

On a bare stage are five chairs that face the audience; they are lined in a straight row.

There are many red origami paper cranes littered about the stage floor and around the chairs. Dressed in white, JOHN, an Asian male in his late teens, sits in the middle chair. Deep in concentration, he relentlessly folds paper cranes as the audience enters the house. When the play begins, the four characters VOICE ONE, VOICE TWO, VOICE THREE, and VOICE FOUR enter from the wings and sit on the remaining chairs. All VOICES are played by Caucasian men of various ages dressed uniformly in black.

It is important that all characters, particularly JOHN and VOICE ONE, do not look at one another throughout the play unless otherwise indicated.

No music or sound effects should be employed during the play.

Scene 1.

The VOICES come in from offstage and create London street sounds as they take their seats. They may overlap each other's lines.

VOICE THREE: (*Sound of Big Ben striking four o'clock.*)

VOICE TWO: (*Sounds of cars honking.*)

VOICE ONE: Watch where you're walking, you fucking sod—

VOICE FOUR: (*Sounds of an underground train screeching to a halt at a station.*)

VOICE TWO: Mind the gap—mind the gap—

VOICE ONE: No. This is not Piccadilly Circus. This is Trafalgar Square. No, not Piccadilly. Fucking tourists—

VOICE TWO: Say, can you spare some change for a cuppa? 50p? Anything? Please—

VOICE THREE: *Evening Standard*. Get your *Evening Standard* here, only 30p. "Homo toilet sex murder"—

VOICE ONE: Would you be a love and fetch us a pint of lager from the pub? Bitter lager. No lime. And a pack of Rothmans—

VOICE THREE: So the bloody Paki taxi driver drove me all the way to Primrose Hill instead. You'd think that the lot of them should at least speak English or carry an *A to Z* around with them—

VOICE FOUR: Where's the fucking number 15? I'll miss *EastEnders* at this rate—

VOICE ONE: Top news this hour: A man was found dead in a public lavatory in Bethnal Green in East London today—

VOICE TWO: Police suspect murder—

VOICE FOUR: Motive has not been established—

VOICE ONE: The alleged murderer is said to be a nineteen-year-old Oriental male from nearby Whitechapel—

VOICE THREE: London Metropolitan Police is still investigating the brutal murder. Now, more from Kylie Minogue on Capital FM—

VOICE TWO: Eyewitnesses to the crime claimed the suspect was cradling the victim after the cold-blooded shooting—

VOICE THREE: The victim, William Hope, a twenty-six-year-old male from South Hackney, was shot six times—

VOICE ONE: Sources believe that he was shot by an acquaintance—

VOICE FOUR (*overlapping, gradually louder and more urgent*): The police found the suspect at the site of the violent murder—

VOICE THREE (*overlapping, gradually louder and more urgent*): The White House has no further comment on the recent civil rights rally held outside the Lincoln Memorial. In London, there's been a fatal shooting in a public toilet in Bethnal Green this afternoon—

VOICE ONE (*overlapping, gradually louder and more urgent*): Two days ago, the Bethnal Green community of East London witnessed a tragic killing. Should handguns be made available to the public? We'll answer these questions on "Good Morning London" after the break—

VOICE TWO (*overlapping, gradually louder and more urgent*): I don't think this would have happened if the police were doing their

usual rounds of the public lavs, you know. Now with what's happened I don't think I'd let my eight-year-old son into any public loo—

VOICE FOUR (*overlapping, gradually louder and more urgent*): We have clinical psychologist Dr. James Christian here this evening. Dr. Christian, what do you suppose the young man was thinking when he pulled the deadly trigger last week in the public lavatory in Bethnal Green?—

VOICE TWO (*overlapping, gradually louder and more urgent*): Well, that's a very interesting point of view. Thanks for calling. The number once again is 071-449-4000, and today's topic is the recent toilet sex murder in—

VOICE FOUR: Bang!

VOICE ONE: Bang!

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE FOUR: Bang!

VOICE ONE: Bang!

VOICE THREE: Six shots.

VOICE TWO: At close range.

VOICE FOUR: A body falls.

VOICE ONE: Slumped against the urinals.

VOICE THREE: White walls with peeling paint.

VOICE TWO: Cold mosaic floors.

VOICE FOUR: A pool of red.

VOICE ONE: Everywhere splattered with blood.

VOICE THREE: Warm blood.

VOICE TWO: Red patterns.

VOICE FOUR: Flower-like.

VOICE ONE: Patterns.

VOICE THREE: Slow-moving.

VOICE TWO: Patterns.

VOICE FOUR: Sounds.

VOICE ONE: Tiny, annoying.

VOICE THREE: Sounds.

VOICE TWO: Drips.

VOICE FOUR: From leaky water taps.

VOICE ONE: The dull hum.

VOICE THREE: From the blinding.

VOICE TWO: Fluorescent lights above.

VOICE FOUR: And a boy standing.

VOICE ONE: Breathing hard.

VOICE THREE: Weeping.

VOICE TWO: Outside.

VOICE FOUR: Traffic sounds.

VOICE ONE: Wailing sirens.

VOICE THREE: The disjointed chorus.

VOICE TWO: Of staccato footsteps.

VOICE FOUR: From street pedestrians.

VOICE ONE: Hurrying home from work.

VOICE THREE: Seems distant.

VOICE TWO: Lingering smells.

VOICE FOUR: Hanging still in the air.

VOICE ONE: Gun powder.

VOICE THREE: Antiseptic.

VOICE TWO: Urine.

VOICE FOUR: Semen.

VOICE ONE: Six shots.

VOICE THREE: A body falls.

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE FOUR: Bang!

VOICE ONE: Bang!

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE FOUR: Bang!

Scene 2.

In the following scene, all VOICES, with the exception of VOICE THREE, take on an array of man-on-the-street characters, a different character for each line.

VOICE THREE: Do you know what cottaging is?

VOICE FOUR: Cottaging?

VOICE THREE: Having sex in lavatories.

VOICE FOUR: Sex in the toilets? Eh—no—never heard of it.

VOICE ONE: Cottaging. Why yes, I believe that the term came from the fact that public conveniences were once designed in the style of Swiss cottages. You know the little white brick cottages with black wooden frames. Very *Sound of Music*.

VOICE FOUR: Is this *Candid Camera*?

VOICE THREE: Excuse me, sir. We're doing a documentary on—

VOICE TWO: You're that chap on—

VOICE THREE: Alan White.

VOICE TWO: BBC?

VOICE THREE: Channel Four.

VOICE TWO: Yes, that's it. My, you look a lot smarter in real life. A bit short, perhaps.

VOICE THREE: As I was saying, we're doing a—

VOICE TWO: Well, you've been doing a brilliant job, my lad. The missus and I simply love to watch your juicy news stories at ten.

VOICE THREE: Yes.

VOICE TWO: Sally, the missus, simply raves about your butch transvestite curb-crawlers story—top notch—

VOICE THREE: Eh—thank you, sir—

VOICE TWO: And the recent story? On the impact of holiday prices on Fergie? Got me tongue-tied, it did. We stay up for you, Alan.

VOICE THREE: Yes. We're here to conduct interviews for a television documentary—

VOICE TWO: And you want my opinion.

VOICE THREE: Yes and—

VOICE TWO: My, I'm going to be on telly. Wait till Sally hears about this. Me on BBC.

VOICE THREE: Channel Four.

VOICE TWO: It's still telly, isn't it? What's the topic this week, Alan?

VOICE THREE: Toilet sex, and we're wondering if—

VOICE TWO: I beg your pardon.

VOICE FOUR: Oh blimey, sure I've heard of it. Seen it even. In Notting Hill—at some of the private clubs, even at parties. There're blokes who'll have a quick shag with girls in the toilets. Yeah—I've seen it. It's really kinky—sexy.

VOICE ONE: Yeah, but I'm not sure. Once I went to the loo in Clapham Common. Yeah . . . it was in the afternoon, maybe it was evening. I went in to take a quick piss—

VOICE TWO: Cottaging? No, never heard of it.

VOICE ONE: Well, there was this geezer standing there. He's just standing there. Like he's taking a piss or something. For a long time. And all the time he was looking in my direction. Looking at me.

VOICE FOUR: I don't think it's true. The graffiti you read on the toilet walls like this bloke gives good head—meet at this place—this time. And the phone numbers. I think it's all—you know. It couldn't be—I don't know.

VOICE ONE: He kept pulling on his . . . you know . . . looking at me. Then all of a sudden, another geezer came into the loo, and he started staring at this new geezer.

VOICE TWO: Sure, I know what it is. Saw *Prick Up Your Ears*.

VOICE ONE: He's still doing the business like—and this new chap looked back at him and walked into a cubicle. And the geezer who was clocking me just walked right in after him wallop.

VOICE THREE: Have you ever participated in toilet sex?

VOICE FOUR: Piss off! What the fuck do you think I am? Fucking queer?

VOICE TWO: Yeah, I got my cock sucked off a couple times before.

Scene 3.

VOICE ONE: It's a bit fucking bright, isn't it?

VOICE THREE: That's TV for you, sorry. Right. Dr. Worthing, can you sign this release before we tape?

VOICE ONE: This is exactly the way we discussed?

VOICE THREE: As I said to you a few days ago, I would like the Channel Four news team to be first in London to broadcast the Lee murder documentary.

VOICE ONE: I don't give a fuck whether you're the first or last. I want to know if this is exactly what we spoke of.

VOICE THREE: We will say we got this interview from you after the trial.

VOICE ONE: That's all I want to know. And to protect myself—

VOICE THREE: We agreed that if you feel there's anything unethical about disclosing certain privileged information, you needn't answer the questions.

VOICE ONE: And you want me to—

VOICE THREE: Recount your daily dealings with your client, since we don't have access to him.

VOICE ONE: And the money?

VOICE THREE: One thousand pounds will be sent to you after the broadcast.

VOICE ONE: Before.

VOICE THREE: I beg your pardon.

VOICE ONE: I want the dosh before you air the piece.

VOICE THREE: This is not what we discussed.

VOICE ONE: Then I'll walk. I'm sure there are other news shows that will want first dibs on this story.

(Pause.)

VOICE THREE: Before the piece, then.

(VOICE THREE *hands* VOICE ONE *a piece of paper*; VOICE ONE *signs it*. *All this is mimed.*)

VOICE ONE: Hey, why are you looking so bloody forlorn? You'll finally get the ratings your show needs and get yourself some fucking credibility.

VOICE THREE: Can we start, Dr. Worthing?

VOICE ONE: It's your money.

VOICE THREE: Do you—I'm sorry, I'm afraid we've got you in a medium shot, and if you won't fidget so. Let's start again. Dr. Worthing, tell us about the case you've been working on.

VOICE ONE: The case I've been working on—

VOICE THREE: The Lee case—

VOICE ONE: Oh right. John Lee, the murder in Bethnal Green. Right, of course, yes—uh—I believe I was asked by the court—

VOICE THREE: You're a—

VOICE ONE: Criminal psychologist. I'm on the case to determine—

VOICE THREE: To determine whether he was sane or insane at the time of the—

VOICE ONE: The murder—yes. The defendant wasn't able to afford counsel and—

VOICE THREE: Yes, we know that—

VOICE ONE: Listen, if you know so fucking much, why are you interviewing me?

VOICE THREE: I'm sorry, Dr. Worthing. I'm just fishing for particular sound bites.

VOICE ONE: Wouldn't it be simpler for everyone here if you gave me a bloody script instead?

VOICE THREE: Tell me about him.

VOICE ONE: Well, he's just finished his A levels—waiting to go into university in Cambridge. He's nineteen—that's all I can say on the record.

VOICE THREE: Dr. Worthing, this is a rather personal question. I have some contacts in the public prosecution sector, and they tell me that you are one of the least liked criminal psychologists in the business. Some of them claim that this is possibly your last assignment given your poor track record in the recent year.

VOICE ONE: I beg your pardon?

VOICE THREE: Let me add that they also said you are unprofessional, rude, and inconsiderate toward your clients. Some even go so far as to say you drink excessively, arriving late to sessions and not even showing up at all.

VOICE ONE: I don't think this is relevant—

VOICE THREE: There are also rumors about the sexual harassment of your female colleagues and coworkers—

VOICE ONE: I have no—

VOICE THREE: According to your peers, you constantly use profanities during counseling sessions? Isn't it unorthodox?—

VOICE ONE: Yes but—

VOICE THREE: Unprofessional, irregular, and rude are the adjectives I have received from—

VOICE ONE: Oh, for fuck sake—

VOICE THREE: Exactly what I mean. Dr. Worthing, am I safe in presuming that all these allegations are true?

VOICE ONE: No.

VOICE THREE: I'm sorry, Dr. Worthing, we didn't get that.

VOICE ONE: No. It's not true.

VOICE THREE: Once again, Dr. Worthing, audio—

VOICE ONE: It's not true.

VOICE THREE: Thank you, Dr. Worthing. I just wanted to clear the air before we ask further questions about the Lee case. I have no more questions at this time. Stop tape.

Scene 4.

VOICE TWO: John standing.

VOICE THREE: In the toilet stall.

VOICE FOUR: Nervously.

VOICE ONE: Looking.

VOICE FOUR: Waiting.

VOICE THREE: A man walks slowly.

VOICE TWO: Into the stall.

VOICE THREE: Cramped.

VOICE ONE: In his late thirties.

VOICE THREE: Balding.

VOICE TWO: A trim beard.

VOICE THREE: Wears glasses.

VOICE ONE: Clonish.

VOICE THREE: They seem to be talking.

VOICE TWO: A little.

VOICE FOUR: Hi.

VOICE ONE: John nods.

VOICE TWO: The clone wets his lips.

VOICE THREE: Slowly.

VOICE FOUR: Knowingly.

VOICE TWO: John's eyes make a quick study.

VOICE ONE: Of the man's body.

VOICE FOUR: His eyes.

VOICE TWO: Transfixed.

VOICE THREE: Touching his body.

VOICE TWO: His trembling hands.

VOICE ONE: Run down the stranger's body.

VOICE FOUR: Unevenly.

VOICE TWO: Nervously.

VOICE THREE: The man holds John's head.

VOICE FOUR: And leads John down.

VOICE TWO: To his swelling crotch.

VOICE ONE: His face against the soft denim.

VOICE THREE: A faint, familiar smell.

VOICE TWO: Smells of soap and sweat.

VOICE ONE: The man's head arches slowly.

VOICE FOUR: Leans on the toilet wall.

VOICE THREE: Pressing against the wall.

VOICE TWO: The man looks at the ceiling.

VOICE THREE: Blinking hard.

VOICE FOUR: Breathing heavily.

VOICE TWO: Through his nose.

VOICE THREE: His body spasms.

VOICE ONE: Long breaths.

VOICE FOUR: Deep breaths.

VOICE TWO: Uneven breaths.

Scene 5.

VOICE ONE: Thanks for letting me smoke. I'll just fucking die if I don't—do you want a fag? Eh—I mean—cigarette.

JOHN: I don't really care for lung cancer.

VOICE ONE: Good for you. It's habit forming. I don't really have all your stuff with me. Your name?

JOHN: John—

VOICE ONE: Yes, that's it. John—John Lee. Eh—my name's Jack Worthing. Doctor—

JOHN: *Importance of Being Earnest.*

VOICE ONE: What?

JOHN: Oscar Wilde.

VOICE ONE: I don't—

JOHN: Jack Worthing is the name of a character—

VOICE ONE: Oh, that's right. The play about people pretending to be other people just to get laid—something like that.

JOHN: I auditioned for the role a few years ago in school.

VOICE ONE: Really? How nice.

JOHN: Didn't get it.

VOICE ONE: Uh-huh. Why?

JOHN: They said I didn't look the part.

VOICE ONE: Oh, I see. I'm sorry.

JOHN: I'm not. You're American?

VOICE ONE: British.

JOHN: You have an accent.

VOICE ONE: I spent many years in America. Studying. Working.

JOHN: Ah, the crow and the sparrow.

VOICE ONE: What are you talking about?

JOHN: Nothing. A stupid story my father told me when I was young.

VOICE ONE: What story?

JOHN: You and I are the same.

VOICE ONE: I don't understand.

JOHN: You'll never understand.

VOICE ONE: Right. Off to work then, shall we? You probably know what these are. Rorschach blot test cards. Pretty, aren't they?

JOHN: Very pretty.

VOICE ONE: So, tell me what you—

JOHN: See?

VOICE ONE: Well?

JOHN: I don't know.

VOICE ONE: Try. Tell me—

JOHN: Patterns—dots.

VOICE ONE: Yes—yes. But what do you see?

JOHN: I don't see anything.

VOICE ONE: Eh—let me rephrase that—what does this remind you of?

JOHN: Patterns—dots.

VOICE ONE: Well, aside from patterns and dots. The shapes. Do the shapes resemble anything to you? Anything in particular?

JOHN: Nothing.

VOICE ONE: All right, let's try another. How about this one?

JOHN: Patterns and dots.

VOICE ONE: Look here, you're not making any of this—

JOHN: Easy?

VOICE ONE: Why?

JOHN: Why not?

VOICE ONE: Can we put our eyes on this card and tell us the first thought—

JOHN: That comes into my pretty head?

VOICE ONE: Don't put words in my mouth.

JOHN: What shall I put in?

VOICE ONE: God, my fucking headache.

JOHN: Listen, Dr. Worthing, I know you are here to—

VOICE ONE: Help you.

JOHN: I appreciate your concern, but I don't need your help. Please go away.

VOICE ONE: Listen, I'm only here to do a job, not to make friends. I'm here to find out why you—

JOHN: Killed him.

VOICE ONE: In so many words.

JOHN: I'm guilty.

VOICE ONE: Let the jury be the judge of this.

JOHN: But I am.

VOICE ONE: Look—

JOHN: I am guilty of each and every shot.

VOICE ONE: Listen, John, I'm tired. I'll be honest with you since I feel we should have an honest working relationship. I'm fucking tired. I've got a fucking headache. I'd rather be in bed—

JOHN: Fucking.

VOICE ONE: Right. And you're in here for murder. It's big time, not some small, petty—

JOHN: I know.

VOICE ONE: We're talking about life here. Behind the bars, never to see the light of day, with lots of men—

JOHN: Fucking?

VOICE ONE: Men who'll slice you up for fun. Now, let's start again. So what do you see?

JOHN: I don't know. Dots—patterns.

Scene 6.

VOICE THREE: Dr. Worthing, what information did you expect to get out of John Lee through the blot tests?

VOICE ONE: Perhaps an idea of who he is and what he is. Why he did what he did. It's a kind of Tarot cards psychologists use.

VOICE THREE: Was it effective?

VOICE ONE: Not in the beginning. Perhaps he didn't trust me. Perhaps he was just being difficult. Perhaps he still hadn't recovered from the shock—

VOICE THREE: And?

VOICE ONE: Then he gradually opened up and told me things.

VOICE THREE: What kind of things?

VOICE ONE: Things. All kinds of things.

VOICE THREE: Like?

VOICE ONE: I thought you were an investigative reporter.

VOICE THREE: I am. So what did John Lee tell you?

VOICE ONE: I can't disclose that special client-counselor information to you, Mr. White. That would be quite unprofessional, don't you think?

VOICE THREE: Then how do you look at this case, Dr. Worthing?

VOICE ONE: What do you mean?

VOICE THREE: You're heterosexual, I presume.

VOICE ONE: Very.

VOICE THREE: You've never cottaged. You're definitely not Oriental. So how do you look at this case as a heterosexual white male?

VOICE ONE: It's a job.

VOICE THREE: No bias?

VOICE ONE: None.

VOICE THREE: Psychologists are, by definition, neutral and impartial to their cases. But you must have some personal opinions.

VOICE ONE: Of course, but—

VOICE THREE: And?

VOICE ONE: Look, this is getting rather—

VOICE THREE: Okay, we'll stop there. Look, just between you and me.

VOICE ONE: This is off the record, right?

VOICE THREE: Oh, definitely. It'd be unethical if we—

VOICE ONE: I think—personally, between you and me, I think this whole case is—sick. Public sex is an offense. Murder is an offense. Well, let me put it in simple words—a queer Chink who indulges in public sex kills a white man. Where would your fucking sympathies lie? Quite open and shut, isn't it?

VOICE THREE: Quite.

VOICE ONE: But I am keeping an open mind. Have to protect my client's bloody interest.

VOICE THREE: Of course.

VOICE ONE: It's just that I have nothing in common with those types, you know.

VOICE THREE: What types?

VOICE ONE: Those types.

VOICE THREE: I see. It must be very difficult for you as a psychologist to meet such a variety of types every day.

VOICE ONE: It's work.

VOICE THREE: Thank you.

VOICE ONE: Not at all. Anything for you boys at the BBC.

VOICE THREE: Channel Four.

VOICE ONE: Same thing. Say, you don't happen to have a cigarette on you, do you?

VOICE THREE: Sorry, you had the last one. (*Pause, loud whisper.*)
Did we get that sound bite?

Scene 7.

VOICE FOUR: There were two big trees on a field.

VOICE TWO: One at each end.

VOICE THREE: In one particular tree.

VOICE ONE: Lived a large family of black crows.

VOICE FOUR: The crows were noisy.

VOICE TWO: Loud.

VOICE THREE: Greedy.

VOICE ONE: Clumsy.

VOICE FOUR: Unwieldy.

VOICE TWO: Across the field was another tree.

VOICE THREE: A family of sparrows.

VOICE ONE: Chirpy.

VOICE FOUR: Merry-making.

VOICE TWO: Graceful.

VOICE THREE: Happy.

VOICE ONE: Beautiful sparrows.

VOICE FOUR: One particular crow always saw them.

VOICE TWO: Always studied and observed them.

VOICE THREE: The lonely crow looked at them.

VOICE ONE: With such longing.

VOICE FOUR: Longing to sing happy, chirpy, little songs with them.

VOICE TWO: Longing to fly in fanciful formations.

VOICE THREE: Climbing up, plunging down, bursting free.

VOICE ONE: Soaring heavenwards like a magnificent paper kite.

VOICE FOUR: Swooping earthwards like a thunderous ocean waves
in a Japanese watercolor picture.

VOICE TWO: The crow made up its mind.

VOICE THREE: Packed its bags.

VOICE ONE: Bade a tearful farewell to its surprised family.

VOICE FOUR: Flew clear across the field.

VOICE TWO: To the tree of singing, happy, chirpy, beautiful sparrows.

Scene 8.

VOICE ONE: What are you doing? You're folding something.

JOHN: Very observant.

VOICE ONE: Paper birds.

JOHN: Origami.

VOICE ONE: Pigeons?

JOHN: Do they look like pigeons?

VOICE ONE: Sparrows, then.

JOHN: No.

VOICE ONE: Crows? I don't know.

JOHN: Cranes.

VOICE ONE: They're—interesting. Why are you folding so many of
them?

JOHN: For fun.

VOICE ONE: Come on, why are you folding them?

JOHN: It's something you wouldn't understand.

VOICE ONE: I might.

JOHN: You won't.

VOICE ONE: How do you know I won't.

JOHN: Tradition.

VOICE ONE: What tradition?

JOHN: Japanese tradition.

VOICE ONE: But you're Chinese.

JOHN: So?

VOICE ONE: What's the tradition?

JOHN: Dr. Worthing.

VOICE ONE: Jack, please.

JOHN: Dr. Worthing, let's not get too chummy and pretend you're interested in my life, because you aren't.

VOICE ONE: I am interested. The Oriental culture has always—

JOHN: Fascinated you?

VOICE ONE: Yes.

JOHN: How nice. What part of our Oriental culture so fascinates you, Dr. Worthing?

VOICE ONE: I like Chinese food.

JOHN: Is it our obedient and subservient geisha girls? Maybe our suntanned go-go girls who'll fuck you for less than five pounds in Bangkok? Or is it our ancient Oriental erotic acts? Maybe *The King and I*? *Miss Saigon*? *Suzie Wong*? Which is it, Dr. Worthing?

VOICE ONE: All those actually, but five pounds a shag sounds reasonable to me.

JOHN: Dr. Worthing, did it ever occur to you that your fascination is rooted in ignorance? Like everyone else—

VOICE ONE: Who's everyone else?

JOHN: Like everyone else you sit comfortably on the other side of the wall. Perched. Watching us. Studying us. Looking at us. And you never once leave the other side to join us or understand us. You don't want to. We are mythicized by you. We are your interesting geisha girls, bespectacled accountants and dentists, your local Chinese takeaway. Your fascination. And why should you want to climb over and join us? Are you afraid of finding out that we're just the same as you? Have the same feelings and the same fears as you? How we are so much alike? You and I?

VOICE ONE: You must think you're very clever.

JOHN: Enough to detect a stiffening in your voice.

VOICE ONE: It's a very good guess.

JOHN: Nevertheless, a very accurate one, Dr. Worthing.

VOICE ONE: You're full of shit—

JOHN: And you're pathetic—

VOICE ONE: No little queer is going to tell me—

JOHN: My, my. Such unattractive and unprofessional language. Enough to get you dismissed from my case and perhaps from a rosy future in the criminal psychology profession. Who'll have to pay for your excessive cigarettes and lager habits then?

VOICE ONE: Listen, you lousy homo Chink—

JOHN: I think we've already established the fact that I'm a homo Chink, Dr. Worthing. (*A pause.*) I presume your silence indicates that this session is over. Do drive safely. Clear skies can be deceiving.

Scene 9.

VOICE THREE: Inspector Piper, what can you tell me about the murder that took place here about a month ago?

VOICE FOUR: There was some commotion in the public convenience by the Bethnal Green tube station. I was dispatched to the area to investigate the case.

VOICE THREE: What did you see when you got there?

VOICE FOUR: There was a crowd of people milling outside the toilets. Some of them were hysterical. They claimed they heard gunshots inside. The victim and the accused were lying in a pool of blood. Mr. Lee seemed to be holding Mr. Hope in his arms, rocking him, like a baby. Mr. Hope had blood all over his head and chest, and Mr. Lee was just holding him.

VOICE THREE: What did you know about this toilet in Bethnal Green?

VOICE FOUR: Nothing much.

VOICE THREE: Let me put it this way: Have you heard anything peculiar about this particular toilet before?

VOICE FOUR: No. Should I?

VOICE THREE: Do you feel John Lee is the killer?

VOICE FOUR: Mr. White, I don't know all the facts surrounding the-

VOICE THREE: You don't need facts. Given what you saw, do you think John Lee is guilty?

VOICE FOUR: I don't know.

VOICE THREE: You are a police inspector. You walk into the public lavatory, you see two men—one dead, and the other living, with a gun by his side. What was your first instinct?

VOICE FOUR: From what I saw, the accused was mourning, like he was a friend.

Scene 10.

VOICE ONE: So how are you today?

JOHN: In prison. And you?

VOICE ONE: Are they treating you well here?

JOHN: I am tired.

VOICE ONE: How well?

JOHN: It's not exactly Buckingham Palace.

VOICE ONE: You have everything you need, I presume.

JOHN: My own cell. My own shower.

VOICE ONE: Good. Anything else?

JOHN: All the prisoners here look at me very strangely.

VOICE ONE: What do you mean "strangely"?

JOHN: In the valley of the blind, I'm the one-eyed man.

VOICE ONE: Meaning?

JOHN: They know I'm getting special treatment.

VOICE ONE: How?

JOHN: For a psychologist you ask a lot of stupid questions. Dr. Worthing, you should learn to open your eyes. Because I am different from the rest.

VOICE ONE: You're an alleged murderer.

JOHN: And?

VOICE ONE: And you're gay.

JOHN: Always been the case, hasn't it? Separate from the rest of the world. Even in prison. I'm not sure if I should be grateful in this instance.

VOICE ONE: What else have you been doing?

JOHN: Giving the warden intense blow jobs.

VOICE ONE: What else?

JOHN: Reading.

VOICE ONE: Reading what?

JOHN: A book.

VOICE ONE: What is the book about?

JOHN: The history of Chinese art.

VOICE ONE: Oh.

JOHN: It's either that or cowboy novels with half the pages missing.

VOICE ONE: I can bring you another book the next time.

JOHN: No. Thanks.

VOICE ONE: Good book, is it?

JOHN: Why are you so interested in making small talk?

VOICE ONE: Can't I be friendly?

JOHN: You have ulterior motives.

VOICE ONE: Why are you so defensive?

JOHN: Am I? I thought I was offensive.

VOICE ONE: How far have you gotten? In the book, I mean.

JOHN: You'll find me under Chinese porcelain.

VOICE ONE: First made by the Chinese.

JOHN: Very impressive, Dr. Worthing.

VOICE ONE: I do have that fascination, you know.

JOHN: The fascinating thing about porcelains is the process. Coarse stone powders and clay fused by intense temperatures to create something so delicate, fragile and beautiful. Two extremes, two opposites thrown together only to produce beauty. Like the fairy tale—*Beauty and the Beast*.

VOICE ONE: That's a fascinating—eh, interesting analogy. Let's take this a little further. Who do you see yourself as? Beauty or the beast?

JOHN: What do you mean?

VOICE ONE: In the context of the whole incident. In Bethnal Green. Do you see yourself as Beauty or the beast?

JOHN: What do you see me as?

Scene 11.

JOHN covers his face with his hands. All the VOICES are looking at JOHN, taunting him, at first softly then gradually louder, like a shout. As the scene progresses, the VOICES get up and surround JOHN in a claustrophobic semicircle and yell at him.

VOICE ONE: Queer.

VOICE THREE: Chink.

VOICE FOUR: Poof.

VOICE TWO: Slit eyes.

VOICE ONE: Queer.

VOICE THREE: Chink.

VOICE FOUR: Cocksucker.

VOICE TWO: Slit eyes.

VOICE ONE: Queer.

VOICE THREE: Chink.

VOICE FOUR: Ugly.

VOICE TWO: Homo.

VOICE ONE: Queer.

VOICE THREE: Chink.

VOICE FOUR: Go away!

VOICE TWO: Chink.

VOICE ONE: Queer!

JOHN: No.

VOICE THREE: Chink!

VOICE FOUR: Go back to China!

VOICE TWO: Slit eyes!

VOICE ONE: Queer!

VOICE THREE: Homo!

JOHN: No.

(VOICES begin to overlap and yell.)

VOICE FOUR: Go back to Hong Kong!

VOICE TWO: Six shots.

VOICE ONE: Slit eyes!

VOICE THREE: Queer!

VOICE FOUR: A body falls.

VOICE TWO: You don't belong here!

VOICE ONE: Homo!

VOICE THREE: Chink!

VOICE FOUR: Bang!

JOHN: No.

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE ONE: Queer!

JOHN: No.

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE FOUR: Slit eyes!

JOHN (*louder*): No.

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE ONE: Chink!

VOICE THREE: Bang!

JOHN (*louder*): No!

VOICE FOUR: Homo!

VOICE TWO: Bang!

JOHN (*screams*): No!

Scene 12.

VOICE ONE: How about this one?

JOHN: Well, it—it does look like a flower.

VOICE ONE: Orchid? Daisy? Daffodil?

JOHN: A poppy. A red poppy.

VOICE ONE: Where did you see this red poppy?

JOHN: I don't remember.

VOICE ONE: What do you feel when you see this card?

JOHN: Sadness. A certain sadness.

VOICE ONE: I see.

JOHN: Yet, warmth.

VOICE ONE: Who do you see in it?

JOHN: Will.

VOICE ONE: William Hope?

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: What about him?

JOHN: Don't know. Just him and the red poppy.

VOICE ONE: We haven't spoken about William Hope.

JOHN: There's nothing to speak of.

VOICE ONE: Tell me something about him.

JOHN: He's dead.

VOICE ONE: What else?

JOHN: Surely, you must have a folder on him.

VOICE ONE: Yes, but I want to hear it from you.

JOHN: I don't want to talk about him.

VOICE ONE: Do you miss him?

JOHN: Why should I?

VOICE ONE: Shouldn't you?

JOHN: I don't miss him.

VOICE ONE: Really? It says in my folder that the two of you were involved in some capacity.

JOHN: That's correct.

VOICE ONE: Sexually?

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: I see.

JOHN: Tell me what you see, Dr. Worthing.

VOICE ONE: Only what you want me to see.

JOHN: So we're playing little mind games, aren't we?

VOICE ONE: You are. I'm not.

JOHN: This is all a trick, isn't it? Reverse psychology.

VOICE ONE: Whatever you say.

JOHN: Surely a leopard cannot change its spots.

VOICE ONE: As I said before, I have a job to do. I am here to help, if you want me to. If you don't, I'll try and do my job all the same.

JOHN: You're no fun.

VOICE ONE: Murder isn't fun.

JOHN: It can be.

VOICE ONE: Do you regret killing William Hope?

JOHN: No.

VOICE ONE: Why?

JOHN: Because he deserved it.

VOICE ONE: Do you miss him?

JOHN: You're repeating yourself, Dr. Worthing.

VOICE ONE: Well, do you?

JOHN: I don't—that's why I killed him.

VOICE ONE: Why did you do it?

JOHN: Because I hated him.

VOICE ONE: You hate him.

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: Really hate him.

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: How much do you hate him?

JOHN: Why are you asking me this question over and over again?

VOICE ONE: Just wanted to make sure. How much do you hate him?

JOHN: I don't know.

VOICE ONE: Hated him so much you murdered him in cold blood?

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: Hated him so much that you shot him six times.

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: Not one shot but six.

JOHN: Yes. Six.

VOICE ONE: Six shots. Two in the face. One in the throat. Two in the chest and one in the groin.

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: Six shots.

JOHN: I'm tired.

VOICE ONE: Six shots.

JOHN: Yes! What do you want from me?

VOICE ONE: Just the truth.

JOHN: I miss him.

Scene 13.

VOICE THREE: You said you had toilet sex before.

VOICE TWO: Yes. With a lot of men. A lot of men.

VOICE THREE: How many men?

VOICE FOUR: Can't say for sure.

VOICE TWO: Lost count after thirty.

VOICE THREE: Tell me about your experiences.

VOICE TWO: Ohhh, wouldn't you like to know, honey?

VOICE ONE: Are you sure no one will recognize me on television?

VOICE THREE: Why do you do it?

VOICE TWO: You know, that's a question I keep asking myself. I don't know. There's a strange kind of attraction to it. Kind of excitement.

VOICE THREE: What kind of excitement?

VOICE TWO: Sexual excitement. A certain kind of anonymity. It's like an exclusive ritual, a gentlemen's sex club.

VOICE ONE: I wouldn't go, but my wife doesn't like to kiss it.

VOICE FOUR: My girlfriend sucks like she's—she just doesn't do it the way I like it.

VOICE TWO: It's convenient. Like a supermarket. It's there. You walk in, get it, and go home. You don't even have to make small

talk, buy him a lager, or exchange phone numbers you know they'll never call.

VOICE FOUR: Those queers there like to suck cock—and they do it good. So I'm just obliging them. Could say I'm doing my bit for gay rights, you know what I mean? (*Laughs raunchily.*)

VOICE ONE: I think there's an element of danger to it, too—an element of being discovered. And that's why people like to fuck in parks, back alleys, toilets, offices, and planes. Don't you?

VOICE FOUR: No, I'm not being unfaithful to my girlfriend. I mean, I think being unfaithful to my girlfriend is having sex with another woman.

VOICE ONE: I'm not bisexual, no.

VOICE FOUR: My lover and I have a very open relationship.

VOICE ONE: I don't think there's much cottaging going on anymore, especially when most of the public lavs are shut down and there's always an attendant there. Not anymore. Cottaging went out with disco.

VOICE FOUR: I don't know why there's cottaging. Maybe it has to do with the boarding school system or something.

VOICE TWO: You'll simply have to die when you hear this. I got sucked off by an Anglican priest. Swear to God. See, he preaches in my parish. Didn't recognize me. What a lark! Never thought they'd take the get-down-on-your-knees thing quite so seriously.

VOICE THREE: How old were you when you first had this experience?

VOICE FOUR: About seventeen, and it happened in a shopping center in North London. Whitelands.

VOICE TWO: Yeah, once I got fucked in the toilet by this blond Adonis. It was a good fuck. Safe sex, of course. My arse just tingles when I think about it. Oh, can I say that on television?

VOICE ONE: It's really unsafe nowadays to be doing toilets. This thing with AIDS is quite frightening. Who knows what type of people are in there?

VOICE FOUR: I know you can't get it from sucking, but who knows?

VOICE THREE: If there weren't AIDS, would you do the toilets?

VOICE FOUR: If the coppers weren't snooping about, maybe.

VOICE ONE: Yeah, why not?

VOICE TWO (*airily and in a camp voice*): Not anymore. This girl needs a spring mattress, a down pillow, and the West End soundtrack of *Camelot* before she can do the wild thing. (*He snaps his fingers in a dramatic way.*)

Scene 14.

VOICE ONE *gently touches* JOHN's shoulder. JOHN notices his touch but says nothing.

VOICE ONE: I know what you're feeling.

JOHN: You don't know what I am feeling. Stop trying to say something you don't mean. How can you possibly know what I'm feeling?

VOICE ONE: Because I've lost someone, too. She didn't die, but a loss is a loss.

JOHN: We're not in the same situation.

(VOICE ONE *returns to his chair.*)

VOICE ONE: Let's get back to the cards. This reminds you of a red poppy. Somehow you're reminded of William Hope. When did you first meet him?

JOHN: Two—no, three—months ago. January.

VOICE ONE: Where?

JOHN: I don't want to talk about him.

VOICE ONE: Why not?

JOHN: I just don't want to.

VOICE ONE: There must be a reason.

JOHN: I don't have a reason, just a feeling.

VOICE ONE: Of?

JOHN: Pain.

VOICE ONE: You can get rid of this pain by talking about it.

JOHN: I know. But somehow—I like this pain—I need it.

VOICE ONE: Where did you meet William Hope?

JOHN: In a public toilet.

VOICE ONE: Which one?

JOHN: That one.

VOICE ONE: Bethnal Green?

(JOHN *nods*.)

VOICE ONE: And?

JOHN: I was sitting in the cubicle.

VOICE ONE: Cubicle doing what?

JOHN: Waiting.

VOICE ONE: Waiting for what?

JOHN: Waiting.

VOICE ONE: I see.

JOHN: It was late afternoon—cold—

(VOICE FOUR *plays William Hope character*.)

VOICE FOUR: About four-thirty, five— Since work was quiet that day, I decided to knock off early and thought I'd make a quick trip to the loo—you know—before going home.

JOHN: Things were quiet that Thursday—

VOICE FOUR: I don't know why, but I went into the lav at Bethnal Green— Guess I live close by, and I've been there before and some chappies got me off.

JOHN: And Will came in—

VOICE FOUR: I went in—thinking, you know, that someone might be there. There's always someone there—if there isn't—you wait. Things do happen, you know. They usually do.

JOHN: At first I thought he was just going to take a piss— Then he started to walk around the toilet. I just kept still in my cubicle—hearing his footsteps.

VOICE FOUR: At first I thought there wasn't anybody there. It was pretty quiet. So I started to check out—

JOHN: He started to walk by the cubicles—really slowly—deliberately. I don't know why, but I was anxious—my heart is beating away—I mean, I've done this before, but I always get—anxious. And—then he passed mine—my cubicle and—he stopped. He wasn't handsome, but he was—attractive. Dark hair, dark eyes. Something magnetic about his features—almost rough yet—gentle. Though he stood in front of my cubicle for a few seconds, it seemed like an eternity.

VOICE FOUR: There was an Oriental bloke—Chinese, Japanese, or something looking at me. He's—not bad looking—looks like any other Chink, I guess—

JOHN: He smiled.

VOICE FOUR: He just kept looking—just sitting there—and I wasn't in the mood to play the usual cat-and-mouse games, so I nodded to him.

JOHN: And I nodded. He came into the stall, and we started looking at each other. He shut the door gently behind him—all the while he kept staring at me. It was arresting.

VOICE FOUR: I've never got it off with an Oriental before, you know. They're not my type generally. But there wasn't anyone else around, and a mouth is a mouth. And it looks as if he has never done it before. Could be an act, for all I know—the innocent puppy dog look. He looked so—what's the word? Fragile? Yeah. Fragile. I touched his face.

JOHN: His rough, warm hands touched my face, my head—and he pulled me close—to his crotch—

VOICE FOUR: And rubbed his face around it. I was about to burst in my jeans. My hands cradling his soft, black hair. Then he—

JOHN: Unzipped his jeans and took it out. Hard.

VOICE FOUR: It was a warm feeling. Nice.

JOHN: It was—

VOICE FOUR: Good—good—

JOHN: Yes—good—

VOICE FOUR: Yes—yes—yes—yes—slow—slow—

JOHN: Hmm—slow—

VOICE FOUR: Hmm—yeah—oh god—oh god—

JOHN: He came over my shirt.

VOICE FOUR: In powerful spurts.

JOHN: Warm and sticky.

VOICE FOUR (*breathing heavily*): That felt good. Felt really nice. It was—

JOHN: Beautiful.

VOICE FOUR: A great blow job.

JOHN: It was—beautiful.

VOICE FOUR: I mean, don't get me wrong. I'm not a queer or anything, but like the other boys I like to—get off. It's just a physical thing, you know. It's just sex.

VOICE ONE: There, wasn't that simple?

JOHN: I feel so—

VOICE ONE: Vulnerable?

JOHN: I don't like to be—

VOICE ONE: I know. None of us do.

JOHN: I know where I remember seeing the picture of the red poppies. Will has this print that quite looks like that. He hangs it by his bed.

Scene 15.

VOICE THREE: Mr. Lee? You're Mr. Lee, aren't you? Excuse me, Mr. Lee?

VOICE TWO: I am no Mr. Lee. Wrong person.

VOICE THREE: But I spoke to—

VOICE TWO: I no Mr. Lee. I no Mr. Lee.

VOICE THREE: Mr. Lee, I'm Alan White from Channel Four, perhaps you've seen me on—

VOICE TWO: Go away.

VOICE THREE: Mr. Lee, we're doing a special documentary about your son's—

VOICE TWO: Please. Please go away.

VOICE THREE: Mr. Lee, have you anything to say about your son's arrest last week?

VOICE TWO: Don't know what you say.

VOICE THREE: Your son who was—

VOICE TWO: No son.

VOICE THREE: There was a fatal shooting in Bethnal Green—

VOICE TWO: No son.

VOICE THREE: Aren't you the father of John Lee?

VOICE TWO: I have no son.

VOICE THREE: But my—

VOICE TWO: No son.

VOICE THREE: Are you—

VOICE TWO: I have no son! I have no son!

VOICE THREE: Mr. Lee?

VOICE TWO: No son! No son! My son is dead.

Scene 16.

JOHN: Then what happened?

VOICE ONE: She had to go back to the States.

JOHN: She's probably waiting for your call.

VOICE ONE: You think so?

JOHN: I know so. Do you love her?

VOICE ONE: I think so. Back to work.

JOHN: Let's talk some more about—

VOICE ONE: Later. Why cottaging?

JOHN: Why do you go to the pubs every night?

VOICE ONE: That's not the same thing.

JOHN: It is.

VOICE ONE: Let's start again. Why cottaging?

JOHN: I don't know.

VOICE ONE: Do you find it exciting—having sex in toilets?

JOHN: No. Yes, but that's not the reason I—

VOICE ONE: You have difficulty meeting men for sex.

JOHN: No, not really.

VOICE ONE: Difficulty in meeting men?

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE ONE: What about the clubs? Don't you go—

JOHN: Sure, I go. Sometimes. And sometimes I wonder why I even bother.

VOICE ONE: Why?

JOHN: Because everyone there looks intimidating, dressed to the nines. Most of them talk among themselves, have a good time, laughing and drinking with their perfect smiles and perfect hair. And I spend the whole night standing alone in a dark corner. Pretending I'm having a barrel of laughs, pretending I'm having a good time. Pretending I'm enjoying the music. Tapping my feet and nodding my head to the rhythm. And waiting for someone to say something to me. Something nice. Say anything to me. Perhaps it's just that I'm Oriental.

VOICE ONE: Why do you say that?

JOHN: White guys aren't into Orientals.

VOICE ONE: There must be some.

JOHN: Some. Old ones maybe. Looking for a houseboy. Trying to relive the old colonial days. Or they are just fascinated by our culture. Like you. I know I'm not being fair, but that's the way I feel. Sometimes I wish I was— *(He laughs.)*

VOICE ONE: What's so funny?

JOHN: Nothing.

VOICE ONE: Tell me.

JOHN: I wanted to say—sometimes I wish I was—

VOICE ONE: What?

JOHN: White.

VOICE ONE: Why?

JOHN: I don't know. I see pictures of handsome, white guys hugging, kissing, holding hands in magazines like they were meant for each other. Always white guys. But always happy. Always together. Even in pornography. I see good-looking white guys fucking each other, making love to each other. I don't know. I see myself in those pictures, those magazines, videos. Suddenly I'm that beautiful white guy everybody wants to make love to. I don't know. Maybe it's just I've always found it difficult to—

VOICE ONE: Blend in?

JOHN: No. To belong.

VOICE ONE: What would you like to say to those people in the gay clubs?

JOHN: Nothing.

VOICE ONE: There must be something. Let's pretend I'm one of those people in the clubs.

JOHN: This is stupid.

VOICE ONE: It's not. Come on.

JOHN: I don't know what to say.

VOICE ONE: Say whatever's on your mind. Tell me how you feel. I am one of those people you see in a club every weekend. I am standing here with my friends.

JOHN: I can't.

VOICE ONE: Try, John. Tell me how and what you've been feeling.

JOHN: I don't know what to say.

VOICE ONE: Try saying hello.

JOHN: Hi.

VOICE ONE: Hi. *(Pause.)* Yes?

JOHN: I want—to let you know—that I wish you were a little more receptive, more hospitable, welcoming—

VOICE ONE: Carry on.

JOHN: It's not too much to ask, is it? After all, aren't we the same? Can you perhaps smile in my direction? Perhaps speak to me.

VOICE ONE: And?

JOHN: We—we don't have to sleep together. We don't have to—fuck. Maybe we can be friends. Maybe we can dance a little. Maybe see a movie, have dinner together. Maybe laugh a little. Maybe something. I can't anymore, let's stop this.

VOICE ONE: That's good.

JOHN: What's good? I may think all these thoughts, but then I'm back where I started. I find myself standing in that dark corner again. People passing me by. Not smiling. Not saying a word. And I go home alone. It's not so bad going home alone—except sometimes I wish—

VOICE ONE: Yes.

JOHN: To be honest with you, I hate the toilets. I really do—but there's this trembling in me when I'm there—I don't know what it is, but I like it—I enjoy it. And—and there's people there who

want me. Even for a moment. And the idiot that I am—thinking I really belong—thinking perhaps all these moments will amount to something—someone who will—like me, love me— Isn't that the silliest thing you've heard?

VOICE ONE: No.

JOHN: It's sick.

VOICE ONE: No.

JOHN: I just want to be held by these men. For a moment, they do.

Hold me. And almost all the time, I treasure that moment. The moment they smile. Then I go back and take a long, hot shower. Washing off every memory, every touch, and every smell. Only it never quite leaves me. No matter how hard or how long I wash. The dirt, filth penetrates deep into your skin. And for a time I'd try to stay away from the toilet, until that familiar loneliness—the need to be held. It's strange. This feeling. This marriage of dirt and desire. The beauty and the beast. It's pathetic. Sometimes I hate myself.

(JOHN crushes a paper crane.)

Scene 17.

VOICE ONE: The door of the toilet stall.

VOICE FOUR: Open.

VOICE TWO: John is leaning.

VOICE THREE: Against the wall.

VOICE ONE: Looking spent.

VOICE FOUR: Eyes shut.

VOICE TWO: Tight.

VOICE THREE: A young man.

VOICE ONE: Kneeling on the floor.

VOICE FOUR: Gets up.

VOICE TWO: Pulls up his jeans.

VOICE THREE: Zips himself up.

VOICE ONE: Buckles his belt.

VOICE FOUR: The young man.

VOICE TWO: Throws a ball of toilet paper.

VOICE THREE: Into the bowl.

VOICE ONE: Spits twice.

VOICE FOUR: Gently pats John.

VOICE TWO: On the butt.

VOICE THREE: Walks quickly away from the stall.

VOICE ONE: Quickly, as if he has something to hide.

VOICE FOUR: John watches him leave.

VOICE TWO: Sits down.

VOICE THREE: Closes the door.

VOICE ONE: He looks up.

VOICE FOUR: At the toilet ceiling.

VOICE TWO: Paint peeling.

VOICE THREE: Interesting shapes.

VOICE ONE: Patterns.

VOICE FOUR: Like the clouds in the sky.

VOICE TWO: Like the blot test cards.

VOICE THREE: It can be anything you want it to be.

VOICE ONE: Depending on how you see it.

VOICE FOUR: And where.

VOICE TWO: In the meanwhile, John sits.

VOICE THREE: Waiting.

VOICE ONE: Waiting.

VOICE FOUR: Waiting.

VOICE TWO: And waiting.

Scene 18.

VOICE THREE: Tell me, officer, in what capacity were you involved with the recent arrest in the toilets at Holland Park?

VOICE TWO: I arrested a suspect who was exposing himself to me.

VOICE THREE: Can you be more specific, please?

VOICE TWO: I was using the public convenience in Holland Park a few weeks ago.

VOICE THREE: Were you in uniform?

VOICE TWO: No.

VOICE THREE: Why?

VOICE TWO: I was off duty.

VOICE THREE: Really?

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: Undercover?

VOICE TWO: Uh—no.

VOICE THREE: Go on.

VOICE TWO: A man in his thirties beckoned to me.

VOICE THREE: What do you mean “beckoned”? Did he call you? Whisper to you? Signaled?

VOICE TWO: He nodded to me.

VOICE THREE: You've never seen this man before?

VOICE TWO: No.

VOICE THREE: I see. Please go on.

VOICE TWO: As I said, the gentleman beckoned to me. Saying he had something to show me. He went into the toilet stall, and I followed. Then he unzipped his trousers and started to play with— I arrested him for public indecency.

VOICE THREE: Let me see. He beckoned to you. Nodded, I mean.

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: He said he had something—

VOICE TWO: Something to show me. Yes.

VOICE THREE: You actually believed that he had something to—

VOICE TWO: Yes. I was curious.

VOICE THREE: I see, curious. And you followed him.

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: Into the cubicle.

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: Alone.

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: And he took off his trousers.

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: And you were standing there—still watching him.

VOICE TWO: That's right.

VOICE THREE: Then he started to fondle himself—and you were still standing there watching.

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: And after a while, you arrested him.

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: How long was this? Fifteen minutes? Ten minutes? Half an hour?

VOICE TWO: A minute. Thereabouts.

VOICE THREE: That long.

VOICE TWO: I had to be sure—

VOICE THREE: Sure that he was actually fondling his penis?

VOICE TWO: Right.

VOICE THREE: Stroking it?

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: Sounds like police entrapment.

VOICE TWO: Does it? It wasn't.

VOICE THREE: Thank you. I'll take your word for it.

Scene 19.

VOICE ONE: Then what happened?

JOHN: After we did what we did in the toilet, I thought Will was going to leave—you know, like the others—without a word—just walk away—but then—he asked me if I wanted to have a drink with him in a nearby pub.

VOICE FOUR: I don't know why I asked him after we got off at the loo. Listen, this isn't what I usually do. Make friends at the public loos. Guess I was thirsty and since there wasn't anyone else around in the loo that evening. And I had no plans. I thought after a few drinks at the corner pub I could ask him back to my place so that we could get off again. (*To JOHN.*) Hiya.

JOHN: Hi.

VOICE FOUR: What's your name?

JOHN: John.

VOICE FOUR: Will. Say, do you fancy a drink?

JOHN: Sure. Yes. (*A beat.*) Of course I went. I mean there was this guy who I wanted—fancied very much and he's asking me out. He had a lager and I had a Coke. We talked about what music we liked.

VOICE FOUR: Opera. Puccini.

JOHN: Pet Shop Boys.

VOICE FOUR: Oh.

JOHN: Books.

VOICE FOUR: Bronte.

JOHN: All of them?

VOICE FOUR: Yes.

JOHN: I don't read much, except for schoolbooks.

VOICE FOUR: Hmm.

JOHN: What do you do?

VOICE FOUR: I'm a builder.

JOHN: Really?

VOICE FOUR: Uh-huh.

JOHN: I'm going to Cambridge in a few months. But right now I'm working in a big furniture shop at Whitelands. You know it? They've got nice things. A bit pricey for me, I'm afraid. I'd love to be able to shop there one day, instead of just—oh, I used to work at my father's restaurant—as a waiter. Didn't like it, so I got this job at—

VOICE FOUR: Really.

JOHN: I've been rambling—

VOICE FOUR: No.

JOHN: Uh-huh.

VOICE FOUR: It's getting late.

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE FOUR: Listen, do you want to come over? To my flat?

JOHN: Sure.

VOICE FOUR: Good.

JOHN: And I spent the night there.

VOICE ONE: How did you feel?

JOHN: High like a kite. Like the whole world was under my feet.

Like nothing could go wrong. Nothing. I couldn't believe this was happening. To me, especially. We made love again and again. It was tender and urgent. That night was very special for me. Later in bed we talked a little more about what we liked, what we didn't. Less awkwardly than we did in the pub. He put on some music, hummed to it around the small flat and made some coffee. Then he talked about football. Suddenly his eyes lit up with a fiery green intensity. Going on about the F.A. Cup, which teams were his favorite and which teams were bound to make it to the finals. Don't know why. Don't know why all of a sudden I liked football. I never did before.

VOICE ONE: So William was very special to you then?

JOHN: I suppose so.

VOICE ONE: Then why did it happen?

JOHN: It just did.

Scene 20.

VOICE TWO: The crow flew across the field.

VOICE THREE: To the tree where the sparrows lived.

VOICE ONE: At first the sparrows looked at the crow.

VOICE FOUR: Some with suspicion and curiosity.

VOICE TWO: The others with fear, contempt, and hatred.

VOICE THREE: Time went by.

VOICE ONE: The crow couldn't be happier.

VOICE FOUR: It often flew with the sparrows.

VOICE TWO: Braving new heights.

VOICE THREE: A soul lost in love.

VOICE ONE: For the very first time, the crow felt free.

VOICE FOUR: Happy.

VOICE TWO: However, the crow flew haphazardly.

VOICE THREE: Ungracefully.

VOICE ONE: Clumsily.

VOICE FOUR: Often colliding with the other sparrows.

VOICE TWO: The sparrows were far too genteel.

VOICE THREE: Polite.

VOICE ONE: Embarrassed to say anything.

VOICE FOUR: Refused to confront the crow about its eating habits.

VOICE TWO: Shurping slimy worms in a vulgar fashion.

VOICE THREE: Eating voraciously.

VOICE ONE: Gorging greedily.

VOICE FOUR: Eating much more than the petite appetites the sparrows possessed.

VOICE TWO: Another topic of private discussion.

VOICE THREE: The crow's enthusiastic singing.

VOICE ONE: The sparrows chirped ever so heavenly.

VOICE FOUR: Mellifluously.

VOICE TWO: Superfluously.

VOICE THREE: The crow cawed hysterically.

VOICE ONE: An unbearable pitch.

VOICE FOUR: Out of tune.

VOICE TWO: Out of rhythm.

VOICE THREE: Loudly.

VOICE ONE: The sparrows winced painfully.

VOICE FOUR: Turned a deaf ear.

VOICE TWO: Smiled forcefully.

VOICE THREE: In time the sparrows accepted the crow.

VOICE ONE: Despite the way it ate.

VOICE FOUR: Flew.

VOICE TWO: And sang.

VOICE THREE: A part of their family.

VOICE ONE: The crow was happy.

Scene 21.

VOICE FOUR: Do you want to hear some music?

JOHN: Sure.

VOICE FOUR: What do you want to hear?

JOHN: Anything.

(VOICE FOUR *mimes putting on a CD.*)

JOHN: What's that?

VOICE FOUR: *Madame Butterfly*. It's my favorite.

JOHN: It's nice.

VOICE FOUR: Beautiful.

JOHN: What are they saying?

VOICE FOUR: "I'm happy now, so happy. Love me with a little love, a childlike love."

JOHN: Will, did you know it's been two weeks since we first met?

VOICE FOUR: Really?

JOHN: Yes. Can you believe it?

VOICE FOUR: What time is it?

JOHN: About eleven-thirty.

VOICE FOUR: I have to get up early tomorrow.

JOHN: Me too.

VOICE FOUR: I'm dead tired.

JOHN: I should go soon.

VOICE FOUR: Lie beside me.

JOHN: Hmm, I can hear your heart beating.

VOICE FOUR: You feel nice and smooth.

(*They kiss tenderly.*)

JOHN: You know something?

VOICE FOUR: What?

JOHN: I'm happy.

VOICE FOUR: Good.

JOHN: Really happy.

VOICE FOUR: Good.

JOHN: Will, we should go out the next time.

VOICE FOUR: The pictures?

JOHN: No.

VOICE FOUR: You mean to the pubs?

JOHN: Yeah, we always seem to stay in—not that I mind, of course.

VOICE FOUR: I'm not comfortable with those types of people.

JOHN: What do you mean?

VOICE FOUR: Well, I don't want to risk being recognized by anyone I know in those places.

JOHN: Sure, okay, I understand. Going to the pubs isn't that important, anyway. Besides I like being here. Being with you.

Scene 22.

VOICE TWO: Public sex has always been a part of the gay culture.
Parks and health club saunas and shower rooms and YMCAs.

VOICE THREE: Isn't it illegal in the U.K.?

VOICE TWO: Yes.

VOICE THREE: Why sex in public places?

VOICE TWO: I'm not sure I'm qualified to answer why gay people
are involved in such activities.

VOICE THREE: Do you think cottaging is a kind of perversion?

VOICE TWO: No, I don't think it's a perversion. Perhaps a better
word is "choice." After all, it's among consenting adults. The
cause of cottaging is directly related to the society's discrimi-
nation of homosexuals. Instead of providing a healthy and
acceptable environment for gay men to come out to the pub-
lic, they are often forced to meet other gay men in less than
conventional surroundings.

VOICE THREE: So you're saying that toilet sex is the fault of the
society?

VOICE TWO: No, I'm trying to say that it is the result of public
inacceptance and intolerance of gays that has led them to seek—

VOICE THREE: You have your clubs and pubs.

VOICE TWO: We also have job discrimination, police harassment,
gay bashings, poor AIDS health care—

VOICE THREE: What about AIDS? Don't you think—

VOICE TWO: AIDS should be a paramount concern for all those who
have sex in public places.

VOICE THREE: Do you think toilet sex spreads homosexuality?

VOICE TWO: One does not spread homosexuality, and besides not
only gay men are involved but bisexual and straight men like
yourself as well.

VOICE THREE: That doesn't answer—

VOICE TWO: If you'd excuse me, I feel that this interview must come
to an end. Does the word *homophobia* mean anything to you?

Scene 23.

VOICE ONE: Has Will treated you unkindly at all?

JOHN: No.

VOICE ONE: Not once?

JOHN: No.

VOICE ONE: Every couple must have their ups and downs.

JOHN: We had our differences.

VOICE ONE: What differences?

JOHN: Will could be—excitable.

VOICE ONE: Excitable?

JOHN: Aggressive.

VOICE ONE: Did you mind?

JOHN: I suppose not in the beginning, but later it started to—

VOICE ONE: To what?

JOHN: To hurt.

VOICE ONE: Uh-huh.

JOHN: He cared for me. I know he did. In his own way. There were times after we made love, he'd stroke my head, breathing softly. Soft brown hair. And skin like porcelain. Smooth. White. Pure. But there were times—

(VOICE ONE reaches for his lighter and cigarettes and is about to smoke.)

JOHN: You know, Jack, smoking isn't good for you. Cancer.

VOICE ONE: Yeah, I know.

JOHN: Hope I'm not being too—

VOICE ONE: You're not. Thanks.

JOHN: Sure. By the way, what's her name?

VOICE ONE: Whose name?

JOHN: The woman you were seeing.

VOICE ONE: Eh—Sue—Suzanne.

JOHN: Did you ring her?

VOICE ONE: Yes.

JOHN: And?

VOICE ONE: We're going to work it out.

JOHN: You know, we were happy. Will and I. Really happy together.

Scene 24.

The stage is pitch black. VOICE FOUR is drunk and is walking heavily on stage.

VOICE FOUR: Can't see a fucking thing in here.

JOHN: Do you want me to turn on the lights?

VOICE FOUR: No, no.

JOHN: Said you'd be here at eight. It's twelve now.

VOICE FOUR: Nag, nag, nag. Put on some music.

JOHN: What do you want to hear?

VOICE FOUR: Whatever's on the turntable.

JOHN: Not *Madame Butterfly* again.

VOICE FOUR: I like it.

JOHN: We always hear it.

VOICE FOUR: I thought you liked it.

JOHN: I did.

VOICE FOUR: Then put on something you like.

JOHN: What's this?

VOICE FOUR: *Carmen.* (VOICE FOUR hums to the music. Sounds of VOICE FOUR knocking against furniture.)

VOICE FOUR: Fuck. Where are you?

JOHN: Here.

VOICE FOUR: Where's here?

JOHN: By the bed.

VOICE FOUR: How convenient.

JOHN: I'm not in the mood.

VOICE FOUR: You will be.

JOHN: Ouch. Stop it. You're hurting me.

VOICE FOUR: You like it.

JOHN: I don't. (Pause.) Ouch. Will!

VOICE FOUR: Come here.

JOHN: You're late.

VOICE FOUR: So?

JOHN: You kept me waiting for hours.

VOICE FOUR: It's only a few hours.

JOHN: Where were you?

VOICE FOUR: At the pub.

JOHN: Again?

VOICE FOUR: Why are you so possessive?

JOHN: You kept me waiting.

VOICE FOUR: You had the bloody telly.

JOHN: I came over to see you, not watch telly.

VOICE FOUR: Come here and touch it.

JOHN: Stop it.

VOICE FOUR: You want it. Come on.

JOHN: No.

VOICE FOUR: I'm horny.

JOHN: You're drunk.

VOICE FOUR: I'm not.

JOHN: You smell of lager.

VOICE FOUR: You smell of talcum.

JOHN: I hate it when you're like that.

VOICE FOUR: I'm hard.

JOHN: Get off me now!

VOICE FOUR: You want it.

(Sound of JOHN's chair falling on the floor, followed by sounds of a violent struggle.)

JOHN: You're hurting me.

VOICE FOUR: You like that.

JOHN: I don't.

VOICE FOUR: Suck it.

JOHN: No.

VOICE FOUR: Suck it.

JOHN: Fuck you.

(Sound of a slap.)

JOHN *(whimpering)*: That hurts.

VOICE FOUR: That'll teach you, you fucking tease.

(Sound of a struggle.)

JOHN: Will, stop it. Stop it.

VOICE FOUR: Suck this.

(Sound of gagging.)

VOICE FOUR: You like it, don't you? Come on, tell me you like it.

(JOHN responds inaudibly, still gagging.)

VOICE FOUR: That's it. Take it all in, you cocksucker.

(JOHN again responds gaggingly and in deep breaths.)

VOICE FOUR: Yeah, yeah. That's good. Lick my balls. Lick it. Now, suck it. Hard. Yeah. *(He breathes hard.)* Stop. I don't want to come yet. Turn over. I want to fuck you.

JOHN: No.

(Sound of a vicious slap.)

VOICE FOUR: Shut the fuck up.

JOHN: Will.

(Another slap.)

VOICE FOUR: You want it. My big cock up your arse.

JOHN: Condom.

VOICE FOUR: Fuck condoms.

JOHN: You promised you'd use—

VOICE FOUR: Shut up.

JOHN: Condoms.

(Suddenly JOHN screams in agony.)

VOICE FOUR: Yes. Nice and tight, the way I like it.

JOHN *(moaning)*: Will. Take it out. Now.

VOICE FOUR: It feels good.

JOHN: Will. Condom. Please.

VOICE FOUR: Tight.

JOHN: Put it on.

VOICE FOUR: Yes.

JOHN: Will.

VOICE FOUR: You like my tongue in your ear?

JOHN: Don't. *(Pause.)* Mmm.

VOICE FOUR: Feels good.

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE FOUR: Do I feel good?

JOHN: You feel good.

VOICE FOUR: Do you like it?

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE FOUR: You wanted it, didn't you?

JOHN: Yes.

VOICE FOUR: Tell me you want it.

JOHN: I want it. Yes.

VOICE FOUR: Say it again.

JOHN: I want it.

VOICE FOUR: I can't hear you.

JOHN: I want it!

VOICE FOUR: Louder.

JOHN *(loudly)*: I want it!

VOICE FOUR: Want what?

JOHN: You! I want you! I want you! I want you! I love you.

VOICE FOUR: I'm coming!

(VOICE FOUR groans. Both he and JOHN breathe hard and slow. Then silence.)

Scene 25.

VOICE TWO: They cannot see? See me?

VOICE THREE: No. You'll be in silhouette.

VOICE TWO: See-lo-what?

VOICE THREE: You'll be in shadows.

VOICE TWO: I'm in shadows. Okay. Shadows.

VOICE THREE: And the money will be—

VOICE TWO: Don't want to talk. About money now. Not now.

VOICE THREE: Tell me about John. John Lee. Your son.

(Pause.)

VOICE TWO: I have only one son. Lone. I don't know why he change his name to John—English. Maybe he want to be like English friends in school—not be different. Be like them. I remember one day—when he was in primary school—he come home from school—clothes all dirty—got mud all over—school tie torn—books in schoolbag all tear up—small pieces—his hands, legs, nose all got blood—but he never say one word. Nothing. But this is life. Life here. Have to accept. Have to learn. Even change name cannot do anything. He don't like much Chinese way of life. Always question the way Chinese live, Chinese speak. He once criticize way I speak English—I angry, hit him across face till red. Again he never say one word. Give him work here at restaurant. Don't want to work here. Say don't under-

stand people speaking Chinese, so how can take order? He find another job in furniture shop. Deep inside, I know he hate working here. Remind him too much of who he is. Where he came from. I come from Singapore long time—in sixties—sacrifice everything I have so children can have good life in England. Think children will be able to be better than other children in Singapore. But think I make mistake. Big mistake. I have daughter who shame my family. Go about with a lot of white men. Stay at their house at night. I know. I know. Times not the same. Different. Have to accept. Now I have son who no respect me. But he intelligent and go to university very soon. Now no more university. No more son. Neighbor all talk behind my back—of murder. In toilet. Bethnal Green. I so ashamed. So angry. Every morning open restaurant in Gerard Street selling noodle bowls, rice plates. People polite, but I know their minds, their hearts. I see it in eyes. Those silent eyes very loud. My wife pretend nothing happen. Pretend everything okay. Everyone all pretending around me. All pretending. My son no commit crime. No commit murder. My son no homo. No homo! He cannot be—I—I have no son. Son is dead. Dead to me. Dead. Perhaps better he change his name to English. Be someone else.

Scene 26.

JOHN: You look like shit.

VOICE ONE: Late night.

JOHN: Again?

VOICE ONE: I'm predictable.

JOHN: Why do you do that so often?

VOICE ONE: Do what often?

JOHN: Go out to the pubs and drink.

VOICE ONE: Because I can't think of anything better to do.

JOHN: Really?

VOICE ONE: I need to—

JOHN: Get laid.

VOICE ONE: Let's get back to the session. Tell me what happened that afternoon at Bethnal Green.

JOHN: Nothing.

VOICE ONE: Stop fucking about! I thought we had an honest relationship.

JOHN: We do.

VOICE ONE: Then?

JOHN: I don't want to talk about it.

VOICE ONE: You'll have to. Sooner or later.

JOHN: I don't.

VOICE ONE: Listen, you've got to bloody confront it once and for all.

JOHN: You're only here to finish a report.

VOICE ONE: Yes. But I'm also here to help—

JOHN: I don't want your help, I've told you.

VOICE ONE: You need my help.

JOHN: No, I don't.

VOICE ONE: Well, fuck you! Yes. Fuck you. Fuck all of this.

JOHN: You'll never understand. You can't—

VOICE ONE: How do you know I won't understand if you don't tell me the story. We've been playing this pissy, merry-go-round question-and-answer session all week and I've gotten nowhere. I want to fucking know what happened.

JOHN: No.

VOICE ONE: You're always so fucking high and mighty about how people don't understand where you're coming from. So you're Oriental—a Chink. So you're gay, poof, queer. So what? Now's your chance to tell me. To make me understand why you fucking did what you did.

JOHN: You'll never understand.

VOICE ONE: Maybe not. But tell me.

JOHN: No.

VOICE ONE: Come on, John. Try. Trust me.

(VOICE ONE *puts his hand on JOHN's shoulder.*)

JOHN: I don't know where to begin.

VOICE ONE: Where did you get the gun?

JOHN: It belonged to my father. Kept it in the restaurant. Just in case of robbers, he said. Said everyone had one, why shouldn't he? Don't know where he got the gun from. It's illegal, probably, just like Pa to do something like that. I took the gun from him.

VOICE ONE: Why?

JOHN: Maybe I just wanted to. Take the gun.

VOICE ONE: To shoot someone?

JOHN: Maybe.

VOICE ONE: William Hope?

JOHN: Maybe.

VOICE ONE: Why?

JOHN: Because.

VOICE ONE: Because?

JOHN: Because. (*Pause.*) He didn't speak to me for several days—days turned into weeks—I don't know—I tried ringing him—leaving messages—on his answering machine, but he didn't ring back. So that Saturday afternoon, I decided to go over to his flat. I wanted to see him. Just to talk or something. But when I arrived at his place, I didn't ring the doorbell. Didn't even

use the latch key he gave me. All I did was to stand outside a bus stop across the street. Looking at his flat with the gun in my jacket.

VOICE THREE: And what happened after that, John?

JOHN: Two—three hours later, he stepped outside. Will did. Probably taking a walk. I followed him. And all the time I was following him, I had an uncomfortable but certain feeling I knew where he was going.

VOICE THREE: To the lav in Bethnal Green.

JOHN: I said maybe not.

VOICE TWO: Maybe he's going to the tube station.

JOHN: Shopping.

VOICE THREE: Maybe a walk in the park.

JOHN: Maybe.

VOICE TWO: Maybe some groceries at Sainsbury's.

JOHN: Maybe a drink at the pub.

VOICE THREE: Maybe he's meeting some friends.

JOHN: What friends?

VOICE TWO: And?

JOHN: And he walked into the lav.

VOICE THREE: I was crushed.

VOICE TWO: Destroyed.

VOICE THREE: But I knew it.

JOHN: Maybe that's why I followed him.

VOICE TWO: To confirm my suspicions.

VOICE THREE: Maybe that's why I took the gun.

JOHN: Maybe.

VOICE TWO: The cheating bastard.

JOHN: I stopped outside. Didn't want to go in. Didn't dare.

VOICE THREE: Dare what?

JOHN: Dare to confront him.

VOICE TWO: Dare to hear the truth?

VOICE THREE: See the truth?

VOICE TWO: Dare to use the gun?

JOHN: I don't know.

VOICE THREE: Maybe he's really taking a piss.

VOICE TWO: Maybe.

VOICE THREE: Yeah. Right.

JOHN: I don't know. Then I saw people, men, going into the lav.

But no one came out. For the longest time. I kept fingering my gun.

VOICE TWO: That son of a bitch.

VOICE THREE: You are an idiot.

VOICE TWO: I knew it.

VOICE THREE: All the time.

VOICE TWO: Why? Why are you doing this?

VOICE THREE: Kill him.

JOHN: Feeling the cold steel in my pocket. I started making mental notes of who went in and who went out.

VOICE TWO: Young black guy with an Adidas sports bag.

VOICE FOUR: White guy in his thirties carrying the *Independent*.

VOICE THREE: Old man in a brown blazer.

VOICE FOUR: White boy with a baseball cap.

VOICE TWO: Still he didn't come out.

JOHN: Then when I thought no one was in there anymore, I walked into the lav.

VOICE THREE: The gun.

VOICE TWO: The loo was empty.

VOICE THREE: Deathly quiet.

VOICE TWO: Deathly still.

VOICE THREE: The gun pressed against his jacket.

VOICE TWO: Pressed against his beating heart.

JOHN: Then I saw Will in the cubicle. Pretending to take a piss.

VOICE THREE: He was pulling his cock.

VOICE TWO: Deliberately.

JOHN: He seemed surprised to see me.

VOICE THREE: Almost frightened.

VOICE TWO: Shocked.

JOHN: Hi.

VOICE FOUR: Hi. Fancy bumping into you, here of all places.

JOHN: Yes. Fancy that.

VOICE THREE: Awkward silence.

VOICE TWO: The gun.

VOICE THREE: Outside traffic noises.

VOICE FOUR: Eh—everyone's gone.

JOHN: Really.

VOICE FOUR: So how have you been?

JOHN: Good.

VOICE FOUR: You all right? You look kinda—

JOHN: You didn't call.

VOICE FOUR: I was busy. Work, you know.

JOHN: I rang. Left messages.

VOICE FOUR: I know.

JOHN: You could have called.

VOICE FOUR: I know, but I was busy—

JOHN: I must have left you a thousand messages.

VOICE FOUR: Yeah.

JOHN: I didn't hear from you at all.

VOICE FOUR: Listen, do you want to go outside so we can talk?

JOHN: No. Let's talk here. It's quieter.

VOICE FOUR: Outside.

JOHN: Here. I want to talk—

VOICE FOUR: All right, here. *(Pause.)* Well?

JOHN: You look—

VOICE TWO: John reached out to touch his face.

VOICE FOUR: I'm okay. Really.

VOICE THREE: Brushing me away.

VOICE TWO: The gun.

VOICE THREE: Against my heart.

JOHN: I—

VOICE TWO: Helpless.

VOICE THREE: Awkward.

VOICE TWO: Stupid.

VOICE FOUR: Look, sorry I didn't ring back.

JOHN: You said you were busy.

VOICE FOUR: I wasn't busy.

JOHN: I see. It's okay.

VOICE FOUR: No, it's not.

JOHN: It is. Really.

VOICE FOUR: Don't think you understand. Johnny, I like you—I really do—but—I think—

JOHN: We should stop seeing each other.

VOICE FOUR: Yes.

JOHN: Why?

VOICE FOUR: Don't like this situation, that's all.

JOHN: What situation?

VOICE FOUR: Us. Us meeting. Us doing things together.

JOHN: Us fucking each other.

VOICE FOUR: Yes.

JOHN: Why?

VOICE FOUR: Don't know why. I just don't want it.

JOHN: Then why are you here? (*Pause.*) I'm sorry.

VOICE FOUR: That's not the point.

JOHN: Forget it.

VOICE FOUR: Let me get to the point. It's over, okay?

JOHN: He said it very evenly—calm.

VOICE FOUR: We are history. Okay? I'm not what you think I am. I'm not that way. I enjoyed doing what we do. But I'm not—queer.

JOHN: Like me.

VOICE FOUR: Told you from the start that I date women, and I like to fool around with guys—you know just to get off—but I'm not like that—like you. And I don't want to play games, the idea of

hiding every time—hide and seek. People may start getting strange ideas about me and you—might start thinking we're queer—that I'm queer—something I'm not. Don't misunderstand, whatever we had—was great. I enjoyed it—had a great time—I know you did too—I don't know, but maybe I just didn't like the idea of turning—perhaps we could be friends.

JOHN: But I wasn't listening. Not a word. All I heard was—

VOICE FOUR: It's over.

VOICE TWO: It's over.

VOICE THREE: It's over.

JOHN: Like some strange, hypnotic melody dancing in my mind.

VOICE TWO: Intoxicating me.

VOICE THREE: Suffocating me.

JOHN: Somehow I anticipated this. I knew this was going to happen.

VOICE TWO: Him leaving.

JOHN: Him saying just that.

VOICE THREE: But he doesn't know better.

JOHN: Maybe that's why I took the gun.

VOICE TWO: Maybe.

JOHN: Maybe I was expecting he'd say this.

VOICE THREE: Maybe.

JOHN: He belonged to me. Only to me.

VOICE TWO: And you took the gun.

JOHN: To make him stay.

VOICE THREE: Force him to stay.

JOHN: No matter what. I was pleading—pleading with him.

VOICE TWO: Begging.

JOHN: Raising my voice. Anything to make him stay.

VOICE THREE: Please don't—

JOHN: Don't say—

VOICE TWO: Please, I'm sorry—

JOHN: I won't anymore.

VOICE FOUR: Listen, this has nothing to—

JOHN: Will, please, you can't—

VOICE FOUR: I'm not queer, Johnny! I'm not one of your kind. I—
I've got nothing against—you—your kind—at all. This whole
thing was all in your head. Shouldn't have allowed it to hap-
pen the way it did—it went too far.

JOHN: I felt so helpless.

VOICE TWO: Desperate.

VOICE FOUR: It's over.

VOICE THREE: Angry.

VOICE TWO: Hurt.

VOICE FOUR: It's over.

VOICE THREE: Pained.

VOICE TWO: The gun.

VOICE THREE: In your jacket.

VOICE TWO: Waiting.

VOICE FOUR: Hey, Johnny, I'm sorry. Really am.

VOICE ONE: Final scene in Bizet's *Carmen*.

VOICE TWO: No.

JOHN: Don't go.

VOICE THREE: Not yet.

VOICE TWO: Please.

VOICE ONE: The Death Scene.

JOHN: Will smiled that smile, that familiar smile I always see in
my mind whenever he's away from me.

VOICE THREE: He shrugged his shoulders.

VOICE ONE: Don José arrives at the bullring.

VOICE TWO: Will put his hands in his pockets.

VOICE THREE: And started to walk out of the toilet.

VOICE ONE: Don José begs for Carmen's love.

JOHN: I wanted to shout but no sound came out. No words.

VOICE TWO: You have a gun.

VOICE ONE: Carmen declares it's over between them.

VOICE THREE: You can make him stay.

VOICE TWO: Force him to stay.

VOICE ONE: Don José implores Carmen to return to him.

VOICE THREE: Then maybe he'll change his mind.

VOICE TWO: He'll see things your way.

VOICE ONE: A triumphant shout from the bullring!

VOICE THREE: Understand what you're trying to say.

VOICE TWO: What you feel.

VOICE ONE: The matador has plunged his sword into the bull.

VOICE THREE: Stay.

VOICE ONE: Plunge!

VOICE TWO: Stay.

VOICE ONE: Plunge!

VOICE THREE: Please stay.

VOICE ONE: Plunge!

VOICE TWO: Your gun.

VOICE ONE: Carmen admits the matador is her new lover.

JOHN: Then I remembered the gun.

VOICE THREE: Take it out.

VOICE TWO: Now!

VOICE ONE: The matador stabs the bull with his glistening blade.

JOHN: Took it out of my jacket.

VOICE ONE: Stab!

VOICE THREE: Aim.

VOICE ONE: Stab!

VOICE TWO: Shoot!

VOICE ONE: Stab!

VOICE THREE: He's walking away.

VOICE ONE: Don José realizes Carmen doesn't love him anymore.

VOICE THREE: He used you.

VOICE TWO: Like everyone else.

JOHN: I—I pointed it at his back.

VOICE THREE: I won't be used again.

VOICE TWO: Stay.

VOICE THREE: I want you.

VOICE TWO: Don't go.

VOICE ONE: Rage and despair overwhelms Don José.

VOICE THREE: Fuck you.

VOICE TWO: You're like the fucking rest.

VOICE THREE: A quick feel.

VOICE TWO: A willing mouth.

VOICE THREE: And a willing arse.

VOICE ONE: Don José pulls out his knife.

VOICE TWO: Love me.

VOICE THREE: Please stay.

JOHN: Stay!

VOICE ONE: The lusty knife glistening in the afternoon light.

VOICE FOUR: What the fuck?

VOICE TWO: Gun pointing to Will.

VOICE FOUR: You're bloody crazy.

VOICE ONE: The crowd cheers "Viva, viva!"

VOICE TWO: Queer!

VOICE ONE, TWO, and THREE: Viva! Viva!

VOICE THREE: Chink!

VOICE ONE, TWO, and THREE: Viva! Viva!

VOICE TWO: Poof!

VOICE ONE, TWO, and THREE: Viva! Viva!

VOICE THREE: Homo!

VOICE ONE, TWO, and THREE: Kill it!

JOHN: It is loaded.

VOICE THREE: Will looked at him.

VOICE TWO: In disbelief.

VOICE THREE: Snarled.

VOICE TWO: As if daring him to shoot.

VOICE ONE: Carmen laughs.

VOICE TWO: Will continued to go.

VOICE THREE: Stay.

VOICE TWO: What else can I do?

VOICE THREE: You're not walking out.

VOICE ONE: Don José raises the knife to his blood-red eyes.

JOHN: Will?

VOICE TWO: The gun trembled.

VOICE ONE: The matador thrusts his sword into the bull.

VOICE THREE: Don't go.

VOICE TWO: The gun swayed.

VOICE THREE: You're not going anywhere.

VOICE ONE: The bull collapses.

VOICE TWO: Under his sweaty fingers.

VOICE THREE: Stay!

VOICE ONE: The bullring is swimming in a sea of blood.

VOICE TWO: Wrapping around the trigger.

VOICE THREE: Stay!

VOICE ONE: The crowd is cheering and throwing roses.

VOICE TWO: Cock the pistol.

JOHN: Then I started to squeeze the trigger.

VOICE TWO: Bullet in the chamber.

VOICE THREE: Ready to fire.

JOHN: Will?

VOICE TWO: He continued walking.

VOICE ONE: Don José plunges the knife into Carmen.

JOHN: I love you.

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE TWO: His body crumpled.

VOICE THREE: Like a paper crane against a flame.

VOICE TWO: And he fell against the white urinal.

VOICE THREE: His right hand clutching a side of the urinal.

VOICE TWO: Holding tight.

VOICE THREE: He was in shock.

VOICE TWO: You're not going.

JOHN: My hands were shaking.

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE THREE: Another shot.

VOICE TWO: You're staying.

VOICE THREE: You need me!

VOICE TWO: You love me.

VOICE THREE: We'll be together.

VOICE ONE: Don José lifts the bloodstained knife.

VOICE TWO: We'll be happy.

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE ONE: The knife plunges again!

JOHN: My eyes were closed tight. When I opened them, I found him on the floor.

VOICE TWO: Spread-eagled.

VOICE THREE: He was still moving.

VOICE TWO: Tough son of a bitch.

VOICE THREE: Gagging sounds.

VOICE TWO: Struggling towards the door of the toilet.

VOICE ONE: He was determined to walk out.

JOHN: Determined to leave me.

VOICE TWO: Motherfucker.

VOICE THREE: You cannot leave.

VOICE TWO: You'll stay.

VOICE ONE: Bang!

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE THREE: Six shots.

VOICE TWO: Then he was still.

VOICE ONE: No more cheering.

VOICE THREE: His body lay limp on the cold mosaic floor.

VOICE TWO: I've never seen so much red in my life.

VOICE THREE: Except when I was a child.

VOICE TWO: In Singapore.

VOICE THREE: Chinese New Year.

VOICE TWO: Red firecrackers littered the narrow streets.

VOICE THREE: Like withered leaves in autumn.

VOICE TWO: The whole toilet was red.

VOICE THREE: The white porcelain turned red.

JOHN (*softly and calmly*): Suddenly I felt drained of all energy and dropped the gun. I limped slowly toward his lifeless body and held him. Tight. Called him. Gently. Will? Will? But he didn't respond. Didn't move. His silent eyes looking at me. Like the way they used to. Hot tears suddenly filled my eyes. I started to rock him. Slowly like a baby. My baby. And then—I kissed him. On his still bloody lips. Lips turning cold. Oh god, what have I done? I didn't want to—didn't mean to—what have I done—what have I— (*Beat.*) I wanted to scream. Wanted to die.

I kept staring at the toilet. The pretty mosaic tiles—with patterns—flower patterns. Pretty flower patterns. They looked like they were dancing. Flower patterns covered with blood—all over the white tiles—and the walls—and the urinals—they were all red. Red. Red. Oh my god, I shot him. I shot him. I shot him.

(*An awkward silence. Suddenly JOHN screams at the top of his voice. It's an animal cry, a cry of anguish and pain that he has been harboring all this time. He screams repeatedly.*)

Scene 27.

VOICE TWO: The crow was happy.

VOICE FOUR: Content.

VOICE ONE: A part of this feathered family.

VOICE THREE: It sang merrily.

VOICE TWO: Ate and flew.

VOICE FOUR: Slept.

VOICE ONE: Played with the sparrows.

VOICE THREE: The days passed.

VOICE TWO: The crow felt homesick.

VOICE FOUR: It dawned upon the crow.

VOICE ONE: It will never truly belong with them.

VOICE THREE: The beautiful, chirpy, graceful, little sparrows.

VOICE TWO: The black crow may sing, eat, or fly with them.

VOICE FOUR: It will never feel like one of them.

VOICE ONE: Never be one of them.

VOICE THREE: A sparrow.

VOICE TWO: The crow was disheartened.

VOICE FOUR: Once again.

VOICE ONE: The crow bade its farewells.

VOICE THREE: Flew across the green field.

VOICE TWO: Back to the tree.

VOICE FOUR: Back to its family of crows.

VOICE ONE: Where it belonged.

VOICE THREE: Where it truly belonged.

VOICE TWO: Or so the crow thought.

VOICE FOUR: The other crows welcomed it back.

VOICE ONE: They flew and ate with their old friend.

VOICE THREE: Something wasn't quite the same.

VOICE TWO: The crow flew in fanciful circles.

VOICE FOUR: In the air, soaring up and down.

VOICE ONE: The crow ate little.

VOICE THREE: A genteel fashion.

VOICE TWO: The crow burst into song.

VOICE FOUR: Songs it had once sung in the company of sparrows.

VOICE ONE: The other crows found the crow distant.

VOICE THREE: Different.

VOICE TWO: Strange.

VOICE FOUR: Peculiar.

VOICE ONE: Queer.

VOICE THREE: They began avoiding the crow.

VOICE TWO: The crow was never more alone.

VOICE FOUR: It didn't belong to the sparrows or the crows.

VOICE ONE: Again the black crow packed its belongings.

VOICE THREE: It flew away.

VOICE TWO: From the tree of crows.

VOICE FOUR: From the tree of sparrows.

VOICE ONE: In search of another tree.

VOICE THREE: Another field.

VOICE TWO: Another family.

VOICE FOUR: Another life.

Scene 28.

VOICE ONE: How are you doing today?

JOHN: Fine.

VOICE ONE: That's good.

JOHN: You're through with the analysis, aren't you?

VOICE ONE: Yes. I'm going to submit my findings this—

JOHN: And you'll be too busy to come by.

VOICE ONE: Well, there isn't really a need for me to—

JOHN: I see.

VOICE ONE: But—I will. Once I finish the report.

JOHN: We can talk—

VOICE ONE: Sure.

JOHN: I'd like that very much.

(JOHN reaches for VOICE ONE's hand and squeezes it.)

VOICE ONE: Yeah.

JOHN: Good.

(VOICE ONE squeezes JOHN's hand and pulls his hand away.)

VOICE ONE: I'll come by. *(Pause.)* Has anyone come by to see you at all?

JOHN: No one.

VOICE ONE: Your parents?

JOHN: They're too embarrassed to come.

VOICE ONE: Sorry.

JOHN: I'm not. Are there any questions you have that I haven't answered?

VOICE ONE: No, not really.

JOHN: I don't mind. Any questions. Any at all. Perhaps I haven't been clear or—

VOICE ONE: None. None at all.

JOHN: I see. *(Pause.)* You know, he meant the world to me.

VOICE ONE: I know.

JOHN: I think you should put that down in your report.

VOICE ONE: I will.

JOHN: I had so many plans for the both of us.

VOICE ONE: Uh-huh.

JOHN: Dreams. Things we'd do together.

VOICE ONE: But he's gone now, John.

JOHN: Who's gone?

VOICE ONE: William Hope.

JOHN: Oh no, he's not.

VOICE ONE: What do you mean?

JOHN: He'll never be gone. Now I have him where I want him.

VOICE ONE: I don't understand.

JOHN: I've finally got Will all to myself now.

Scene 28.

VOICE THREE: Cigarette?

VOICE ONE: Eh—no, thank you. I've quit.

VOICE THREE: So you were saying, Suzanne, the woman you said you were romantically involved with, doesn't exist?

VOICE ONE: No, I invented her.

VOICE THREE: Why?

VOICE ONE: To gain someone's trust, you have to blemish the truth.

VOICE THREE: You told John Lee a personal story, and he told you his.

VOICE ONE: Old trade secret.

VOICE THREE: You lied to him.

VOICE ONE: I got what I wanted.

VOICE THREE: Isn't that unethical?

VOICE ONE: Isn't the basis of this whole interview?

VOICE THREE: So you found John Lee sane during the time of the murder?

VOICE ONE: Yes, I found him sane.

VOICE THREE: Why?

VOICE ONE: He was sane, like most of us. It was more of a crime of

passion. He did truly love William Hope, but the relationship was not reciprocal.

VOICE THREE: Taking someone's life is a sane act?

VOICE ONE: No, but the circumstances surrounding the death were—
You see, not all of us have the intense passion that John possessed—passion enough to kill the person he loved.

VOICE THREE: Aren't you making this case a little more romantic than you should?

VOICE ONE: Perhaps. But I think you'd probably find the same answers I did by going through the case.

VOICE THREE: This is certainly quite a change from what you told me before.

VOICE ONE: Yes, I know.

VOICE THREE: What was the verdict?

VOICE ONE: Life without parole.

VOICE THREE: Thank you, Dr. Worthing. We'll leave it there. Have you been back to see John Lee since the trial?

VOICE ONE: Eh—no. But I will. I did promise him I would—when my work's a little lighter. Listen, I've got to go.

VOICE THREE: One last question, Dr. Worthing. You never told me why he folded those paper cranes?

VOICE ONE: A Japanese tradition that if you folded the paper cranes—a thousand of them—your wish would come true.

VOICE THREE: And what wish did John Lee have? For folding the thousand paper cranes?

VOICE ONE: You mean you can't guess?

Scene 29.

VOICE FOUR: Bang.

VOICE TWO: Bang.

VOICE ONE: Bang.

VOICE THREE: Bang.

VOICE TWO: Bang.

VOICE FOUR: Bang.

VOICE TWO: Six shots.

VOICE THREE: A body falls.

VOICE FOUR: Hot blood splatters.

VOICE TWO: On the peeling walls.

VOICE THREE: On the cold, hard floor.

VOICE ONE: Red flower.

VOICE TWO: Patterns.

VOICE THREE: On white.

VOICE FOUR: Mosaic tiles.

VOICE TWO: On cool.

VOICE THREE: White porcelain.

VOICE ONE: Smells of.

VOICE FOUR: Gun smoke.

VOICE THREE: Antiseptic.

VOICE TWO: Urine.

VOICE THREE: Semen.

VOICE ONE: A boy.

VOICE FOUR: Holding a man.

VOICE THREE: Two of them.

VOICE FOUR: Alone.

VOICE TWO: In a public toilet.

VOICE ONE: At Bethnal Green.

VOICE TWO: Outside the tube station.

VOICE FOUR: Beside a small park.

VOICE THREE: With flowers.

VOICE ONE: And some trees.

VOICE FOUR: And in one particular tree.

VOICE TWO: A lone black crow.

VOICE ONE: Sits comfortably.

VOICE THREE: On a branch.

VOICE FOUR: Cawing.

VOICE THREE: Cawing.

VOICE ONE: Watching painfully.

VOICE TWO: Watching longingly.

VOICE ONE: The sparrows.

VOICE FOUR: In a nearby tree.

VOICE THREE: Singing.

VOICE FOUR: Sweetly.

VOICE TWO: Without a care in the world.

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE ONE: Bang!

VOICE TWO: Bang!

VOICE FOUR: Bang!

VOICE ONE: Bang!

VOICE THREE: Bang!

VOICE TWO: Six shots.

JOHN: Two bodies fall.

(Short pause and then gradually louder, the overlapping cacophony of London street sounds once again fills the air.)

VOICE THREE: Tara, love. See you at four for tea. Don't forget the MacVities biscuits at the midnight shop. Chocolate ones, mind you—

VOICE ONE: Come on then, off to the pub. The F.A. Cup's about to start in a few minutes—

VOICE FOUR: Sorry, I can't come to the phone. Leave a message and I'll ring back. Bye—

VOICE TWO: Say, would you like to come in for a show? We've got topless girls—

VOICE THREE: Fucking terrorists. They've got the bleeding tubes all shut off because of a bomb scare. Now, how the fuck can I get to Camden?

VOICE FOUR: Do you want tickets to *Phantom*? I've got good seats for— Sorry, no speak Japanese. *Phantom*. Only one hundred quid for a ticket. Very little yen. Yes?—

VOICE ONE: Another crisis at Buckingham Palace. Now, next on the turntable is another member of the British royal family, Boy George—

VOICE THREE: (*Sound of cars honking.*)

VOICE TWO: (*Sound of an underground train leaving the platform.*)

VOICE FOUR: (*Sound of Big Ben striking four o'clock.*)

(JOHN finishes folding a paper crane and looks at it incredulously. He holds it on the palm of his hand and offers it to the audience. He smiles.)

End of Play.

A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN

