

Scene 1

Jim What time do you call this ay? Where've you been? Answer me.

Sasha I've been into town and now I'm home.

Jim Who have you been with? Which one of those layabout druggies was it tonight?

Sasha Oh, I'm going to bed.

Jim Oh no you're not. You're going to tell me just where you've been and who you've been with and why you think you can go out every night of the week with anyone you choose when your exams are coming up. You'd better watch out carrying on like this young lady.

Sasha Night.

Jim Come here.

Sasha What for? So you can shout at me even louder and wake up your daughter?

Jim You'll do as I say.

Sasha Oh for Christ sake – get real. Just because you get off on throwing your weight around this house whenever you choose to be here doesn't mean you have some god given right to order me about. Mum and me manage fine when you're not here which is most of the time. I'm nearly sixteen and I can lead my own life thank you.

Jim Your mother just lets you run wild and I'm not having it. It's your future I'm thinking about.

Sasha I can look after my own future. Frankly, what you think doesn't matter.

Jim Oh so I suppose you'll all manage without me bringing home the bacon. What you do think this house runs on? What your mother earns wouldn't pay the rent let alone the bills. Without me you'd all be on the streets, which is where you're heading if you don't watch out.

Sasha Oh I've had enough of this.

[FIZZY DRINK BEING POURED INTO GLASS & DOOR OPENING]

Dawn Hi. God my feet are killing me. What an evening. It's been non stop since seven. I'm shattered.

Jim I don't know why you work in that God-forsaken hole.

Dawn Because we need the money. Jim There's plenty of proper jobs around, daytime jobs.

Dawn We've been through all this. You know I can't leave mum on her own all day. And I've got to get Jade to nursery and back. Bar work fits in, besides I get to meet people.

Jim Not people who use that dump – they're animals.

Dawn You don't know them. Anyway what's got into you tonight? Did they lose again?

Jim Your bloody daughter, that's what.

Dawn Have you been rowing again? I wish you'd let her alone Jim.

Jim You don't seem to care what she gets up to, do you? Who she's with, where she goes. She's only a schoolgirl for Gods sake. You let her out until all hours. Where's she been tonight eh? You don't know do you? Hanging about on street corners, in clubs. There's all sorts out there Dawn. Druggies, car thieves, louts, don't you care?

Dawn Are you accusing me of being a bad mother? Well that's rich coming from you. When are you ever here? What do you know about running this house and bringing up kids? When are you bathing Jade. Cooking the meals, wiping up after one of mum's accidents. Jesus, you don't even do the washing up.

Jim Your mother should be put in a home; it's disgusting having her dribbling and pissing all over this house. It's unhealthy.

Dawn That's it. I'm not discussing my mother with you.

Jim Typical. Turn your back on it. Ignore the problem and it'll go away. It's the same with Sasha. You just let her do as she pleases. Well it's not good enough Dawn. You can't go on turning your back on your responsibilities.

Dawn Responsibilities? You don't know what the word means.

Scene 2

Mike Now. Jade has been attending for the last year. She has always been behind with her verbal expression and has difficulty relating to other children.

Hilary How has her attendance been?

Mike Very regular. Five days a week. She has a priority place. Her mother works in the daytime, and in the evenings at the Coach and Horses I think.

Hilary Who is looking after Jade in the evenings then?

Mike The grandmother lives with them and there's an elder sister, about fourteen or fifteen.

Hilary Father?

Mike Away working most of the time. We've noticed a pattern in Jade's behaviour. She seems to get more aggressive to the other children when he's been at home. She's been like this for the last week and has virtually stopped communicating verbally altogether. We are concerned. And then when Mrs Palmer failed to come to Jade's review we thought we ought to contact you.

Hilary Has she given any reason for not showing up?

Mike Well she said she simply forgot. We sent her a reminder of course, though she said she never received it. Brushed it off rather lightly even though we tried to point out how important it was for Jade. She does appear to be under a lot of stress.

Hilary Anything else you've noticed – about Jade?

Mike Well, no signs of any physical abuse if that's you mean. But we are very concerned about the deterioration in her speech, and by her behaviour to the other children. That has got worse and it's causing quite a lot of disruption.

Hilary So – a home visit?

Mike I think that would be appropriate – sooner rather than later.

Hilary I'll try to fit something in early next week and then get back to you. Can I see Jade before I go?

Mike Sure. She's in with Megan and Nicola. I'll take you through.

Scene 3

Dawn I just completely forgot to go. That's all.

Hilary I think the nursery staff want to talk to you about Jade.

Dawn Look – I see them every day when I drop her off. I don't see why they can't talk to me then

Hilary They are pretty busy at the beginning and end of the day with all the parents and children coming and going at once. The idea of the review is to all sit around and discuss Jade's development with you in peace and quiet. At length. So you can all see how she's getting on and make plans.

Dawn She's fine. Perfectly normal.

Hilary It would be worth making another appointment anyway. They like to review each child every six months as a matter of course. I think they're concerned about Jade's speech.

Dawn She's only three for God's sake. What do they expect?

Hilary If you go along to the review you can talk about it with them. Can Jade's father go as well?

Dawn He's away working. Won't be back for three weeks. Look, I don't know when I'll find the time to go to be honest.

Hilary You've got a lot to deal with at the moment?

Dawn All the time I work you see. Lunch times and evenings. And there's my mother to look after – and Sasha. She doesn't really need looking after, do you Sash? Sasha!

Hilary How is your mother?

Dawn Gets worse and worse, but she's over seventy so it's only to be expected. We have a District nurse around twice a week to help with baths. She can't move about much now what with the arthritis, and she's on this diabetic diet so that's another thing. And she's started wetting herself a bit recently. She's my biggest problem to be honest.

Hilary Is she able to look after Jade when you are at work?

Dawn She can keep an eye on her I suppose. But Sasha is very good, aren't you? And of course my husband. Sasha – please!

Hilary I'm just wondering if there's any more help you might need for Jade? Child minding or something.

Dawn If we didn't have mum to look after – I mean if we could get her into a home. Could you do that?

Hilary Well I'm responsible for childcare really, but I could make some enquiries for you.

Dawn It's the money you see. I mean we couldn't afford anything private. You have to pay for them anyway nowadays don't you?

Hilary I think there are places.

Dawn She's just getting too much for me to deal with. I'd want her properly looked after. But if she was in a home, I would have more time for Jade wouldn't I?

Hilary Yes. What do you think Sasha?

Sasha I know he wants to get rid of her.

Dawn Sasha!

Hilary Have you talked to your mother about it?

Dawn Well it's difficult isn't it? I don't want her to feel unwanted or anything. I mean it's not that we want her to go. It's just, you know – until we've got something sorted out there's no point in worrying her is there? Do you think you could find somewhere?

Hilary I can try to find out. And you'll make another appointment to go to the nursery for a review for Jade?

Dawn Yeah, all right, if it's so important.

Scene 4

Hilary Have you made another appointment yet?

Mike Yes. But that's not why I rang. We had a bit of an incident today with Jade.

Hilary What happened? Mike Apparently she got quite aggressive with another child and this time actually bit him – quite badly. She's been particularly difficult all this week and this has left all the staff feeling very worried. The child's clearly distressed.

Hilary I think her father has been at home this week.

Mike Well whatever the reason it needs looking into – with some urgency.

Hilary OK. I suppose I could make another home visit and meet Mr Palmer.

Mike Yes. Let me know how it goes.

Hilary Of course. Thanks for ringing.

Mike Good luck.