



ARSON COMBATED TOGETHER

**ACT Tool Kit**

# Trying to Get Back Home

A play for young people  
about arson in schools



ZURICH  
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# Trying to Get Back Home

*'Trying to Get Back Home' tells the story of two fires, at the same school, but with different outcomes. At the start of the play, the first fire, which occurs in the 1970s, burns down the building and kills two people. But the events of that night continue to haunt the rest of the play, which takes place in the present day.*

*The story revolves around LISA – a young girl who is positive and enthusiastic about starting her new secondary school, DANNY – her elder brother, and CARMEN – her best friend. DANNY becomes infatuated with CARMEN and, in order to win her affection, embarks upon a series of increasingly outrageous dares, which result in him being temporarily suspended from school. He appears to be headed for big trouble until a chance encounter with MR EAMES, the school caretaker, causes him to re-appraise his whole outlook.*

*As the play proceeds and we learn more about the events of that fateful night 30 years ago, history seems about to repeat itself when DANNY learns of a plot to disrupt an end of term school disco. He is faced with a tricky dilemma: should he tell what he knows, or should he remain loyal to his friends?*

*'Trying to Get Back Home' is a play about belonging. Against a backdrop of peer pressure, it explores the twin themes of friendship and responsibility in a direct and challenging manner. It is a hard-hitting play with a powerful message, punctuated by humour and suspense, and is suitable for students in the first year of secondary school (12 years old).*



Original script by Chris Fogg. Updated by dbda.

The play 'Trying to Get Back Home' was originally performed by a travelling Theatre In Education company, who toured the play and workshops around schools across the UK. All parts were played by four actors, as described below. However, for school productions each character could be played by one student.

### CAST:

<b>ACTOR A (male):</b>	<b>DANNY</b>	<b>14 Years</b>	<b>Lisa's brother</b>
	<b>BILL</b>	<b>14 Years</b>	<b>Danny's father as a boy in 1970s</b>
<b>ACTOR B (female):</b>	<b>LISA</b>	<b>11 Years</b>	<b>Danny's sister</b>
	<b>MARY</b>	<b>12 Years</b>	<b>in 1970s</b>
	<b>MRS ADAMS</b>		<b>Student at pottery class</b>
	<b>JOLEEN</b>		<b>Line dancer</b>
	<b>DORIS</b>		<b>School cleaner</b>
<b>ACTOR C (female):</b>	<b>CARMEN</b>	<b>12 Years</b>	<b>Lisa's best friend</b>
	<b>JOAN</b>		<b>Carmen's mum</b>
	<b>JOAN</b>	<b>12 Years</b>	<b>in 1970s</b>
	<b>HEADMISTRESS</b>		
	<b>TRISH</b>		<b>Student at aerobics class</b>
	<b>MARTHA</b>		<b>T'ai Chi teacher</b>
	<b>ARSONIST</b>	<b>15 Years</b>	<b>in 1970s</b>
	<b>A PIGEON</b>		
<b>ACTOR D (male):</b>	<b>DAD</b>		<b>of Danny and Lisa</b>
	<b>MR EAMES</b>		<b>School caretaker</b>
	<b>CHAD</b>	<b>14 Years</b>	<b>Danny's mate</b>
	<b>ROB</b>		<b>Gym user</b>
	<b>RON</b>		<b>Line dance teacher</b>
	<b>MR BRENT</b>		<b>Teacher at school</b>



## Section 1: 1970s

*Loud 70s disco music greets the audience as they come in.*

*The four actors, dressed like the figures from Village People, enter.*

**MARY:** **Welcome, everybody, to the Wadham Comp Midsummer Disco!  
It's the 1970s. Let's get down and party!**

*The four briefly mime the actions to "YMCA". An atmosphere of innocent, infectious fun is generated. The music then changes, offering a rapid medley of favourite 70s disco hits. With each change comes a freeze as we focus on one specific character after another.*

**JOAN:** **Mary and me – that's Mary – had just had this ginormous row. Over a boy – naturally. Now I can't even remember his name. If I could have done that, it would have made a kind of sense.**

*Music changes.*

**BILL:** **I was wondering where my brother had got to. We hadn't seen him since breakfast, and he was supposed to be giving me the money for my bus fare home. I couldn't help thinking: what's he gone and done this time?**

*Music changes.*

**MARY:** **It was brilliant. I'd spent weeks making the decorations for this night and it looked fantastic. Occasionally the DJ'd turn down the lights for a few seconds. That's when, if you were lucky, you got to snog someone. Not that I ever did.**

*Music changes.*

**MR EAMES** **It was my first year as School caretaker. I hadn't wanted this disco to take place. Too much mess, I thought, but I couldn't have been more wrong. The kids were terrific. Everyone was having a great time, so I went back in to my cubby hole at the back of the stage to make myself a cup of tea.**

*Music changes.*

**JOAN:** **So when the lights went out for longer than usual, I didn't think anything of it.**

**MARY:** **Someone grabbed hold of my wrist in the dark. When I turned round ..... it was Joan! We didn't half laugh.**

**JOAN:** **So that's alright, I thought.**

**MR EAMES:** **Except that it wasn't.**



*Music changes.*

**BILL:** **Someone lifted one of the curtains by the big windows to let in some light. For a split second I caught a glimpse of my brother ... In a halo of fire.**

*Music stops. Silence.*

*The actors fan slowly outwards in a circle. They make the sounds of flames crackling, whispering "Fire" in a long drawn out way.*

*They back towards each other. When they reach the centre, a loud fire alarm sounds. Immediately there is pandemonium, the actors tumbling and climbing over one another. During this sequence the following Narrative is shared between them.*

**ACTORS:** **It was chaos. People were screaming and crying. Tripping and trampling over each other. As they tried to escape. Flames were sweeping through the hall. The fire escape was blocked. There was only one exit. The roof. The roof. We clung and climbed till we reached the top. Then we waited.**

*The sound of the alarm gives way to the siren of an approaching fire engine as the Actors wait in a tense tableau.*

**MR EAMES:** **Eventually we were rescued. Two people died. It's a miracle it wasn't more. And that ..... was thirty years ago.**



## Section 2: First Day

*A pop station 'Breakfast Show' is playing. The DJ is wishing "Good Luck" to all those starting their new secondary school. The Actors set up the next scene.*

**LISA:** I'm Lisa. It's September 6th and my first day at Wadham Comp. I'm looking forward to it, but I'm nervous.

**DAD:** Lisa?

**LISA:** Though not as nervous as Dad.

**DAD:** Breakfast's ready.

**LISA:** Coming. Honestly, he's been fussing for days.

**DAD:** I've cleaned your shoes, your bag's by the door - there's some crisps and a drink for break - and I've made you a cooked breakfast: eggs, bacon, the lot.

**LISA:** Thanks, Dad, but I couldn't.

**DANNY:** I'll have it, Dad.

**LISA:** That's Danny, my older brother. He's 2 years older than me. He thinks he's the best.

**DANNY:** I am. Can I, Dad?

**DAD:** You haven't time. You've got your paper round to do. It's alright, Lisa. I know how you feel. I remember my first day at school.

**DANNY:** Can you remember that far back, Dad?

**DAD:** Cheeky. Now, Danny, I want a word with you.

**DANNY:** No time - sorry. Paper round - remember?

**DAD:** Listen. I won't be here at tea time. I'm on lates this week.

**DANNY:** Not again!

**DAD:** Somebody has to put food on the table.

**DANNY:** Well it's never you, is it?

**DAD:** So I've left some fish pies in the freezer. You can microwave them whenever you like.

**DANNY:** I hate fish pie.

**DAD:** It's good for you.

**DANNY:** Why d'you have to be a fire fighter anyway?



**DAD:** You know why, Danny.

**DANNY:** We never see you. Anything could happen.

**DAD:** Danny....

**DANNY:** Like when Mum died. If you'd been here then....

**DAD:** That's enough, Danny!

*Pause.*

**DAD:** Well, Lisa - don't you look a picture? So smart in your new uniform. Why can't you look like this, Danny?

**DANNY:** What?

**DAD:** Just look at the difference between you.

**DANNY:** What?

**DAD:** Hair all over the place, tie not done up, shirt not tucked in, shoes a mess.

**DANNY:** What?

**DAD:** Go and do your paper round. But remember what I said. No going out tonight.

**DANNY:** But I'm supposed to be seeing Chad.

**DAD:** Chad will have to wait.

**DANNY:** It's not fair.

*DANNY leaves angrily.*

**DAD:** And keep an eye out for your sister during the day.

*DANNY is gone.*

**DAD:** Well, Lisa - all set?

**LISA:** Yes, Dad.

**DAD:** Good luck then.

**LISA:** Thanks.



### Section 3: New Friends

**HEAD:** Good morning, School, and welcome to the start of a new year. I would particularly like to welcome all the new students. I expect everything here looks a bit strange at present, but you'll soon get used to things. We hope you'll be very happy here and I am looking to the rest of the school to set you the right example. It's also a special day for another reason, for today marks the thirtieth anniversary of the reopening of this school after the tragic burning down of the previous building. Some of you will, I know, have parents and relatives who were present that fateful summer's night; some of you may even have lost members of your family in the fire – so I would like us all to share a moment's silent prayer, in which we think about those who suffered then, and in which we can reflect that a school is more than just a building where we come to learn, it is a whole community that unites together to work and to play. Thank you.

**LISA:** After assembly we went into tutor groups where we had to write down what we were most looking forward to and what we were most worried about.

**DANNY:** Meanwhile, me and Chad....

**CHAD:** Hi....

**DANNY:** ..... set about doing a bit of DIY.

*He tosses CHAD a screwdriver.*

**CHAD:** Eh?

*HEAD suddenly appears.*

**HEAD:** Danny? Chad? What are you two doing out of lessons?

**DANNY:** Oh – we're....just helping Mr Eames, the caretaker, fix some of the signs in the corridor. Aren't we, Chad?

**CHAD:** That's right, Miss. So the new students don't get lost.

**HEAD:** I see. Well. That's very helpful of you. Thank you.

*HEAD goes. DANNY & CHAD try to suppress their laughter.*

**CHAD:** So which ones do we do first?

**DANNY:** Oh, the toilets, I think, don't you?

**CHAD:** Most definitely. You unscrew where it says "Boys"....

**DANNY:** ....and you unscrew where it says "Girls".



*Elsewhere LISA stands up, reading from what she had just written.*

**LISA:** What I am looking forward to most is making new friends. I went to a tiny primary school where I was the only girl in Year Six, so I don't know anyone my own age - except for boys. And what I'm most worried about is getting lost.

*Bell goes for the end of the lesson.*

**LISA:** When break came I was desperate for the loo, so I rushed into the corridor and dived straight through the door where it said "Girls". Only it wasn't the girls' loo at all was it? It was SO embarrassing. And to make matters worse, when I came out, who do you think was there? Of all people?

**DANNY:** Alright, sis? Got a problem?

**LISA:** Only you.

**DANNY:** Take a tip from me. Just watch where you're going in future.

**LISA:** But the sign said...

**DANNY:** I know - it's terrible. Someone must have swapped them round. Me and Chad were just putting them right, weren't we, when you.....?

*Bell goes for the end of break.*

**LISA:** Why you....! I haven't got time now. I'll be late and it's all your fault.

*LISA goes to hit DANNY with her bag. CHAD intercepts and tips out the contents onto the floor. The boys are about to run off when CARMEN arrives. Although she too is in Lisa's year, she looks much older. DANNY and CHAD stay, staring at her.*

**CARMEN:** Here - let me help you.

**LISA:** Oh, thanks.

**CARMEN:** You're in my class, aren't you?

**LISA:** Yes. I'm....

**CARMEN:** Lisa. I remember. I'm Carmen.

**DANNY:** Well then. Lisa, aren't you going to introduce us to your new friend?

**LISA:** Take no notice - that's my annoying older brother.

**CHAD:** Hi - my name's Chad.

**LISA:** My annoying older brother's even more annoying best friend. Let's go.

**CARMEN:** What's your brother's name?



**LISA:** Danny. Why?

**CARMEN:** He's cute.

**LISA:** You wouldn't say that if you had to live with him.

*CARMEN and LISA are gone.*

**CHAD:** She - is - gorgeous!

**DANNY:** I saw her first.

**CHAD:** So?

**DANNY:** So?

**CHAD:** What're you gonna do about it?

**DANNY:** What're YOU gonna do about it?

**CHAD:** Bet I get to go out with her first.

**DANNY:** You're on.

**CHAD:** How much?

**DANNY:** My new football kit. *(option to add local team)*

**CHAD:** You haven't got a new kit.

**DANNY:** So? You're not going to win.

*They run off kicking each other.*



### Section 4: Past Mistakes

**LISA:** Term progressed. I soon got to know my way around, which teachers you could have a laugh with, which ones you couldn't. Carmen became my best friend. She was very different from me, but we could talk about anything.

**CARMEN:** What do you want most in the world?

**LISA:** A mum.

**CARMEN:** You wouldn't say that if you had mine.

**LISA:** Your mum's great.

**CARMEN:** She's embarrassing. She's always borrowing my clothes or my make-up. There's nothing worse than a parent trying to be trendy.

**LISA:** I know what you mean. You should see my dad when he tries to dance.

*They both mime older people dancing.*

**CARMEN:** Anyway they seem to be getting on well with each other.

**LISA:** It was true. Since Carmen and I had become friends, my dad and her mum started to see each other a lot.

*On a different part of the stage.*

**DAD:** Lisa tells me that it's just you and Carmen.

**JOAN:** And Carmen tells me that it's just you, Lisa and Danny.

**DAD:** What happened?

**JOAN:** A lot... Nothing.

**DAD:** I'm sorry. I'm prying.

**JOAN:** You are. But it doesn't matter. I'm proud of what I've done. I don't know who Carmen's father was. It could have been one of - well... I've brought Carmen up to be able to take care of herself.

**DAD:** Yes. I can see.

**JOAN:** And you disapprove?

**DAD:** Not at all. I've done just the opposite, that's all. Since Lisa's mother died, I've tended not to let her out of my sight.

**JOAN:** That's understandable. I worry sometimes that I give Carmen too much freedom.

**DAD:** It's important, that kind of trust.



**JOAN:** I want her to make her own mistakes, not just repeat mine.

**DAD:** Yours?

**JOAN:** You were there that night, weren't you?

**DAD:** When?

**JOAN:** The fire.

**DAD:** Yes. I was there that night.

**JOAN:** I didn't know you then.

**DAD:** No. I lost a brother.

**JOAN:** Mary - my best friend, she....

**DAD:** You don't have to.

*We see aspects of the story JOAN tells acted out.*

**JOAN:** She was behind me, going up the ladder towards the roof where the flames hadn't reached. She said:

**MARY:** You go on ahead. I'll be right behind you.

**JOAN:** We had to jump, you see, to where the fire crew was waiting below to catch us. And I said: I can't, it's too high. And she held my hand and she said:

**MARY:** That's alright. We'll jump together.

**JOAN:** And we did. Or at least I thought we did. But she must have let go of my hand at the last second. When I landed, I looked back up and saw her. She was helping others to jump, not thinking about herself, so I shouted: Mary! Please! Jump! Then flames engulfed the roof. The last I saw of her was her face caught in the light as she fell, her arms outstretched, back inside the building.

*In a separate space DANNY tells his story.*

**DANNY:** Dad was at work. As always. Lisa was asleep. She was only six. So there was just me. Mum had been ill for what seemed like for ever. I don't know what woke me up. I looked at the clock. Half past two. Dad should have been home hours ago. I got up to go to the bathroom. Mum's door was open. For some reason I looked in. It was so quiet. Normally she would be awake, coughing. But on this night there was nothing. I crept towards her, and I knew. How do you know things like that? But I did. I knew. She was dead and Dad should have been there....

*JOAN continues her own story.*





**JOAN:** Anyway, after that, I sort of..... went a bit mad for a few years.

**DAD:** And I became a fire fighter....

**JOAN:** .....until Carmen was born....

**DAD:** And became my daughter's best friend.

*JOAN and DAD kiss. DANNY rushes in to tell LISA.*

**DANNY:** You'll never guess what I've just seen?

**LISA:** No, but you're going to tell me.

**DANNY:** Too right I'm going to tell you. Only our dad and her mum snogging on the sofa.

**CARMEN:** Ugh - gross!

**LISA:** I think it's sweet.

**CARMEN:** This is our parents we are talking about. No - for once I agree with your brother. Just imagine - they might be doing it downstairs as we speak.

**DANNY:** Do you mind? I've just had my dinner.

**CARMEN:** Let's sneak downstairs and watch.

**DANNY:** No way!

**CARMEN:** I dare you.

**DANNY:** No!

**CARMEN:** I'll make it worth your while.

*Pause. DANNY and CARMEN look at each other.*



## Section 5: I Dare You

**LISA:** I think that's where it began. From then on Carmen played Danny and Chad off, one against the other, urging them on from one outrageous dare to another, with the promise of going out with whoever was the winner. I didn't really agree with it myself, but I sort of got caught up in it, you know? And since it involved Danny making an absolute prat out of himself, I suppose I enjoyed it.

*CARMEN, DANNY and CHAD chant "The Dare Rap", as CARMEN gradually ups the stakes for DANNY or CHAD to go out with her.*

**CARMEN:** I dare you to skip a class.

**BOYS:** Skip a class?

**CARMEN:** Yes, skip a class.

**BOYS:** And what if we don't skip a class?

**CARMEN:** Then you can both go kiss my \*\*\*\*!

*LISA blows a whistle loudly.*

**CARMEN:** I dare you to have a smoke.

**BOYS:** Have a smoke?

**CARMEN:** Yeah, it's no joke.

**CHAD:** Got any money?

**DANNY:** No, I'm broke.

**CARMEN:** Have a smoke - it's no joke - just a toke - be a bloke - I'll put a spoke in your wheel.

**BOYS:** Don't you know how we feel?

**CARMEN:** - what a joke!

**CARMEN:** I dare you to dye your hair.

**DANNY:** My dad'll go spare!

**CARMEN:** I don't care.

**CHAD:** Blue or pink?

**CARMEN:** Whatever you think.



**BOYS:** The slightest hint  
Of a magenta tint  
Will make us stand out anywhere.

**CARMEN:** I dare you to dye your hair.

**CARMEN:** I dare you to have a tattoo,  
Pierce your nose, your eyebrows too;  
Wear a chain, ride a motor bike -  
Do whatever I tell you I like!  
And when you've done there's one thing more:  
Write rude words on the staff room door;  
Spray graffiti from a can -  
Prove to me that you're a man.

**CHAD:** Minimum effort....

**DANNY:** ....maximum harm -

**BOYS:** Trigger the school smoke alarm.

**CHAD:** Play the fool!

**DANNY:** Bunk off school!

**BOYS:** Systematically break every rule!

**CARMEN:** I dare you to give some cheek -  
That sorts the strongest from the weak.

**CHAD:** Swear at the Head -

**DANNY:** No way!

**CHAD:** You're dead!

**LISA:** They were now both seeing red.  
A fight ensued, wild and crude -  
The only way to end this bitter feud!  
Danny swings, Chad ducks beneath,  
Knocks out two of Danny's teeth!  
Danny pulls Chad to the ground.  
Sits astride him, pins him down.  
He really gives his mate what for -

*Till Chad submits:*

**CHAD:** You win. No more.

**LISA:** Danny stands up, turns around -  
But Carmen's nowhere to be found.  
Instead he finds, to his distress,  
He's face to face with the Headmistress.



*The Chant stops abruptly.*

**HEAD:** **Danny Waters, what is the meaning of this? I will not tolerate bullying in this school. You've gone too far this time. I now see that the recent catalogue of misdemeanours perpetrated by you - missing lessons, smoking, breaking the school dress code - were merely a prelude to an altogether more disturbing aspect of your behaviour. I shall be writing to your father asking him to attend, with you, a special meeting where a contract will be drawn up, warning that any future misconduct by you could lead to you being excluded from this school. Until that time you are suspended. Go home. Is that clear?**

**DANNY:** **Yes, Miss.**

*HEAD goes. DANNY helps CHAD to his feet.*

**DANNY:** **Sorry, mate. Still friends?**

*CHAD shakes DANNY's hand. CARMEN returns.*

**CARMEN:** **Who won?**

**LISA:** **Danny. But the Head's just suspended him.**

**CARMEN:** **What a loser!**

*She goes off with CHAD. DANNY is crushed. He turns to LISA.*

**DANNY:** **Did you see that?**

**LISA:** **You're so stupid!**

*LISA runs off, clearly very confused.*



## Section 6: On The Roof

*DANNY is furious. Instead of going home he smashes up whatever is at hand. He becomes quite uncontrolled, tearing up flowers and shrubs in the school grounds. MR EAMES, the School caretaker, discovers him. DANNY runs off, pursued by MR EAMES who calls after him until they reach the school roof. By this time DANNY has a long stick in his hand, which he is whirling round him in a dangerous manner.*

**DANNY:** Don't come near me. I'm warning you. If you do -

**MR EAMES:** What? What will you do?

**DANNY:** Just don't, that's all.

**MR EAMES:** Don't worry, son. I shan't. Even if I wanted to - which I don't - I couldn't. I'm all out of breath, what with chasing you up hill and down dale. Come on - put that stick down.

**DANNY:** I've told you.

**MR EAMES:** Where else is there to go? We're up on the school roof, there is nowhere else. The only way down is to jump - and even you are not that stupid - or to come back past me. And I've already told you: I'm not moving.

*Pause*

*DANNY, exhausted, slowly lowers his stick and noiselessly starts to cry.  
MR EAMES pretends not to notice.*

**MR EAMES:** D'you know, it's years since I've been up here? Not since the fire... I hadn't been in the job long then, and now, in a year or two, I'll be retiring. Of course, it's all different now. No one comes up here, unless it's to fix the guttering, or retrieve a football. But back then, I used to come up here all the time.

**DANNY:** What for?

**MR EAMES:** Same reason as you today.

**DANNY:** Eh?

**MR EAMES:** Get a bit of peace. You can see things differently from up here. Look at all those kids going to their next lesson. Shouldn't you be with them, by the way? They look like ants, don't they? All the same. Yet each one different, trying to fit in. And look out across the playing fields towards the town. All those houses in rows climbing up the hill.

**DANNY:** I reckon you can see our house from up here.

**MR EAMES:** Which one is it then?



**DANNY:** I'm not sure now I come to look.

**MR EAMES:** That's what I mean. Things look different. See that pigeon?

**DANNY:** Yes.

**MR EAMES:** Imagine being him. Looking down on all this. How would you know where you were?

**DANNY:** But they do, though, don't they? They find their way home over thousands of miles. I've read about it.

**MR EAMES:** Have you?

**DANNY:** It's an instinct.

*Pause.*

**MR EAMES:** Put that stick down and I'll tell you a secret. Go on.

*DANNY does so.*

**MR EAMES:** I used to keep pigeons.

**DANNY:** Where?

**MR EAMES:** Up here.

**DANNY:** On the roof?

**MR EAMES:** Yes. Well, not this roof exactly, the other one, before the fire. You can't do that sort of thing now - health and safety and all that.

**DANNY:** What happened to them?

**MR EAMES:** They died, every last one of them.

**DANNY:** In the fire? Why didn't you rescue them? I would have.

**MR EAMES:** Would you now? Yes, I daresay you might at that. Well, I was.... otherwise occupied.

**DANNY:** What do you mean?

**MR EAMES:** That's a story for another day. In the meantime there's the little matter of all the damage you've caused today. Those plants'll have to be replaced for a start.

**DANNY:** I'll pay you for them - out of my paper round. Only please don't tell. The Head's already said she's going to kick me out if I do anything else wrong.

**MR EAMES:** In a lot of trouble, aren't you?



**DANNY:** I don't want to get kicked out.

**MR EAMES:** Then why do you do what you do?

**DANNY:** Don't know. Seems like a laugh at the time.

**MR EAMES:** Not much of a laugh now, is it?

*DANNY shakes his head.*

**MR EAMES:** I'll tell you what I'll do. You help me round the school at the end of every afternoon for the rest of this term and we'll say no more about it. Agreed?

**DANNY:** Agreed.

**MR EAMES:** Then - as a reward - you can come and look at my pigeons.

**DANNY:** I thought you said they were dead?

**MR EAMES:** Not those, you cratehead. Others.

**DANNY:** Where do you keep them?

**MR EAMES:** In a shed, in my back garden. Next to the school field. Look. Down there. Do you see? One's just returning to the coop.

**DANNY:** Yes. Yes, I can see it. How do they know?

**MR EAMES:** That's what I'm going to teach you. Come on.

**DANNY:** Thanks, Mr Eames.



## Section 7: Not Just Lessons

*Music for a lively Aerobics Class.*

**LISA:** So Danny began his work for Mr Eames. He didn't tell us much about it, but we saw less of him, and I wasn't complaining about that.

**DANNY:** Do you know - I'd no idea just how much goes on in a school. It's not just lessons, you know? Take tonight - a Tuesday. Aerobics. I usually try to be around for that.

*Two GIRLS embark on an energetic step routine.*

**DANNY:** See what I mean? Can I get you anything, Trish?

**TRISH:** A bottle of water would be nice. Cheers, Danny.

He's not a bad lad, really. Ever so helpful. I've been coming here for two terms now. It's great. You work up a really good sweat. I like the music and the other girls are a good laugh. No fellas, of course. They're all next door. In the gym. But we sometimes meet up after, like, for a drink, you know? I used to come to this school as a kid. Didn't like it much then. Well, you don't, do you, not when you have to go? But now - well, it's different. I come here 'cos I choose to.

*Cut to ROB. He is in the gym doing weights.*

**ROB:** I come here three times a week. Mondays is badminton - I usually come with Joe. We're about as bad as each other, so the games are quite close. Saturday morning, when I've got the kids, I go swimming. And tonight - Tuesdays - I do weights. Well - you've got to keep fit, haven't you? Oi, Danny! Chuck us that towel, will you? Cheers, mate.

*Cut to MRS ADAMS doing POTTERY.*

**MRS ADAMS:** I don't know what I'd do without my weekly pottery. Helps to keep me sane. It's so therapeutic. I've been coming for years now. Seen off several tutors! The present one - Mr... Dave, he likes us to call him that, though I find it quite difficult - is lovely. He's only young, he wears an earring, but he's so encouraging. Feel the texture, he says. Let the clay speak through your fingers! And do you know, I understand just what he means. I work in an office all day - very neat, very manicured. So to come here and be allowed to ..... well - just mess....is so liberating. I wish I'd done it years ago when I was at school. But no time for regrets. Too busy potting! Oh Danny darling, make sure these go in the kiln tomorrow, there's a good boy.

*Cut to MARTHA, a T'ai Chi Teacher, going through a series of motions.*

*Ambient music.*



**MARTHA:** I've been teaching T'ai Chi here now for nearly three years. It's ever so popular. Could you give the floor a quick sweep for me, Danny? Thanks. Yes. I get all sorts here. The best thing for me is the crèche. It means I don't have to worry about child care. I can leave Justin while I teach, knowing that he's having fun too.

*Cut to the crèche where the cast, as BABIES play.*

**MARTHA:** Come on Justin - time to go home.

*The BABIES wail as the music changes to Country and Western.*

**RON:** Well howdy! My name's....Ron. And this little lady here is my beautiful wife Joleen. And we're here to teach you some good ol' Line Dancing!

**JOLEEN:** Come on Danny - you've been watching from the sidelines long enough. It's time you joined in.

*A short sequence of Line Dancing. JOLEEN persuades a reluctant DANNY to take part. After a few seconds, the HEAD steps out of the line and the music stops.*

**HEAD:** Good evening, everyone, and welcome to Wadham School's Open Evening. We have displays of the students work along the corridors and in several classrooms; there are a number of sample lessons taking place; the School Choir and Orchestra will later be entertaining us, and Mrs Hodder's Food Technology Class will be serving home-made refreshments. I know that for many of you with sons and daughters at the school today this is something of a return visit. A number of you may well have attended here yourselves and, in some cases, your own parents too. Well, although things may have changed quite a bit on the surface, I hope you will regard tonight as a kind of homecoming for you. There are maps and signs at strategic points throughout the campus, but if you need any help in finding a particular venue or event, please ask Danny here, who will be happy to escort you to the appropriate place. Thank you.

*Cut to DORIS, a cleaner, who enters, somewhat desultorily, with a duster.*

**DORIS:** Look at the state of this! It's always the same after a Social. I tell you - I'm all for opening up the school to the community, but they never think about those of us who have to clean up after them.

**DANNY:** What are you complaining about, Doris? You get double time for this.

**DORIS:** That'll be the day. Here - make us a cup of tea, Danny love, and pour one for yourself while you're at it. And remember....

**DANNY:** Milk, no sugar.



**DORIS:** That's a good boy.

**DANNY:** Sweet enough, aren't you Doris?

*DANNY brings in two mugs.*

**DORIS:** Thanks, love.

**DANNY:** It'll be busy next week.

**DORIS:** Why's that then?

**DANNY:** School Disco. Midsummer's Eve.

**DORIS:** You'll be taking your girlfriend, I suppose.

**DANNY:** I thought I'd ask you, Doris.

**DORIS:** Get away with you. Though there was a time once.

**DANNY:** I bet there was.

**DORIS:** I was there the night the old school burned down.  
They had a disco then.

**DANNY:** I know. What happened? Does anyone know?

**DORIS:** Not for certain. Some said it was electrical, faulty wiring, but I don't hold with that. It was the wrong kind of smell. Others said that someone must have dropped a lighted cigarette into the rubbish at the back of the hall - an accident, like, you know? The fire brigade said it could have been started deliberately. If it was, they never found out who did it, although...

**DANNY:** What?

**DORIS:** I'm not saying. Besides, I've got all this cleaning up to do. Ask John Eames if you really want to know. That is - if he'll tell you.



## Section 8: Too Many Questions

*A PIGEON flies in. MR EAMES talks softly to it. DANNY approaches him.*

**DANNY:** Can I come in, Mr Eames?

**MR EAMES:** Yes, I reckon you've earned it. But softly mind, and no talking above a whisper.

**DANNY:** She's a beauty. Can I stroke her?

**MR EAMES:** Like this. Just below her chin. That's it. Gently! Don't want to startle her. That's better. That's the way. Yes. She likes that. I reckon you've got the gift.

**DANNY:** I love the sound she makes. Like bubbles.

**MR EAMES:** It's the sound of summer, I always say. Warm and lazy and contented. Time for bed now, I think. There you go, girl. I thought I'd lost her. She set off from France more than a week ago. I reckon she must have missed her way.

**DANNY:** Do you lose many?

**MR EAMES:** More than I used to.

**DANNY:** Why's that?

**MR EAMES:** I don't rightly know. Perhaps it's harder to know exactly when you are home these days. Some say it's all these mobile phones jamming up the air waves, but I'm not so sure.

**DANNY:** How many did you lose the night of the fire?

**MR EAMES:** All of them, Danny. Over fifty there were. All perished - their little wings charred with soot.

**DANNY:** They didn't burn, then?

**MR EAMES:** No. They didn't burn. It was the smoke suffocated them. Like the two victims.

**DANNY:** Why didn't they try to escape?

**MR EAMES:** I tried to help them. I climbed up to the roof and opened the cages, but it was no use. They were already home, you see.

**DANNY:** Is that why you always wear gloves?

*Pause*

**MR EAMES:** You ask too many questions, my lad - and you've got work to do if we're to get everything ready for this disco next week. Now hop it!



## Section 9: Worried About Carmen

*LISA and CARMEN are each making an outfit for the Disco.*

**LISA:** It was coming to the end of the summer term. I've been coming to Wadham Comp for nearly a whole year now. Hard to imagine I was ever anywhere else. Primary school seems a lifetime ago. We were having a Midsummer's Eve Disco. With a 70s theme. We were making costumes. I wanted to go looking like Olivia Newton-John in "Grease".

**CARMEN:** And I wanted to go as a Punk!

**LISA:** Between you and me I've been getting worried about Carmen. She's still my best friend and all, but....I don't know. She's been acting kind of strange. First it was homework....

We had to make this volcano for Geography, showing how it all worked and everything. We'd been making it for months. Carmen's was fantastic, it even erupted, issuing red crepe paper for lava in a dead realistic way. Mine was OK but nothing compared to Carmen's. Then, when we had to hand it in to Mr Brent....

**MR BRENT:** And where's yours, Carmen?

**CARMEN:** Dunno, sir.

**MR BRENT:** What do you mean? Haven't you done it?

**LISA:** She has sir. I've seen it. She must have forgotten it.

**CARMEN:** I haven't done it, sir. It's stupid. I burnt it.

**LISA:** Then it was the business with the cigarettes....

**CARMEN:** Hey.

**LISA:** Hey.

**CARMEN:** Coming out tonight?

**LISA:** I can't. I'm revising for that Science test tomorrow.

**CARMEN:** You don't need to do that.

**LISA:** I do, Carmen. I'm not as brainy as you.

**CARMEN:** Alright - I'll test you. Want a fag?

**LISA:** No.

**CARMEN:** Mind if I do? I'm desperate.



**LISA:** You know my dad's dead strict about things like that. He doesn't like smoke in the house. He caught Danny once and grounded him for a month.

**CARMEN:** Well he lets my mum smoke in here, doesn't he?

**LISA:** That's different.

**CARMEN:** How? She knows I smoke anyway.

*CARMEN smokes unpleasantly in LISA's face, then leaves.*

**LISA:** Then she started wearing make-up and jewellery to school....

**MR BRENT:** Very nice, Carmen. Now wash it all off.

**CARMEN:** What?

**MR BRENT:** You know the school rules, Carmen. And while you're about it, remove that nose stud.

**CARMEN:** I can't, sir. It'll get infected.

**MR BRENT:** Then you should have thought about that before. Stand outside the Head's office.

**LISA:** A few weeks later, while we were doing a litter pick one dinner time, I turned round the back of the bike shed and she was there with Danny and Chad. They were taking turns to snog her....

Then only last week, Mr Brent found her on the school field when she should have been in class....

**MR BRENT:** Carmen? What are you doing here? Didn't you hear the bell?

**CARMEN:** I heard it.

**MR BRENT:** Then why aren't you in your lesson?

**CARMEN:** I'm on my way.

**MR BRENT:** It doesn't look like it. Come on. Stand up.

*CARMEN stands up unsteadily and then is sick.*

**MR BRENT:** Goodness - you're drunk, young lady!

**CARMEN:** Ten out of ten.

**MR BRENT:** What's the matter, Carmen? Look, you'd better go to the sick room, lie down for a bit. I'll tell your teacher you're not well. But we have to get to the bottom of this. Twelve year old girls don't normally get drunk. Now off you go.



**LISA:** He could really have landed her in it, but that was it, see? She was always popular with everybody - even the teachers. They always forgave her in the end, whatever she did, and then for a few weeks she'd be fine again. But I worry about her. What will she do next? I wish there was someone I could talk to about it.... But at the moment all we can think about is what we're going to wear for the disco!

*Music: a quick snatch of "You're The One That I Want" from "Grease". LISA and CARMEN mime and dance to it, laughing. DANNY bursts in on them.*

**LISA:** Hi, Danny! How do I look?

**DANNY:** Stupid.

**CARMEN:** Charming! What about me?

**DANNY:** Alright, I suppose. Know where Dad is?

**LISA:** No.... but we can guess!

*LISA and CARMEN are shrieking once more.*

**DANNY:** Only if you see him, tell him Mr Eames has asked me to work late with him this evening at the Disco, so I won't be home for tea, alright?

**CARMEN:** And there I was, thinking you were taking me.

**DANNY:** Yeah - well....

**CARMEN:** Chad says you're turning into a right little geek. Chad says you prefer to be with Mr Eames than your mates. Chad says you spend so much time with those pigeons of his you're starting to look like one. Chad says....

**DANNY:** Chad says? What's the matter? Haven't you got a tongue of your own?

**CARMEN:** There's one way of finding out.

*DANNY ignores this.*

**DANNY:** Don't forget, Lisa. Tell Dad what I said.

*DANNY goes. LISA and CARMEN suppress a giggle, as music from "Grease" briefly returns.*

**LISA:** We were so excited. Then Carmen had to go and spoil it all the next day at school...

**MR BRENT:** Carmen - I didn't realise the Head had said that today was a non-uniform day.

**CARMEN:** She didn't, sir. I just thought that I'd brighten up your day for you.



**MR BRENT:** Thank you, Carmen. That was most considerate of you. Now go and take it off.

**CARMEN:** I could report you for saying that, sir - asking a young girl to take off her clothes.

**MR BRENT:** That's not what I meant, Carmen, and you know it.

**CARMEN:** What do you mean, sir?

**MR BRENT:** What I mean, Carmen, is that you've had your bit of fun. Now go and change back into your school uniform.

**CARMEN:** I'd like to oblige, sir, I really would. Only trouble is, I ain't got it with me.

**MR BRENT:** And why is that?

**CARMEN:** Thought it'd save me changing for the Disco later on.

**MR BRENT:** Carmen - either you go at once to the School Office where the secretary will supply you with whatever is necessary, or you can go straight home and **NOT** come back to the Disco tonight.

**CARMEN:** Is that a threat, sir?

**MR BRENT:** No, Carmen, it's a promise.

**CARMEN:** I didn't want to go to your poxy Disco anyway!

*She storms out noisily. LISA puts her head in her hands.*



## Section 10: Midsummer Madness

*Music: "YMCA". LISA speaks into a microphone.*

**LISA:** Students of Wadham Comp, welcome to Midsummer Madness, as we take you back in time to the 1970s!

*As the chorus of the song is reached, the audience is encouraged to join in with the actions. Music then switches to The Bee Gees: "Staying Alive".*

**CHAD:** This was too much like hard work. I needed a fag. So - I slipped out of the hall to the back of the Drama Studio - that's where we always go for a fag, you'd think the teachers'd catch on, wouldn't you? And who should be there but.... ?

**CARMEN:** Hi, Chad.

**CHAD:** Blimey! You gave me the shock of my life. What are you doing here?

**CARMEN:** Looking for you. I need your help.

**CHAD:** Oh yeah? What's in it for me?

**CARMEN:** I'll make it worth your while.

**CHAD:** OK. What's the beef?

**CARMEN:** Help me through this window for a start. Ta.  
Now - follow me and keep quiet.

**CHAD:** Where are you taking me?

**CARMEN:** Whatever you may be or not be, Chad Roberts, everyone knows that when it comes to computers, there's no-one better.

**CHAD:** Now you're talking.

**CARMEN:** This is the Caretaker's Office. A set of keys should be hanging on a nail just inside the door. Right?

**CHAD:** Right.

**CARMEN:** Quick - hand them over. One of them should say "Boiler Room".

**CHAD:** There!

**CARMEN:** Take it off the ring. Come on! We haven't got all night.

**CHAD:** So that's where we're going. Cosy.

**CARMEN:** Stupid. What's inside the boiler room?

**CHAD:** Er... a boiler?



**CARMEN:** And?

**CHAD:** I don't know.

**CARMEN:** The central computer that controls all the fire alarm system.

**CHAD:** Oh.....

*Back at the Disco.*

**LISA:** Hey, Danny - isn't this great?

**DANNY:** Yeah, it is.

**LISA:** Want to dance with your little sister?

**DANNY:** *(genuinely)* I'd love to, Lisa, but Mr Eames has just asked me to get his keys for him. Maybe later.

**LISA:** I might hold you to that.

**DANNY:** I went to collect the keys and found them, not on the nail where they should be, but on the floor. Funny, I thought. Then I noticed that the key ring had been twisted and it looked like one was missing. Which one? Boiler room. I legged it down the corridor and I was just about to burst in when I heard voices....

**CARMEN:** So this is the plan. At exactly eleven o'clock, the Head's going to announce the Winner of the Best Fancy Dress Costume. Lisa is going to win it.

**CHAD:** How do you know?

**CARMEN:** Because you're going to persuade everyone to vote for her.

**CHAD:** How am I going to do that?

**CARMEN:** You'll think of something.

**CHAD:** *(smiling)* Oh yeah...

**CARMEN:** Then, at eleven o'clock precisely, the fire alarm's going to go off and ruin the disco for everyone - especially for Lisa.

**CHAD:** What's all this with Lisa? I thought she was your best friend.

**CARMEN:** She was. But she didn't stand up for me this morning when I was banned from coming tonight.

**CHAD:** So what do you need me for?

**CARMEN:** Haven't you been listening to a word I'm saying? I need you to fix it so that the fire alarm goes off at exactly eleven o'clock. Right?



**CHAD:** Right.

**DANNY:** I couldn't believe what I'd just heard. Here was my one time best mate and the girl I fancied like crazy plotting to ruin the entire evening for everyone. Once upon a time I'd have thought like Chad - yeah, anything for a laugh - but since working for Mr Eames I'd begun to see things differently. I kept thinking about that stupid poem I'd learnt at primary school. Something about some kid called Mathilda always pretending there was a fire. Then one day there really was a fire and no one believed her! She burned to death! I didn't want something like that happening here.

**MR EAMES:** Danny! (*shout from the background*)

**DANNY:** Then I started to think, if there was a fire what about the aerobics class, the pottery, the T'ai Chi, the Line Dancing - they'd all have to be cancelled. Not to mention the school exams starting next week. I'm not the world's greatest student, but even I would be a little miffed if all that revision had gone to waste. Chad should know all about that: his older brother's taking his final exams - he needs four C's to get on that engineering course. I had to do something, tell someone - but then again, they were my mates, weren't they? You don't dob on your mates...

**MR EAMES:** There you are, Danny! I've been looking all over for you. Have you got my keys? What's up? You look as though you've seen a ghost.

**DANNY:** I have.

**MR EAMES:** Eh?

**DANNY:** So I told him didn't I? Except that I missed out the bit about WHO it was.

**MR EAMES:** It won't open. They must have locked themselves in, or run off somewhere else with the key.

**DANNY:** Haven't you got a spare?

**MR EAMES:** In the Bursar's Office. But the key for that is....

**DANNY:** .... in the Boiler Room.

**MR EAMES:** Exactly.

**DANNY:** What're we going to do?

**MR EAMES:** Haven't you any idea who it was?

**DANNY:** What good would that do?

**MR EAMES:** From what you say, I can't imagine anyone setting up such an elaborate plot without waiting to see how it turns out, can you?

**DANNY:** I suppose not.



**MR EAMES:** You know who it is, don't you?

**DANNY:** I never said I did.

**MR EAMES:** Listen, Danny. Remember when you asked me about the fire thirty years ago and I said that was a story for another day?

**DANNY:** Yes.

**MR EAMES:** Well, today is another day.

*Music changes to something altogether darker, as MR EAMES tells his story, which is acted out in a slow and formal manner.*

**MR EAMES:** He was a lot like you.

**DANNY:** Who was?

**MR EAMES:** No names. Just listen. I'd caught him smashing windows at the back of the gym one day after school. So much anger inside him. I just chased him off. Threatened him with the police. He swore, then ran off, saying he wasn't finished yet and that he'd be back. I'll show you, he said. Many's the time since I've wished that I'd reacted differently. If I had, then maybe what happened might not have.

**DANNY:** What could you have done?

**MR EAMES:** Promised to show him my pigeons perhaps? Any way, you can't go turning the clock back. You can only move forwards.

**DANNY:** What happened?

**MR EAMES:** He came back the night of the Disco. He collected some rubbish from round the back and wheeled it to the side of the hall, by the big window, while everyone was dancing.

**DANNY:** Why there?

**MR EAMES:** He wanted people to see what he was doing. To show them, remember? He set fire to it, then sat back to watch it burn. The only trouble was, the windows to the hall were all open, for ventilation. There was a gust of wind and the flames flew inside, caught hold of the big curtains and spread in seconds. With all the dancing and the flashing lights, nobody noticed at first. It only takes a few seconds, Danny, then it's too late.

**DANNY:** How do you know all this?

**MR EAMES:** In the confusion of the evacuation, I found him. He'd been very badly burnt. He told me after I'd put the flames out on his clothes. He apologised, then he died.

**DANNY:** And you never told anyone?



**MR EAMES:** What good would it have done? The lad died. And could you have told his mum that not only was her son dead, but that he had also caused the death of someone else?

**DANNY:** But you expect me to tell you the names of my friends?

**MR EAMES:** While there's still a chance, yes.

**DANNY:** A chance?

**MR EAMES:** To change.

*Pause.*

**MR EAMES:** The lad's name was....

*He whispers in DANNY's ear. DANNY's eyes widen. The music stops.*

**MR EAMES:** What time is it?

**DANNY:** Ten to eleven.

**MR EAMES:** You go to the hall, try to keep everyone calm.

**DANNY:** What?

**MR EAMES:** While I'll get a crowbar and try to break the Boiler Room door down. Hurry!

*The music is once more lively 70s disco as DANNY rushes back to the dancing. He grabs the mic.*

**DANNY:** Listen, everybody! Stop the music! The fire alarm's going to go off, but don't panic, it's just a hoax.

**LISA:** Danny, what're you doing? Have you gone mad?

*DANNY points suddenly to CARMEN.*

**DANNY:** Ask her - your so-called best friend.

**CARMEN:** I don't know what you're talking about.

**LISA:** Yes, Carmen - what are you doing here?

**DANNY:** She's fixed it so the school fire alarm goes off in five minutes time.

**CARMEN:** How could I do a thing like that? Lisa - tell him: I don't know the first thing about computers.

**DANNY:** But you know somebody who does. Doesn't she Chad?

**CHAD:** What do you mean? *(To CARMEN)* Have you gone and told everyone? Blamed it on me to get yourself out of trouble?



**DANNY:** No, Chad. I overheard you when you were in the boiler room.

**CHAD:** You didn't think I did anything, do you? That was just talk.

**DANNY:** Was it?

**CHAD:** You're just jealous 'cos I was in there with Carmen.

**DANNY:** Jealous?

**CHAD:** Come on, Danny - we're mates, aren't we?

**DANNY:** I don't know. Are we?

**CHAD:** You've changed. You've been spending too much time with those pigeons.

**DANNY:** They make more sense than you do.

**CHAD:** Why you.... !

*CHAD launches himself at DANNY but LISA intervenes.*

**LISA:** Stop it, the pair of you!

**CHAD:** Come on, Carmen. Let's go.

*But CARMEN is looking anxiously towards the fire alarm.*

**LISA:** It isn't true, is it?

**CARMEN:** Get lost, Chad.

**LISA:** Carmen?

**CARMEN:** Course it isn't.

*CHAD has gone. The teacher, MR BRENT, has arrived.*

**LISA:** Danny?

**MR BRENT:** Carmen - we're waiting.

**CARMEN:** You'll have a long wait then.

**MR BRENT:** Not if what Danny says is true.

**CARMEN:** I don't know what you mean.

**MR BRENT:** Then while you figure it out, get rid of that cigarette.

**CARMEN:** Anything to oblige, sir.

*In a deliberate, defiant gesture CARMEN tosses the lit cigarette into the air. Everyone watches its passage with exaggerated slowness.*



**LISA:** It's hard to be certain what happened next. It was like one of those moments in a film when everything becomes slow motion. The cigarette cartwheeled its way through the air, across the hall. We all stood and watched it like we were in some kind of trance. Whether Carmen actually meant what happened next, or it was all just an accident, we'll never really know, but suddenly - everything was happening at once.

**MR BRENT:** The cigarette landed on the shoulder strap of Lisa's dress and began to melt its way straight through it.

**LISA:** I tried to put it out but -

**MR BRENT:** - she panicked. It was lucky I was close by. I threw my jacket over it before it could really take hold - are you alright, Lisa?

**LISA:** I think so, sir....

**MR BRENT:** - then dashed off to get a first aid kit.

**DANNY:** But I was looking at Carmen. In her left hand she was holding -

**CARMEN:** - a lighter....

**DANNY:** .... and in her right hand -

**CARMEN:** - a letter.

**DANNY:** A letter?

**CARMEN:** From Mr Brent to my mum, explaining why he banned me from the Disco.

*CARMEN sets the letter alight.*

**LISA:** Carmen, what are you doing?

**CARMEN:** Setting this letter alight and putting it where it belongs - in the rubbish, like me. There, lets burn it all!

*CARMEN drops the burning paper into a bin. There is a loud roar, followed by the sound of crackling flames. LISA, CARMEN, and DANNY, in a direct echo of the scene in the 1970s, fan outwards in a circle, whispering "Fire!" as they do so. Suddenly a very loud fire alarm sounds and immediately there is pandemonium again, as there was at the beginning.*

**LISA:** It was chaos.

**DANNY:** People were screaming and crying.

**CARMEN:** Tripping and trampling all over each other.

**DANNY:** As they tried to escape.



**LISA:**           Flames were threatening to sweep through the hall.

**MR EAMES:** I thought: My God, it's happening all over again!

**DANNY:**       I rushed to the stage where I knew there was a fire extinguisher,  
when suddenly....

*There is a differently pitched alarm and the sound of cascading water. Everyone looks up.*

**MR EAMES:** The sprinkler system has come on above the fire!  
Just try to keep calm. A fire crew will be here shortly. If we could all  
make our way to the nearest fire exit....

**LISA:**           It was then that my dad arrived, with the rest of the fire brigade. They  
soon had things under control.



## Section 11: It's Not That Simple

*Music: sad and thoughtful as the space is formally bestrewn with ashes that fall in a slow shower. LISA begins to sweep some of them up. JOAN, Carmen's mum, joins her.*

**JOAN:** Hi.

**LISA:** Hello.

**JOAN:** You're doing a good job.

**LISA:** It's lucky Dad arrived when he did. The damage is only superficial. Mr Eames reckons we'll be able to re-open in a few days.

*Pause*

**LISA:** How's Carmen?

**JOAN:** She's made a full confession, admitting everything.

**LISA:** And Chad?

**JOAN:** She never mentioned him. She's taken all the blame herself.

**LISA:** That's good, I suppose.

**JOAN:** Yes, I think so. Lisa - Lisa, she keeps asking for you. Are you going to visit?

**LISA:** I don't know.

**JOAN:** She's wondering if you'll still be her friend.

**LISA:** I can't say. It's not that simple, is it? Look - I've got to go.



## Section 12: Trying To Get Back Home

*The sound of hammering is heard. DANNY is trying to repair the pigeon loft. His DAD arrives and watches him for a while.*

**DAD:** Hello, Son.

**DANNY:** Oh - hi, Dad.

**DAD:** Mr Eames said I might find you here.

**DANNY:** Yeah - it's quite a mess.

**DAD:** What happened exactly - do we know?

**DANNY:** Not really. Mr Eames discovered it when he got home. The coop all smashed up and the pigeons gone.

**DAD:** Who would do such a thing?

**DANNY:** I think we both know the answer to that?

**DAD:** Chad?

**DANNY:** When he thought I was going to tell on him, he was pretty steamed up.

**DAD:** Chad's lucky others saw what happened. It's unusual for girls to deliberately start fires in that way. Usually it's boys. Boys like you and Chad.

*Pause*

**DANNY:** In the first fire, was one of the ones that died your brother?

**DAD:** Yes. Why?

**DANNY:** I'm glad you're a fire fighter Dad.

**DAD:** Come on, son - let me give you a hand with this coop.

*They work together for a while, then....*

**DANNY:** Look! Up there! One of the pigeons. It's trying to get back home.

**END**



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