

CHRISTOPHER. I promise.

MRS. ALEXANDER. Your mother before she died was very good friends with Mr. Shears.

CHRISTOPHER. I know.

MRS. ALEXANDER. No Christopher, I'm not sure that you do. I mean that they were very good friends. Very, very good friends.

CHRISTOPHER. Do you mean that they were doing sex?

MRS. ALEXANDER. Yes, Christopher. That is what I mean.

I'm sorry Christopher. I really didn't mean to say anything that was going to upset you.

CHRISTOPHER. Was that why Mr. Shears left Mrs. Shears, because he was doing sex with someone else when he was still married to Mrs. Shears?

MRS. ALEXANDER. Yes. I expect so.

CHRISTOPHER. I think I should go now.

MRS. ALEXANDER. Are you OK Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER. I can't be on my own with you because you are a stranger.

MRS. ALEXANDER. I'm not a stranger Christopher, I'm a friend.

20. SCHOOL

Ed finds Christopher's book on the kitchen table.

SIOBHAN. Have you told your father about this?

CHRISTOPHER. No.

SIOBHAN. Are you going to tell your father about this?

CHRISTOPHER. No.

Ed goes to the book.

There is a tone.

He begins reading Christopher's book.

SIOBHAN. Did it make you sad to find this out?

CHRISTOPHER. Find what out?

SIOBHAN. Did it make you sad to find out that your mother and Mr. Shears had an affair?

CHRISTOPHER. No.

SIOBHAN. Are you telling the truth?

CHRISTOPHER. Yes, I always tell the truth. It didn't make me feel sad because Mother is dead. So I would be feeling sad about something that isn't real and doesn't exist and that would be stupid.

SIOBHAN. What was your mother like?

Do you remember much about her?

CHRISTOPHER. I remember the 20th of July 2008. I was 9 years old. It was a Sunday. We were on holiday in Cornwall. We were on the beach in a place called Polperro. Mother was wearing a pair of shorts made out of denim and a stripy blue swimming costume, and she was smoking menthol cigarettes, which were mint flavour. And she wasn't swimming. She was sunbathing on a towel, which had red and purple stripes, and she was reading a book by Georgette Heyer called *The Masqueraders*. And then she finished sunbathing and went into the water and she said:

JUDY. Bloody Nora it's cold.

21. BEACH

CHRISTOPHER. "Bloody Nora it's cold." And she said I should come and swim too, but I didn't like swimming because I don't like taking my clothes off. And she said I should just roll my trousers up and walk into the water a little way. So I did. And Mother said:

JUDY. Christopher! Look, it's lovely.

CHRISTOPHER. And she jumped backwards and disappeared under the water and I thought a shark had eaten her and I screamed. And she stood up out of the water and came over to where I was standing and held up her right hand and spread out her fingers like a fan.

JUDY. Come on Christopher, touch my hand. Come on now. Stop screaming. Touch my hand. Listen to me Christopher. You can do it. It's OK Christopher. It's OK. There aren't any sharks in Cornwall.

ED. "When we were inside the park Mrs. Alexander stopped walking and said 'I am going to say something to you and you must promise not to tell your father that I told you this. Your mother before she died was very good friends with Mr. Shears.'"

CHRISTOPHER. And other times she used to say:

JUDY. If I hadn't married your father I think I'd be living in a little

farmhouse in the South of France with someone called Jean. And he'd be, ooh, a local handyman. You know, doing painting and decorating for people, gardening, building fences. And we'd have a French bulldog. And a veranda with figs growing over it and there would be a field of sunflowers at the bottom of the garden and a little town on the hill in the distance and we'd sit outside in the evening and drink red wine and smoke French cigarettes and watch the sun go down.

22. HOME

ED. What is this?

Christopher looks at Ed.

CHRISTOPHER. It's a book I'm writing.

ED. Is this true? Did you speak to Mrs. Alexander?

CHRISTOPHER. Yes.

ED. Jesus, Christopher, how stupid are you? What did I tell you Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER. Not to mention Mr. Shears' name in our house. And not to go asking Mrs. Shears or anyone about who killed that bloody dog. And not to go trespassing on other people's gardens. And to stop this ridiculous bloody detective game. Except I haven't done any of those things. I just asked Mrs. Alexander about Mr. Shears because I was doing chatting.

ED. Don't give me that bollocks. You knew exactly what you were bloody doing. I've read the book, remember. What else did I say Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER. I don't know.

ED. Come on Memory Man. Not to go round sticking your nose into other people's business. And what do you do? You go around sticking your nose into other people's business. You go around digging up the past and sharing it with every Tom, Dick, and Harry you bump into. What am I going to do with you Christopher? What the fuck am I going to do with you?

Ed throws Christopher's book.

CHRISTOPHER. I was just chatting with Mrs. Alexander. I wasn't doing investigating.

ED. I ask you to do one thing for me, Christopher. One thing.
CHRISTOPHER. I didn't want to talk to Mrs. Alexander. It was Mrs. Alexander who ...

Ed grabs Christopher's arm.

Christopher screams.

Ed and Christopher tussle.

Ed hits Christopher hard.

Christopher falls.

Ed stands above him.

ED. I need a drink.

He goes and picks up the book.

He leaves.

He comes back without the book.

I'm sorry I hit you. I didn't mean to.

I love you very much Christopher. Don't ever forget that. I worry about you, because I don't want to see you getting into trouble, because I don't want you to get hurt.

CHRISTOPHER. Where's my book?

ED. Christopher, do you understand that I love you?

Ed holds his right hand up and spreads his fingers out in a fan.

Christopher does the same with his left hand. They make their fingers and thumbs touch each other.

CHRISTOPHER. Is it in the dustbin at the front of the house?

23. MAP OF HOUSE

SIOBHAN. "The next day, when I got home from school, Father was still at work so I went outside and looked inside the dustbin. But the book wasn't there.

I wondered if Father had put it into his van and driven to the dump and put it into one of the big bins there but I did not want that to be true because then I would never see it again. One other possibility was that Father had hidden my book somewhere in the house. So I decided to do some detecting and see if I could find it.

I started by looking in the kitchen.

Then I detected in the laundry room.

Then I detected in the dining room.