

Scene 1

(The touchline of a park football pitch.

ANNE, DAVE and **ELLI** are watching an under-12 game. **DAVE** follows the game up and down the pitch, supporting enthusiastically. The two women stand apart, **ELLI** trying to look interested, **ANNE** frankly bored)

ANNE *(To the audience)* September. Another feast of under-12 football kicks off. Same Dads on the line with bloodlust in their eyes. Same Mums sticking together.

DAVE Bloody hell, ref - change your optician.

ANNE You can't blame them, can you? But last season I came loose somehow. Dropped away. Was dropped.

(The play shifts towards the opposite end. DAVE follows the ball down the touchline. The change of direction means ELLI is now looking towards ANNE. She smiles shyly. The ball is hoofed back and forward)

DAVE Yes!

(ANNE and ELLI clap)

ELLI That was good.

ANNE You're one of us?

ELLI Yes. Are you new too?

ANNE I wish.

ELLI I thought as you're on your own...

ANNE Oh, I'm not really a team person.

ELLI Sorry.

ANNE I don't mind talking to people. I like talking to people.

ELLI But you're... yourself, yeah?

ANNE Yeah. I'm myself. You're right on the button there. Which one's yours?

ELLI The blonde boy.

(They watch him)

ANNE He looks good.

ELLI You think he'll be OK?

ANNE They keep giving him the ball. That's always a good sign. That's my Gary tackling now.

ELLI Is he allowed to pull their shirts?

ANNE If nobody sees. Coffee?

*(She offers a flask. **ELLI** takes it and drinks)*

ELLI Just coffee?

*(**ANNE** puts a finger to her lips. **ELLI** giggles)*

ANNE I'm Anne.

ELLI Elli.

*(**DAVE** follows the game back upfield)*

DAVE Kill him, boy! Kill him now!

ANNE He's mine as well.

ELLI I thought Mr Phillips was the coach for Vincents.

ANNE Dave's their supporter. *(They watch him)* Bless. Dave, this is Elli. *(**DAVE** is too absorbed to hear)* Calling planet Zog.

DAVE What?

ANNE Elli.

ELLI Hi.

ANNE Elli's new.

DAVE Right. Good ball!

ANNE That's Luke.

DAVE He can play a bit.

ELLI He used to play for Parkside.

DAVE He left Parkside for us?

ANNE Why not?

DAVE Parkside are shit-hot, that's why. They beat us 4-1 last year.

ANNE Against the run of play. That's what you said.

DAVE I never. Don't remember Luke playing.

ELLI It couldn't have been Parkside.

DAVE It was. Bastards.

ANNE That's a footballing term for the other side.

ELLI Parkside play in a different league. I checked.

DAVE This was the cup.

ELLI Cup?

DAVE The district cup. We all go for that one. Don't watch him, Vincents!

(DAVE sets off after the play)

ELLI Luke never said.

ANNE It's no big deal.

ELLI No. We won't play Parkside this year, will we?

ANNE Not unless we draw them.

ELLI Good.

ANNE Doesn't want to play his old mates?

ELLI Something like that.

ANNE We're usually out by round three.

DAVE Luke's a nippy little bugger, isn't he? Really skinned him that time.

ANNE I think that means the boy done good.

DAVE He did do good. Lucky he chose us.

ELLI I think some of his friends play for Vincents.

ANNE I know. Don't ask questions, Mum, just do it. And they're not even teenagers.

(The final whistle goes. They all clap the players off)

DAVE Well played, Vincents!

ANNE That's it for another week, thank God.

ELLI We won though.

ANNE Better than losing. And the sun shone. Small blessings. You here next week?

ELLI Yeah. You?

ANNE Uhm. The things we do for kids.

ELLI Yeah, but imagine not having them.

(They imagine it)

ANNE/
ELLI Great.

(They both start laughing)

Scene 2

(ANNE's living room. DAVE, wearing an England shirt, is jogging on a treadmill - a basic folding model. As he runs he imagines a commentary by Clive Tyldesley, with Ron

Atkinson providing the experts view.)

DAVE Ferdinand. Through to Gerard. Dave's making a run on the left. Dave gathers. That's a penetrating ball to Defoe. Loses it to Edmilson. Out to Roberto Carlos. Good tackle from Dave. Beats one man. Two. Three. What a goal! That's one they'll keep showing. *(Ron's voice)* I'll tell you what, I'm not betting he won't give us one better. *(Clive's voice)* He's giving Brazil a roasting tonight. *(Ron)* To be fair, we all said Capello couldn't leave Rooney on the bench but this fella's got his own opinion. He keeps asking questions and Brazil don't know how to answer. If I was Rooney I'd be wondering how I'm going to get back into the side. *(Clive)* I know you've always been an admirer of Dave. *(Ron)* Arsenal must be kicking themselves for turning down the lad. *(Clive)* That's football, Ron.

(A banging noise is becoming more insistent)

DAVE I'm busy! *(Muffled shouts as well)* I've shown you how to do it. *(The shouts become angrier)* All right. I'm coming.

(He exits. There is a thump and a kicking noise. DAVE re-enters and resumes his jogging.)

DAVE And it's Dave again. Really, Ron, this boy's unstoppable.

(ANNE enters)

ANNE You've got to do something about that door.

DAVE I will.

ANNE But you don't. You know you don't.

DAVE I've been working. I need some rest.

ANNE Rest?

DAVE Exercise does you good.

ANNE Stuck in the loo does me good?