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ROAD

A Play

by Jim Cartwright

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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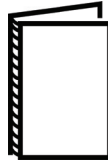


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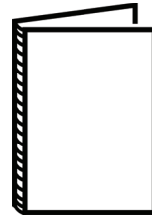
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ROAD

First performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, London, on 22nd March, 1986, with the following cast. Then transferring to the Royal Court's main auditorium on 9th June 1986.

SCULLERY	Edward Tudor-Pole
CAROL'S MOTHER	Susan Brown
CAROL	Mossie Smith
LOUISE	Lesley Sharp
BRINK	Neil Dudgeon
EDDIE'S DAD	Colin McCormack
EDDIE	William Armstrong
MOLLY	Susan Brown
PROFESSOR	Colin McCormack
SKIN	William Armstrong
HELEN	Susan Brown
JERRY	Colin McCormack
JOEY	Neil Dudgeon
CLARE	Lesley Sharp

Other parts

DOR	Mossie Smith	LANE	Leslie Sharp
MARION	Susan Brown	BRIAN	Colin McCormack
CLINT	William Armstrong	CHANTAL	Mossie Smith
LINDA	Lesley Sharp	MR BALD	Neil Dudgeon
BISTO	William Armstrong	MRS BALD	
TOM	Neil Dudgeon	CHANCE	Colin McCormack
STANLEY		PETERSON	
BLOWPIPE	William Armstrong	BARRY	William Armstrong
CHIPSHOP	Gail Pallin	ELECTRIC	Mossie Smith,
GIRL		CLUTCH	Leslie Sharp and Susan Brown

The play directed by **Simon Curtis**
Produced by **Max Stafford-Clark**
Designed by **Paul Brown**

Road returned to the Royal Court's main auditorium in January 1987 with the following cast of characters:

SCULLERY	Ian Dury
LOUISE	Jane Horrocks
BROTHER	Ewan Stewart
BRENDA	Susan Brown
CAROL	Mossie Smith
BRINK	Ewan Stewart
EDDIE	Iain Glen
EDDIE'S DAD	Alan David
MOLLY	Susan Brown
PROFESSOR	Alan David
CHANTAL	Mossie Smith
SKIN-LAD	Iain Glen
JERRY	Alan David
CLARE	Jane Horrocks
JOEY	Ewan Stewart
HELEN	Susan Brown
VALERIE	Jane Horrocks

All other parts played by members of the company

The play directed by **Simon Curtis**

Designed by **Paul Brown**

CHARACTERS

SCULLERY

BRENDA, Carol's mother

BARRY

LOUISE, a young girl

LOUISE'S BROTHER

CAROL, a young girl

BRINK, a young man

EDDIE'S DAD

EDDIE, a young lad

DOR

LANE } tarted-up women

SKIN-LAD

MOLLY, an old woman

THE PROFESSOR

CHANTAL, a young girl of about 16

MR BALD

MRS BALD

JERRY, a middle-aged man

BLOWPIPE

CLAIRE, a young girl of about 16

JOEY, a young lad of about 17

BISTO, a DJ

TOM STANLEY, pub compère

ELECTRIC CLUTCH, 3 dancers

MANFRED, chip shop owner

SCOTCH GIRL, his assistant

CURT, a young lad

HELEN, a middle-aged woman

SOLDIER

VALERIE, a woman in her mid-30s

MARION, a drunk woman

LINDA, a girl of about 12

CHANCE PETERSON

The action of the play takes place in a road in a small Lancashire town

Time—tonight

ACT I

Pre-show

*In the street in front of the theatre, **CHANTAL** (a young girl from Road, about sixteen but simple-minded) is hanging around or going up and down on a little child's shove scooter. After a while she is joined by **LINDA**, another girl from Road, about twelve. She is in her night-dress, and has sneaked out to play before going to bed. They sit on the theatre steps and play chalk games, sometimes obscene. As the time for the performance approaches, the House Manager of the theatre should come out and tell them to clear off.*

*As this is occurring outside, inside the theatre bar has been converted into the Millstone Pub, a typical old Lancashire pub, with a dartboard, a little tiny stage in the corner, with mike and glitter ribbons behind, for the pub entertainers to perform on, posters advertising the "Pub Disco Room" with "**BISTO** and his Beatoven Disco", pub lunches, trips, photographs advertising tonight's turns: "**CHANCE PETERSON**, singer", "**TOM STANLEY**, your compère", "*The* **ELECTRIC CLUTCH**, erotic dancers", etc. **BARRY** is in the pub playing darts. The following scene was used as a basis for the bar improvisation. It should be noted that this is a scene only to be passed through or by, and not the start of the play and should be very low-key, slow, natural and lengthy, almost unnoticeable.*

BARRY is in the pub playing darts.

BRENDA comes in and goes to the bar.

BRENDA Hey mate. Can I have a drink on t'slate, eh. Summat on t'slate. I'm skint you see, until me daughter gi's me some later. She comes in here, Carol, you know her. Gi'us one an she'll pay you later. Eh. Eh. Go on lovey, gi'us a bottle. Oh sod off then. Stuck up flea. (*She turns round and sees BARRY*) Barry! Baz! Playin' darts then Baza.

He ignores her.

What time is it, Bar?

BARRY Dunno.

BRENDA What ha'you doing in so early. Bar?

He ignores her.

Eh what's so early for?

BARRY I'm waitin' for John to play pool.

BRENDA Ay, lend us a cig.

He plays on.

A cig, Bar.

He plays on.

Lend us a cig.

BARRY *gives her one. He plays on.*

Got a light, Bar.

He plays.

Got a light, Barry?

He throws his lighter at her, plays on. She picks it up, lights up, pockets the lighter. She watches the game, watches the game.

Want a pound on one?

He ignores her. She watches.

Wan' a pound on one?

He ignores, she watches.

Wan' a pound on one?

BARRY BLOODY HELL!

BRENDA Do you though, Bar?

BARRY EH!

BRENDA Want a pound on one. I've no drink money, does see Bar? But it might be me lucky day eh, might it, Bar.

BARRY Alreet then. *(He starts walking to the bar)*

BRENDA Reet. God I've gone thirsty I always do when I'm coming up to play.

BARRY *(to the BARMAN)* 'Nother set o' darts, cock.

The BARMAN passes them over the bar to BARRY. BRENDA is disappointed—she thought he was going for drinks.

Here. (He shoves them in her hand)

They go to the board and play the first set.

BRENDA You chalk up Bar, I can't do take-aways.

As he goes up to the blackboard, she takes a quick sip of his drink. They play another set. She's waiting for him to go to the board again. But this time he downs his in one then goes to the board to chalk up.

Do you want another then, Barry? *(To the BARMAN)* He might want another here in a sec, love.

BARRY *is returning.*

Do you, Bar?

BARRY What?

BRENDA Want another ale.

BARRY Shut up an' play if you're playing.

BRENDA I'll have to whether I want to or not, won't a. I need that pound more than me next breath Baz, I'll tell you that. I mean remember you're playing a girl.

He's gone. He is over at the bar queuing for a drink. She sneakily runs up and shoves the darts in the board, then runs back to the spot.

BRENDA One hundred and eighty! One hundred and eighty! Look at that, Barry, look.

BARRY *goes to the board takes the darts out.*

BARRY Game's over.

BRENDA Eh?

BARRY Game's over Brenda.

BRENDA Well what about fifty p for a good try.

BARRY *(carrying on playing on his own)* Go.

BRENDA *runs in front of the dartboard.*

Move Brenda or I'll throw this right in the cow's eye.

BRENDA *(beaten; under her breath)* Fuck you.

She goes.

Meanwhile, in the auditorium SCULLERY is there on stage or on the floor to greet the audience as they come in. On stage EDDIE'S DAD is in his house, sitting on an armchair, fixing a Hoover across his knee, the TV on. In another house, LOUISE'S BROTHER is sitting on a chair fixing an oily engine. BRENDA enters her house and sits in an armchair smoking, tense. When all the audience are in and settled, Act I begins.

"SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW" *by Judy Garland is playing. The record ends.*

Blackness.

A match is struck. It is held underneath a broken road sign. The name part has been ripped off, leaving a sharp, twisted, jagged edge, only the word "Road" is left. The sign is very old and has been this way a long time.

SCULLERY It's been broken.

The flame moves across to illuminate SCULLERY's face. He holds the match there until it goes out; at the same time a spotlight creeps up on his face.

Wid' your night yous chose to come and see us. Wid' our night as usual we's all gettin' ready and turning out for a drink. **THIS IS OUR ROAD!** But tonight it's your road an' all! Don't feel awkward wi' us, make yourselves at home. You'll meet "all-sorts" down here, I'm telling you love. An' owt can happen tonight. He might get a bird. She might ha' a fight, she might. Let's shove off down t'Road and find out! We'll go down house by house. Hold tight! Here we go! Come on! (*He beckons the audience around*) Watch the kerb missis! Road's coming round us! (*He starts laughing, laughing uproariously*)

Blackout, then the lights come up on a living-room. There is a mirror up at the back. A man (LOUISE'S BROTHER) in a vest, and old trousers and socks, is sitting in a chair, leaning over and working on an oily (car, bike, or machine) engine, on spread-out newspapers.

A young girl, LOUISE, bursts in, dressed for going out, frantically brushing her hair.

LOUISE Late, late again, late. Can I get to mirror?

BROTHER Shut it.

She has to try and do it from where she is.

LOUISE Where's Mum and Dad?

BROTHER (*mouthing*) Shagging.

LOUISE Is they!

He looks at her in disbelief, shakes his head, carries on.

I wish to God you won't joke me like that. I could just imagine 'em there then, on that dirty bed of vests.

He just ignores her, carries on.

You not going out?

He stares at her. She jumps in fear. She carries on brushing. She looks round.

Where's dog?

BROTHER Out back.

LOUISE Have you fed him today?

BROTHER (*not looking up*) Fuck facey, fuck facey. Fuck facey.
Fuck facey. Fuck off. Fuck off.

LOUISE Why do you never go out, you?

BROTHER Can't afford it. Why do you never stay in?

LOUISE I can't stand it.

BROTHER *throws the engine at her. She jumps back, screams.*

You think you're scary. But you're just a big lump of it.

BROTHER *turns the chair over. His next line though not said in an overtly sexual way, carries sexual threat.*

BROTHER Let's dance.

LOUISE (*scared*) You can't dance with your brother.

BROTHER I know. Everything's not allowed in life. (*He takes two quid out, gives it to her*) Here.

LOUISE Where's that from?

BROTHER (*indicating the engine*) I'm doing a job for Eric.

LOUISE (*holding the money*) You go an' get a pint on it.

BROTHER No, I've got a quarter-bottle under me pillow.

LOUISE You're not going back to bed is you, you're there all day and night.

BROTHER Do you want a punch?

LOUISE No.

BROTHER I wish you did. I'd love to see summat' go down. (*He looks at his oily hands*) I'm going for a bath.

LOUISE Don't put the immersion on, me mum 'ull kill you.

He puts his hands on her face. Then draws them down her cheeks, smudging make-up and leaving black.

Oh no! I'm goin' be really late now. I'm going have go up and do it again. I'm goin' be late late now. You pigging bastard.

She goes up.

He looks out after her, starts clapping, clapping his hands for a long time. He suddenly stops.

BROTHER (*blankly to the audience*) Fucking long life innit.

Blackout. The lights come up on another living-room. An old beaten red armchair, an ironing-board up at the back.

BRENDA, a thin wizened scruffy woman sits in the chair facing the audience, smoking. At the back, **CAROL** in bra and knickers is ironing her dress.

BRENDA (*who speaks in a low, quiet, one-tone voice*) Where you goin'?

CAROL Out.

BRENDA Where you goin'?

CAROL Out.

BRENDA Where you goin'?

CAROL The pub.

BRENDA Tha's better. What time you be back?

CAROL Whenever.

BRENDA What time you be back?

CAROL Whenever.

BRENDA What time?

CAROL Eleven, twelve-ish.

BRENDA Tha's better. Are you still seeing that lad?

CAROL I'm not answering any more questions.

BRENDA There you are then. Don't bring anyone back here
the night.

CAROL As though I would.

BRENDA You would. You would. I'm sick of the sound of it
down here.

CAROL What do you mean?

BRENDA You know.

CAROL Look leave me alone, I'm ironing this.

BRENDA Well speak then.

CAROL Look why should I eh? You're nothing to me.

BRENDA I'm Mother.

CAROL You're my mother so what?

BRENDA I'm your mother and I brung you from... (*She indicates
with her hand*) ...that to that!

CAROL Ay ay well I'm leaving soon. So thanks an' all that, but
there you are.

BRENDA Ay here I am and there you are so let's have something.

CAROL What?

BRENDA Respect and money.

CAROL I'll give you your money Monday morning and your respects down the bog.

BRENDA Pissing young git.

*There is the sound of someone shouting and laughing.
They both get up and lean out front.*

CAROL } (together) SHUT IT!
BRENDA }

They look at each other and laugh. They go back to ironing and sitting.

BRENDA Have you had 'owt eat.

CAROL I've had a warmed-up pastie from dinner.

BRENDA Well get summat else.

CAROL What else? There's rock all in, but shrunk carrots, Sugar Puffs, and some spit or summat in a saucer.

BRENDA Don't exaggerate.

CAROL Uh.

BRENDA Anyway get summat down you before you go out.

CAROL You get summat down you.

BRENDA You get summat down you.

CAROL You get summat down you.

BRENDA You get summat down you.

CAROL You get summat down you.

BRENDA You get summat down you.

CAROL You get summat down you. You're the one whose goin' to be pissed up and lying in it.

BRENDA Shove it you little tart.

CAROL You shove it.

CAROL turns the dress over, spits on the iron, carries on.

BRENDA So you're goin' down the boozier are you?

CAROL Yeah. Are you?

BRENDA I might go down if somebody coughs up.

CAROL Are you still going with that ragman?

BRENDA No.

CAROL Why not?

BRENDA He snotted off din't he. He owes me an' all.

CAROL Eh?

BRENDA Yeah like you all do, every one of yous. I s'pose you're skint an' all.

CAROL Well I've got some but I need it for tonight.

BRENDA Well give it me.

CAROL No.

BRENDA Yes.

CAROL No.

BRENDA Yes.

CAROL No.

BRENDA Yes.

CAROL No, you mouldy old slag.

BRENDA Yes, you young pig.

CAROL Cow!

BRENDA Sick!

CAROL Oh God, you're crude. How could I have let you bring me up. Fling me up more like, I was flung through the years.

BRENDA Listen her romanticizing. You've done all right out of my bones you lot.

CAROL You're nothing but bones anyway. Why don't you eat?

BRENDA Because I don't. Because I don't. I do any way. I get enough.

CAROL You'd rather swill ale. Wun't you? Look at you. Your skin's like ham. There's veins showing all over you. You're hung in your old clothes. You never wash, you never change. You never...never... *(She can't bring herself to say it)* I'm like I am because of you and you're like you are because of who knows what rot. *(She puts her dress on. It is very short)* Is it short enough for you?

BRENDA Ask men.

A loud knocking on the door.

CAROL Come in Louise!

CAROL *puts her coat on.*

LOUISE *comes in, she looks upset.*

LOUISE *(to both)* Hello.

BRENDA *(uninterested)* Hiyah.

CAROL *(to LOUISE)* What's up with you?

LOUISE Me shoulder pad's slipped.

CAROL Pissing hell Louise, there's always summat wi' you.

They set off.

BRENDA Are you giving me some?

CAROL I can let you have a pound.

BRENDA Oh generous. Generous. Generosity. Generosity. Generous.

CAROL *throws change all over the floor, then walks out with LOUISE.*

BRENDA *scurries and scrambles on the floor for money. She stops on all fours, looks to the audience.*

BRENDA Fucking long life innit.

The lights come up on the road.

SCULLERY *enters, with a bottle.*

SCULLERY All right? (*He nods to someone in the audience, offers a drink to another*) Do you want one, luv? (*He drinks*) This is my domain. I'm in and out everywhere here, all about. There's everything you needs, two pubs at the top, chippy round the side, places to hide. This road and me. (*He pours some rum on the Road*) Have one. What a fuckin' place though!

CAROL *and LOUISE pass.*

CAROL The Millstone. The Swan. The Blue Boar. The New Zealand Chief. Ikey's. Wheatsheaf. Gypsy's Tent.

LOUISE White Horse. Market. Ancient Shepherd. Smokey's. The Millstone.

SCULLERY My darlings.

They run off squealing and laughing.

CAROL (*offstage*) Fuck off', Scullery!

SCULLERY Come and taste me!

CAROL (*shouting offstage*) No way, your fly's full of fleas!

SCULLERY Please yourself, chickens. You can't escape! (*He blows a kiss after them, winks then drinks*) Let me help you get your bearings. There's the town, there's this Road, then there's the slag heap. This is the last stop. All of life is chucked here. You've seen nowt yet. There's auld Molly at number seven, there's the Professor in the end house there, there's Skin-Lad at number fourteen, he's a fucking nutter. There's all-sorts. Nature is above us, there's moon, there's

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