Acting Edition

THIS IS MY FAMILY

Book and music by Tim Firth

Arrangements and Orchestrations
by Caroline Humphris

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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This Is My Family premiered at Sheffield Studio Theatre on 19 June 2013. The cast was as follows:

NICKY. . . . . Evelyn Hoskins
STEVE. . . . . Bill Champion
YVONNE. . . . . Clare Burt
MATT . . . . . Terence Keeley
MAY . . . . . Siân Phillips / Marjorie Yates
SIAN . . . . . Rachel Lumberg

This Is My Family was subsequently presented at Chichester Festival Theatre in 2019. The production was directed by Daniel Evans, with music direction by Caroline Humphris, design by Richard Kent, lighting design by David Plater, and sound design by Nick Greenhill and Paul Arditti. The cast was as follows:

NICKY. . . . . Kirsty MacLaren
STEVE. . . . . James Nesbitt
YVONNE. . . . . Clare Burt
MATT . . . . . Scott Folan
MAY . . . . . Sheila Hancock
SIAN . . . . . Rachel Lumberg

This Is My Family was subsequently produced by Anthology Theatre at Southwark Playhouse in May 2025. The production was directed by Vicky Featherstone, with music supervision by Caroline Humphris, design by Chloe Lamford, lighting design by Lee Curran, sound design by Dominic Bilkey, costume design and associate set design by Ethan Cheek and Casting by Amy Ball CDG. The cast was as follows:

NICKY. . . . . Nancy Allsop
STEVE. . . . . Michael Jibson
YVONNE. . . . . Gemma Whelan
MATT . . . . . Luke Lambert
MAY . . . . . Gay Soper
SIAN . . . . . Victoria Elliott

CHARACTERS

NICKY – 13, a spirited, porous and consequently astute daughter.

STEVE – 40, a dad of infinite ideas and little practical skill but huge optimism.

YVONNE – 39, what a woman ends up like if she's grown up with Steve and has survived due to a wry sense of humour.

MATT – 17, a son yet to become happy in his own skin, and currently defining himself via clothing and eyeliner.

MAY – a gran slightly losing sight of how she too was once a woman of immense humour and driven angry by it.

SIAN – 42, Yvonne's chaotic, irrepressible, voluble older sister.

SETTING

Act One: any house in any town.

Act Two: any forest in any county.

TIME

The present.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

All text in normal type is spoken
All text in regular CAPITALS is sung
Italicised capitals indicate spoken emphasis
If a speech is interrupted the point of interruption is marked with a / . e.g. **SIAN**. Talking of *WHICH*, / girls –

YVONNE. *SIAN*!

If two speeches are printed side by side they are meant to be spoken or sung concurrently e.g.

YVONNE.

I'm not – why are you talking to me like that? I'm not the one stood here texting –

STEVE.

They shut early on New Year's Eve.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

01. *This Is My Family* . . . . . Steve, May, Nicky & Yvonne
02. *Smile* . . . . . Yvonne, Steve, Nicky & Sian
02a. *Transitions* . . . . . Instrumental
03. *Falling In Love At Sixteen* . . . . . Yvonne, Steve & Nicky
04. *What Can I Say?* . . . . . Yvonne
05. *OK, God* . . . . . Yvonne
06. *Disneyland* . . . . . Nicky
07. Sex . . . . . Sian, Yvonne & Nicky
08. *There's A Small Light Burning* . . . . . Nicky & May
09. *Vancouver* . . . . . Nicky
10. *Rockery* . . . . . Yvonne
11. *Teenage Boys* . . . . . Steve
12. *France* . . . . . Matt & Nicky
13. *There's A Small Light Burning (Reprise)* . . . . . May
14. *Same Thing Twice* . . . . . Yvonne, May & Nicky
15. *Abu Dhabi* . . . . . Steve & Matt
16. *Things Men Don't Say* . . . . . Nicky
16a. *List of Instructions* . . . . . Yvonne
17. *Unfamiliar Angle* . . . . . May
18. *Zante* . . . . . Sian, Yvonne & Nicky
19. *Act One Finale* . . . . . Nicky, Yvonne, Steve, Matt & Sian

ACT TWO

20. *This Is My Holiday* . . . . . Nicky, Yvonne & Steve
21. *There's A Face / List of Instructions* . . . . . May & Yvonne
21a. *David/Rachel* . . . . . Steve, Nicky & Matt
22. *OK, God/Rachel/Family* . . . . . Yvonne, Matt & Nicky
22a. *Teenage Dads* . . . . . Matt & Steve
22b. *Sandpit* . . . . . May
22c. *List of Instructions for Being a Mum* . . . . . Yvonne
23. *Punctual* . . . . . May
24. *Orienteering / Tonight* . . . . . Matt, May & Sian
25. *The Very First Time* . . . . . Yvonne, Steve & Nicky
26. *Royal Assortment* . . . . . Steve & Yvonne

27. *Tell The Truth Now (Do I Know You?)* . . . . . Yvonne, Steve, Matt & Nicky
28. *It Wasn't The Fault of the Star / Carve Us In This Tre*e . . . . . Yvonne & May
29. *Last Man Standing* . . . . . Steve, Yvonne & Nicky
30. *Lanterns / Madagascar* . . . . . Nicky
31. *Garden Shed* . . . . . Nicky, Steve, Sian, Yvonne & Matt

ACT ONE

Scene One

(A spirited girl of thirteen appears in a pool of light which it feels like she has personally generated. This is **NICKY**. *She thinks for a moment:)*

NICKY. OK. So this is my family.

[MUSIC NO. 01 – THIS IS MY FAMILY]

Firstly there's mum and dad, who've been together just – god forever, and I mean we are talking sixteen.

(Whatever vignette **NICKY** *describes, appears. Firstly* **STEVE**, *a man of forty, acting sixteen.)*

On holiday. With him outside the toilet block giving it the whole –

STEVE. *(Off-hand.)* Hey.

NICKY. Y'know? With the arms specially folded to make it look like he's got biceps?

(Now a woman in her late forties, **YVONNE**, *also acting sixteen, leaning casually with a water canister.)*

And she was like –

YVONNE. *(Off-hand.)* Alright.

NICKY. Like "Sorry, but I've got loads else to do. I've got to go and carry on not-talking to my parents for bringing me here".

STEVE. So er...

NICKY. After which came the most immortal chat-up line in history.

STEVE. Has your tent not got a chemical toilet?

NICKY. Honest to god.

*(***YVONNE** *snorts a laugh, hand over mouth immediately.)*

But it made her laugh! They started meeting at this place called 'Black Rock Lake' to sit and talk and throw fir cones at the moorhens. By the Friday, her parents forced her to visit a castle, and he wrote a poem about how much he missed her!

STEVE.

I WILL BE YOUR LAST MAN STANDING.
I AM THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

*(***YVONNE** *laughs.)*

NICKY. Which made her laugh as well. Which caused a bit of an 'mm-mm' 'cause it wasn't supposed to.

YVONNE. *(Stops herself.)* Sorry.

NICKY. Then on the last night they buried it under a lightning tree, all...

(Does 'lightning'.)

...'kk-kpow' – dramatic, like a love letter.

STEVE.

UNDERNEATH THIS LIGHTNING TREE
OUR LOVE FOUND EARTH TONIGHT.

(Kneeling over the burial spot, they look at each other...and kiss. It's genuine and genuinely beautiful.)

NICKY. And you know how you only write that kind of crap when you're sixteen and it never lasts?

STEVE. I do.

YVONNE. I do.

NICKY. It did! They got married and had my brother!

(A bright, clean-cut lad of sixteen, **MATT**, *cries like a baby.)*

MATT. *(As a baby.)* Wah wah!

YVONNE. Quickly! Sing it, sing it!

STEVE. *(As a lullaby.)*
THERE'S A SMALL LIGHT BURNING ON A DISTANT HILL.

(He instantly falls asleep.)

MATT. Zzzzzzz.

YVONNE. He's an angel!

NICKY. And you know how ALL parents say that and then their kids turn completely satanic?

MATT. *(Stands, aggressively.)* Yeah?

NICKY. He was my white knight!

MATT. You pick a fight with my little sister, you come through me.

NICKY. Even when it was Mandy Pickles! Even the caretaker was scared of Mandy Pickles.

(A charismatic older woman in a pew. The dream Gran. It's **MAY**.*)*

MAY.

THERE'S A SMALL LIGHT BURNING ON A DISTANT HILL

NICKY. And that lullaby?

MAY.

AND IT GUIDES A PATH ACROSS THE MOOR.

NICKY. That came from my Gran. Now she *DOES* go to church but *DON'T HANG UP*. Not in a 'bad' way.

MAY.

THAT BECOMES A LANTERN THROUGH
THE TALLEST TREES

NICKY. For years the vicar thought she had a hearing aid but she was actually listening to the cricket.

MAY.

AND A BEACON OVER STORMY SEAS.

NICKY. In fact once when someone was caught *LBW*, she went –

MAY.

AND WILL... ALWAYS BE –

OH, GOOD LAD.

NICKY. Then had to pretend she was just like *REALLY* agreeing with the sermon.

(There's a voice, harsher, more annoyed.)

YVONNE. *(Offstage.) (Shouts.)* Nicky?

*(***NICKY** *prods her phone at high speed!)*

NICKY. *AND FINALLY* there's *ME*! And I've gone over the word limit!

YVONNE. *(Offstage.)* Nicky!

NICKY. *(Reads.)* "Entries must be 300 words or less."

YVONNE. *(Offstage.)* Steve, *SHE'S HERE*!

NICKY. OK so I'm thirteen…

YVONNE. I knew it. *I KNEW* what she'd be doing.

NICKY. My name's Nicky –

*(***YVONNE***, grown up and sadly now acting it.)*

YVONNE. Could you stop texting *ONE SECOND*?

NICKY. I'm entering a competition!

*(***STEVE** *appears. The same.)*

STEVE. Are we doing this or not?

NICKY. THIS IS –

YVONNE. I'm not – why are you talking to me like that? I'm not the one stood here texting –

STEVE. They shut early on New Year's Eve.

(They instantly veer sideways in the tram-lines of an argument.)

YVONNE. *I KNOW WHAT TIME THEY SHUT NEW YEARS EVE, STEVE! IT ISN'T MY FIRST.*

NICKY. This is m –

STEVE.	**YVONNE.**
THEY WILL SHUT IN TEN MINUTES.	*I'M GETTING IN THE C – NICKY!*
	GET IN THE BLOODY CAR.
BLOODY HELL.	*GOD HELP US! NICKY! JUST PUT YOUR PHONE DOWN AND GET IN THE CAR AND SHUT THE DOOR!*

*(***NICKY** *presses send. Pockets the phone and they get in the car.)*

NICKY.
THIS IS MY FAMILY.

YVONNE. *(Tight-lipped.)* It's one-way.

NICKY.
THIS IS US IN THE CAR

YVONNE. It's a one-way system.

NICKY.
MUM'LL SAY

YVONNE. It's one-way.

NICKY.
DAD'LL SAY

STEVE. No it's not. Car park arrows are painted by small-minded health and safety bureaucrats / who –

EVERYONE. *(Recoiling from a near miss.) LOOK OUT!*

(Slight frosty pause.)

NICKY.
THIS IS MY FAMILY

STEVE. *ALRIGHT MATE, YOU CAN SEE I'M REVERSING.*

NICKY.
THIS IS US IN A SHOP

YVONNE. Just want a scented candle.

NICKY.
MUM'LL SAY –

YVONNE. Ask an assistant.

NICKY.
DAD'LL SAY –

STEVE. Yvonne, Yvonne, Yvonne.
TOP SHELF, AISLE NINE.

YVONNE. Why d'you do this?

STEVE.
TOP SHELF, AISLE NINE.

YVONNE. There's no glory in 'knowing a supermarket'.

STEVE.
BIN BAGS... ROCK SALT... AIR FRESH'NER...
THE CANDLES'LL BE RIGHT HERE, DARLING

(Pauses, frowns.)

NORMALLY THEY'RE RIGHT HERE –

STEVE.
– DAR...

YVONNE.
OH FOR GOD'S SAKE

TANNOY VOICE. *THE STORE IS NOW CLOSING!*

YVONNE. Steve, *YOU IDIOT!*

STEVE. Why've they moved to the aisle end?

YVONNE. Just get one!

STEVE. 'Kalahari' or 'Hot Citrus'?

YVONNE. *IT DOESN'T MATTER.*

RUN!

STEVE. Throw it!

'Five quid?' Do we / really –?

YVONNE. *JUST BUY THE BLOODY – !*

DID YOU GET IT?

STEVE. *YES! SLEEP EASY, EUROPE!*
WE HAVE A CANDLE FOR THE DOWNSTAIRS TOILET.

YVONNE. *(Taking it off him.)* ...ffrgodssake.

(Back in the house, **YVONNE** *gives the candle to* **NICKY** *to put on a shelf.)*

NICKY.
THIS IS A SHELF DAD MADE

YVONNE. OK we have *THIRTY MINUTES* to get ready

NICKY.
THIS IS THE WAY THINGS SLIDE

YVONNE. Catch it! Catch it! *CATCH IT!*

NICKY.
DOWN EV'RY SHELF DAD MAKES

YVONNE.
(Spoken in rhythm) FOR FUTURE REF'RENCE, NICKY,
'FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS' MEANS 'DON'T BOTHER'

STEVE. Nick just get my toolkit.

YVONNE.
'ARROWS ARE FOR PETTY MINDED
HEALTH AND SAFETY BUREAUCRATS'

STEVE.
(Goes himself, sv.) Oh for god's sake...

(Lights gradually come on around the whole house!)

NICKY.
THIS IS THE HOUSE YOU BUILD
IF YOU BUILD SHELVES LIKE THAT
TWENTY TWO. TWENTY TWO. END OF LATHAM AVENUE.
BABYLON. FIELD OF DREAMS. GLADIATORIAL ARENA.
CENTRAL SHADED AREA OF ALL THE CIRCLES
OF THE LIVES OF ALL THE MEMBERS ...

(Reassesses the term.)

'Combatants.' 'Contestants.'

IN OUR FAMILY.

[MUSIC NO.02 – SMILE]

YVONNE. It's fine. We can't make the New Year party we were invited to because we can't leave gran. I haven't got my son because he's out with his girlfriend. And it's so last minute *OUR* party's only got one guest.

*(***YVONNE** *looks round her life:)*

NICKY. It's usually when Mum's depressed herself, she tells ev'ryone else to –

NICKY.
Smile.

YVONNE.
SMILE. SMILE.

YVONNE. God's sake
WHY DOESN'T EV'RYBODY

(Effects: Ding Dong!)

DOOR!
SMILE?

NICK!
DON'T YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE –

Deck lights on

– KIDS STARVING IN U-GAN –

Pour the peanuts out

– DA.

NICKY. *(High excitement.)* She's brought him! Sian's new boyfriend! He's gone straight in the garden!

YVONNE. "In th – ?" What's he –? Steve, go and talk to him. Ask him what he drinks.

STEVE. Nick, for future reference…

YVONNE. *GO*, Steve!

STEVE.
'BOYFRIEND' WHEN YOU'RE FORTY TWO MEANS 'PARTNER'.

NICKY. Well he *IS* younger, to be fair.

STEVE. For future reference,
'YOUNGER' WHEN YOU'RE FORTY TWO MEANS
NOTHING YOU WOULD COUNT AS 'YOUNG'.

NICKY.
(Spoken in rhythm) SHE SAYS SHE'S 'FOUND HERSELF'
SINCE UNCLE PAUL.

STEVE.
THAT MEANS SHE HASN'T.

NICKY.
(Spoken in rhythm) SHE SAYS SHE'S NOW A BRAND NEW
SPIRITUAL IDENTITY.

STEVE.
THAT MEANS SHE HASN'T.

*(***STEVE** *exits.)*

NICKY. I think for Dad, Mum's sister is a little bit –

(By way of her own illustration, in bursts **SIAN***, full of life and larger than it.)*

SIAN. *HAPPY NEW YEAR* to my absolute favourite-est –

(Grabs and hugs **NICKY***.)*

Mm-*AH*! OK Nick, spill the beans. What's y'r boyfriend like?

NICKY. *(Being squeezed.)* Sian, when I get one, you'll be the first to know.

SIAN. Did you see him? Didn't *I SAY!?* Didn't I? Go an' look and imagine that, last night, climbing into my hot tub.

YVONNE. Nick, take these nuts out?

SIAN. Talking of *WHICH*, / girls –

YVONNE. Sian.

SIAN. *(Hands-up.)* Sorry.

YVONNE. *(To* **NICKY**.*)* Go.

(To **SIAN**.*)*

She's thirteen. I want to keep her that way.

*(***STEVE** *is leaning dully, looking out.)*

NICKY. *(Calls round.)* Dad? These peanuts are for you and Dave –

(Frowns.)

Why's he standing on the shed?

STEVE. Because, Nicky when you're into free-running, apparently 'every garden is a challenge'.

NICKY. Oh right.

STEVE. Dave also goes abseiling in Canada and last year did a wing-suit dive off the face of Mount Cooke.

NICKY. Right.

(Nods.)

Did you tell him you've got top score on that arcade game where monkeys drive speedboats?

(He looks at her. She does one over her slightly over-cranked smiles. A house phone rings.)

*(***SIAN** *is in full flow.* **STEVE** *heads off.)*

SIAN.

HONEST TO GOD, YVONNE.

YVONNE. Drink?

SIAN.

IT COULD
(Spoken in rhythm) – YES PLEASE
– IT COULD NOT HAVE

YVONNE. *PHONE, NICK.*

*(***NICKY** *goes to get the phone.)*

SIAN.

– WORKED OUT BETTER. THERE'S A TIME

YVONNE. Say when?

SIAN. YOU REACH – bit more – A CROSS – *WHOA* thanks – ROADS.
I MEAN IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED BETTER,
THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY BETTER WAYS
TO HAVE YOUR HUSBAND FIND OUT
THAT HIS MARRIAGE ISN'T WORKING
THAN TO BUY AN AERIAL PHOTO FOR YOUR
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY AND FIND IT'S GOT YOUR
GYM INSTRUCTOR'S

SIAN.

AUDI IN THE DRIVE.

YVONNE.

Audi in the drive. You told me –

BUT VONNY –

*(***NICKY** *returns with the phone to hear:)*

SIAN.

DAVE. DAVE. EV'RY WOMAN NEEDS A DAVE!

YVONNE. Are you still in touch with Paul?

SIAN.

YOU DON'T APPRECIATE HOW MUCH YOU NEED ONE
TILL YOU GET ONE.

YVONNE. Great. / Well –

SIAN.

IT'S JUST THAT ... UH. GOD.
(Spoken in rhythm) HOW CAN I EXPLAIN –? OK –
LIFE WITH PAUL WAS – KIND OF – ALL WAS

('Teen-sy size'.)

LOWER CASE, WHEREAS WITH DAVE MY LIFE ... IS

('Billboard-size'.)

LIFE!

YVONNE.

(Copies, mockingly.)
'Life'!

SIAN.

('Gestures lights coming on'.) K-poosh! Little lights!

NICKY.

THIS IS A CALL FROM GRAN.

YVONNE. What? Seriously?

NICKY.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS –

YVONNE. *(Gesticulates 'not me' wildly.)* Give it your dad.

NICKY. *(Going with phone.)*
EV'RY TIME.

YVONNE. Give us *ONE* day this holiday without her.

SIAN. Steve's mum still –?

YVONNE. Don't. She's getting worse.

SIAN. Isn't this something her church can help out with?

YVONNE. I've asked. They don't do exorcisms.

*(**SIAN** falls about laughing, which always makes **YVONNE** smile, as **NICKY** exits.)*

NICKY. *DAD? IT'S GRAN.*

YVONNE.
SHE ALWAYS TOOK CONTROL.
AND I SUPPOSE, FAIR PLAY, SHE WAS A NURSE.

SIAN. Indeed she was.

YVONNE.
THEY 'TAKE CONTROL'.

SIAN. Indeed they do.

YVONNE.
SO I'D JUST 'PUT UP' EACH TIME SHE BROUGHT ROUND BLEACH
OR THE BIBLE SONGS I ASKED "PLEASE DON'T TEACH THE KIDS".
SHE DID. BUT HEY.
NOW SHE'S GETTING OLDER *GOD* SHE'S GETTING WORSE. SHE JUST –

SIAN. *('Stress not, eh?'!)* OK. OK...

*(***STEVE** *enters.)*

STEVE. *(Into phone.)* OK. I'll be five minutes. *NICK!* Catch.

YVONNE. What?

STEVE. She 'wants a candle'.

YVONNE. What?

STEVE. Hi Sian.

YVONNE. She doesn't want a candle, Steve. She just wants you to go round!

SIAN. Right, Dave and me 'll leave.

YVONNE. No!

STEVE. Really? Oh well I can take the one out of the downstairs toilet.

YVONNE. Don't touch that candle.

SIAN. *(Calls.)* Da-ve?

YVONNE. It's New Year's Eve! Steve! You should be with your family!

STEVE. And my mother is –?

NICKY.
THIS IS MY FAMILY

YVONNE.
Steve, THIS is your family.

SIAN. It's fine, we'll head off…

STEVE. OK, see y'.

YVONNE. *STAY!*

NICKY.
THIS IS MY FAMILY.

STEVE. *(To* **YVONNE** *re* **SIAN**.*)* She might have another party t –

(To **SIAN**.*)*

See you later.

NICKY.
TWENTY TWO. TWENTY TWO. END OF LATHAM AVENUE.
BABYLON. FIELD OF DREAMS. GLADIATORIAL ARENA.
CENTRAL SHADED AREA OF ALL THE CIRCLES
OF THE LIVES OF ALL THE MEMBERS...

YVONNE. NO they're staying!

SIAN. Dave we're going!

YVONNE. Sian, you're staying.

STEVE. Can I take the –?

YVONNE. Leave the candle.

STEVE. Bathroom candle?

YVONNE. I said *LEAVE IT*

SIAN. Dave come in!

YVONNE. No!

STEVE. If they're going does it matter –?

YVONNE. Yes to *ME* it *ABSOLUTELY MATTERS*

SIAN. *(Calls.) DAVE?*

NICKY. *HEY IT'S* Matt!

(Everyone turns.)

YVONNE. *EVERYONE STAY EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE! THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR WE'VE ACTUALLY BEEN TOGETHER AS A FAMILY!*

EVERYONE.
(Spoken in rhythm) MATT!

(The door opens to reveal **MATT** *who is a complete goth nightmare.)*

MATT. *(Dully.)* I came to tell you I just married Rachel in a Druidic handfasting so I've got a new family.

(They all stare at him.)

Scene Two

[MUSIC NO. 02A – TRANSITIONS]

(This is life as it appears or rather as it appears in the perspective of a girl for whom it has been her entire world, horizon, and gladiatorial arena. A swirl of different but familiar rooms and different but similar days.)

(There is the usual dawn chorus of calls from around the house. A family calling each other as if lost in a wilderness. First the individual calls:)

STEVE. Yvonne? Post!

YVONNE. School shirts on the dryer

MATT. *Yawwwwnnnn.*

(Then the melee:)

STEVE.
Yvonne? Post! Yvonne Post
Yvonne? Post.

YVONNE.
School shirts on the dryer.
School shirts on the dryer.
School shirts on the dryer.

NICKY. Vocabulary test. Are we doing? Vocabulary test. Are we doing?

(Calls.)

Can we do this vocab test now?

*(***STEVE** *is pulling a bike helmet on.)*

STEVE. Yes yes yes go go go! We have

(Doorbell.)

– have to do it – Yvonne! – do it quick 'cause I'm still not – *POSTMAN!* – not quite getting this cycle to work under forty minutes.

YVONNE. *(Passing through with.)* Headband.

NICKY. No.

YVONNE. Yes.

NICKY. No-one wears headbands except Year 7's before they get beaten up or the

(Slightly insulting mimicry.)

– 'girls who join choir'.

STEVE. OK vocab test! Let's do it!

NICKY. *(Wearily reads from book.)* "Good morning".

STEVE. *(Pause, winces to remember.)* "Sabah al kayir".

NICKY. "Thank you".

STEVE. "Shokra". OK and number three.

(Proudly – he knows this one.)

...the most important phrase when meeting someone who speaks Arabic. "Ana laa atakellem al arabi".

NICKY. *(Searches pages.)* What's that?

STEVE. It's Arabic for "I don't speak Arabic".

MATT. *("What's for breakfast cos I'm going vegan did I say.")* "Wussssfrrbuffstcsmmgnvgnddisy"

(There is a small pause from **STEVE** *and* **NICKY** *to see if this develops into anything comprehensible. It doesn't. They resume:)*

NICKY. So why're you bothering learning it?

STEVE. I told you. We've been bought by a company in Abu Dhabi.

(Doing up his tie.)

Learning someone's way of communicating is a huge gesture of acceptance and tolerance.

MATT. *("I need money for the bus.")* "Mrrghghhmrrmfrmm bssgnnbelate"

*(***STEVE** *is immediately intolerant.)*

STEVE. *(To* **NICKY**.*)* What did he say?

NICKY. *(Auto pilot.)* He says he needs money for the bus, he's gonna be late.

*(***YVONNE** *thunders in with a letter and a small box-shaped parcel.)*

YVONNE. Nicky what the hell is this?

NICKY. *WHOA!* Is that for me?

YVONNE. Not *THIS*.

(Withholds box, reads letter.)

"Parent / guardian of Nicky Perry, 9JW".

(As **NICKY** *gets up to escape:)*

"I am –" *STAY!* "- increasing complaints from teachers about non-production of work. I know it is a troubling time for Nicky with the disappearance of her relative in New Zealand–"

(They all look at her. She shrinks slightly.)

MATT. Have *MY* course work. I'm not gonna need it.

YVONNE. "Your relative in / New Zealand?"

STEVE. *(Diverts to* **MATT**.*)* We've been through this. You might need it at college.

MATT. We've been through this. I'm not going.

STEVE. *('Don't start.')* Matt.

YVONNE. *('Don't leave'.)* Nicky…

MATT. I told y'. Me and Rachel have / decided.

STEVE. *(Instantly he hears the name.) OH* for god's –

YVONNE. *(Mumbulance ploughs in.)* Steve! Don't. Matt! What?

('Stay'.)

Nick!

STEVE. *(Sv – 'go'.)* It's OK, it's OK. I am perfectly

('Capable'.)

…mrm-a-mrr.

YVONNE. *('Alright, go on'.)* Mrm-mrr. Mrr mrn.

STEVE. *('Are you going to let me do it or are you not'.)* Mrrm mmrrm mmrrrmmmrm

YVONNE. *('I'm letting you do it. Just be tactful'.)* Mrr mmmrm. Mrr mrr.

*(***STEVE** *approaches* **MATT** *like a counsellor.)*

STEVE. 'Rachel' should have no bearing on any decisions you make 'cause let's face it, in two months she'll be off with someone else.

*(***MATT** *gets up instantly.)*

YVONNE. Brilliant. *ABSOLUTELY* –

(To **MATT***: 'stay'.)*

Matt!

STEVE. It's the truth!

YVONNE. This is his partner / you're talk –

STEVE. 'Partner'?

YVONNE. – talking about so / just –

STEVE. 'Girlfriend' when you're sixteen / does not –

MATT. Seventeen.

[MUSIC NO. 03 – FALLING IN LOVE AT SIXTEEN]

STEVE. *('Whatever'.)* Metaphorically.

YVONNE. What y'r dad's trying to say is that/ falling in –

STEVE. Wrapping strips of wet leather round your wrist in a damp forest is not a 'marriage'.

YVONNE. What your dad / is –

STEVE. Reciting tosh off the internet about ley lines is not legally binding.

YVONNE. He means / that –

STEVE. Standing with a candle in a goat skull summoning spirits of the West SADLY in an English court of law / will –

YVONNE.

FALLING IN LOVE AT SIXTEEN IS JUST GREAT,
IT'S JUST WONDERFUL

*(**STEVE**'s face – and maybe a small indistinct noise – says: 'what the hell are you doing?')*

*(Gestures **STEVE** leave.)*

FALLING IN – GO – AT SIXTEEN
IS JUST JUST JUST WONDERFUL

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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