

# Meet the Parents

by Daniel Winterstein

## **Characters**

BEN, a black Englishman

LAURA, a Scottish woman

FATHER, an old Scottish man

MOTHER, an old Scottish woman

KIRSTY, a large Scottish teacher

SCOTT, an American tourist, loud and cheerful

EWEN, an abandoned bairn

MAD HAMISH McTAVISH

& a NARRATOR

*Naturally all accents should be exaggerated, and all characters hammed up.*

## **Part 1**

[A man and a woman stand nervously outside a house door.]

BEN: So.

[pause]

LAURA: [speaking with a distinct Scottish accent] Yeah.

[pause]

BEN: I finally meet your parents.

LAURA: I hope it goes okay. They - well, they're from a different generation. They might have some problems.

BEN: Is it because I'm black?

LAURA: It'll be okay. We love each other; they're going to have to accept it.

BEN: [nods]

LAURA: Right. [knocks on the door]

[An elderly man opens the door a crack.]

FATHER: [speaking with a strong Scottish accent] Is that ye Laura?

LAURA: Hello Father.

BEN: [in an English accent] Hello sir. [extends his hand] I'm Ben.

FATHER: [regards the proffered hand with open disgust]

LAURA: Look Dad, I want - [but she is cut off by her father]

FATHER: Can ye no see girl? He's a – a – an Englishman.

[An elderly woman bustles up to join the man.]

MOTHER: [cheerfully] Is this Laura's lad? Welcome!

FATHER: Dinnae invite him across the threshold Mother! He's no Scottish lad.

MOTHER: Well, wherever he's from, he's welcome.

FATHER: He be - English!

MOTHER: Arh! Is it true? Can it be true? [to the MAN, suspiciously] Say something.  
[she stares at him with a canny eye]

BEN: er, Hello Mrs McKay.

MOTHER: [almost fainting] Arh! Yer English! My Laura, what have ye done?!

LAURA: Mother!

MOTHER: He's no welcome in my hoose!

FATHER: Oot! oot!

MOTHER: [wailing] My own daughter!  
[faced with such a reception, the couple have no choice but to leave, the man angry, the girl upset.]  
[within the house, there is a sad pause]

MOTHER: Me little girl.

FATHER: Aye mother. 'Tis a sad thing.

MOTHER: Aye. Why can she no find hersel a nice Scottish lad?

FATHER: I blame meself. We should never have moved to Kent.

MOTHER: Aye.

## **Part 2**

### **Scene 1**

[A London flat. LAURA sits sobbing quietly.]

BEN: Your parent's approval - It's important to you.

LAURA: Aye.

BEN: I could tell by the way you'd been crying for days.

LAURA: [gentle sarcasm] That's what I love about you, your sensitive perceptive nature, the almost telepathic link you have to my feelings. [pause] They're my parents Ben. I can't go against their wishes. I'd hoped they'd be reasonable... but it's hopeless

BEN: Hmm. Maybe I can do something.

LAURA: What is there to do?

BEN: Well, sometimes people have to change for the ones they love. Look, I did some research. The Declaration of Arboath, 1320, does allow for non-Scots to become Scottish – providing they either pass a stringent set of gruelling tests, or are good rugby players. And I've found a course on being Scottish. What do you think?

LAURA: Sounds like a load of bollocks. But I guess it's worth a try.

### **Scene 2**

[A school classroom in Aberdeen. KIRSTY stands addressing a class consisting of BEN, SCOTT and EWEN]

KIRSTY: Welcome to the Aberdeen School for Scottishness, some weeks later.

I'm Kirsty, and I'll be training you in the rich history and culture of the Scottish people. Let's see, we have Scott who's American.

SCOTT: [speaking with a broad American accent] No ma'am. I'm Scottish.

KIRSTY: You're Scottish?

SCOTT: Yes sirree, my family's Scottish. I have a certificate, see, from the Royal Institute of Tourism. Scott Jefferson Junior (that's me) is descended from Robbie McJefferson of the McJefferson clan. Scott by name, Scot by nature!

KIRSTY: There's no McJefferson clan.

SCOTT: What?

KIRSTY: You've been had laddy. There's no McJefferson clan, and you're nae Scottish.

SCOTT: Yes I am! Hell, I ate 3 haggis for breakfast. I got my Nessie doll, my McJefferson tartan kilt, my bagpipes [he smacks the pipes, releasing a tuneless squeal] and of course, this.

KIRSTY: A fuckin' broadsword.

SCOTT: A *celtic* sword. Bought it together with the Nessie doll. Got a good bargain.

KIRSTY: And that makes you Scottish?

SCOTT: It's a traditional Scottish weapon.

KIRSTY: These days, we like to use our heads. [which she demonstrates by headbutting him. SCOTT is knocked cold] [continuing breezily] And Ben, who's English,

BEN: Good morning.

KIRSTY: And finally Ewen. [speaking in a sympathetic tone] He's a poor wee bairn, who was abandoned by his parents. They left him in some southern place called Eton, where he was raised by Englishmen [said as if it were 'raised by wolves']. [shakes her head sadly]

EWEN: Hello chaps! Thought I'd take a look round the old area. Just inherited some land up here - the Lothians it's called, been in the family for yonks. Evict the tenants and it should make a nice summer home.

KIRSTY: [still sympathetic] A bad case of english aristocraticness. But we're confident we can beat it out of him. [clouts EWEN, who falls over] Although we've beaten him pretty hard so far without much success.

### **Scene 3**

NARRATOR: Meanwhile in Kent...

FATHER: Ah, that smells grand Mother. There's nothing like a good Scottish breakfast to harden yer arteries and put cholesterol on your chest.

MOTHER: But seein as we are living in Kent, I thought I'd serve yer greasy fry up on a salad bed of rocket lettuce and sundried tomatoes drizzled with a balsamic vinaigrette.

FATHER: Well fair enough, if you want to impress the neighbours with yer poncy shopping. But yer turning my dog into a fuckin yuppie.

MOTHER: [changing the subject] Did ya hear that they're takin Englishmen to Loch Ness, and sinking them to the bottom?

FATHER: No?

MOTHER: Aye. They've found that, deep down, they're really not so bad. [they cackle happily together]

### **Scene 6**

NARRATOR: In Aberdeen, the course comes to an end:

KIRSTY: So, you've all come a long way. First we have Ewen.

EWEN: [slumped in a corner] Fuck off.

KIRSTY: After careful thought, Ewen's decided to switch from his City career to become a ned, and made marvellous progress.

EWEN: [sniffing glue] Fuck off.

KIRSTY: Everyone give him a round of applause. [moving on] Now finally, Ben.

BEN: [who now speaks with a mild Scottish accent] Aye?

KIRSTY: Ben - you've come a long way. You could get by in Edinburgh perhaps. But...

BEN: It's not enough. I need more training.

KIRSTY: Well... There is perhaps one man who can help you.

BEN: Who?

KIRSTY: They call him... Mad Hamish McTavish. But he does nae speak to many people.

BEN: Why do they call him Mad Hamish?

KIRSTY: Why, 'cos he's mad o' course. Tis a sad story. He was the finest teacher of Scottishness I ever saw. But then he turned to the dark side of Scottishness. Beware the dark side of the Scottish Ben! Hamish became tighter than ever. He was abusive to his friends and family, then he turned pure ginger, and went to live a hermits life up in the highlands near Pittlochry. But if anyone can help you, it's him.

[all exit]

## ***Scene 7***

[BEN enters]

NARRATOR: And so Ben trekked for days out into the highlands. The winds tore past him. The rain beat down on him. Finally he came upon a hut in the most barren patch of the highlands. No living thing grew there. There was nothing else around as far as the eye could see. Nothing – except the piles of old white bones and empty beer cans.

BEN: Finally – the hut of McTavish. [steps up and knocks at the door]

MCTAVISH: [roars from offstage] Who dares disturb the hangover of Mad Hamish McTavish?

BEN: Sorry. My name is Ben. I have trekked for days to find you. I want to train in the ways of the Scottish.

MCTAVISH: [opens the door and steps forward – onto BEN's foot] You apologise like an Englishman! [his voice booms]

BEN: Sorry. Er – you're standing on my foot.

MCTAVISH: [leans towards BEN and stares into his eyes] So why is it ye that's apologisin? [stamps on his foot again]

BEN: [yelps] Sorry.

[MCTAVISH glares at him]

NARRATOR: 3 months later...

MCTAVISH stands on BEN's foot.

BEN: sorry. I mean - Fuck You You Bleedin Cunt Yer Standing On Me Foot.

MCTAVISH: [pats him on the shoulder] Mebbe there's hope for ye yet lad.

## ***Scene 8***

NARRATOR: Later, in Kent...

[MOTHER is at home cooking. FATHER enters the house, shutting the door behind him]

MOTHER: Hello father.

FATHER: Got a video oot for the evening. [handing her the video]

MOTHER: English football?! [reading on] Penalty shoot-outs collection...  
[they cackle happily together]

[BEN and LAURA arrive outside. They stand nervously.]

LAURA: Right.

BEN gives her a hug, and she knocks on the door.

[MOTHER and FATHER answer the door together. Opening it a crack, they glare round it at the couple.]

FATHER: Yer still with that Englishman. Away tae fuck!

MOTHER: A thocht shame tae be yer mother.

LAURA: No, wait - Ben's converted. He's become Scottish.

FATHER: Converted to bein Scottish? I naer heard such bollocks. [to BEN] Git tae fuck ye sassenach shite.

BEN: [steps forward aggressively] Yeh fuckin' basturt. I'll wham yeh!

FATHER: Basturt? A'll gar ye claw whaur it's no yeukie!

BEN: Yeh Fancy a doin'? Yeh minky Kent-living weedgie? [headbutts FATHER]

FATHER: [happily surprised] 'Tis true! He fights like a Scotsman.

[BEN takes advantage of this to deck the old man, knocking him out]

MOTHER: [pleasantly impressed] Ah. [sniffs back a tear] Come here my children. I'm so proud of ye both.

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