

**Dean** Any road, sorry I'm late. Chrissie and me, last night, we had this slight altercation.

**Mal** Did you?

**Dean** Nothing serious. Blow over. You're dead right about women, though, Mal. Seriously.

**Mal** Am I?

**Dean** Oh, yes.

**Mal** Really? I never thought I understood them, at all.

**Dean** You? You read them like a bloody book, mate, I tell you. *(Sitting)* Like you were saying yesterday, whatever you do for them, they're never bloody satisfied, are they?

*Mal finds a dishcloth, wets it under the tap and starts wiping the work surfaces*

Whatever you do — whatever you ... *(Noticing Mal)* What you doing?

**Mal** Just wiping these over.

*Mal sets about the work surfaces whilst Dean warms to his theme. Mal shoots Dean the odd venomous look but is evidently trying his best to retain self control*

*Jill comes back with a second clothes combination which she rapidly rejects as well*

*She goes out again*

**Dean** *(puzzled)* Oh. No, whatever you do for them ... it's never quite enough, is it? I mean, as you said, you try your best, you work your balls off for them, it's still not enough, is it? You were spot on there, mate. I mean take what you're doing now, that bit of cleaning, if she was in here, if Jill was here — don't get me wrong — she'd be saying, ooh, don't forget that bit in the corner, wouldn't she? Or, ooh, look you missed that bit! Wouldn't she? Eh?

*Dean laughs. Mal continues, grimly*

No, it's all one way, mostly. When you think about it? All about them being appreciated, isn't it? I mean, take last night with me and Chrissie — I mean, don't get me wrong, Mal, I think the world of her — but I

mean the entire conversation was about what *she'd* done for *me*. What about all the things I've done for her, eh? I said to her, bloody hell what about all the things I've done for you then, eh? So we finished up having this — this altercation, you know. And this morning, she's still sulking. Refusing to get up. Well, except to feed the baby, of course ... So I had to get the breakfast. Do it myself. Boiling eggs ... all that.

**Mal** Nice change for her, anyway. Breakfast in bed.

**Dean** You're joking. She didn't have breakfast. Wasn't my turn, was it? Fair's fair.

*Under the next, Mal finishes wiping the surfaces and, as he passes behind Dean, squeezes the wet cloth over his head*

I mean, let's face it, women, they'll turn anything to their own advantage, won't they? To suit themselves? I mean, take the other —  
(*Jumping up in alarm*) Hey! What are you doing?

**Mal** Sorry.

*Mal wrings out the rest of the water in the sink and puts the cloth neatly out to dry*

**Dean** Careful.

**Mal** Ready for off, then?

**Dean** Sure. Waiting for you. Do you — er — want me to cover for you again, this lunchtime? For your — lunch appointment?

**Mal** Sorry?

**Dean** You know. While you — you know — you have your lunch?

**Mal** Oh, my lunch. No, not today.

**Dean** No?

**Mal** Probably — disagree with me.

**Dean** Right. Sorry. I thought you were ... sorry. None of my business.

**Mal** Come on. We're going to be late.

**Chrissie & Jill 57 – 58**

**Jill** Sleeping like a log.

**Chrissie** Told you. Always the same, minute he's in the car. You should have been round at our place last night. Yelling and screaming.

**Jill** Real tantrum, was it?

**Chrissie** I'll say. And that was just us two.

**Jill** What?

**Chrissie** Nothing.

*Pause. Jill stares at her*

Nothing. I've said, nothing you can do. We'll sort it out between us. We have to.

*Jill continues to stare*

Nothing. I've said.

*Another silence*

No, I was thinking about what we were saying yesterday, Mum. I think the problem for Dad, he's like most men, he lives in a sort of fantasy land, doesn't he? Well, they all do really, don't they? In their different ways. Most of them, most of the time. Dean, Sam, Dad. Liam probably eventually. But then we don't help, do we, because quite often we sort of protect them, don't we? Keep the truth from them. Frightened of hurting them, I suppose, little blossoms. I mean. I say things to you, Mum, I'd never dream of saying to Dad. Not in a million years. It's the same with you, isn't it? I mean, this affair of his. You've been playing along with it, but in the end, face it, the only one who's really getting hurt is you. What you should have probably done is said to Dad, "Listen, I know you're having an affair with this woman, so for goodness' sake stop pretending you're not, making all these secret phone calls, pathetically sneaking out in your lunchbreaks as if nobody knew, just go ahead, fuck her senseless and then come back home and let's get on with our marriage, for God's sake." Only you can't really say that to him, can you?

*Silence. Jill sits somewhat stunned*

You all right, Mum?

**Jill** I don't know.

**Chrissie** Sorry. Shouldn't I have said that? I haven't upset you again, have I?

**Jill** I just feel I've just been run over by a large truck.

*Jill suddenly gets up and hurries from the room*

**Chrissie** Mum?

*Chrissie stands at a bit of a loss*

Oh, God. I can't say a thing right, can I?

**Jill** (*sitting down again*) Right. Let's do this Shakespeare.

**Sam** We'd better. Dad'll be home in a minute.

**Jill** (*finding her place in the text again*) "Quin —" no, Quince, isn't it?  
— "Quince: Francis Flute, the bellows maker."

**Sam** Here, Peter Quince.

**Jill** (*reading*) "Quince: You must take Thisbe on you."

**Sam** What is Thisbe? A wandering knight?

**Jill** "Quince: It is the lady that Pyramus must love." (*Under her breath*)  
Bloody hell, here we go.

**Sam** What?

**Jill** Nothing. Carry on.

**Sam** Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming. (*Slight pause*) That's it then, thanks, Mum.

**Jill** That it? That all you say?

**Sam** In that scene, yes, that's all he says. Except later on there's an All.  
When we all say, "That would hang us, every mother's son."

**Jill** Not much of a part, is it? This Flute? Doesn't get to say much, does he? Hey, what about this one later on? This Tita? He goes on a bit.

**Sam** No, that's Titania, Mum. Queen of the Fairies.

**Jill** (*hastily*) Oh, well, you don't want to get into that.

**Sam** No, he says a lot more, Francis Flute, later on when he's doing  
Thisbe —

**Jill** The woman's part?

**Sam** Look, I'll show you. Thisbe has this death speech. I nearly know that. Thisbe's just found her lover, Pyramus, dead, like in *Romeo and Juliet*, you know, and she's so upset she goes and kills herself then. Listen. I think I know it. I think I do.

*He positions again and starts to perform for Jill. What Sam lacks in technique and sophistication, he makes up for in sincerity and simplicity*

*Jill, despite herself, slowly gets drawn in*

So. Thisbe comes in. And she sees him, you know, lying there and then she says: Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

Speak, speak! Quite dumb?

Dead, dead! A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

*At this stage, Chrissie enters quietly and lingers in the doorway, listening to Sam*

These lily lips,  
This cherry nose,  
These yellow cowslip cheeks,  
Are gone, are gone:  
Lovers, make moan!  
His eyes were green as leeks

... Er ... hang on ...

*Sam hesitates, losing his words, momentarily*

*Simultaneously, Dean looks in at the kitchen doorway. He is, as yesterday, slightly drunk*

**Dean** 'Evenin' all. We're back. (*Seeing no one*) Oh.

*Dean goes out of the kitchen again*

**Jill** Go on, Sam ...

**Sam** Oh, yes. I remember.

O, Sisters Three,  
Come, come to me,  
With hands as pale as milk;  
Lay them in gore,  
Since you have shore  
With shears his thread of silk.  
Tongue, not a word;  
Come, trusty sword:  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

*He mimes stabbing himself and falls to his knees*

And farewell, friends;  
Thus Thisbe ends;  
Adieu, adieu, adieu.