

**SCENE ONE**

*(A living room, Basingstoke. Late afternoon. JULES, PENNY and TAMMY enter. JULES pauses to switch the light on and off several times. follow him in)*

**JULES** You know the first thing I did when they got me to Luanda? Switched on the light. Mid-afternoon in Africa and I switched on the bloody light. First time for six years I had a switch.

**PENNY** I'll put the kettle on.

**JULES** That can wait. I just want to look at you all.

**TAMMY** Inspection.

*(She forms a line next to PENNY and poses)*

**JULES** Look at you, Tams - I've a woman for a daughter now. Isn't she pretty?

**TAMMY** Dad!

**JULES** It's true.

**TAMMY** And Mum?

**JULES** She don't change. *(PENNY is crying)* What's this about?

**PENNY** I'm so happy.

**JULES** We're all happy.

**PENNY** The years we've lost to those bloody bandits.

**TAMMY** They're freedom fighters.

**PENNY** They still had your Dad..

**JULES** That's history now. Hey, that's my chair *(He shoos TAMMY off his chair and sits down)* I'm back.

**PENNY** You look it and all.

*(Silence)*

**JULES** Yeah.

*(He starts to drum, something he will always do in the house when under stress)*

**TAMMY** Mum was like... *(She mimes someone staring at a phone in disbelief)* when Donny rang.

**JULES** Donny?

**PENNY** From the Foreign Office.

**TAMMY** Useless prat.

*(He can't stay still so he walks round the room, touching the furniture to familiarise himself with it again)*

**PENNY** He got Dad out.

**TAMMY** After six years. Leaves on the line?

**PENNY** Deal's take time.

**JULES** There were no deals.

**PENNY** Give Donny credit.

**TAMMY** It's only because you were nag-nag squared.

**JULES** You?

**PENNY** I wanted that phone call.

**TAMMY** And what did you do when it came? Worry what's in the freezer.

**PENNY** I thought Dad might be hungry.

**JULES** They fed me OK. A dead hostage is no hostage.

**PENNY** Don't say that.

*(More silence)*

**TAMMY** I was how's Dad and Mum was all where's Luanda?

**PENNY** I didn't know.

**JULES** The Front wanted the release across the border.

**PENNY** I was trying to look it up, but the internet was down and Tammy was too busy praying to sort it. She

goes to church now.

**TAMMY** Meeting house.

**JULES** Right.

**TAMMY** It's not a disease, Dad.

**JULES** I've met good people who do religion.

*(Silence)*

**PENNY** I kept seeing you in some horrible prison with rats and...

**JULES** Hammock in the forest. Hut when I was lucky. But no straying or...

*(He mimes someone shooting)*

**PENNY** Don't!

**JULES** It's over. *(He moves a china figure back to where it was six years ago)* Where's the crinoline lady?

**PENNY** She broke.

**JULES** Broke?

**TAMMY** I was dusting.

**JULES** Oh.

*(Silence)*

**PENNY** I've so much to tell you.

**JULES** I bet.

**PENNY** Yeah. *(Silence)* The apple tree died.

**JULES** Tams loved picking those apples.

**TAMMY** That was ages ago.

*(More silence)*

**TAMMY** You should have seen Mum at the airport. She was like dab, dab with her make-up.

**PENNY** I was not.

**TAMMY** You were. She was so stressed.

**PENNY** It'd been a long time. I thought you might forget that.

**JULES** I counted every day of it, Pen.

**PENNY** I mean... I'm six years older. You hesitated when you saw me.

**JULES** You're imagining things.

**TAMMY** You did, Dad.

**JULES** I'm older too.

**PENNY** You're still my hero.

*(She flings herself at him. He tries lifting her up. He's not strong enough. They end up toppling into a chair)*

**TAMMY** I'll be leaving.

*(She tries to edge past them)*

**JULES** Don't be silly.

*(He ruffles her hair)*

**TAMMY** No!

**JULES** What's up?

**TAMMY** I don't like you messing my hair.

**JULES** You used to.

**TAMMY** It's like I'm still a kid.

**PENNY** Girls grow up, Jules.

**JULES** I missed that.

**PENNY** Lucky you.

**TAMMY** Mum!

**PENNY** Wait until you have kids.

**JULES** I bet she breaks hearts.

**TAMMY** I'm so not like that.

**JULES** Your Mum. Talk about bees round honey.

**PENNY** Don't you believe him.

**JULES** True.

*(More silence)*

**PENNY** The things we could have done together.

**JULES** We'll soon pick up the threads again.

**TAMMY** Except I'm seventeen.

**JULES** Ancient.

*(TAMMY gives him a playful punch. JULES takes up the stance of a bare knuckle fighter. TAMMY touches his knuckles with her own fist. JULES collapses back as if knocked down - an old routine that makes them both laugh)*

**PENNY** It wasn't nice without you.

**TAMMY** It was worse for Dad.

**JULES** That don't matter now.

**TAMMY** I want to know everything.

**JULES** I said it don't matter. *(He starts patrolling the room again)* Opposite's for sale again.

**PENNY** He wants to move; she don't.

**JULES** That's still going on?

*(TAMMY joins him at the window)*

**TAMMY** This is Basingstoke, Dad. Nothing's ever different. You were a million years excitement.

*(She has put her arm round him. He surprises her by suddenly hugging her tightly to him. He lets go)*