

IS THAT YOU CHARLIE?

A Gay Comedy/Drama

By Tweed Harris

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

This play was written as a three act play but can be presented a Two Act play.

Theatre Groups are free to choose.

Two Act version has five scenes in each Act.

Three Act version has another interval between Scenes 4 and 5 Act Two.

IS THAT YOU CHARLIE?

A Boy Meets Boy Comedy/Drama

Cast in order of appearance:

Charlie Noakes	21 year old straight acting gay man
Kevin Kentner	25 year old straight acting gay man
Peter Kentner	Kevin's Foster Father - early 50's
Cheryl Kentner	Kevin's Foster Mother - early 50's
Snap	Very effeminate photographer - mid 20's
Coke (Coco)	A fairly butch lesbian mid 20's
Things	Coke's partner mid 20's
Mrs Noakes	Charlie's Mother - late 40's
Mr Noakes	Charlie's Father - 50-60
Steven	An attractive guy - mid 20's

(Small part at end of play but maybe be used as a walk by in the opening scene.)

SCENES

ACT ONE

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Scene 1 | A park bench - late Saturday Evening |
| Scene 2 | Kevin's flat - a few years earlier |
| Scene 3 | The park bench - later on Saturday evening |
| Scene 4 | Kevin's flat - Saturday 3 months later |
| Scene 5 | Kevin's flat - The next morning |

INTERVAL

ACT TWO

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Scene 1 | Kevin's flat - Saturday afternoon - 6 days later |
| Scene 2 | Kevin's flat - a week later |
| Scene 3 | Kevin's flat - Two days later |
| Scene 4 | Kevin's flat - 6 years later |
| Scene 5 | The park bench - later that evening |

Note: The park bench scenes play nicely in front of curtain or on a side stage if available.

IS THAT YOU CHARLIE?

ACT ONE SCENE ONE - Saturday around 10p.m.

(As the audience enters they should see a park bench set DSR in front of the main curtain. MUSIC "Hello" by Ah Do should be played throughout the last two minutes before spotlight on bench fades, houselights out, spotlight rises again to reveal CHARLIE sitting on bench with a bottle in a brown paper bag, which he swigs from now and then.)

(If desired by the director, STEVEN can walk across the stage, looking at CHARLIE and smiling. CHARLIE glances up but does not smile back. STEVEN shrugs shoulders and exits.)

(Shortly after the apron lights are brought up and KEVIN strolls in from SL, stops to look at CHARLIE for a moment and then approaches the bench.)

KEVIN I could take out my gun and shoot you.

CHARLIE (Looking up) Sorry?

KEVIN I said, I could take out my gun and shoot you. It would be quicker and less painful than that (He indicates bottle)

CHARLIE (Smiling) It's not as bad as it looks, it's only Coke. (He slips top of bottle out of bag to prove it.)

KEVIN That's even worse. Have you seen what that stuff does to a penny?

CHARLIE I haven't even seen a penny.

KEVIN Me neither come to think of it. Anyway that stuff eats right through metal so they say. So do I need to get my gun?

(CHARLIE looks quizzically at KEVIN who mimes taking out his gun and shooting CHARLIE in the head.)

CHARLIE (Smiling) Oh no, it's not as bad as that.

KEVIN Good. I've run out of bullets anyway. (Pause) May I? (He indicates park bench.)

CHARLIE Oh, sure. Sorry. (He moves up to make room for KEVIN.)

KEVIN (Sits) Thank you. (Pause) So what's a nice guy...

CHARLIE Like me doing in a place like this?

KEVIN No. I was gonna ask what's a nice guy do around here on a Saturday night?

CHARLIE Well, there are pubs I suppose, clubs, discos. I don't really know. I'm not really a night person.

KEVIN Yet here you are at (looks at watch) ten twenty-seven sitting in a park, drinking alone.

CHARLIE Coke (Holds up bottle and smiles.)

KEVIN Yes, Coke. Would you like to go somewhere for a drink, maybe something stronger?

CHARLIE Thanks, but I just wanted to sit here and think things over for a while. Nice and quiet like.

KEVIN (Rises) Oh, sorry. Then maybe I should go.

CHARLIE Oh no. I'm sorry that must've sounded very rude. No, you are welcome to stay and chat if you want.

KEVIN (Sits) I think I will. Thanks. What shall we chat about?

CHARLIE I don't know. I am not usually very good at making conversation.

KEVIN Well, you've made a good start. Tell me, what do you do for a living? If you don't mind my asking?

CHARLIE I have only just recently started my first job. I'm a computer support officer.

KEVIN Wow! Sounds very technical and very important.

CHARLIE Not really. It just means when people have problems with their computers or programmes, they call me to sort it out.

KEVIN Now you really do sound important. I'm impressed.

CHARLIE (Laughs, feeling slightly embarrassed.) I'm still learning but I do know computers. I spend too much time with them, I know. That's why I am probably not very good at making conversation.

KEVIN You're doing just fine.

CHARLIE You know I don't know you but I feel quite comfortable talking to you.

KEVIN Well, that's my job, listening to people. I'm a Social Worker.

CHARLIE Now it's my turn to be impressed.

KEVIN I like my job. I mainly deal with teenagers who just don't seem to be able to cope with High School. I had a bit of a rough time myself at school so I understand them pretty well.

CHARLIE I wish I'd had someone like you when I was going through High School, someone to talk to.

KEVIN You can talk to me now.

CHARLIE Yes, I can can't I? I can see you would be good at your job. I wish I could talk to my parents like this. About my problems.

KEVIN Girl trouble?

CHARLIE I wish. No, that I could deal with.

KEVIN So, problems at home?

CHARLIE Kinda. I left home three months ago. Never said a word, just packed and left. I did leave a note saying I had to go and not to worry. I would stay in touch. Humph! Stay in touch! Every week I send the same postcard with he same message. "Dear Mum and Dad, I'm fine. Please don't worry. Love Charlie".

KEVIN Kevin.

CHARLIE I beg your pardon.

KEVIN I'm Kevin. (He offers his hand.)

CHARLIE Oh, Hi. I'm sorry. I'm...

KEVIN Charlie, yes I got that. (CHARLIE smiles as they shake hands.)
You've done it again. (CHARLIE looks puzzled.) Smiled. You smiled again. It's good smile.

CHARLIE Thanks.

KEVIN You know kids moving out on their own can sometimes bring parents and their kids closer together. That sounds funny but I guess you know what I mean.

CHARLIE (With another of his bright smiles) Yeah.

KEVIN I got my own flat sometime ago now. Mind you, I had no probs with my family. I just wanted to start off on my own. My parents were great, even helped me get started. Probably glad to get rid of me.

CHARLIE I think mine will be glad to see the back of me if ever I get to see them again and talk.

KEVIN Look, I don't wanna pry but if you wanna talk about what's bothering you, I'm happy to listen.

CHARLIE (Looks at KEVIN as if deciding) I have tried so many times to phone my parents and talk to them. I ring and as soon as they answer, usually my father, I say nothing. He says, "Is that you Charlie?" And then I hang up.

KEVIN Tough.

CHARLIE Yes, cos I never know what I am going to say, or at least, how I am going to say it.

KEVIN No, I mean tough on them. Your "Don't worry" notes won't stop them you know - worrying I mean. Why not write to them and say whatever it is you want to tell them. In any case I am sure it can't be that bad.

CHARLIE Oh, you don't know. It's so bad that I just know I have to face them when I tell them. But how the hell am I ever going to do that when I can't even get up enough courage to say, "Can I please come home and talk?"

(CHARLIE is beginning to show signs of getting quite upset.)

KEVIN I don't know about you but I could do with a bite to eat. How about it?

CHARLIE No thanks.

KEVIN Come on, Everything looks better on a full stomach - except a ring through your navel. (CHARLIE finally laughs out loud and covers his navel.) You haven't have you?

CHARLIE No. (Sincerely) Thanks for cheering me up. (Pause) I could do with something to eat. Nothing too fancy though.

KEVIN McDonalds?

CHARLIE My favourite. (They exit DSL)

(The lights dim leaving the bench in the spotlight, rises and after a few minutes fades as we hear KEVIN and CHARLIE laughing offstage.)

(CHARLIE and KEVIN enter laughing and carrying McDonalds Shakes. They sit at the bench.)

CHARLIE Why is it that the dirtiest jokes are always the funniest?

KEVIN Not true. But different people have different senses of humour. It is true, however, that the more people talk about sex in their jokes, the less likely they seem to have in real life.

CHARLIE I bet that's not true either. Maybe some people tell sexy stories cos they haven't started sexy lives yet.

KEVIN Really? You mean..you...haven't....

CHARLIE (embarrassed) No, not yet, not really,

KEVIN Wow! A real live virgin. Sorry, I wasn't making fun. I actually think it's kinda wonderful. Although I do have to say, with such a good looking guy, I am surprised no one has....you know?

CHARLIE Well, to be honest, I've played around but never really....you know? I've always been too scared.

KEVIN Believe me it is nothing to be afraid of, nothing will jump out and bite you.

CHARLIE I know that).(smiling). I'm just scared of so many things I guess.

KEVIN Such as?

CHARLIE Well, I'm a little scared of the way I feel. I don't know why but I am. I'm just not sure I understand...understand myself I mean. I'm scared of going with ...people too.

KEVIN Why is that?

CHARLIE Not sure that I really know what to do, scared of getting sick.

KEVIN Listen, Charlie, We all started out like that. As for knowing what to do, well, at first it's all kind of experimental until you discover what each of you likes, feels comfortable with. A sensitive person will tune in to your, shall we say, lack of experience.

CHARLIE What if they are not sensitive?

KEVIN It's always a risk you take but somehow I don't see you being attracted to someone who is not sensitive, gentle, caring.

CHARLIE Can you tell all that on a first meeting?

KEVIN Maybe not always. I'm pretty sure from this first meeting that you are all of these things.

CHARLIE Thank you. (They hold each other's eyes for a moment.)

KEVIN I don't think we've covered all the zones of fear yet, have we?

CHARLIE No. My biggest fear is how to tell my parents how I feel. What do I say to them? What will they say? What will they do?

KEVIN Look, Charlie, we've been playing word games long enough. What is it you find so hard to say? If you can't say it to your parents, try me. I'm a pretty good listener.

CHARLIE Don't you know what I'm trying to say?

KEVIN Yes, Charlie, I think I do but you have to say it. Say it to me, a stranger. I promise not to judge, or laugh or even cry, if what you are going to tell me is very sad. I will understand. If it is any help, I think I already know what you want to say, but go on say it, no one is listening except a friend. (He places a hand on CHARLIE'S shoulder. Softly he says) Say it.

CHARLIE How do I tell people that I am....gay?

(KEVIN does not react at all. Slowly his hand slips from CHARLIE'S shoulder. CHARLIE watches this and feels he has surprised, if not shocked, his new friend. He seems visibly worried.)

KEVIN You don't have to tell people, only those you care about and those you feel ought to know. Anyway , you've told me, that's a start.

CHARLIE Yes, I have, haven't I? But you're so easy to talk to, not at all like my parents.

KEVIN Are they that difficult to talk to?

CHARLIE My mother, no. She is wonderful and there have been so many times that I have come so close to telling her. My father would never understand, I'm sure and I am just so scared that he would turn against, even blame, my mother. But there is no blame here is there, Kevin?

KEVIN No,Charlie, there is no blame and no shame. It is just possible that your parents already know.

CHARLIE (Shocked) How? How could they know?

KEVIN Charlie, I've been there, done that.

CHARLIE You have?

KEVIN Yes, Charlie. Now I know you are a TG.

CHARLIE TG

KEVIN (Laughing) Trainee Gay. You don't even know a pick-up line when you hear one.

CHARLIE What?

KEVIN I sensed you might be gay so I came to pick you up and then I got caught up with this feeling that what you wanted was not a fuck but a friend. I wasn't wrong was I? And a friend I can be. Charlie, if I can sense you are gay maybe your parents can too. Maybe they are just waiting for you to tell them. Maybe....

CHARLIE No, they will never understand.

KEVIN Charlie, you want more than understanding, you NEED more than understanding, you should expect, demand acceptance. Acceptance

of you the son, you the man, you the lover, you the human being with real human emotions. Please don't settle for understanding. I didn't.

CHARLIE Your parents know about you?

KEVIN I don't know about my parents. I think they died when I was quite young. I have lived for most of my life with Pete and Cheryl, foster parents. Two of the greatest people I know.

CHARLIE And they know about you being...(he stops)

KEVIN Gay, Charlie, gay. It's not a dirty word, you can say it. Yes, they know.

CHARLIE Did you tell them?

KEVIN I wanted to. Just like you I struggled with ways to tell them. Like you I thought my telling them would be a slap in the face for all the hard work they had put into raising me. But then I decided that if they loved me, and I definitely love them, then honesty is the least we could expect from each other. One day I asked them to come to my flat, I told them I had something very important to tell them.

(Front of curtain lights go off. Park bench stays with CHARLIE seated looking at the place where KEVIN sat. KEVIN has left the stage.

Lights fade up as curtain opens on KEVIN'S flat.)

ACT ONE SCENE TWO KEVIN'S FLAT - A FEW YEARS AGO.

(It should be an attractive living room, nicely furnished but with few, if any, pictures on the walls. There its a doorway USR leading to bedroom 1, a doorway DSL leading to bedroom 2, an opening (possibly an arch) USL leading to the kitchen and a front door DSR leading to a hallway entrance. There are two small windows in the wall SR. These should be draped with nondescript curtains. At first the living room as we see it is furnished with a sideboardUSL, a bookcase USR, a sofa centre stage with an easy chair off to its left and an oblong coffee table front of sofa. All of the furniture suggests what it really is, a clumsily furnished place for rental purposes only. A cordless phone sits on the sideboard.

As this is a flashback sequence, it is suggested that the stage lighting not be full and, if possible, CHARLIE on the bench should appear just in silhouette.

PETER is seated at the R end of the sofa next to CHERYL.)

PETER (Calls out) Come on, Kev, where's the bloody drinks mate.

CHERYL (sotto voce) Mind your bloody language. (They laugh. They are quite obviously a happy, down-to-earth couple that have enjoyed, and still look forward to, many years of marriage.

KEVIN (offstage) Coming.

PETER He's doing something special for you. Mark my words. It doesn't take this long to get a beer for his old man.

CHERYL Well he knows how to take care of a lady in her old age.

PETER Old, be buggered, you'll outlive the lot of us.

CHERYL Not you love. When we go, we're going together. Remember?

PETER (Leans across and kisses her) We've a whole lot of time left yet young 'un. (Another kiss.)

KEVIN (Enters from kitchen, carrying tray of drinks, wearing open neck shirt and slacks, just in time to see the last kiss.) Oops, I'll get more ice. (Goes to exit)

PETER Come back here, we're bloody dying of thirst. The drinks will be cold enough.

KEVIN The extra ice was for you, your randy old sod. (General laughter as KEVIN passes a glass of beer to PETER and places two glasses of an exotic looking drink on the coffee table. He sits in easy chair.)

ALL Cheers (They sip their drinks)

PETER So now then, Kev, what's this important news you have to tell us?

CHERYL Yes, love, what was it you wanted to say?

KEVIN Have another drink. (He drinks)

PETER Is it that serious that we have to get drunk before you spring it?

KEVIN (Drinks again) Pete, Cheryl, I always felt like calling you Mum and Dad but it never seems right somehow.

CHERYL Whoever your parents were, they would have been proud of the way you've grown and those titles still belong to them. Pete and Cheryl will do us just fine. In any case we've rather liked just being your best friends while you were growing up.

KEVIN Best friends anyone could have. (Pause)

PETER Well, go on. Spit it out.

KEVIN You see, you have never asked about who I go out with. Oh you always asked where I went, did I have a good time but you never asked about my friends.

CHERYL Well, we didn't want.....

PETER (Gently) Shush, love. (CHERYL holds PETER'S hand as if worried about what is to come.)

KEVIN You see I always thought that one day you'd ask about a girlfriend. Did I have one? What was she like? And I always dreaded that coming cos I'd never want to lie to you.

CHERYL As far as we know you never have.

PETER (Silences her with a gesture) Did you want us to ask, Kev?

(KEVIN Slight pause) Well, maybe yes then I could've told you what I have to say now. You see I don't have a girlfriend and I suspect I never will because...because... I'm gay.

(There is a moment's silence and then CHERYL starts to giggle and PETER tries to control his laughter but finally the two of them burst out laughing. KEVIN looks stunned.)

CHERYL (Crosses to KEVIN, hugs him, kisses him on cheek) Oh, Kev, we love you so much. We thought you were going to tell us you had AIDS. Oh, we know who you are and what you are. You're the son we never had. This one here definitely has something wrong in his genes, four daughters. You were welcome in our house when you were just four years old.

Do you think we have watched you grow, watched you learn, watched you mature and not know who you really are?

KEVIN Pete?

PETER We thought it was only proper that you should tell us when you were good and ready. I guess now is the right time but we have known for years. Telling us you had something very serious to talk about did have us worried for a while, We know Kev cos one of our lovely daughters told us. The one who had her eye in you. She is tickled pink cos she says 'now she has a younger sister'. She doesn't mean anything by that, it's just a phrase. We all know, Kev, and it doesn't change a thing. We are still proud foster parents of a great young man. (He gestures KEVIN to stand and he goes and hugs him.

(Returning to seat) Drinks, bloody hell they'll be warmer than a camel drivers crutch. (They drink.)

Now, Kev, I wanna say two things. First, no lectures on sex, you're a big boy, just be careful is all we ask. Second, if you have a special friend ? (Pauses and looks at Kevin .)

KEVIN Not yet, Pete.

PETER Well, when you do, you bring him home to meet us. I'll serve him drinks and Cheryl will sum him up to see if he's good enough for you.

CHERYL Pete, be serious.

PETER What I mean, Kev, is you don't wanna go spending your evenings and money in bars and clubs. You fancy a quiet, family evening at home, well there's our place. Your friends will be welcome. Cheryl and I would like that, wouldn't we love?

CHERYL Anytime, Kev, we miss having you around.

PETER Yeah, we'd like to see more of you. Stop us getting bored with each other. Mind you we've managed for 27 years and ain't bored yet.

CHERYL (Teasing) Well, you might not be.

'PETER Oh-ho, a challenge is it?

CHERYL Get on with your pep talk.

PETER Right. We're not prudes Kev and we weren't born yesterday. Young men have needs, just like us old ones, and those needs must be met. Like some wise old fart once said, 'If you don't use it, you'll lose it.'
(General laughter.)

KEVIN Pete, Cheryl, I hope I've not disappointed you.

CHERYL We love you Kev, always. Have, always will.
(KEVIN hugs CHERYL and goes to PETER, who holds out his hand.)

PETER Just a handshake will do. (He shakes KEVIN'S hand and in so doing draws him close for a long, warm hug.)

KEVIN I'll get more drinks (He exits with glasses on a tray)

PETER I better not drink too much otherwise I might not be up to accepting that challenge.

CHERYL That'll be the day. I'm glad he finally told us.

PETER And I'll bet he is too. He's a great lad Cheryl and chances are he'll bring another great lad into our family. You always said you'd like another boy. Well, here's your chance of getting one - and no labour pains.

CHERYL There weren't any with Kevin either - at least not for me. (Slight pause with CHERYL staring into space.) Does he ever think about her I wonder?

PETER Who?

CHERYL His mother?

PETER I'm sure he thinks of her often, very often, of YOU.
(They hug as lights dim on flat and curtain closes.)

ACT ONE SCENE THREE - THE PARK BENCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

(The spot comes up on bench with CHARLIE and KEVIN still sitting with their drinks)

KEVIN So you see they made it easy for me. They knew me better than I knew myself. They told me they knew when I was fourteen. I wasn't really sure myself till I was twenty. Five years ago. (Long pause.) That was a subtle way of telling you my age. Twenty-five. (Pause) You?

CHARLIE Twenty-one. Not really, I was twenty three months ago.

KEVIN When you moved out.

CHARLIE Yes, you have been listening.

KEVIN Isn't that what friends are for?

CHARLIE Are we friends Kevin?

KEVIN No, not yet, but I have a feeling we will be.

CHARLIE Thanks I'd like that.

KEVIN (They have spent a moment just looking at each other.) Do you want to go to a club?

CHARLIE What club?

KEVIN Don't worry, it's a nice place not far from here. We can just sit and talk and later if you feel like it we can dance.

CHARLIE Dance?

KEVIN Yeah, you do dance don't you?

CHARLIE Yes, but I've never ...

KEVIN Danced with a man?

CHARLIE Well, no, not really.

KEVIN Well, we can sit chat and have a drink, not coke, OK?

CHARLIE OK

KEVIN And if we do dance, don't worry. I'll lead.

CHARLIE I'm probably not very good.

KEVIN I am.

(They exit DSR. KEVIN puts his arm around CHARLIE'S shoulders.

Lights fade. MUSIC "For Once in My Life" Harry Connick Jnr

After a few minutes lights come up on KEVIN'S flat.)

ACT ONE SCENE FOUR - KEVIN'S FLAT - THREE MONTHS LATER-SATURDAY

(The front door opens quietly and SNAP, an obvious ,but very likeable, queen pokes his head in. He carries an expensive camera around his neck.)

SNAP All clear. (He crosses to sideboard and places his camera on it, he is carrying cushions or whatever is needed for change on the set and a large bag of ornaments.)

COKE (Enters carrying a large tray of ornaments.) Thank goodness. Sneaking around like this I feel like Mission Impossible.

THINGS (Who has entered and placed a large art folder against the wall.)
Mission Impossible? I thought that was the night I first met you.

COKE Nah, I was just playing hard to get. (They hug and kiss.)

SNAP When you two have finished with this sickening display of lesbian l'amour, can we get on with the job? Then we can get down to the club and enjoy a well-earned drink and perv.

COKE Right. (To THINGS) You deal with the curtains, me and Butch here will deal with the furniture.

(Things starts to hang curtains and arrange a few ornaments from the large bag.)

SNAP Don't you mean me and Butch?

COKE Maybe I do, let's go.

(They pick up pieces of furniture and take it outside the front door, returning with replacements. Items to be replaced need only be the coffee table, new furniture can be limited to a CD rack or bookshelf. The sofa can be covered with a loose cover or simply decorated with scatter cushions. The conversation continues, though may be disjointed as characters pop in and out and carry out their tasks. Coke collapses on sofa.)

THINGS Are you really sure Charlie knows nothing about this?

SNAP Kevin has it all arranged to collect him one evening this week and just bring him here and announce, "This Charlie my boy is home."

COKE That Kevin is such a romantic, such a pity he's gay.

THINGS (Sits on arm of sofa) And what good would it do you if he wasn't?

COKE I dunno but it might be fun to find out.

THINGS (Throws a cushion at COKE) You'll get more stuffing out of this than you will our dear Kevin. (They hug.)

SNAP Will you two save yourselves for the bedroom and get on with this makeover.

COKE (Beckons to THINGS and they advance on SNAP, mock menacingly.)
Maybe we could give you a makeover at the same time.

SNAP Look dear, being with two women might be some men's fantasy but it is definitely not mine. (He dashes past them, retrieves cushion and places it back on sofa.) Come on we're nearly finished and then we can get to the club and you two can rub your bodies together in what you call dancing.

COKE Yeah, let's hurry.

THINGS What am I supposed to do with all these ornaments?

SNAP Just put hem anywhere. Kevin will change what he doesn't like. Our job is just to get the stuff in here and the old stuff out. The rest is up to Kevin.

THINGS Snap, you've known Kevin for so long. Is this really serious for him?

SNAP I would say this is the big one, the one he always wanted.

COKE I thought it was you who always wanted the big one.

SNAP I mean, I think Kevin has met his ideal man. (He looks just a little sad as he says this.)

COKE (Breaking the mood, she throws a plastic ornament to SNAP.) Here put this somewhere.

SNAP Bitch, I might have dropped it.

COKE Look at it carefully. You would never let anything like that slip through your fingers.

SNAP (Holds up clearly phallic ornament.) Mmmm, is this really just ornamental?

THINGS Come on guys almost done.

(They make a final check and tidy the room. They go to the front door.)

SNAP The bridal suite is finally ready. Thank God we did the bedrooms yesterday. Now I really need.....

THINGS ...a man?

SNAP Well, maybe later but right now I need a couple of shots for my records. (Takes a few shots with his camera.)

THINGS Why do you need those?

COKE My dear, he keeps a record of everything he does.

THINGS Everything?

SNAP Everything. (Looks at watch.) Let's get moving, Kevin said we have to be out of here no later than 10.

COKE It's just three minutes to, we'd better hurry.

SNAP Now let's go for that well-earned drink.

COKE (As they exit) I hope you're paying. I'm flat.

SNAP Never mind, there's an ATM close by.

(They exit closing the door behind them. There is a sound of excited voices fading and this gives way to voices approaching. A short pause before the front door opens, KEVIN enters and holds the door for CHARLIE, who enters carrying a battered suitcase. The door is left open.)

KEVIN Well now you know why I haven't asked you back for a while.

CHARLIE (Dropping case and looking around.) It's great Kevin, really. Did you do it all by yourself?

KEVIN A lot of my ideas but the gang helped me put it together the way I like it. Mind you if you want to suggest some changes....

CHARLIE No, I like it, I really do. (Crosses to behind sofa) I any case it is your home.

KEVIN Our home. (CHARLIE looks at KEVIN) Please Charlie, I want you to stay.

CHARLIE Stay?

KEVIN Yes, stay, I want this to be OUR home, Charlie. Yours and mine.

CHARLIE Three months ago I didn't even know you. Now I find it hard to believe that I ever didn't know you. You have made me grow up so much. I want to be part of your home Kevin but more than that, I want to be part of you.

KEVIN You know for someone who not so long ago was a virgin, you sure have developed a sweet line of patter. (He puts his arm around CHARLIE and they kiss, a short affectionate peck and then just look into each other's eyes.)

CHARLIE Should we close the door?

KEVIN We will but not for what you're thinking. You need to unpack and see your bedroom (He closes front door) .

CHARLIE MY bedroom?

KEVIN (Seriously) Of course, you didn't think you were going to sleep with me every night did you?

CHARLIE (Bewildered) Oh, OK.

KEVIN You snore something dreadful. Come on (takes suitcase and heads for bedroom 2. This will be your bedroom (He puts case in and closes door. Crosses to bedroom 1.) And this will be mine. (Opens door.)

CHARLIE I've seen it remember?

KEVIN No, come on look.

CHARLIE (Crosses and looks in.) Kevin, you've redecorated this too and you've got ... (He looks at KEVIN and smiles broadly.)

KEVIN Yes, a Queen bed. Thought you'd like that.

CHARLIE So, what's all this about your bedroom and my bedroom?

KEVIN Let's make some coffee and sit down. Then I'll explain, OK?

CHARLIE You make coffee, I'll unpack in MY room.

KEVIN It's a deal.

(KEVIN goes to kitchen, we hear sounds of coffee being made.

CHARLIE looks around the room smiles, hugs himself and goes into bedroom 2.)

CHARLIE Calls through open door) Do I have to keep this picture of you on the wall?

KEVIN (Enters) Yes, it might come in handy on nights when I'm away.

CHARLIE (Appears in doorway, agitated.) When? When will you go away nights? Where will you go?

KEVIN Hey, hey. I was joking and being rude. I thought you might occasionally want to perve on my picture when I'm out and you know, cheer up little Charlie. (He gropes CHARLIE and quickly exits to kitchen.)

CHARLIE You're dreadful. I would never do that.

KEVIN Liar. Everyone does it. I've done it with your pic a few times.

CHARLIE Really (Looking very pleased.)

- KEVIN (re-enters with packet of biscuits and two mugs of coffee which he places on coffee table and lounges on the sofa). Yes, when you couldn't meet me and especially the last few days when I haven't been bringing you here. I would come back and just think about you. Next thing I had your photo out and then before I knew it seeming else was out and Well, fantasy time.
- CHARLIE (sits next to KEVIN) You know, I sometimes used to think about you and get so sad that I couldn't see you and now and again I would feel real horny but I never You know.
- KEVIN It's OK Charlie. As long as you're thinking about me it's not being unfaithful or anything.
- CHARLIE I'd never be unfaithful to you Kevin, I promise.
- KEVIN Let's see. We have known each other three months and I have no thoughts for anyone but you. Tragically in this gay world of ours, things never seem to last very long. I hope we do Charlie, I really do. Let's just take each day at a time, then we'll build to weeks, then months....
- CHARLIE ...then years.
- KEVIN I hope so Charlie.
- CHARLIE Me too, Kev.
- KEVIN Charlie, please don't call me Kev. I know you hear Pete calling me that but I don't really like it. Except from him. I owe him so much he could call me shithead and I'd like it. Cheryl sometimes calls me Kev and now and again mates at work do. For you I want to be Kevin and I promise I will never call you Chas or Charley Girl.

CHARLIE You better not. You do and I will cross my legs (does so) and not speak to you for, for five whole minutes.

KEVIN (laughing, he puts his arms round CHARLIE) Oh, Charlie, this flat never looked so good, never felt so good as when you walked through that door the first time. You were so scared. Your hands were like ice and I was almost tempted to give you a coffee and take you straight back to your bed-sitter. I'm glad I didn't.

CHARLIE Me too.

KEVIN Now you're here to stay the place seems even better. It's like you Charlie, it's smiling and you know how bright your smile can make me? Well, just think what it can do for this whole place. Charlie, this place needs your presence to make it and me come alive. (CHARLIE turns head back inviting a kiss which KEVIN guvs him.)
So what do you think of you room?

CHARLIE It's cool.

KEVIN Which means you don't like kit.

CHARLIE No, it's OK, but I notice I have the bed which used to be in your room.

KEVIN Uh-huh, which you won't use a great deal.

CHARLIE (light heartedly) What are you talking about?

KEVIN Look, your folks will be invited here...

CHARLIE (Alarmed) Oh no, they'll guess for sure.

KEVIN Maybe they will, maybe they won't. Listen, we invite them to see your new home. You have your own bedroom, as far as they know. You're just sharing with a friend. If they guess the truth, then isn't that a good thing? Won't it solve your problem?

CHARLIE No Kevin. I have to tell them myself. I don't want to go on forever wondering do they know, don't they know. In any case, whatever else I do know I can't hide my feelings for you and I don't want to. I may be new to all this but I really believe if we're to last, and I want that to happen, then we have to be open and honest, with ourselves and to others. (He is now quite anxious) I have to find a way to tell my parents. I just have to.

KEVIN (soothing) OK Charlie, we'll work something out. In the meantime the second bedroom is for show and the first bedroom is for....

CHARLIE You mean I have to move all my things now to your room?

KEVIN Our room, Charlie, Ours. That bedroom is ours but I suggest if we are going to keep that room for show then you should have some of your things in there.

CHARLIE I don't want to lie about us Kevin. I'm not ashamed of you or of what I am to you. I really love you Kevin.

KEVIN Charlie if I didn't love you I'd never have asked you to come and live with me. Let's not worry about your parents any more tonight. Let's enjoy the first real night together in our new, well newly decorated home.

CHARLIE Yes, yes please.

KEVIN Let's finish this cold coffee and take a closer look at that queen bed.

CHARLIE Let's just forget the coffee, shall we?

KEVIN That's my boy.

(They laugh and move to bedroom 1. CHARLIE enters first and giggles. KEVIN is already beginning to undress as he enters and he closes the door behind him.)

ACT ONE SCENE FIVE - KEVIN'S FLAT - THE NEXT MORNING.

The doorbell rings persistently as lights come up on an empty stage.

KEVIN enters wearing bathrobe. Doorbell continues. Kevin closes bedroom door and goes to front door),

SNAP (bursts in to room) What happened to you girlfriend? (SNAP, with his camera, goes straight to sofa and sits.)

KEVIN (closes front door) Oh my God, Snap. I'm so sorry, I just fell asleep and... what time is it?

SNAP Eleven.

KEVIN Are the others still at the club?

SNAP What's wrong with you dear? It's 11a.m Sunday morning.

KEVIN What? (He sits beside SNAP and laughs) Oh, we've slept through the whole night.

SNAP Knowing you dear, I doubt you slept all night and by the way who is this WE, as if I couldn't guess?

KEVIN Charlie, of course, he moved in yesterday. Let me make some coffee and then I'll think more clearly. (He picks up mugs from last night and goes off to kitchen.)

SNAP So where is Charlie now?

KEVIN (Points to bedroom.) Sssh!

SNAP (Moves to kitchen entrance and whispers) Oh my, the full wedding night treatment was it?

KEVIN (offstage) The details you will never hear from me, gossip guts.

SNAP My imagination is running wild.

KEVIN Well, maybe one day it will catch up with your butt.

SNAP Bitch! (He returns to his seat on sofa)

KEVIN (Returns with two glasses of iced coffee) Iced coffee. Best I could do at short notice. Puts drinks on coffee table and sits in easy chair.)

SNAP Well, at least it will take the taste of last night away.

KEVIN Heavy drinking or something else?

SNAP The details you will never get from me, gossip guts.

KEVIN (laughing) Do you ever go anywhere without that bloody camera?

SNAP Never. It's either good for evidence or for a personal collection of porn.

KEVIN And you call me Bitch.

CHARLIE (Enters wearing identical bathrobe to KEVIN) Oh, I thought I heard voices. Hello Snap. What brings you here so early?

SNAP (Jumps up and goes to CHARLIE) I came to photograph the crime scene. (Leads CHARLIE to sofa) Sit down, you look awful. Did he do this to you? Well, you tell me everything and I'll see that the gets what he deserves, the Brute. What happened?

CHARLIE (By now wide awake. Laughs out loud) My God Snap, don't your batteries every run down?

SNAP Energiser and Ever Ready all rolled in one, that's me. Would you like some iced coffee?

CHARLIE Thanks,

KEVIN I'll get it. (Exits to kitchen)

SNAP (mimes) "How was your night?"

CHARLIE (mimes) Beautiful (They hug)

(KEVIN returns and hands coffee to CHARLIE then sits in easy chair)

SNAP (To CHARLIE) So, did you forget you were meeting us all at the club last night?

CHARLIE Yeah, something came up.

SNAP I bet it did.

CHARLIE So who was there?

SNAP Well, apart from me, looking brilliant as usual, the usual dreary queens. But there was one incredible drag queen I hadn't seen before and, of course, Coke and Things camping it up as usual.

CHARLIE Why Coke and Things?

SNAP My dear, they practically live there.

CHARLIE No, I mean why those names?

SNAP Oh, you don't know. I keep forgetting you're a new member. Well, Coke's real names Coco like Chanel. I started it by saying that she sounded like something hot, dark and sweet you go to bed with. I said Coke sounded better, full of bubbles and caffeine, just like her. She liked it and has been Coke ever since.

CHARLIE And things?

SNAP Never let anyone know I told you but her real name is Marlene. A lot of her friends called her Mar and naturally everyone hated that name. She said I should think of a good name for her just as I had for Coke.

CHARLIE So you came up with the name, Things?

SNAP We were all watching TV and the ad for coca cola came on. You know the one (sings) "Things go better with Coke". I realised it was true, Things did go better with Coke.

CHARLIE You really are crazy, Snap.

SNAP I know, Fun isn't it?

CHARLIE I really am sorry I wasn't there last night. No, I'm not. You know what I mean. I'd no idea what time it was til I woke up, looked at the clock and the open curtains. Was everyone stinking mad?

SNAP Yeah, for a while but then we got to drinking and dancing and we figured Kevin had decided to show you his newly decorated flat. We had no idea that last night was the night he would ask you to move in. We all knew it was coming but were sworn to secrecy. Was it a big surprise for you?

CHARLIE More like a shock. He (points to Kevin) turned up at my place with a taxi. Kept the taxi waiting and told me, no ordered me, to pack one suitcase with whatever I wanted and be prepared to spend the night with him.

SNAP Which, of course, being decently brought up, you refused to do.

CHARLIE Which, being of sound mind and body, I agreed to immediately. Kevin says we'll go back for the rest of my things some time today. I still wonder if I'm dreaming. Oh, Snap, I'm so sorry about last night but....

SNAP The but is not necessary. I have eyes, I can see what the better attraction is. Anyway, you can say all your sorries at the party (He stops immediately and looks at KEVIN.)

CHARLIE What? What's going on between you two?

KEVIN It's no use trying to cover up now, tell him.

SNAP No, you tell him it was your idea.

CHARLIE If one of you doesn't tell me soon you'll both be wearing iced coffee.

KEVIN OK. Thanks Snap. I could have waited for a better time.

CHARLIE Kevin (He threatens to throw coffee at KEVIN)

KEVIN I've arranged for Snap, Coke and Things to come to a party at the weekend. A sort of welcome Charlie party. And they all have to bring a special present.

CHARLIE Kevin, the party is great but you must tell them not to bother with presents. It doesn't.....

SNAP (Bursting at the seams) The presents are to be ideas of ways you can come out to your parents.

CHARLIE (Pause) Kevin, I can think of no better present. I just hope someone comes up with a good idea. Thank you. Thanks Snap. (Pause) I think I will get dressed now. (He exits to bedroom 1 emotionally moved)

SNAP Sorry, Kev.

KEVIN It's OK. It's out now and honestly, I think it's better. If he reacts like this just hearing about it, think how upset he might be if we just all sprang it on him. I think you just did me a favour.

SNAP For which I will expect to be handsomely rewarded. (A meaningful glance from Kevin) I want to have photos of you two hanging all round this place before the party.

KEVIN It's a deal. I better go and see how he is.

SNAP I'll be off to buy rolls and rolls of film. (He turns at front door) He's a great guy Kev, treat him well.

KEVIN You can count on it Snap. I'm a very lucky guy.

SNAP So is he Kev, so is he. (Exits and closes door.)

KEVIN (Opens bedroom 1 door) You OK, Charlie?

(Charlie hurls himself into KEVIN'S arms.)

CHARLIE It's Sunday morning and you haven't finished all your chores yet.

KEVIN Chores?

CHARLIE What is it you like better than breakfast in bed on Sundays?

KEVIN Hmm! We'd better get started then, maybe we'll finish in time for lunch.

(They disappear into bedroom 1. We see a bare back and maybe a flash of bum just before the door fully closes. Lights fade. Houselights up.)

INTERVAL

Interval Music

Hello	Ah Do
For Once in My Life	Harry Connick Jnr
To Where You Are	Josh Groban
In Another Place	Sandy Lam
Other Romantic songs	

ACT TWO - SCENE ONE - KEVIN'S FLAT - THE NEXT SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Four large portraits of CHARLIE and KEVIN are on the walls. The impression is that they are naked. COKE, THINGS and SNAP have just hung them and are stepping back to admire them. One photo is leaning against the wall behind the sofa. We do not see photo.)

SNAP Oh, I think we are ready.

COKE I'll call Charlie and Kevin. They must be wondering what the hell we're up to.

KEVIN (offstage) What the hell are you up to?

COKE See!

KEVIN (offstage) Have to remember, Coke, these walls are paper thin. Can we come out now? If we don't come out soon we might never come out.

CHARLIE Stop that!

KEVIN What?

CHARLIE (laughing) That.

THINGS We better let them in.

SNAP OK, here goes. (He goes to door to let CHARLIE and KEVIN in. The girls sit on the sofa. SNAP opens door and then goes to photo DSR)
You start over here.

(KEVIN and CHARLIE enter and go DSR.)

CHARLIE Oh, Snap it's beautiful. (He moves quickly around the other photos. Kevin admires them from where he is). They're all beautiful. (He returns to Snap and kisses him on the cheek.) Oh, thank you Snap, thank you.

SNAP No, thank you. I do believe that is the first time you've ever kissed me first.

CHARLIE Oh, I'm sorry. Do you mind?

SNAP I love it. Give me another. (CHARLIE does.)

KEVIN Snap, they really are wonderful. Thank you.

SNAP Don't I get a kiss from you too?

KEVIN You sure do. (Kisses SNAP and moves to a photo US and sees the frame behind the sofa) What's this one?

SNAP (Rushes over and clutches photo to his chest.) That's a special. For your eyes only at this point. Charlie, Kevin, this one is for your private collection.

(CHARLIE crosses to them and SNAP holds photo out for them both to see.)

CHARLIE (Emotionally) This has to be one of your best photos ever.

SNAP Not one of the best, THE best.

KEVIN You are remarkable , Snap.

SNAP (Curtseys) Well, I'm always willing to photograph the human body, especially males who are nude,

KEVIN and CHARLIE (together) Semi nude.

COKE What about the female body?

SNAP I never know where to focus.

(General laughter)

THINGS This isn't fair, why can't we see?

COKE Yes, come on you guys.

SNAP What do you say, guys? Do we show my masterpiece to these two gals?

KEVIN Charlie?

CHARLE Oh yes. I'm so proud of it I want everyone to see.

COKE That means us I think. (They cross to photo.) Oh my, wow! Snap, it is just....

THINGS ...beautiful. (Suddenly hugs COKE real tight.)

COKE What's that for?

THINGS For me. That photo makes me wanna hug and be hugged. (To KEVIN and CHARLIE) You two are so lucky.

COKE So where is it going?

KEVIN I have the perfect place in mind.

CHARLIE Where? Where?

KEVIN Above our bed.

CHARLIE Yes, yes please. (CHARLIE exits with photo)

KEVIN We'll be back shortly. How about some drinks to celebrate? (Exits to bedroom1)

SNAP (Looks after the guys for a while and then exits to kitchen) I'll get the drinks.

COKE (sits on sofa) There is so much love in those photos.

THINGS Yes, and not just from the models.

COKE I know. I always thought Kevin would eventually see just how much Snap adores him.

THINGS Kevin will tell you Snap is his best, best friend and has been ever since they were at school together. But you know, I don't honestly think Kevin sees how Snap just simply idolises him.

COKE Like I do you. (They kiss)

SNAP (Enters with tray of drinks which he puts on coffee table.) Huh, my photos turning you two on as well?

COKE Well, maybe the thought that you might do some of us too. How about it, Snap?

SNAP (Exaggerated thinking pose) Mmmm, two nude lesbians. Yuk!

COKE Bitch. (Throws cushion at him.)

KEVIN (Enters with CHARLIE) Drinks, drinks.
(They all sit around and drink)

CHARLIE So, when do I get my presents.

KEVIN Yes, when do we get to hear your brilliant ideas for Charlie to come out to his parents?

SNAP (joking) I thought of a photo of you two naked on the Queen bed and I send it to them anonymously.

CHARLIE Thanks but the idea is supposed to be for me to tell them

COKE We can only speak from experience. Let them find out the same way my folks found out about me.

KEVIN Oh NO!

CHARLIE WHAT?

COKE They found us in bed together doing...well I was doing... Things.

CHARLIE How is that supposed to help me?

THINGS You invite them over for afternoon tea say about 3 o'clock, you leave the door ajar and they walk in. There you two are in what can only be described as a compromising position, open to only one interpretation.

CHARLIE Really, no one have a serious idea?

COKE Yes, Things has in a way. Invite them tea or dinner and just let them see all these wonderful photos that Snap has taken. I doubt anyone could see them and not know what's going on.

CHARLIE You don't know my father. He is a keen and very good photographer, an artist. He's had several exhibitions of his own. He would look at these photos and admire them for their good qualities. But he is not dumb, he would also know for sure about Kevin and me.

THINGS He may not recognise you in some of those positions.

COKE Thats for sure (Laughter)

KEVIN What about it Charlie? Invite for tea? That would be a start. Mind you, we shouldn't have these layabouts here at the same time. They would definitely give the game away.

SNAP Are you insinuating that I am an obvious fairy?

THINGS Not to a blind man who is also partially deaf.

SNAP (Pokes out his tongue)

COKE Oooh, I almost fancy you when you do that.

SNAP Dream on lover.

KEVIN Come on, Charlie, what do you say? Invite or not?

CHARLIE (Pause) Ok, Invite but only my parents and only for tea. No photos up for their visit.

SNAP Well, thank you.

CHARLIE I love these photos Snap, I really do but I can't just flash them to my parents. Let me think of another way. I want to tell them about me. I want to tell them about you Kevin. Eventually I want hem to k now you all. I love you all so much, you really are my bestest friends. Maybe my only friends right now and I always want you to be but I want my parents as friends too. Let me work it out, please. Excuse me. (He exits to bedroom 1 (almost in tears.)

KEVIN You're not only his best friends you are mine too. So please, be friends now and leave us alone for a while. What say we meet at the club later?

COKE OK. (She kisses him and exits with THINGS.)

SNAP (Klisses KEVIN) Maybe see you later, maybe not. Take your time Kev. This is important. (He moves to front door) I'm glad I'm one of your best friends.

KEVIN Not one of the best, THE best. See you later sweet thing. (SNAP hesitates a moment and then exits. There is a pause and KEVIN goes to bedroom door, opens it and speaks to CHARLIE.) You want to come out and finish your drink with me?

CHARLIE (Enters and sits on sofa.) Heard them leave. Sorry, Kevin, I am just so confused.

KEVIN (Sits next to him) I know. How to, what to, when to tell them? Only you can decide, Charlie, but I am with you all the way, you know that.

CHARLIE I know, thank you.

KEVIN I think I have one of the greatest guys I have ever met and I cannot for one minute believe your parents don't know how good you are.

CHARLIE I don't think they judge me by the same standards you do.

KEVIN Maybe not, but when we've been together for a year, two years surely then they will guess how serious we are.

CHARLIE Not many guys I know about, and yes I agree I don't know many, stay together for a long time. Why is that?

KEVIN I imagine they all have different reasons but basically I would say they haven't met the right one yet or they expect too much of each other right from the start. Of course, there are always those who think sex is the bottom line.

CHARLIE Not the best choice of words.

KEVIN What?

CHARLIE Bottom line.

KEVIN You're learning. Gay repartee. It's fun and hopefully most of the time harmless. Some call it being bitchy, you'll hear that a lot.

CHARLIE Were not just out for sex are we Kevin?

KEVIN Hey, it took me six weeks to get past hand-holding and kiss on the cheek stage. Remember? You were too scared to even let me pinch your butt. Do you know we went out for eight weeks before you agreed to come home with me?

CHARLIE Was I that bad?

KEVIN No, you were honest.

CHARLIE Afraid.

KEVIN Well, I respected that. It gave me chance to see if there was more to this than physical attraction. There was. It was like the hours apart dragged so slowly, I just couldn't wait to see you again, even it was just for a quick coffee at lunch time. I lived for the times when we were together.

CHARLIE I'm no good with words but when I am with you I feel safe, safe to be just me, safe to have feelings I should not be ashamed of, safe enough to be alive and know that it will be a good life, as long as I am with you.

KEVIN Wow! For someone who is no good with words you do alright.

CHARLIE (Touches KEVIN'S face.) Will we be alright, Kevin? Will we last a long time?

KEVIN (He places his hand on top of CHARLIE'S against his face) Yes, Charlie, we are going to make it to the end, till one of us has to go. You know the great big gay Mardi Gras in the sky?

CHARLIE (Not at all sadly) Why one of us? We might go together and then we can come back together.

KEVIN Huh?

CHARLIE I was reading a book about Buddhism and they believe you can come back in another life, but probably as something quite different. Like butterflies or bees.

KEVIN Queen Bees?

CHARLIE (Laughing) Well, if I go first I will definitely come back and haunt you.

KEVIN (Light heartedly) Can I place an order now for how I'd like you to come back.

CHARLIE Don't be crazy. (Pause) How would you like me to be, Kevin?

KEVIN Exactly the same as you are now, maybe without the birthmark.

CHARLIE But I thought it was a great talking point.

KEVIN OK, you're right. But could it be somewhere else?

CHARLIE Then it wouldn't be such a great talking point, would it?

KEVIN You're right, as usual.

CHARLIE Kevin, I'm serious about coming back to you.

KEVIN Do we have to get serious right now? You're not going just yet are you?

CHARLIE Don't be silly. I just want to say this. If I do go first I **will** come back and I **will** find you.

KEVIN But people who believe in this....(He is searching for a word.)

CHARLIE Reincarnation.

KEVIN Yeah, that. They say you don't come back as the same thing, so how will I know you?

CHARLIE There'll be a sign Kevin. You'll know.

KEVIN A few minutes ago we were having a party, then we discussed telling you parents and now we're talking about the next life. What do you say we take a break and look at some pictures of naked men?

CHARLIE Semi-nude, remember? Yeah, let's. I never get tired of looking at you.

KEVIN Nor me of you. (Kiss)

(They wander around looking at photos).

CHARLIE This is one of my favourites but it really does look as if we have nothing on.

KEVIN Only if you have a dirty mind. Does your father have that?

CHARLIE I think so, at least I am sure he would not find the naked , sorry semi-nude male form in any way attractive.

KEVIN Maybe we should just wear G-strings when he comes to tea.

CHARLIE (Laughs) You always know when to make me laugh and it's your way of saying 'stop being so bloody serious' isn't it?

KEVIN Is it?

CHARLIE Kevin, I love you and whatever happens with my folks I will never leave you, never. (He leads CHARLIE back to sofa.) So, when do we invite your folks to tea and what do we do with these photos?

CHARLIE Just pack them away in the bedroom while they are here. I'm not ashamed of them Kevin, it's just...

KEVIN Hey, you don't have to explain to me. I'm the guy that knows you and loves you, remember?

CHARLIE I will never forget, I promise. So let's invite them next week that will give us time to prepare.

KEVIN And give us a week to enjoy our photos. (Pause) Charlie, do you think telling your mother first might be the way to go?

CHARLIE I always thought I could tell my mother but what then? When she tells my father, if he gets angry, what will he do to her?

KEVIN You mean he might hurt her?

CHARLIE He wouldn't hit her but he has a way of making you feel his anger and with it a sense of guilt. I don't know but if they are together I think I could give my mother moral support and help her to face up to him if necessary.

KEVIN That's just it, Charlie. It may not be necessary. You might be pleasantly surprised by your father's reaction.

CHARLIE Oh, I hope so, Kevin, I do hope so.

KEVIN I've just had a great idea. How would you like another surprise?

CHARLIE I think I've had enough for today.

KEVIN No, you're going to love this one, I'm sure. Just wait till I call you, OK?

CHARLIE (Smiling) OK.

(KEVIN exits to bedroom 1 and starts his quick change. CHARLIE looks once more at photos.)

KEVIN (off stage) No peeking.

CHARLIE I'm not. This better be really good.

KEVIN (offstage) Give me just a minute more. OK, come in now.

CHARLIE (exits to bedroom 1. Offstage) Oh, Kevin, you've hung the picture upside down over our bed.

KEVIN (offstage) So when you lay down you can see it properly. Come on, see for yourself.

CHARLIE (off) You are terrible, but I have to admit I do love it. Do we have to go to the club straight away?

KEVIN Maybe, maybe not.

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO SCENE TWO - KEVIN'S FLAT - ONE WEEK LATER

(KEVIN enters from bedroom 1 respectably dressed but with shirt hanging out. He takes photos off walls and replaces some with other pictures. After taking the last photo off he returns to stage and tucks in his shirt. Sits on sofa.)

CHARLIE (Enters rom bedroom) Kevin are you sure I look alright?

KEVIN To me?

CHARLIE You know what I mean.

KEVIN You look fine. (CHARLIE starts to tidy the flat, which is already tidy.)
Look, you remember me telling you about when I told my folks. How they thought I was going to give them terrible news. Well, if you behave so nervously they'll think you've got bad news for them too. It's not bad news Charlie, just news, OK?

CHARLIE I'll check the food.

KEVIN Charlie, sit down. The teacups are all laid out, the kettle is full and ready to go. The cakes are beautiful arranged on our one uncracked plate. Relax, (Pats seat next to him.)

CHARLIE (Sits and take KEVIN'S hand in his to look at his watch) What time is it?

KEVIN (Pulls hand away) Five minutes later than the last time you asked.

They will be here soon, go wash your face in cold water.

CHARLIE (Jumps up) Is it dirty?

KEVIN No, you're fine. It will just make you feel better, help you relax.

(CHARLIE goes off to bedroom 2. Shortly afterwards the doorbell rings. KEVIN opens the door and invites CHARLIE'S parents in.)

KEVIN Please come in. I'm Kevin.(Shakes hands with Mr NOAKES and smiles at MRS NOAKES. They enter. KEVIN closes door.) Charlie has just gone to the bathroom (pause) Please, will you sit down? (Indicates sofa. Mr N sits SL end. Another pause.) Charlie is always talking about you.(pause) You are much younger than I imagined.

MRS N I think all children look on their parents as old codgers.

KEVIN No, Charlie's very proud of you both and obviously cares a great deal about you.

MR N (Sounding as though it is none of KEVIN's business.) Thank you.

KEVIN (After long awkward pause) I'll go put kettle on. You both prefer tea, Earl Grey, right?

MRS N Charlie must have told you.

KEVIN I have to admit, he did. I'll .. (He points to kitchen and exits.)

MRS N Don't be angry with Charlie, Joseph. Listen to what he has to say.

MR N (Makes a throat sound that could mean anything.)

MRS N It's a lovely flat and they keep out so clean and tidy (Pause)That Kevin seems like a nice young man. (Pause) She picks up photo album from under coffee table. Glances through.) Look, Joseph, pictures of Charlie and Kevin - on holiday I think.

MR N (Looks at photos) Asking for skin cancer that's for sure.

(MRS N replaces album. CHARLIE comes rushing in, he has changed his shirt.)

CHARLIE Mum, Dad, you're here. (Nervously) You've met Kevin? Of course you did, he let you in. Do you want a cold drink or anything? Can I.....

MRS N Relax, Charlie. Yes, we've met Kevin and he has gone to boil water for tea, Earl Grey. (She rises, goes to CHARLIE and hugs him then returns to her seat.)

CHARLIE Hello father. (Half smiles)

MRS N We were just looking at the photo album. Where were they taken?

CHARLIE (Obviously not remembering album was there) Weekend trip with friends. (He takes album and puts in on sideboard. Comes back to his mother's side.) They were taken by a friend of ours, Snap.

MRS N What a funny name, Snap.

CHARLIE It's his nickname. (MR N rises and goes to album.) He goes everywhere with a camera. Even to the toilet I think. (He realises he has gone too far. His mother frowns and his father turns quickly to CHARLIE and just stares.)

MRS N (Trying to cover up) Charlie, what a funny thing to say.

MR N Not at all funny. (He is looking at photos in album) The lighting and texture in these photos are particularly good. This Snap fellows very good. (He turns pages) Does he take pictures of anything other than you two?

CHARLIE Of course, they are just our private collection.

MR N Whatever, he takes a fine photo. (He puts album down and returns to sofa) You should bring him along to one of my exhibitions sometime. He might get some good ideas about other subjects worth photographing.

- KEVIN (Enters with two cans of lemonade, teapot and cups on tray and places them on coffee table.) Mustn't let it draw too long, loses its sweetness.
- MRS N Charlie has been educating you (She smiles.)
- KEVIN (Pours teas and hands cups to MRS and MR N.) No sugar, no milk, right?
- MRS N Thank you.(Kevin sits in easy chair, he and CHARLIE hold cans of lemonade.)
- CHARLIE (Showing KEVIN the album and then quickly putting it into cupboard.) My father was suggesting we take Snap to one of his exhibitions.
- KEVIN (Almost exploding) Sorry wrong hole. I mean went wrong way up, down. Sorry. (He takes out handkerchief and wipes mouth.) Sorry.
- MR N (Goes to photo DSR, photo of the boys in bathers.) I believe that man has great potential as a photographer. As I said before though, he does need to broaden his subject matter. Men in bathers are not that popular.
- CHARLIE Oh, but they are in some quarters.
- MR N Not generally.
- MRS N (Trying to save the day again) But they are good, Jospeh, you said so before.
- MR N Yes, indeed. I really would like to meet this Mr. Snap. He seems to have a feel for his subjects.
- KEVIN (Trying not to laugh) Oh yes he has a feel alright. (CHARLIE scolds him with a look which quickly turns to a smile when he sees his mother looking at him.)

MR N (Goes back to seat) Well, Charlie, you invited us here to talk, I believe.
Have you something of importance to say to us?

CHARLIE Well....

MR N Maybe you could start with why you left home and sent those absurd postcards telling your mother not to worry.

CHARLIE I'm sorry Father. I didn't want to hurt you, either of you, but I didn't know how to explain why I had to leave.

MR N Had to?

CHARLIE Wanted to. I needed to be alone and sort out my thoughts.

MR N And having sorted them out you no longer felt the need to be alone but moved in here with this young man, is that it?

CHARLIE (Taking offence at the phrase 'this young man'. Kevin, Kevin. No, Father I (rises) I still don't know how to explain. I love you both very much but I am happy here with Kevin.

MR N And you weren't happy at home?

CHARLIE (PAUSE) No, Father, I wasn't. (There is an exchange of looks between them all, puzzled.) I have never been happier than I am now, living with Kevin.

MR N You mean sharing a flat with Kevin is to be a permanent fixture?

CHARLIE Not sharing a flat, I mean LIVING WITH Kevin and yes, I hope it will be permanent.

(There is a long pause)

MR N (Looks at KEVIN, then CHARLIE and crosses to sideboard looking for album.) Are we not to look at any more photos?

CHARLIE They are personal, very personal.

MR N I see. (And this time we understand that he really does.) Thank you for the tea Kevin but my wife and I have another appointment.

MRS N Jospeh?

MR N Come dear, I think we are late already. (Hurries his wife to door, opens it and ushers her out. He looks straight at CHARLIE who makes a move as if to go to his Father. KEVIN sensing that MR N has now guessed the truth, takes CHARLIE by the wrist. CHARLIE wanting to make his stand clear holds KEVIN'S hand. The look in MR N's eyes is pure loathing.) Good-bye Charlie. (He exits closing door)
(CHARLIE stares at the door for a long time and then falls to his knees and sobs.)

KEVIN (Kneels and holds him) Hey, we knew it wouldn't be easy.

CHARLIE I am so sorry.

KEVIN You did your best. Give them time to think.

CHARLIE No, Kevin, I mean I am sorry I never got to say my best line. Kevin is my lover. (He breaks down again in Kevin's arms. KEVIN leads him to sofa.)

KEVIN Hold on love, I think we both need a drink. (He pours two whiskies at sideboard and returns to sit next to CHARLIE.) To us, Charlie.

CHARLIE To us, Kevin. They drink and place glasses on table.) Please, Kevin, hold me.

(CHARLIE rests his head on KEVIN'S shoulder and sobs.)

FADE TO BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO SCENE THREE - KEVIN'S FLAT - TWO DAYS LATER

(During BLACKOUT KEVIN and CHARLIE exit to bedroom 1 to remove shirts. Lights come up full on COKE cleaning up the coffee table. THINGS and SNAP enter from bedroom 1 carrying photos to be replaced on walls.)

SNAP Still think we should have left these up. As it turns out it wouldn't have made any difference.

COKE Yes, it would Snap. Those would have been a real slap the face. It was a pity they forgot about the photo album but at least now the truth is out.

CHARLIE (Enters with last photo. Melodramatically) Yes, but I never got to say my best line.' Kevin is my lover, BooHoo BooHoo' (Laughter) So dramatic. So now Snap you really can call me a Drama Queen.

KEVIN (Enters to hear last line, he sits on sofa.) Don't you dare Snap. Really it was quite horrible. He was like a man from another era. Totally Victorian. Sorry, Charlie but he was.

(During this scene COKE and THINGS complete the picture/photo replacements and take pictures back to bedroom 1)

CHARLIE (Sits next to KEVIN) Yes, I know. Now you know why I found it so hard to tell them. It's Mum I feel sorry for. I could see she was hurt not by what he was thinking but by the way he was reacting towards me. I really think she might understand.

SNAP (Sits in easy chair, legs dangling DS)

- KEVIN I also think she was not really taken by surprise either. Mothers are incredible creatures, they have greater insight into their children than many people give them credit for. (Exits to kitchen and returns with more drinks.)
- COKE (Sits on floor leaning against sofa) My Mum was definitely more encouraging than my Dad. That's for sure.
- THINGS (Sits on floor leaning against COKE) Mine too.
- SNAP For me it was the other way round. My Dad was great. I think he said something like, 'Well, if ever someone says go screw yourself, you can say I don't have to.' (Laughter) Mum, of course, thought it was all her fault. She made me like this. Where do they get these ideas?
- COKE Literature from phoney doctors who think they know the answers to everything. Who believe the only thing that should go in anyone's arse is a rectal thermometer. And they make money printing these supposedly well-researched papers. It's all crap. We are what we are. (Sings) I am what I am and what I am needs no excuses. (Everyone boos and hisses and when she stops they clap.)
- SNAP Yeah, that's another thing my Dad said, 'Joshua, shit, forget I said that, 'Snap' he said, 'you be what you are and be happy boy'. He was really great.
- KEVIN But you always come across a lot better with men. You also come across a lot more for men.
- SNAP Up you Kevin Costner.
- CHARLIE What?
- KEVIN At school they called me Kevin Costner instead of Kentner.

CHARLIE You and Snap were at the same school?

SNAP Yeah, Our Lady of the Misconception. Catholic School for Girls and Boys.

KEVIN That wasn't its real name but that's what we called it and it was really boys school. After Snap and a few others came out we changed its name to Girls and Boys. Actually it was a good school.

SNAP For you maybe. I think they purposely arranged to keep me in most breaks just so I wouldn't mix with other students.

CHARLIE How terrible.

SNAP Not really, others were kept in too, some gay and some what you might call straight but curious. In other words not ready to come out yet. I think that's where we learned gay repartee and being bitchy.

THINGS And there I was thinking you were born with that talent.

SNAP (Gestures and blows raspberry)

COKE So what next, Charlie? Do we try again?

CHARLIE No. They made it quite clear, at least my father did, that they want nothing to do with me.

COKE What about your Mum? You said she'd probably understand.

CHARLIE A very good friend once told me understanding is not enough. I want acceptance.

SNAP I know who that good friend was. (Looks at KEVIN)

COKE Couldn't you just go and see your mother when your Dad is away at one of his exhibitions or something? You should give her a chance to tell you how she feels. Ifs it's the same as your Dad, which I doubt, then forget it. Get on with your life and be happy, just like Snap said.

- CHARLIE My Mum would never be able to keep it to herself. She'd definitely tell him I'd visited and I've no idea what he'd say or do to her.
- COKE Slap her or something?
- CHARLIE Oh no, I already told Kevin, he'd never hurt her physically but he can be so mean in his manner that you hurt just the same. She adores him but at the same time I believe she is afraid of him.
- COKE What a prick.
- THINGS Well, sometimes I'm afraid you.
- COKE Yeah, especially on Sunday mornings. (Laughter)
- SNAP Isn't it amazing how Sunday morning is a popular time for sex?
- KEVIN Well, it beats going to confession.
- CHARLIE (Rises and wanders DSR) Well, no one has to get up for work and unless you've been partying the night before you have both probably had a good rest. So, it's the perfect time . I mean it can go on for hours. Sometimes Kevin just...(He stops suddenly aware that they are all looking at him and then they all burst out laughing.)
- COKE My God the voice of experience. (Charlie is embarrassed and his smile shows it.)
- THINGS Stop Coke, you're gonna make him blush. And you know what happens to some people when they blush.
- CHARLIE (Innocently) What?
- COKE They get horny (Laughter)
(Doorbell rings. Silent pause.)
- SNAP Well, do I go or what?
- KEVIN No, it's OK I'll get it.

CHARLIE You expecting someone Kevin?

KEVIN No. Hang on. (He goes to door and admits PETER and CHERYL.)
Hey, guys, look what the cat dragged in.

PETER G'Day Kev.(Playful punch) G'Day Snap. (Winks)

SNAP See I told you men go for me , Hi Pete, Hi Cheryl.
(Meanwhile KEVIN has kissed CHERYL and closed door.)

CHERYL (Moving towards C) Hello Snap, Girls.

GIRLS Hi Cheryl.

COKE (Gets up) Have a seat. (THINGS moves up and makes room for PETER and CHERYL.

PETER Is that all you got ? (Indicating cans.)

KEVIN No, I'll get you a beer. Cheryl?

CHERYL Gin and Tonic or lemonade.

KEVIN Lemonade it is. (Exits to kitchen.)

PETER G'Day Charlie.

CHARLIE Hello Mr.....

PETER Uh-uh. Pete, remember?

CHARLIE Hello Pete, Cheryl.

CHERYL Well,Charlie, you got a kiss for your mother in law?

CHARLIE Any time, Cheryl. (He goes to her and kisses cheek, she hugs him.)

CHERYL Oooh, I knew I was gonna like you from the very first. (To Snap) Move over Snap I wanna chat with Charlie. (SNAP goes to floor and CHARLIE takes easy chair.) Now, I hear it didn't go too well with your folks.

CHARLIE (lightly) Not really, I think I've been disowned. It's two days since they came here. I thought my mother might have phoned but I haven't heard from them and well, to be honest, I haven't phoned them either.

CHERYL Give them time love, they'll come around. They just have to get used to the idea. It took us a while didn't it Pete?

PETER Yeah, about five minutes. We decided, we took him in and now he's ours, Either we use him or lose him.

CHARLIE I seem to have heard that before.

KEVIN (Enters with fresh cans for everyone) Heard what before?

CHARLIE Either you use it or lose it.

KEVIN Now you know where I get all my best pick up lines.

PETER (Swigs beer) Aah! Now Charlie, the reason we came is we thought you might like us, Cheryl and me, to visit your folks and knock some sense into your Dad.

CHERYL Stop it Pete. Be serious now and then.

PETER I was.

CHERYL No he wasn't Charlie. We thought you might think about whether a visit from us....me and Pete...and a chat about our Kev...you and Kev....and the way we feel about him....you...both of you...might help....somehow. (She gives a big sigh.) I made a right balls up of that didn't I?

PETER No, love you did alright. What do you think Charlie?

CHARLIE I think my father would have you prosecuted for trespassing. The thought is really lovely and I am so grateful but I am afraid of what he might do to my mother. I think she would be even more upset if my father turned on you and then on Kevin here too.

PETER Well, Charlie, think about it and if you change your mind, you know where we are.

CHERYL We love you Charlie and we see what you do for our Kev. We've never seen him so happy.

CHARLIE Why couldn't my parents be like you?

PETER Well, if your parents ever do abandon you, we'll have you, though we would have preferred another son.

KEVIN Pete!

PETER Sorry, Kev, just joking.

CHARLIE It's Ok Pete, Kev, I'm not ashamed of what I am.

COKE (Starts to sing) I am what I am...

SNAP Not again.

PETER She often go off like this? (To THINGS) You poor Things. Ha, I made a gay joke.

KEVIN Not that good actually, Pete.

PETER OK. I've just thought of another gay joke. Why did the gay priest put a nicotine patch on his dick?

CHERYL (Trying to get Pete away) Are you staying to drink here all afternoon or am I getting to those markets?

PETER Oops, forgot, sorry love. Let's go. (Swigs beer hands CHERYL car keys) Here, you drive.

(PETER and CHERYL prepare to leave amid various farewells.

KEVIN has seen them to the door and kisses CHERYL goodbye.

COKE and THINGS start to tidy up, ready to take things to the kitchen.)

SNAP Hey, Pete, what's the punchline? Why did the gay priest put a nicotine patch on his dick?

PETER Oh, he was trying to cut down to one butt a day. (General cries of dismay. COKE and THINGS exit to kitchen.)

KEVIN (To PETER and CHERYL) Thanks. (He closes door after thy leave.)

CHARLIE They really are the greatest. (Sits on sofa and is joined by KEVIN.)

KEVIN Most of the parents we know are like them, Charlie. Yours will come round too, you'll see. What is it they say? Blood is thicker than water.

CHARLIE He hasn't got blood he's got developing fluid in his veins. Which reminds me, Snap, when are we going to take you to see one of his exhibitions?

SNAP When I can go in drag with you in my arms. (Laughter)

COKE (Back for last things on coffee table) Hey, who's washing up?

SNAP Not me, my hands never touch dirty things.

COKE There has to be an answer to that but it's probably not printable. (Grabs SNAP and drags him to kitchen.) OK, sweet thing, I'll wash you wipe. You do wipe afterwards, I hope. (By this time they are out and COKE, THINGS and SNAP make their changes for next scene.)

KEVIN The are all so fond of you.

CHARLIE I am glad. I want to be liked by all your friends.

KEVIN Inevitable, if they don't like you they are not my friends.

CHARLIE (After a kiss) You have changed my life. I have never been so happy.

KEVIN Me neither.

CHARLIE Really?

KEVIN Yes, Charlie, really. I have loved before but until you I didn't really know what being IN LOVE meant. (Kiss) I'm gonna change, we're all going to the pub for drinks and, of course, for Snap to view the local talent again. (He goes off to bedroom 1 to change.)

CHARLIE (Sits quietly for moment then goes to phone) He dials, hangs up, dials again and waits.) Hello. (Pause) Yes, it's me. Is Mum there. No, no don't get her. Can I come home and talk? Please? Please, Father I need to.....(Clearly Mr N has hung up. CHARLIE replaces receiver and walks dejectedly to bedroom 1.)

LIGHTS DIM SLOWLY AND THEN SLOWLY RISE AGAIN TO FULL.

ACT THREE SCENE ONE - KEVIN'S FLAT - SIX YEARS LATER.

(Fade in Music)

(Flat is empty. After a few seconds of total silence the door opens and KEVIN enters. Fade out music as SNAP, COKE, THINGS, PETER and CHERYL enter. They are all in sombre clothes and even more in sombre mood. COKE and THINGS sit on sofa, SNAP on sofa leaning against left arm with legs across the knees of COKE and THINGS. PETER sits in easy chair with CHERYL at his feet.)

PETER It was a nice service.

KEVIN (Sits on right arm of sofa) Did you see Charlie's folks?

PETER Yes, they both looked destroyed.

CHERYL I thought at one stage he was going to come and talk to you Kev. It looked as though he wanted to.

KEVIN I wanted to talk to him too but he was probably having as hard a time trying to think of what to say as I was.

COKE (Angrily) Just go up and say what's on your mind. He bloody deserves it.

KEVIN No Coke. No-one deserves this. And now, right now I couldn't be angry with him. He's suffered as much, if not more than me.

SNAP How can you say that?

KEVIN Look, we had Charlie's love for six years. In that time Charlie had a few calls and a letter from his Mum, nothing from his Dad. What now do you think? Don't you think his Dad is now giving himself hell? Charlie always said his Dad was hard on himself and I'll bet you anything he is being harder on himself than ever before. I'll go and see them, take some of Charlie's things but I am mainly going to deliver Charlie's message.

COKE Message?

KEVIN Yeah, the line he never got to say. Well, I'm gonna say it for him. Charlie was my lover and I loved him more than.. more (He breaks DSR in tears.)

PETER (Goes to KEVIN and holds him) After a while he nods to CHERYL to come and take his pace. She does. PETER exits to kitchen wiping his eyes as he leaves.)

CHERYL Come and sit down Kev. (COKE and THINGS exit to kitchen dragging SNAP with them. Cheryl sits at left end of sofa with KEVIN next to her.) Kev, no one can help you get through this. Oh, they can make you tea, invite you to dinner, I can come in and clean and do your laundry, Pete will bring over a silly movie and a few beers but in the end you have to work through this all by yourself. You will, you'll see, Life will go on Kev and there will be other good things for you to look forward to.

KEVIN I know you're right Cheryl but right now it's hard to imagine anything being good without Charlie.

CHERYL I know it seems like that now but you'll never be without Charlie. His love for you was greater than any love I've ever seen before. You were his whole world and I think his love for you was so strong that he will somehow keep giving it to you. Don't lose sight of our love for him, Kev, but let him go and let yourself move on too. Charlie will come back to you, often but I think to make you happy not to see you grieve.

KEVIN Charlie told me he would come back. I wish he would, right now
(Buries head on CHERYL'S shoulder.)
(Doorbell)

SNAP (Enters from kitchen) I'll get it. (He opens door to MR and MRS N.
There is a long pause. CHERYL and KEVIN rise.)

MR N I'm sorry I didn't speak to you at the church. May we come in?

KEVIN I(Goes to door) Please, you are very welcome here. You always would have been.

MRS N (Sobs)

KEVIN (Leads her to sofa) Please sit down. (Indicates sofa to Mr N) Mr Noakes?
(SNAP has closed door and returned to kitchen.)

MR N Thank you. (He sits)

KEVIN Can I get you something, tea, brandy?

MR N No thank you.

CHERYL Mrs Noakes?

MRS N May I please have some water?

CHERYL Of course (She exits to kitchen)

MR N Mr Kentner...may I please call you Kevin?

KEVIN I would like that very much.

MR N You see Kevin, in spite of my seemingly foolish behaviour...

CHERYL (Returns with water for MRS N)

MR N (Continues) In spite of my foolish behaviour, I loved my son. Very much.

KEVIN I know and so did I, truly and he loved me.

MR N I know but I found it so difficult to...to....

KEVIN Understand?

MR N At first yes. My wife helped me understand eventually but then I had such a struggle to....

KEVIN Accept.

MR N (looks at him as if surprised) Yes.

KEVIN It takes some people more time than others that's all.

KEVIN Charlie will be so glad that you're here. He wanted more than anything for us to meet, talk and be friends.

MR N Are we too late for that Kevin?

KEVIN Oh no, sir. It's never too late.

MR N (Crosses to KEVIN and offers his hand.) Thank you, thank you.

MRS N May I please use your bathroom?

KEVIN Yes, of course, it's through there, through our bedroom.

(MRS N exits and MR N looks around room, stopping at photo USR.)

SANP I have a great collection of Charlie's photos, some actually on his own (half smiling). Would you like to see them?

MR N Very much, but not just now. I would like, however to meet the photographer.

KEVIN Well, he's here. (Calls) Snap, Snap.

SNAP (Enters and crosses to US of sofa). Yes.

KEVIN Snap, Charlie's father, Mr Noakes, would like to meet you. Mr Noakes this is Snap.

MR N I have admired some of your work and Kevin tells me he will let me see more sometime but at the moment Snap, may I call you Snap?

SNAP I probably wouldn't know who you were talking to if you didn't.

MR N Well, Snap, I, my wife and I, would like to mount an exhibition of your photographs as soon as possible. An exhibition as a memorial to Charlie.

SNAP You mean a whole exhibition of pictures of Charlie?

MR N Not just Charlie, Charlie, Kevin and any other friends that you think fit. I want it to reflect Charlie's life and I want you to arrange the exhibition. I will pay you well.

SNAP I would love to do it, Mr Noakes but on one condition.

MR N Name it.

SNAP No pay.

MR N Thank you Snap. Afterwards I think we should talk about other exhibitions, this time with pay, if you are interested.

SNAP Thank you, thank you. (He races to MR N and kisses him on the cheek and then immediately runs towards kitchen, calling) Things
Coke, listen...(He freezes turns and faces MR N) Oh my God, I'm so
sorry, I never meant to... (He touches his own cheek.)

MR N Snap, I do understand but if you get this excited at the opening of the
exhibitions I plan for you, I hope you will not always show your
pleasure that way, at least not in public. (He gives a little smile.)

SNAP You know Charlie was right. You are a good man. (He exits to
kitchen.)

KEVIN I'm sorry, Snap, is always like that.

MR N I would say that he is not only talented but also a good man.

KEVIN Yes, sir, that he is.

MR N I think my wife may have fainted had she seen that kiss.

KEVIN Oh, I'd better send one of the girls to see if she's OK.

MR N It's alright. I'll go if you don't mind.

KEVIN Please. (As MR N exits) The best picture of Charlie and me is over our
bed.

MR N Thank you. I mean... thank you. (He is visibly emotionally moved)
(COKE, TINGS and SNAP burst into room, all talking at once.)

COKE What in hell happened here?

THINGS What's all this about Snap kissing the old man?

SNAP Tell them about the exhibitions, they won't believe me.

KEVIN Whoa! One at a time. First, a lot happened here and I think it is ALL good. Yes, Snap kissed Charlie's Dad on the cheek and , frankly, I thought he took it really well although he was quite clearly shocked by it. And yes, it's true, he has offered to help Snap set up his own exhibition and Snap will get paid for it.

SNAP Not for the first one Kev.

KEVIN True, Thanks Snap. He's going to set up an exhibition of photos as a memorial to Charlie and Snap refused to take any money for that one. (During the following conversation KEVIN moves upstage and stands gazing at the photo of CHARLIE and himself.)

THINGS (Kisses SNAP on cheek) YOU never got paid for being an exhibitionist before. (She sits on sofa)

COKE That was a lovely thing to do Snap. But have you got enough of Charlie for an exhibition? Most of the photos will have Kev in them, semi-nude.

SNAP No, that's the thing he wants to show, to portray Charlie's life, he wants Kevin, us and any other friends in the photos too.

COKE Hold it. You want to show pictures of me and Things too? (Sits next to Things and hugs her protectively.)

SNAP Yeah, but don't worry they won't be nearly as naked, or interesting as Charlie and Kevin's.

COKE Thanks Bitch. We'd better see them first.

SNAP I'll get everyone's OK for all the pictures in my final list but the last choice stays with me. Which ones I use and how I show them off. Agreed?

THINGS Snap, you'll be a great hit. I just know it. Soon you'll be off to Hollywood photographing movie stars.

COKE And getting laid by most of them too, if you have your way.
(They all notice that Kevin has been very quiet and looking at Charlie in the photo above the bookcase.)

THINGS Kev, you OK love?

SNAP Here we are getting all excited over me. Are you OK with this whole idea, Kev?

KEVIN (Turns to face them and moves down C stage above sofa.) I was waiting for a sign from Charlie. Do you think he will like this exhibition?

THINGS Oh yes. The thought of you band his father being friends. It was a rotten way for it to happen but yes, I think Charlie would approve.

KEVIN Thanks. Look they're in there. Will you see them out? Tell them I'm sorry but I need to be alone for a while. (He exits to bedroom 2.)

THINGS (Suddenly and almost in tears) I hope that fucking drunk driver gets life.

(COKE takes her and leads her to the kitchen.)

(MR and MRS NOAKES enter from bedroom 1.)

SNAP Kevin's gone to lay down for a while and the girls are making some more tea I think. Would you care to sit and wait for some?

MRS N No thank you, Snap. My husband tells me you have agreed to mount an exhibition for Charlie.

SNAP Yes.

MRS N Thank you. Will you please do me a personal favour? Will you please include the photo over their bed?

SNAP Are you sure?

MRS N Oh yes. It shows two men very much in love. I am sure it was Charlie's favourite.

SNAP And Kevin's and mine. Would you like smaller version to take home?

MR N I think when we have seen more of your work, we will choose several for our own personal album but for now I would like you to concentrate on the exhibition. Can we have it ready in two weeks?

SNAP Yes, we can.

MR N (Holds his wife's hand affectionately. To SNAP.) There Will be some paperwork involved getting permission for photos with other people in but I will contact you probably tomorrow. Tell, Kevin we said thank you, for everything. Now Snap I think we will say goodbye.

(SNAP advances to MR N) Not another kiss Snap?

MRS N (Bewildered) What are you....?

MR N I'll explain later. (He shakes Snap's hand and they head to front door.)
Say goodbye to your lady friends for us.

SNAP (Giggles) They are not my lady friends.

MRS N We know Snap. We know. (Smiles and begins to exit.)

SNAP I'll just get Pete and Cheryl, they'll want to say goodbye. (He exits to kitchen returning almost immediately with PETE and CHERYL.)

PETE I hear from Snap that you're going to stay in touch. Our Kev will like that, so will we. (He places arm around CHERYL.)

MR N Thank you, again. (Offers hand to Pete)

(CHERYL crosses to MRS N and they hug warmly. MRS N exits.)

MR N (To PETE and CHERYL) Please.... Forgive me. (Exits very emotionally upset.)

CHERYL Should we go too? Will Kev want us to stay?

PETE I think he might like to be alone for a while - well just him and Charlie. His friends are here, they'll call if he needs us.

CHERYL Oh, Pete, I loved him so much (She buries head on PETE'S shoulder.)

PETE I know, me too. Snap says Kevin is resting, maybe we should go home and get some rest too. We'll call later to see how he is. (Moves to kitchen door.) Bye girls.

SNAP Bye Pete, Cheryl.

PETE You know Snap, Kev always says you are his best friend in the world, nothing will overcharge that. That also makes you one of our best friends too. Bye Snap. (CHERYL exits. PETE turns at door.) Take care of my boy, won't you?

SNAP Always Pete. You know I..... (He hesitates, emotionally overcome.)

PETE I know, Snap. I know. (They hug and PETE exits.)

SNAP (Closes door, looks at photo on wall DSL.) Charlie, I'm gonna make you and me famous.

COKE (Enters from kitchen) We've made some. More tea. I think the whole day just caught up with Things. I will take her home. Will you stay with him, Snap?

SNAP Of course.

COKE If you need anything, anything at all, call. OK? Please.

SNAP Sure I will.

COKE What about tonight? Should we come over or....?

SNAP No. I'll stay with him. If he feels like company, you'll be the first people I'll ring.

COKE (Kisses him) I'm sorry Snap. I know how hard this is hitting you too. Seeing the man you love hurt so badly.

SNAP What are you.....

COKE Come on Snap. We all know how you feel about Kev. Well, now you have the chance to show just how good a friend you are. Don't screw it up Snap. All he needs right now is a friend. Be the one you've always been. I love you Snap. (They hug)

THINGS (Enters from kitchen, with no feeling at all says) Huh, the minute my back is turned. (She goes to Snap, kisses him.) See you later, Snap. (COKE and THINGS exit)

(SNAP looks around room. Peeks into bedroom 2 then quietly goes to bedroom 1 and returns with a blanket. He curls up on sofa and tries to sleep. The lights fade as he tosses and turns.)

(KEVIN enters the living room, sees SNAP sleeping, goes to bedroom 1 and returns wearing the same jacket he wore when he met CHARLIE. He switches off lights and exits by front door, taking the whisky bottle with him and leaving the door open.)

ALL LIGHTS FADE OUT

ACT TGREE SCENE TWO - THE PARK BENCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

(PARK BENCH TRASH CAN SET DSL)

(After a short while Apron lights come up and KEVIN enters and sits alone with whisky bottle which he sips from now and then. A pause before a young man enters DSR and pauses to look at KEVIN before crossing to him.)

STEVEN You know, I could just take out my gun and shoot you.

KEVIN (Jumps up) What? What did you say?

STEVEN Hey, I didn't mean to scare you, I was just joking.

KEVIN No, what did you say?

STEVEN I said, I could take out my gun and shoot you. I was just meaning it would be quicker and easier than that. (He indicates whisky)

KEVIN Charlie?

STEVEN No, my name is Steven.

KEVIN (Dizzy) I'm sorry, it's just that... (He reels little.)

STEVEN You OK? Look, if you've been drinking on an empty stomach maybe you should get a bite to eat. I was just going to myself. You know there's nothing worse on an empty stomach than....

KEVIN ..than a ring through the navel.

STEVEN That's funny, but I was going to say than a tattoo of John Elton.

(NOTE: This name can be changed to any local celebrity.)

KEVIN (Little laugh) I.. I'm sorry I just don't know... I thought you...

STEVEN Hey, what about this bite to eat. If you feel up to it, there's a McDonalds nearby.

KEVIN McDonads?

STEVEN Yeah, is that OK?

KEVIN My favourite. (Spoken with no special meaning, KEVIN is under a spell. They exit DSL, STEVEN first. KEVIN turns back and throws whisky in trash. Exits.)

(MUSIC: IN ANOTHER PLACE by Sandy Lam. Slow fade of lights on stage showing SNAP still curled up. He fidgets, rises and listens for sounds for KEVIN then he notices open front door. He is torn with emotion but closes front door and curls back up on sofa to await KEVIN'S return. Slow fade to complete BLACKOUT.

COSTUMES

For the most part casual wear for all. KEVIN needs an identifying jacket. KEVIN and Charlie need bathrobes (preferably the same) SNAP lots of bright gay gear. Mr and MRS NOAKES subdued wear. Everyone subdued wear in Act 2 Scene 3.

PROPS

!/1	Charlie	litre coke in per bag
		McDonalds Shake with straw
	Kevin	McDonalds Shake with straw
1/2	Kevin	Tray with beer and cocktails
1/4	Coke	Bag of ornaments
	Things	Art folder with posters
	Snap	Camera
	Coke/Snap	Coffee table, CD rack, ofa cover or scatter cushions
	Charlie	Suitcase
1/5	Kevin	3 glasses of Ices coffee
	Snap	Camera
2/1	Stage	4 framed photos on walls, 1 empty frame behind settee
	Snap	5 cans of drinks
2/2	Kevin	Tray 2 cans lemonade, teacups saucers, teapot
	Mrs N	Handbag
2/3	Peter	Car keys
3/1	Cheryl	Glass of water
3/2	Kevin	Bottle of whisky

LIGHTING

At 15 minute call, spotlight bench DSR

P5	SM gives cue	Houselights down
	Cue: Charlie takes third swig from bottle	Apron lights UP
P10	Cue: Charlie “ My favourite”	Apron lights fade
		Bench in subdued spotlight
P14`	Cue: Kevin “I had something very important to tell them.”	Stagelights UP
		Fade spot on bench
P20	Cue: Peter “ I am sure he thinks - very often of YOU” HUG	All lights fade out
P21	Cue: SM to cue when Kevin back on bench	Spot on bench UP
P22	Cue: Kevin and Charlie exit	Blackout
P23	SM Cue	Stagelights UP
P32	Cue: Kevin ad Charlie exit	Fade out
P32	SM cue	Stagelights UP
P38	Cue: Boys exit, door slowly closes	Fade to Blackout
		Houselights UP
P39	Cue: SM to cue	House down
		Stage UP
P49	Cue: Kevin “Maybe, maybe not”	Quick fade to Blackout
P50	SM to cue	Stage UP
P55	Cue: Charlie “Please, Kevin hold me.”	Slow blackout
P56	SM to cue	Stage slowly to full
P64	Cue: Charie exits to bedroom 1	Slow fade to Blackout
P65	SM to cue	Stage UP
p75	Cue: Kevin switches off light	Stage to low
P76	SM to cue when Kevin on bench	Apron UP
P77	Cue: Whisky bottle thrown in trash	Spot out
		Stage UP
P78	Cue: Snap lies own again on sofa	Slow fade to blackout

SOUND

Music is suggestions only

2 minute call - "Hello"

P10	Cue: Charlie "My favourite"	HELLO
	Fade when boys laugh	
P22	Cue : Kevin " I am"	FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE
P23	Cue: As front door opens	Quick fade of music
P32	Cue: Kevin and Charlie exit	30 seconds of FOR ONCE
P33	SM to cue after stage lights up	Doorbell - 3 times
P38	Cue: Houselights Up	Selection of Music used in play
P39	1 minute before curtain SM cue	YOU GOT MAIL SUITE
		Fade as curtain opens
P50	Cue: shortly after Charlie exits to bedroom	Doorbell
P55	Cue: Charlie "Please, Kevin hold me"	FOR ONCE (short snippet)
P56	SM to cue	Fade music to low then slowly fade out under dialogue
P59	Cue: Coke "They get horny"	Doorbell
P65	Sm to cue as stage lights UP	TO WHERE YOU ARE
P77	Cue: Stage lights UP	IN ANOTHER PLACE
		Fade with slow blackout

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