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SF PERUSALS

Amongst Barbarians

A Play

Michael Wall

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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ISBN 978-0-573-01928-9

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AMONGST BARBARIANS

First staged at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, on 9th February, 1989. The cast was as follows:

Bryan	Dominic Keating
Ralph	Ronan Vibert
Gaolers	Tariq Yunus
	Zubie Dar
	Anji Dar
Lawyer	Sakuntala Ramanee
George	Christopher Hancock
Wendy	Avril Elgar
Lilly	Kathy Burke
Toni	Rosalind March
Barman	Ricardo Sibelo

Directed by **James Maxwell**
Designed by **David Millard**
Lighting by **Vincent Herbert**
Sound by **Alastair Goolden**
Fights Director **Nicholas Hall**

CHARACTERS

Bryan, from north London, aged 20
Ralph, English, but has a slightly Americanized accent; early 20s, possibly late 20s
Gaoler, large, tough Sikh man, good English
Lawyer, elegant Tamil woman, excellent English, 30s
George, Bryan's father, north Londoner with bad nerves, 40s
Wendy, Bryan's mother, loud, early 40s
Lilly, Bryan's sister, heavy, young mother, aged 17-19
Toni, Ralph's mother, glamorous, 40, perhaps older
Barman, Malay or Chinese, attractive to the women, young

Set in Penang, Malaysia; in two hotel bedrooms, a bar, and a prison cell

Time—the late Eighties

ACT I

SCENE 1

Prison cell in Penang, Malaysia. It should be brightly-lit and spacious—white walls, hot

If possible, signs of life behind the cell, where other prisoners occupy a sort of open area

Bryan and Ralph have come in. They are dejected, exhausted. Bryan is twenty, Ralph is older

Ralph slumps on his bed. He has a Walkman. Bryan seems lost. He presents an incongruous sight here, and indeed he has little idea of where he is or what's happened to him. Silence for a while

Bryan Well, that's us nicely bolloxed, ennit?

Ralph says nothing

Very nicely bolloxed. Thank you very much. Oi—I'm talking to you.

Ralph Yeah.

Bryan Oh, you can hear me; I thought you couldn't hear. I thought perhaps you had that wonderful instrument you call brain switched off.

Ralph I can hear you.

Bryan Well, that's something. That fucking persecutor, he made it all up, didn't he? We never done half the things he said we done. Well, *I* never; I dunno what *you* done.

Ralph Prosecutor.

Bryan What?

Ralph It's prosecutor, not persecutor, although, I suppose... (*He stops*)

Bryan Bollocks.

Ralph Yeah, well, why don't you try and give things their proper names, you know?

Bryan I'll give you your proper name, pal.

Ralph All right.

Bryan All right. I mean, they took no notice about that copper, did they? The

one in charge, who—what's-'is-name—solicited, the one who solicited the twenty thousand dollars. That's a fucking bribe he was trying to get—I dunno what else you'd call it. They failed to take that into account.

Ralph They did.

Bryan What?

Ralph They did take it into account.

Bryan What?

Ralph What d'you mean "what"?

Bryan When?

Ralph It's a separate issue. It's got nothing to do with our guilt or innocence.

Bryan 'Course it's got to do with it!

Ralph All right...

Bryan 'Course it has. Copper takes a bribe, it weakens the whole case, dunnit? Stands to reason. The whole case against us is rendered suspect.

Ralph We're guilty as charged, man.

Bryan Yeah, I ain't saying—I'm just saying, when the Court of Law is dealing with scumbags like him, they can't be relied upon, quite frankly. I mean, an English court would have slung it out, wouldn't they? There ain't nothing dodgier than a bent copper.

Ralph Yeah.

Bryan 'Course I ain't saying I'm *innocent*—I just ain't as guilty as you, that's all.

Ralph What difference does it make?

Bryan That fucking lawyer, she said she'd look for loopholes and that—what was that if it weren't a loophole? Bent coppers supplying the information. In England they'd've chucked it out and we'd be down the boozer now.

Ralph I doubt it.

Bryan 'Course we fucking would. Bent copper, there's no case.

Ralph It's not "bent"; they take it for granted everyone's working a scam...

Bryan Yeah, but that ain't——

Ralph The Customs found us with it in our fucking Y-fronts, man—now smarten up.

Bryan I know they did; I ain't contesting that. That ain't contested. But what I'm saying is—who tipped 'em off? Number one cunt.

Ralph All right.

Bryan I mean, don't try to tell me they're gonna hang us on that 'cos it just don't stand up. For fuck's sake, how can it? I mean, fair's fair, ennit? It's not as though we fucking killed anybody, is it? I mean, who did we kill? It's just not realistic. It isn't a realistic sentence to pass. I mean, why not hanging for pinching a loaf of bread or poking your best mate's missis or something? It's prehistoric. I'll take what I got coming, but no way can you tell me hanging is appropriate for a thing like this. It's just not playing the fucking game. Oi—is it?

Ralph No, it's not a game.

Bryan That's what I'm saying. I couldn't believe it when that cunt read that out. Hanged by the neck until you are dead... Jesus. Who'd he think he's talking to? Fucking multiple murderer or something? Who'd I fucking kill? I hate killers; I think they should be hanged. But I ain't one. It doesn't describe me at all. I'm not even fucking twenty-one. They knew that, didn't they? I mean, that was pointed out to them, wasn't it? That I'm under-age?

Ralph Yeah.

Bryan Well, there ought to be a fucking law against it.

Ralph There is a law and you got on the wrong end of it.

Bryan You an' all. Don't try and tell me you ain't gonna get the same. That's the only satisfaction I've received so far.

Ralph Why don't you just shut up about the law. If the law's an ass you're the shit that comes out of it.

Bryan No, I'm saying an international law—there's got to be an international law, respected by all nations alike, which it's a crime to hang an under-aged person for this. Anyway, they can't hang a fucking Englishman.

Ralph Yeah, well, that's just what they can do.

Bryan What—foreigners hang an Englishman? Leave it out; it's a complete contradiction in terms. I mean, who gave 'em their fucking legal system in the first place...

Ralph Oh, man...

Bryan No, go on—who give it to 'em? We did. Fucking muggins as usual—we give 'em everything, then they go and turn on us.

Ralph You know, in certain circumstances I suppose you could be quite entertaining...

Bryan I'd been all right if it hadn't been for you. Why didn't you fucking leave me alone? Heroin? I never touched the stuff back home. I hate fucking pushers; they should all be shoved down the lavatory... What you laughing at now, you cunt? You're always laughing at something. You done that in court, I seen you. No wonder they was indisposed against us, what with you smirking like that all the bleedin' time...

Ralph Maybe I find the whole thing funny.

Bryan Oh, yeah, fucking hilarious. Got me in stitches here. I expect you'll be laughing when they put that rope round your neck an' all. Oh, I don't wanna think about it. Gives me the fucking creeps. And another thing: that fucking accent of yours. I could see they hated you the moment you opened your mouth. What you trying to be—Clint Eastwood or something? You an Englishman or not?

Ralph Yeah, I'm English.

Bryan Well, why don't you fucking talk like one?

Ralph I've done a lot of travelling, Bryan.

Bryan Well, I wish you fucking hadn't. I wish you'd stayed home and sat

in front of the telly, instead of... Why the fuck couldn't you have left me alone? I was all right.

Ralph Oh, yeah!

Bryan I was.

Ralph Yeah, you were wonderful.

Bryan I ain't saying I was wonderful; I'm saying I was all right. I didn't need...

Ralph You needed the money! Well, you wanted it. Quit telling yourself lies, why don't you? You did it for the bread. Twenty-five thousand and a first-class flight on to Australia—you couldn't resist it. A fortnight in Oz, then back home like the fucking Sugar Plum Fairy—Look Ma! You're a victim of your own greed. The new English disease, or haven't you heard?

Bryan Bollocks...

Ralph ...That's why you were perfect. Or we *thought* you were perfect.

Bryan I wasn't perfect, was I?

Ralph You were not. You were a complete asshole.

Bryan You're lucky I haven't broken your fucking neck for you by now.

Ralph I am?

Bryan Fucking lucky. I tell you, they shouldn't've put us in the same cell together, 'cos I'm gonna do for you.

Ralph Yeah, well, I sleep with one eye open.

Bryan You fucking would.

Ralph Because that's the only way you'd do it, pal...

Bryan Stop calling me pal; I ain't your pal...

Ralph You're all talk, like all the English these days...

Bryan You don't half fucking know a lot about the English considering you don't live there no more...

Ralph ...They're gonna hang you by the neck until you're fucking dead and then you'll be number one jerk.

Bryan Yeah, well, they're gonna hang you too, mate, so you're not so bloody smart, are you?

Ralph You should've gone to Margate for your holidays.

Bryan I nearly did. You don't know how true you spoke—I nearly did! 'Cept I won this fucking trip in a raffle. (*He laughs*) Fucking laugh, ennit? That's your sort of humour, ennit? Cunt wins a foreign holiday in a raffle, ends up getting himself topped. You like all that, don't you?

Ralph (*seriously*) Yeah, that's pretty damned funny.

Bryan Cunt. I ain't even been abroad before! Har har har!

The Gaoler passes by. He is a large Sikh

Gaoler All right, boys?

Bryan Fuck off, you different-coloured bastard.

Ralph Careful.
Gaoler Going home soon, Bryan.

The Gaoler passes on

Bryan What you mean "careful". You mean, I might get into trouble?
Ralph I mean, he might come back and knock seven different kinds of shit out of you.
Bryan Hilarious. What is this country anyway? They got Chinks everywhere and they got fucking Pakis running the gaols. Sounds like a pretty fucked-up sort of place to me.
Ralph Sounds just like home.
Bryan What d'*you* know?
Ralph He's not a Paki.
Bryan Well, whatever he is.
Ralph How could he be a Paki?
Bryan What are you gonna tell me—he's a fucking Jap or something?
Ralph He's a Sikh. And it's *not* a surprise to see him here. Wherever you go in the world you find Sikhs in jobs like this—they have a reputation for toughness...
Bryan (*suddenly*) Oh, fucking hell, though, it ain't fair! (*He buries his head in his hands*)

Ralph pulls the headphones of the Walkman over his ears and listens to the music

Don't put that on! Come on, take it off.
Ralph Why?
Bryan I don't know.

Ralph looks at him for a while, then takes it off again. Long silence

I mean, you're carrying on as though this sort of thing is happening to you all the time. I mean, don't pretend you couldn't give a stuff, all right? You gotta be as chewed up about it as I am, haven't you? Unless you want to fucking die, which I doubt.

Ralph says nothing. They look at one another

Ralph Just don't you think of coming up on me when I'm asleep...
Bryan No, no, no...
Ralph I mean it—don't even think of it.
Bryan All right, no need to threaten me.

Ralph I just want to make it clear to you, OK?
Bryan It's clear, it's clear. Fucking hell, touchy, entcha?
Ralph Yeah. I don't like people coming up on me.
Bryan Well, you're in the wrong place, son.

Ralph looks at him

In here. This is the wrong place for you.
Ralph Just leave me alone.
Bryan Yeah, I'll leave you alone. Just like you left me alone.
Ralph I'm sorry...
Bryan Oh, fucking hell, he's apologising!
Ralph ...But you shouldn't win prizes. (*He laughs at him—a curious, joyless laugh. It's creepy*)

Scene 2

Hotel, Penang

It is a large, adequately furnished, impersonal hotel room with one or two ethnic touches to distinguish it from other hotel rooms in other parts of the world

George and Wendy come in—Bryan's parents. They are both in their forties, although they both have the worried and hunched bearing of people older than their age. With them is Lilly, Bryan's sister. She is about nineteen—overweight, sluttish, glazed. She carries a very small baby, invariably crying its head off. They have all just arrived after a long flight. Leading the way is the female Lawyer who is handling Bryan's case—Mrs Mahalingam. She is a crisp, well turned-out woman in her thirties or younger. She is an elegant Tamil, speaks excellent English. Wendy and Lilly both have loud, uncompromising voices, George is very quiet. They carry luggage with them

Lawyer Ah, yes, this is it; I think they made a little mistake downstairs, actually.
George Yes, I think so.
Lawyer But I think it's quite clean and comfortable; we've used it before many times...
George Thank you.
Lawyer I think you'll be OK here.
George Very nice, thank you—and thank you for coming all the way out to the airport. I did run a check and I had a reasonable idea of the route in, didn't I, Wendy?

Lawyer Oh, it is no problem.
George Not that we know where we are, do we, Wendy? (*He laughs—a throaty, smoker's laugh*) Never been to this part of the world before, to tell you the——
Lawyer Well you are in Penang island proper; it is separated from the mainland by a short stretch of water with very regular ferries. The city here is known as Georgetown.
George Really? Well, that's suitable, isn't it, 'cos George is my name, see. George in Georgetown. Don't suppose there'll be many Georges as such here, will there? They'll have their own names, won't they? Why is that? Because the British was here—is it?
Lawyer Yes, they were here, very much so.
George I thought so. 'Cos there are a lot of Georgetowns all over the world, aren't there? Jamestowns. Victorias. It's funny how they hang on to those old names after all this time, isn't it? You'd think they'd want to change 'em, you know, sort of get their own names.

The baby is crying

Wendy I think he wants a feed, Lil.
Lilly I know he does.
Wendy I'm just telling you because sometimes you don't seem to realize...
Lilly 'Course I realize—whose baby is it—yours or mine?
Wendy It ain't mine!
Lilly No.
Wendy I finished with all that, girl, bloody ages ago, thank Christ...
Lilly Well, then.
Lawyer Now apparently this is a suite...
George Yes, they told us it was a suite...
Lawyer ...So your room should be through here... Yes.
Lilly Right.

The Lawyer goes ahead to check the adjoining room

George Try and say thank you, Lil, because she's been very kind to us.
Lilly Shut up, you fucking crawler.

Lilly goes with the baby into the next room

George and Wendy are together. George starts looking through a suitcase

George Well, it seems to have everything, dunnit? (*He checks something*) What's this?

Wendy What you bloody talking, Georgetown?
George I'm just being "amickable" with her, aren't I? She's Bry's lawyer—stands to reason we should get on with her.
Wendy "Georgetown—my name's George"—she'll think you're mad. Leave that case; you won't know where to put nothing.
George Oh, I'm bleedin' tired, though, Wend. You reckon it's that jet lag thing I got?
Wendy I dunno what you got, mate, but whatever it is, it ain't worth having.
George What is she, d'you reckon? Only, I always thought Malayans was a darker race.
Wendy Don't rumple all them things up.
George No, I'm just...
Wendy Just don't rumple 'em. They're packed so I know where everything is.
George No, I'm just...
Wendy What you looking for?
George Umm...
Wendy Come on, get out of it. You're worse than her and that kid.
George I thought I'd put me sandals on, only with this tropical climate...
Wendy I'll find 'em for you in a minute. Sit down there. God, I haven't had a decent smoke since we left home. (*She lights up*) Trust you to get us in a no-smoking area on the plane...
George Well, I thought with Lil's kiddie—you know, passive smoking. I was reading about that in the *Sunday Times*...
Wendy You consider me for a change. (*She coughs grotesquely*) God, I needed that. "Passive smoking!" Stupid bastard.
George It was a very interesting drive in, I thought. It's still too early to form a view, sort of thing, but from what I could see—most of the residents appeared to be Chinese. I always thought Malayans were a dark race, somewhat like the Indians. Darker than the Pakis. It's terrible when you come to think of it, though, Wend, what you don't know about the geography of the world we live in.
Wendy I dunno what fucking world you live in; it ain't the same as mine, I'll tell you.
George No, I was just trying to place the Malayans...
Wendy Place 'em in the sea, I would. The bastards.
George Well, we'll see, won't we?
Wendy Seen already, haven't we?

They sit staring into space for a while. George lights up. He has a coughing fit too. Followed by more silence

At last the Lawyer enters

Lawyer Well, your daughter seems to be all right in there.
George Yes, lovely, thank you.
Lawyer You don't seem to have much of a view, I'm afraid...
George No, I was thinking...
Wendy (*stonily*) We don't really want a view, thank you.
Lawyer No.
George So, you'll appreciate we're both very interested to know how Bryan is. I mean, when you last saw him and...
Lawyer Well, obviously he's very upset...
George Yes.
Lawyer ...And a little bitter. I think it's hard for him to take in at the present time...
George Well, it would be hard for anybody, no matter what he's——
Lawyer But as I told you in the car, we have not given up hope. Not by any means.
George Thank you. Well, that's good to hear, isn't it, Wendy?

Wendy says nothing

So what hope can there actually be, would you say? At this moment in time.
Lawyer Well, regarding *Bryan*, let me say—in Bryan's case as distinct from Ralph's—a pardon on appeal is an altogether more feasible prospect. I don't want to raise false hopes, not at all, but I think I can say that. I think that in Court we were able to prove that the nature of their responsibility was quite different. Bryan was duped, there's agreement on that. Ralph is unmistakably the guilty one—he's a member of an international syndicate and all that...
George Is he really? Tsk tsk tsk!
Lawyer But Bryan was different, of course: first offence; not a user or supplier; just a tourist and a dupe on this one single occasion. Also, there is the question of his IQ rating. His IQ being—um—so low, he is the type who is more easily led astray. We were able to prove that in this sense he was led astray. Courts in this part of the world set great store by this sort of evidence, you know...
George Do they, yes—well, if you think it will be a helpful, a chink of light sort of thing...
Lawyer Well, I'm reasonably optimistic about this whole area of our appeal, frankly. It is more likely to be taken notice of on appeal than in Court, oddly enough.
George Yes, I see.
Wendy Sorry, you say his IQ is what? Very low, you say?
Lawyer Well...
Wendy You see, I don't know what you mean by that at all.

George Well, it's his IQ, isn't it?

Lawyer Well, we were able to produce a renowned psychiatrist, you know, who was able to measure it. It's not *chronically* low—please don't get me wrong...

George No no, you have to...

Wendy You mean, he's not very bright. That's what you're trying to say, isn't it?

George No, listen, Wend...

Wendy A psychiatrist? Excuse me, but I got to laugh, quite frankly...

Lawyer Compared to Ralph, certainly—there is a discernible gap. That is the crucial factor. Only IQ-wise, you understand. There is definitely a question of leader and led.

George Yeah, that's what it is, see, Wend. The other boy—what it is with him—well, he's clever, isn't he?

Lawyer Well, he does have a very high rating...

Wendy Oh, he's clever.

Lawyer Anyhow, this is one line we will certainly be taking and frankly I believe we should be grasping at every straw.

George Thank you.

Wendy Yes, well, that's what it is, isn't it? Grasping at straws.

George Well, it's a question of you've got to take every...

Lawyer The law here is very strong on this matter.

Wendy Yeah, well, we have heard, thank you.

George Yes, we have heard.

Lawyer Personally, although the situation is very serious, I believe there are grounds for optimism.

George Thank you very much.

Wendy But it's not your boy, is it?

George No, listen to the lady, Wend...

Wendy So I don't know what you mean you're "optimistic". I mean, it's me that's optimistic or pessimistic, isn't it? I mean, I'm the one who's involved, you know what I mean?

Lawyer (*kindly*) Yes, I know.

Wendy I mean, I know you're probably doing the best you can and you're probably quite a sincere person, but you see, I'm not going to just stand by and let that boy hang, am I? I haven't come all the way out here to attend a hanging.

George I don't think we actually attend...

Wendy I've been in touch with my MP. He's a leading Labour MP and he's taken an interest in our case...

George He's very good.

Wendy He's written letters and made deputations to this that and the other...

George We live in an inner-city area, you know.

Wendy And it's a *personal* interest he's taken, not just so he can get votes...
George He doesn't have to do it; he's already an MP.
Wendy At this moment he's trying to raise the issue with the Queen.
George It's funny, we never went to church at all before this happened. (*He laughs and coughs*)
Wendy The Prime Minister is expected to intervene.
Lawyer Of course, all that is to the good.
George The Prime Minister does usually intervene, isn't that right? As a last resort, sort of thing?

Pause. They ponder this

I expect there'll be some sort of deal going on right now, at top level, sort of thing, won't there? You just don't know, do you?
Lawyer Well, I'll telephone you later—I'd better let you get settled in now.
George Yes, thank you.
Lawyer If there's anything you want to know, anything at all—please don't hesitate to ring me at the office or at home. (*She passes George her card*)
George Oh, thank you... Oh, I see your home address is on the back. That's useful, isn't it? Cor, that's a long name, isn't it?
Lawyer Mrs Mahalingam. But you can call me Katie, if you like—everyone calls me that. It's the nearest thing.
George What is it, a Malayan name, is it?
Lawyer No, it's a Tamil name, actually.
George Oh.
Lawyer India, you know.
George Oh! Oh, I was wondering what you—I was just saying, wasn't I, Wend?
Lawyer Yes, we're simply all over the place.
George You're telling me. I mean, where we come from...
Wendy Thank you—we'll be in touch.

The Lawyer goes

George reads the card

George Mrs Maha... Mahal... I can't even say it, Wend!
Wendy "We live in an inner-city area". You prat.
George What about it?
Wendy You berk.
George Well, we do.
Wendy What's it got to do with anything?
George Well, she's an Indian. She'll know we sort of live amongst 'em. Other Indians and Pakis and that. Which we do live amongst 'em.

Wendy You'd send 'em all back home if you had your way.

George I wouldn't! When did I say that? I ain't never said nothing like that. I might have in jest once or twice. You're talking about in jest.

Wendy All right. Shut up.

George I don't think it can do any harm to tell her that we move amongst her kind.

Wendy Jesus Christ.

George But I do think it's very enlightened of them, though, Wend, to have an Indian as a lawyer. Because they're not in the majority here. If they was, it would be India, wouldn't it? It wouldn't be Malaya at all. Plus the fact she's a woman. How many lawyers are there in England that are Indian *and* women? It would be interesting to know that, Wend. It's funny, ennit? You go abroad and you come across little things like that that really surprise you, you know what I mean? They sort of... (*He mimes surprise*) Don't you think that's enlightened?

Wendy You can't help being enlightened; your head's full of holes.

George (*laughing good-naturedly*) That's good, Wend.

Wendy We haven't come here to be enlightened or observe the various what's-'is-names—we come here because our boy's being hanged! Or has it escaped your attention?

George I know; I suppose I'm just sort of seeking a refuge really.

Wendy Well, don't seek it in stupidity, if you can help it. We got to keep a clear head or they'll treat us like scum. They're just like at home, only worse.

George No, I'm just saying...

Wendy Well, don't say. Don't say nothing. I'm fed up with the sound of your voice. I'm not taking my son home in a box.

George Can you get my pills out of there, because...

Wendy Here.

George Ta. Got the bleedin' shakes already, I have. Which ones is it—I can't see without me glasses... Where's me glasses...? Tell you something else, though, Wend; that girl didn't ought to talk like that to me in front of other people. Did you hear what she said to me? I dunno—ever since she got herself pregnant—her whole manner seems to have altered with me. The things she says. No-one's ever spoken to me the way she does. Except you, but that's normal. I got to have respect, though, Wend—I think I've got to have a word with her. No way can she talk like that to me, specially not in front of strangers.

Wendy She didn't hear.

George I think she did. D'you think she didn't? She probably didn't. But still.

Wendy I don't know where your bloody glasses are. Have I got to think of everything?

George No, it's just these labels, they make 'em so small...

Wendy These are your carba ... carba...
George Carbamazepine! That's the ones.
Wendy What a fucking hole, though! Did you see it on the way in? (*She starts unpacking the case*)
George Yeah, I thought it was...
Wendy Bloody shanty-town full of Chinese and they're gonna hang our Bryan. They got a fucking cheek. Oi, Lil!

Lilly comes in, without her baby

Lilly What?
Wendy What you bring this for? (*She holds up a swimming costume from the case*)
Lilly What d'you think?
Wendy You can forget going swimming here, all right?
Lilly Why not?
Wendy 'Cos you're not, that's all.
Lilly They got the sea, haven't they?
Wendy They may have the sea, BUT YOU AIN'T GOING IN IT!
George Shh! Shh!
Lilly (*laughing*) That's that prickly heat you got there.
Wendy FANCY BRINGING THIS, YOU COW!
Lilly WHO YOU CALLING A COW?
George Shh, come on now...
Lilly It's supposed to be the fucking tropics!
George Well, it *is* the tropics, Wend—fair enough. There was a lot of them palm trees on the way in.
Wendy We are here because our Bryan—your brother—has been sentenced to death by a bunch of savages. Can you get that into your thick skull? You an' all. How d'you think it would look in the papers if there was this picture of you swanning about in the water while our Bryan's on death row? They'd love that, wouldn't they?
Lilly All right—I wasn't going to go now—I was going to leave it until after.

Pause. Lilly realizes what she's said

Fuck it.
George I suppose they would print a picture like that, really. I suppose we ought to be on our guard, sort of thing. I hadn't thought of that. I suppose we're newsworthy really, aren't we?
Wendy You always fucking have been. We got to be serious about this, all of us, or they're gonna hang our Bryan. (*She throws the costume back*) It won't fit you no more anyway.

Lilly Nothing does fit me. When am I gonna get my figure back?
Wendy Shouldn't drink so much, should you?
Lilly Look who's talking!
Wendy I am.
Lilly Yeah, look who's talking!
George Don't start rowing—my nerves won't stand it.
Lilly They won't hang him; they wouldn't fucking dare.
Wendy Better hope you're right, girl.
George Er, Lil—just a ... before we, er...
Lilly What?
George No, it's just...
Lilly What's the matter with him?
Wendy You've upset him.
Lilly Do what?
Wendy Why don't you mind how you talk to your father?
Lilly Ooh, my "father"!
Wendy Don't put your feet on that; I don't want them complaining about muddy marks.
George No, what it is, Lilly—I'll be quite honest with you...
Lilly Oh, that'll make a change.
George What it is...
Lilly You already said that.
George When that woman was here you had a little go at me, didn't you? It's all right—we're all under pressure, and I expect a little niggle or two will be coming out in the ensuing days. But, well, what it is, you see, Lilly—a family, it's like the insides of a car, you know? Every bit under there depends on every other bit; they can't function if one bit isn't turning over and doing its proper job an' that. That's what a family's like, see? You get one that's out of tune—or "sync" as they call it—well, you've a breakdown, haven't you? Chaos. You have to pull over on to the hard shoulder. You get what I mean? The hard shoulder of life. I mean, I don't blame you—don't get me wrong; we're all under pressure. I'll let it go with a word this time, but I'd really rather you didn't address me like you did just now in front of Mrs Marlgam.
Lilly What d'you know about the insides of a car? I haven't finished that feed yet... (*She starts to go*) I feel like a fucking cow, don't I?

Lilly goes back to her room

Wendy She's grown up very fast, that girl.
George I don't know. She defies her parents.
Wendy Haven't you taken that pill yet?
George You think it's all right to drink the water? Better not, eh? I should've asked Mrs Marlgam.

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