-

DEXTER (CONT'D)
Nero child, it's time tae snooze...
The -

He plays on... panic! What rhymes with snooze...?

NERO
 Cows!

DEXTER
Cows? Cows!.. have finished all
their moos.
And soon they will be... beef... in
stews.

Awkward. Ring at the door. Dexter jumps up - reprieve!

38

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. EARLY EVENING.

38

Dexter answers the door. It's Lizzie.

DEXTER
 (normal voice)
 Lizzie!

LIZZY
 You were right. I should help with
 your toilet. I'm your girlfriend
 and it's not your fault you're
 useless.

(pulling on some rubber gloves)
 I'm braced for the underpants.

Dexter looks back towards the living room. Doesn't move aside for Lizzie to come in.

DEXTER
 I know. But look. Now might not be
 the BEST time.

Shona appears in the corridor -

SHONA
 Mr Harris -

DEXTER
 Bye then. I'll let you know about
 the toilet.

He shuts the door on Lizzie. Smiles at Shona.

DEXTER (CONT'D)
 Plumber.

SHONA

Mr Harris, I think re-establishing a working toilet should be quite a high priority for you.

Dexter sighs, opens the door reluctantly. Lizzie looks furious. He grabs her, pulls her in and pushes her into the bathroom. In his urgency he forgets his Scottish accent.

DEXTER

Here's the problem!

LIZZY

WHAT is going on?

DEXTER

(through gritted teeth)
I'll explain everything in a minute!

Dexter shuts Lizzie in the bathroom. He turns to face Shona, with a smile. She's frowning. Dexter sees Nero has come through behind her, looking desperate.

NERO

You're probably wondering why Dexter said all that in a *different accent*. Well... Dexter?

DEXTER

Uh. Yes. I'm... doing... a...
sponsored Accent-A-Thon! And I just forgot.

(Eli voice)
Hoots mon. Ha ha!

SHONA

A sponsored accent?
(she laughs)
Do you know I did wonder if you were putting on a silly accent, earlier!

They all laugh. Nero and Dexter laugh too hard. Shona stops laughing and eyes them.

DEXTER

(Eli voice)
Och, I had better explain things to my... the plumber.

Dexter gulps, heads into the loo to explain things to Lizzie. Nero gives Shona a smile.

39

INT. CARTER FLAT - BATHROOM. DAY 2. EARLY EVENING.

39

Lizzie is looking at Dexter.

LIZZIE

So... You're pretending to be
Scottish? For charity? I'm a
plumber? Mr Bell's your fiancé? And
Nero's a cheerleader?

DEXTER

Exactly. Ready?

40

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. EARLY EVENING

40

Nero is still waiting awkwardly with Shona as Dexter and Lizzie come out of the loo. Lizzie affects a tradesperson's demeanour.

LIZZIE

Well, the problem with your u-bend
is.. It needs a... sprocket?

DEXTER

(Eli voice)
Och, does it now.

There's a ring at the door. Dexter goes to answer it.

Bell comes through from the kitchen, Eli behind him.

MR BELL

Oh good. That'll be the plumber.

Shona looks at Lizzie. Lizzie smiles. Dexter doesn't want to open the door - just stands there with his hand on the catch. Everyone just stands there awkwardly. The bell rings again.

MR BELL (CONT'D)

Well open it then.

Dexter sags. Opens the door.

It's Owen.

OWEN

I got the milk.

Dexter, Lizzie and Nero breathe again.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Oh, and good news - the plumber's here.

Owen steps aside to reveal A BIG GUY wearing a TOOLBELT. He smiles warmly.

LIZZY

But.. *I'm* the plumber.

DEXTER

(Eli voice, to the
plumber)

Already got one thanks.

Dexter shuts the door.

BELL

Don't be absurd. You're a chemistry
teacher. And Harris, why are you
putting on that ridiculous voice?

An oven timer goes off.

BELL (CONT'D)

Dessert!

Bell retreats back to the kitchen. As soon as he's out of
earshot Dexter calls after him, for Shona's benefit.

DEXTER

(Eli voice)

Och. You know why. Er.. Darling.

Shona looks at them all, raises an eyebrow. Beat.

NERO

You're not buying any of this are
you?

Off Shona's look, Nero, Dexter, Lizzie, Eli and Owen all
start to speak simultaneously.

NERO (CONT'D)

(simultaneous)

Look, Shona yeah, I can totally
explain everything that's been
happening. I've been giving Dexter
a hard time but he's been great -

DEXTER

(simultaneous)

I think what Nero's trying to say
is that he and I are both pretty
new to this whole guardianship
thing and we're trying to find our
way -

LIZZIE

(simultaneous)

What you have to know about Dexter
is that he cares, he really cares.
He's doing the best he can, yes he
messes up sometimes, but the
important thing -

ELI

(simultaneous)

Okay, I confess, I'm the Scottish one, not Dexter. On the phone earlier, that was me, speaking in a Scottish accent, because I'm Scottish, from Scotland -

OWEN

(simultaneous)

Madam, please, can I just say a few words in Nero's defence? Yes, he's acted irresponsibly, but he's scared, he's like a cornered animal, and when a vulnerable animal gets cornered sometimes it acts irrationally -

<Ding Dong!> It's the doorbell again. Everyone falls silent.

DEXTER

It'll be the plumber again.

(yelling)

GO AWAY!

41

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CARTER FLAT. DAY 2. EARLY EVENING 41

REVEAL A middle aged lady in jodhpurs and riding boots and a pony jumper, holding a red flower. She hears Dexter's 'Go away' and her face falls. Sad. She turns and walks slowly away.

42

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. EARLY EVENING

42

SHONA

I haven't a clue what's going on here. But something clearly is. Shall we go and sit down?

43

INT. CARTER FLAT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. EARLY EVENING

43

We jump into a cacophony of protest again. Shona is sat on the sofa. Everyone else is stood up, speaking simultaneously -

DEXTER

Yes, I've made some mistakes, but Nero shouldn't have to pay for-

OWEN

They're good together -

LIZZIE

I feel that sending Nero to Kuwait would be entirely counter productive.

ELI

Even though I would like a camel -

NERO

Everyone! Shut up!

(they do)

Look. I lied, okay. I ain't got a grade A homelife. But.. I know weirder set-ups! Like, the stories I could tell 'bout Owen's family -

OWEN

Hey!

NERO

Dexter ain't perfect.. but he's okay. He really tries. And I'm happy.

DEXTER

(touched)

Really?

NERO

Yeah. So please - can't I stay?

Everyone looks at Shona.

SHONA

Will you all sit down?!

They do. They think all is lost.

NERO

This stinks man...

SHONA

Please. We KNOW nobody has the perfect childhood. 'Okay' is totally fine.

DEXTER

It is?

SHONA

You're a good team. And you evidently love each other.

Nero and Dexter both look at each other and make faces.

SHONA (CONT'D)

No one does all this for someone they don't care about. We're not removing Nero from your care, Mr Harris.

Relief. Exhaustion.

44

INT. CARTER FLAT - HALLWAY. DAY 2. EARLY EVENING.

44

Dexter, Nero and Shona come through. She's leaving.

DEXTER

So.. This wasn't to do with me?

SHONA

No! Just a routine visit. Didn't
you get the letter?Nero and Dexter turn as one to look at the massive pile of
post on the hall table.

DEXTER

Uh.. No. Can't think why not.

SHONA

Well. Bye everyone!

- just as Bell comes out of the kitchen.

BELL

But.. Dinner...

SHONA

Lovely to meet you. I'll be back in
six months.

She's gone.

BELL

Oh. Well.. She's probably right.
Best to take things slow.But he's chuffed. Thinks his date went well. He chuckles,
roars like a lion, heads back into the kitchen. Nero looks at
Dexter.

NERO

So... guess I really saved your
sorry bacon there Dex. No need to
thank me.

DEXTER

(warm, friendly)

Oh no Nero. I'll thank you
alright...

Dexter pushes the bathroom door open.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

(turns serious)

Right after you unblock the toilet.

On Nero, looking grumpy.

END.