

# **Our Place**

**by David Lane**

**Edited Draft May 2020**

**Commissioned by Shooting Fish with Cultural Solutions UK**

**Developed with Emily Bignell and Year 7 Students at West Grantham Academy St Hugh's  
and William Lovell Church of England Academy**

**Written as part of REConnecting Lincolnshire 2019**

### **Characters**

ALI (12, White)

BETH (12, Black)

JOSH (12, Asian)

### **Other Voices**

Unmarked verse lines or dialogue marked with a ( - ) will be performed by:

- Year 7 students in the mixed schools/professional production
- By the three actors in the touring production

### **Timeframe**

ALI, BETH and JOSH are looking back on the story, as well as playing out scenes from within it. They are in Year 7 now, looking back on events that happened at the end of Year 6.

### **Main Locations**

A primary school in rural Lincolnshire, and the town of Boston.

### **Digital / Film Work**

There are four sections of digital / film work of approx. two minutes each, exploring themes and questions linking to the play's action. These will feature in both versions of the play.

### **Script Notation**

- in the text indicates an interruption from the next character

... indicates a non-verbal response from a character

White space between the lines of dialogue indicates a beat or shift in thought

/ indicates overlapping speech

### **Digital 1 – Events of Change**

An exploration of events that children think:

- change our identity
- change how we see the identity of others
- change how a community is seen or sees itself (any size or type)

- change who we are as people
- change how we see and understand the world, for better or worse

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## 1. NOW

**ALI** Everything came together right here

**BETH** The most amazing

**JOSH** Most incredible

**ALI** Totally awesome place on Earth

**JOSH** The Cattle Market Car Park in Boston town centre

**BETH** Seriously

**ALI** The screams and shouts from Market Place across Wide Bargate

**JOSH** The strobes a million different colours stretching through the town

**ALI** The noise!

**JOSH** One of the best street funfairs in the country

**BETH** This is *our* place

**TOGETHER**      The May Fair

**JOSH**            People have been travelling here for eight hundred and fifty years

**ALI**                Escaping real life for just one night

**BETH**            The rides and candy floss and burgers and the roller coaster –

**ALI**                And the secret kissing on the Waltzer –

**BETH**            It didn't happen there –

**ALI**                That's what Josh told me!

**JOSH**            Nah the spit would fly out of your mouth and hit someone

**BETH**            And your tongue would be all like a dog's with its head out a car window –

**She demonstrates. It's weird.**

**ALI**                Anyway

**JOSH**            Last May the three of us had made a deal to stick together

**ALI**                Last two months of Year 6

**JOSH** 'Cos we'd be all together 'til the middle of July then after that

**BETH** Three different schools

**JOSH** And back then we had no idea what was gonna happen

**BETH** The things we'd hide away from one another

**ALI** Or the truths we'd end up facing

**BETH** The ones we'd never told a soul

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## **2. MOVING ON (TRIO 1)**

**JOSH** In Year 6 in the Christmas holidays  
Before we three have even met  
Mum moves me away from Dad and Lincoln  
To this village in the middle of the countryside

**BETH** We've always spent our Christmas in this village  
Travelling down the bumpy lanes from Grantham  
To reach Gramps and Nana's house  
We moved out here when I was in Year 3  
Gramps got really ill and Mum and Dad said  
That they wanted to be closer

**JOSH** Mum wants me to make friends at church  
Calls it *our new community*  
She pretends she doesn't see them whispering  
Giving us side-eye in the pews

**BETH** Starting at the village school was weird  
It got better by Year 6 until Mum –  
Went away  
And Dad moved me in to Gramps and Nana's house  
While he went back on tour with his unit

**JOSH** This whispering ain't gonna stop when I start school  
Arriving in a random village for the last two terms of primary  
Is weird enough already

**BETH** When Dad's back for leave at Christmas  
All I wanna do is go outside into the cold  
Drive his knackered banger racer round and round the field  
Try to forget this empty space inside where Mum should be

**JOSH** There's literally nothing here for me

**ALI** Mum and Dad try making our move from Skegness exciting  
On Christmas morning in my stocking there's this envelope  
A picture of a little house  
Stuck somewhere in the countryside

**JOSH** I just wanna go back home to Dad and Lincoln



**BETH** 'Cos it's all decided for me

**JOSH** And I realise I'm never going back

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### **3. CONTACT**

**Lunchtime. BETH sits alone. ALI observes, but he's not in the same time and space.**

**JOSH approaches. There's space next to BETH. She looks up. Considers.**

**She moves across to make space. They eat in silence for a bit.**

**JOSH** You're Beth.

**BETH** Yeah.

**JOSH** Josh.

**Sandwiching.**

**BETH** You're new.

**JOSH** I've been here since Christmas.

**BETH** Seven weeks isn't that long.

**JOSH**                   Feels like forever when only the teachers talk to you.

**BETH**                   I'm talking to you.

I was new here in Year 3. It gets better.

**Sandwiching. JOSH stares.**

**BETH**                   What?

**JOSH**                   Just... everyone said to 'give you space', 'cos of... but you're like, normal –

**BETH**                   Because of what?

**JOSH**                   People said to be careful round you.

**BETH**                   In case you catch dead Mum disease?

**JOSH**                   ...

**BETH**                   ...

**JOSH**                   Do you want some of my KitKat?

It's a bit broken. Charlie Hinton was using my bag as a football.

**She nods. They share the KitKat. JOSH smiles.**

**BETH**                   This doesn't mean we're married or anything.

**JOSH** Marriage is a big waste of time anyway.

**BETH** watches him. They eat.

**JOSH** What's happened to all your mates here then?

**BETH** I'm different now.

**JOSH** What does –

**BETH** See you later KitKat boy.

**JOSH** It's Josh –

**ALI** steps forward.

**ALI** *(To JOSH)* You're *such* a liar –

**JOSH** Get lost, you don't arrive 'til after Easter break!

**BETH** Get out of our scene!

**ALI** *You* told me when you met Beth, she was all over you like a rash!

**JOSH** Ali!

**ALI** But actually... you just shared a KitKat? Awwww.

**BETH** (To **JOSH**) Is that what you said to him?

**JOSH** I – no – I mean, I might have said a Penguin or something –

**ALI** This. Is. Amazing.

**JOSH + BETH** Shut up!

**ALI** You are totally busted!

**BETH** Hey, how about we do when I first met *you* Ali –

**ALI** Nah nah nah it's fine, I hung about in Skeggy for months with Tyler waiting for a school place to come up, got here just after Easter, we all made friends, let's do the next bit –

**BETH** Ali hasn't seen it.

**ALI** Yeah but –

**BETH** You okay down there?

**JOSH** What is this?

**BETH** How me and Josh met.

**ALI** (To **BETH**) Shut up –

**JOSH** I wanna see what happened! Do it, do it, do it, do it –

**ALI** Well get out of *my* scene then!

**He pushes JOSH away. Then reluctantly, ALI lies down on the floor groaning.**

**JOSH** OhmyGod this is *brilliant* –

**ALI** Shut up!

**BETH looks down at him.**

**BETH** You okay down there?

**ALI** (*Getting himself up quickly*) Yeah.

**BETH** Charlie Hinton does that to everyone that's new. Like his welcome to the school present.

**ALI** I've had worse.

**BETH** Me too.

**She helps him gather his things.**

**ALI** Um... I've gotta pick up my brother round the side, Tyler – he's at basketball 'til half four –

**BETH** You can wait with me if you want.

**ALI** Who are you waiting for?

**BETH** No-one. I mostly just wait here after school. It's peaceful.

**ALI** I can go if you want –

**BETH** It's a free country.

**ALI** Huh.

**BETH** What?

**ALI** Doesn't feel like it sometimes.

**BETH** Where'd you move from?

**ALI** Skegness.

**BETH** Never been. You miss it?

**ALI** Like I've lost something and I'm never gonna get it back.

**BETH** I'm Beth.

**ALI** Yeah. They said to be careful –

**BETH** I know what they said.

**ALI** I'm Ali.

**They smile.**

**JOSH comes to join them.**

**JOSH** I do know you got bullied back then.

**ALI** A bit.

**JOSH** But you did tell me you'd done kung-fu on Charlie Hinton.

**BETH** Ha!

**ALI** Shut up! Scene's over, all right?

**They look out together.**

**ALI** The ghost train was over there. Where Josh needed new pants.

**JOSH** Dodgems that way, where I slayed both of you.

**BETH** In your dreams.

**ALI** Greasy hot dog stand round the side of the roller coaster.

**BETH** (To ALI) Which you threw up.

**JOSH** And the firing range was awesome – I was like blam! Blam! Blam –

**ALI** *Josh.*

**JOSH** What?

Oh, God. Sorry. Sorry –

**BETH** Let's do summer term next.

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#### **4. BETH'S SPACE**

This space is just for her

The roughness of the stone

The way the light can catch within the coloured glass

The echo

Followed by the silence

She traces her fingertips around the pillars

Carefully takes the book and picks out passages

Its pages tissue-paper thin

Heaven and earth bound up together

Sometimes she kneels on embroidered cushions

Whispers a conversation

Hearing her mother's voice inside her head

This space is where she goes

To work out how to cross the gap

From who she was before

To who she can become

This space is just for her

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## **5. DIGITAL 2 – Multiple Identities**

An exploration of:

- why we might express different identities depending on who we're with
- why we might hide aspects of our identity from certain groups / individuals
- why other people might hide aspects of their identity from us
- what's been revealed to us about the identities of our friends/family that's surprising

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## **6. GANG**

**ALI**                      When Josh and me had just arrived here everyone was like

- What happened in their old school?
- Did they get expelled?
- I heard he set the library on fire
- I heard he punched a teacher
- They were kicked out of their house
- And both his parents are in hiding from police
- His Mum's a secret ninja!

**ALI** 'Cos to move here in the last bit of Year 6

**JOSH** It means you've got to come from somewhere *else*

**BETH** Like me you're suddenly a mystery

**ALI** The three of us hear all of this in conversation though

**BETH** The ones I'm not invited to be part of anymore

- *(To **BETH**)* Because you're hanging out with them
- The three of you in special classes for your SATS
- Need help with spelling 'cat'?

- They're weird
- And different
- No-one knows anything about them

**JOSH** That's 'cos nobody has thought of sitting down and actually *asking* us!

**ALI** By summer term they've all decided what our truth is  
So much easier *not* to question

**BETH** It's less scary to believe the things you *think*  
In case you have to hold your hands up

**JOSH** And admit you got it wrong

**ALI** It's easier when you believe the world  
Can only be the way *you* wanna see it

**JOSH** Fortunately Beth's big mouth gets us through

**ALI** Like on the Waltzer?

**JOSH** Shut up!

**BETH** (*Rapidly*) Sit there, queue here, this classroom not that one, he's trouble, she's all right, don't talk to that one, PE kit Wednesday, sleep through geography, don't hang out in that bit of the playground BOOM done any questions?

**JOSH** We're the gang that stays behind two days a week

**ALI** For extra SATS revision

**EVERYONE** Lame

**BETH** For kids who've been 'displaced'

**ALI** Which sucks

**JOSH** Except for writing on the whiteboard 'Mr Stratton is a massive pen - '

**ALI** *(As Mr Stratton) In this school we practice respect! It doesn't matter where you were before, but here –*

**JOSH** That's just it though

**BETH** Each of us is made up of what came before  
But we don't even ask each other about that

**ALI** We're happier this way  
It's easier to strip the canvas down

**JOSH** Paint over all those bits of us that came before

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## 7. HOME (TRIO 2)

**ALI** Mum and Dad are in the kitchen waiting for me after school  
Tyler's sent up to our room  
They just stand there staring  
*What?*

**JOSH** All the posters in my bedroom have been taken down  
Mum's got pots of paint and rolls of wallpaper spread everywhere  
Can't even plug Nintendo in for Mario Kart

**BETH** *How sick?* I ask Nana  
*Very sick* she says  
And Gramps isn't going to get better like last time

**JOSH** She's put up a bookshelf  
*My First Book of Prayer* from my Christening  
Volumes of Bible stories that she bought for every birthday

**ALI** Dad slams his tea down on the kitchen counter  
*You've been texting him* he says  
*We checked your phone*  
*We moved out here to get away from them*

**BETH** Even though I'm scared that Gramps might die  
Maybe this means that him and Mum'll be together  
Father and daughter up in heaven like they should be

**ALI** We are literally miles away from Skegness

But they still hate him  
They still hate my best mate Daanish

**JOSH**                    This Bible stuff is *Mum's* version of me  
She takes my hand and makes me kneel

**BETH**                    Then Nana says *Gramps doesn't want a Christian service*  
*None of that God nonsense*  
Turns out he wants this natural woodland burial  
Biodegrading coffin

**ALI**                        Daanish who they wouldn't let come round  
Daanish who played football with me in the playground  
Just like every other kid  
Daanish who I had to lie about  
Telling them I went to Lincoln for the match  
Not on a secret trip with him

**BETH**                    He's wrong  
Gramps needs to be with Mum  
Buried together in the churchyard he just *has* to be

**JOSH**                    I've seen Mum crying on the sofa when she thinks I'm sleeping  
She's making *me* do all this faith stuff just to give *her* strength

**ALI**                        I tear upstairs and pack a bag  
Could cycle back to Skeggy and stay with Daanish  
Dad blocks me in the doorway

Tyler's crying underneath his duvet and I shout right in Dad's face

*Look at what you're doing to us*

*You moved us out here just because **you're** scared*

**JOSH**

Mum says

*You choose the right path son*

*Not like that lying father of yours*

**ALI**

Dad's neck goes red

*That boy is Muslim terrorist scum just like the rest of them*

*You get in touch again and I know people who will find him*

**JOSH**

When Mum's asleep that night I take a pot of paint

I march into the village

**BETH**

I run out to the field

I put the keys inside Dad's banger

Drive it round in ever-faster circles face all tight

**JOSH**

Even though I shouldn't

I feel better when I've done it

Everything goes sort of calm

**BETH**

I jerk the wheel out to the right

And slam the brakes on just before the dyke

I wasn't going to I wasn't

**ALI**

I just stare at Dad



**BETH** Um, what?

**ALI** We're gonna have to find you one with an extra big bumper –

**BETH** Three for the dodgems please!

**JOSH + ALI** Aaaaarrrrghhhhhhhh!

**BETH** Told you.

**ALI** Yeah my car's aerial was clearly broken –

**BETH** Whatever...

**JOSH** Hot dog stand –

**ALI** Two for a fiver?! That's my bus fare home!

**BETH** Come on, the rollercoaster's got the shortest queue –

**JOSH + ALI** Aaaaarrrrghhhhhhhh!

**BETH** That. Was. Epic.

**JOSH** Oh God –

**ALI** I can taste onion coming up –

**JOSH**            You get sick on my Nikes and I will *properly* kill you.

**BETH**            Last bus is in five minutes, we can make it if we run –

**JOSH**            We haven't done the Ferris Wheel!

**ALI**                Yeah, because it's lame.

**JOSH**            You can see the whole of the town though!

**BETH**            Guys we're gonna miss the bus –

**JOSH**            We said we'd go on everything and that includes the wheel!

**ALI**                We said we'd be back at nine –

**BETH**            My Nana's called like fifty-seven times –

**JOSH**            Which school are you going to next?

**ALI**                What's that got to do with it?

**JOSH**            Which one!?

**BETH**            Seriously, the bus –

**JOSH** You know we're all going different places in Year 7! So we do this now, or maybe it doesn't happen at all.

**A shift.**

**BETH** There's the river.

**JOSH** The Marina.

**BETH** ASDA.

**ALI** Romantic. Hey, reckon I can get popcorn in that girl's hair?

**JOSH** Gimme that –

**ALI** Hey!

**BETH** Think we're stopping.

**They look out from the top of the wheel.**

**JOSH** We can trust each other, right?

**BETH** Why, what've you done?

**JOSH** Nothing, just... this feels safe. Like... safe, safe.

**ALI** Trapped under a metal bar at the top of a rusty Ferris wheel?

**JOSH**            Just... want to trust you both. We're all mates. Whatever happens.

**ALI**                Okay.

**BETH**            Okay.

**JOSH**            Okay.

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### **9. ALI'S SPACE**

He stares up at the ceiling in the night

Tyler wriggling in the bed nearby

And summons up the memory of a secret trip to Lincoln

He remembers half a green and marbled globe

A golden crescent moon set sharp

And glinting in a sun-filled sky

He feels the memory of shoe-less feet

The sight of ninety-nine names

Carefully carved in Arabic on marble walls

Warm welcome of the Imam round his hands

Daanish gripping on his arm and grinning

The call of words like music in the prayer hall

The comfort of a hundred million people

All doing one thing at one time

He checks Tyler's asleep

Then kneels up in bed

Lowers his head and palms down to the pillow

Wondering if Daanish might be doing the same

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## 10. SUNDAY

**BETH**            Didn't know you came here.

**JOSH**            Yeah, just... with my Mum. You here with your Nana?

**BETH**            No.

**JOSH**            Oh.  
The children's service was...

**BETH**            ...pretty rubbish.

**JOSH** Probably gonna make sock puppets or something now. It was mosaics last week. Noah's Ark.

**BETH** What?

**JOSH** Sunday School.

**BETH** Did you hear what happened to the church door?

**JOSH** Yeah but – it's just graffiti though, you can wipe it off –

**BETH** People want to feel safe here!

**JOSH** Why are you having a go at me, I didn't do it –

**BETH** I don't know, just... don't worry about it.

**JOSH** ...

**BETH** Does Ali know you do Sunday School?

**JOSH** No. And don't tell my Mum I said, but... not like any of it's real anyway.

**BETH** What?

**JOSH** Y'know... God. You think all of them believe?

**BETH** If they don't, why are they here?

**JOSH** Free biscuits?

**BETH** Why are *you* here?

**JOSH** Well – I don't mean I don't *believe* believe, 'cos if *you* do, I mean –

**BETH** You just said it's not real.

**JOSH** Yeah yeah yeah but I mean, like... in the *real* sense it's not... *here*, real. I don't *not* believe, I just...

**BETH** ...agree with the door being graffitied?

**JOSH** No!

**BETH** It said this was all a lie.

**JOSH** They're about to take everyone through. Round to the chapel, that way.

**BETH** Okay –

**JOSH** And do me a favour. Don't tell Ali I was here.

**BETH** Why?

**JOSH** Because I asked you.

**BETH** Why?

**JOSH** Because we said we could trust each other! Like we didn't tell him about the fairground... and you and me and... stuff.

**BETH** How is not telling Ali stuff trusting each other?

**JOSH** This is just... it's not me. None of this.

**BETH** What do you mean?

**JOSH** I don't *feel* anything. Aren't you mean to feel something?

**BETH** ...

**JOSH** We usually get more biscuits, come on.

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## **11. SLEEPOVER**

**ALI** You still awake?

**JOSH** That. Was. The worst.

**ALI** Not been asked to pray before bedtime before –

**JOSH** She never made me do it back in Lincoln.

**ALI** Don't you believe in anything then?

**JOSH** Cheese.

**ALI** You believe in cheese?

**JOSH** Is believing in cheese weirder than believing in God?

**ALI** No-one ever wrote a book about the creation of cheese.

**JOSH** *Cheese: A Global History. The Science of Cheese. Cheese and Culture: A History –*

**ALI** That's not the same thing.

**JOSH** People can believe whatever they want –

**ALI** Yeah I know –

**JOSH** But no-one ever tells you you can choose *again*. It's like... you just have to believe whatever your parents tell you so you don't upset anyone.

**ALI** My old school in Skegness... they were cool about stuff like that. Loads of different pupils, from all over. Near the sea. It was good.

**JOSH** Why'd you move?

**ALI** Dad got a different job down here.

**JOSH** Oh. When you first came to school, you said he was fired -

ALI                    Okay, so I didn't remember it properly –

JOSH                 He couldn't get another job in Skegness?

ALI                    I don't know!

JOSH                 Why are you always at my house? I wanted to come to yours for once.

ALI                    I like it here.

JOSH                 And when your Mum dropped you off, why'd she check what we were gonna be *eating*? She looked at Mum and me *really* strangely – like we were aliens or something –

ALI                    Just be glad it wasn't my Dad.

JOSH                 Why?

ALI                    Because... y'know...

JOSH                 No.

ALI                    ...how you look...

JOSH                 How do I *look*?

ALI                    I mean that's what *he'd* say – he just believes everything in the paper –

**JOSH**                   What do I look like?

**ALI**                     - 'cos he's convinced himself there's gonna be some attack, or invasion – and you've gotta believe that that's *not* what I think, you're my mate –

**JOSH**                   *(Realising)* 'Cos I look... like a Muslim?

**ALI**                     ...yeah.

**JOSH**                   Wow. So Mum thinks I'm Christian, and your Dad thinks I'm Muslim, and nobody's even asked me what I think.

**ALI**                     Probably wouldn't even listen anyway.

**JOSH**                   ...

**ALI**                     My best mate, back in Skeggy... we'd sit on the beach after school, talking about where we'd travel when we were older. His grandparents were from Turkey. And then I'd go back home to Dad in our tiny flat, shouting at the telly and telling me how crap everything was because of anyone who wasn't like us.

**JOSH**                   What was your mate's name?

**ALI**                     Daanish. I miss him loads.

**JOSH**                   I miss my Dad. But I'm starting to feel like... he's sort of here. Like... I'm carrying him inside or something, when I need him. I can't explain it.

**ALI**                     I get that too.

**JOSH**            ...

**ALI**                Did you kiss Beth at the fairground?

**JOSH grins.**

**ALI**                Knew you went in different seats on purpose.  
Everyone's doing the end of term party at Charlie Hinton's next week.

**JOSH**            His house is like four storeys or something. Someone said they had a butler.

**ALI**                You get invited?

**JOSH**            What do you think?

**ALI**                We should do something else. You and me and Beth.

**JOSH**            Like what?

**ALI**                Something epic.

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## **12. DIGITAL 3 – Generations**

An exploration of:

- the biggest differences in how adults and young people see the world

- what can young people see that adults can't see and vice versa
- what adults never ask us that we wish they would
- what we never ask adults but wish we could
- how far young people mimic their parents' opinions and values

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### 13. PRESSURE (TRIO 3)

**JOSH**                    I'm washing up when suddenly Mum blurts it out  
                                  She's put me forward for a service  
                                  Standing up in church to lead a reading

**BETH**                    The heart rate monitor next to the bedside's bleeping  
                                  Gramps says *you're the one I trust*  
                                  Turns out *I'm* the one he wants to plan his God-less funeral

**ALI**                            Mum and Dad get me and Tyler loads of Pepsi and a KFC  
                                  They've tried to make the kitchen like a party  
                                  Put some music on  
                                  We even have a laugh  
                                  Then Dad says *we're starting up a group here in the village*

**JOSH**                    *It'll be a turning point* my Mum says  
                                  *Show the Lord what strength we've found here*

**BETH**                    Gramps doesn't want prayers or hymns  
                                  He shows me a picture of the celebrant

This humanist who won't believe in after-life or anything

**JOSH**

*It's your favourite reading* Mum says

There's a bookmark in my Bible from that shelf that she put up

**ALI**

Dad turns the music down

Mentions other families whose names I recognise from school

The ones with flag-posts up in their front gardens

**BETH**

I want to shout he *has* to have a proper funeral

I've got these visions of Gramps crying out

Mum stretching down from heaven trying to reach him

**ALI**

This new group is gonna have a big event

Bit like a village party in the summer holidays

He says we should be telling all our friends

**JOSH**

Mum says *my* faith is what has kept her going

Presses the Bible in my hands and leaves me at the sink

I need her

I need her to be strong or what happens to me

**ALI**

Dad gets out these leaflets

Then tells me and Tyler we'll get fifty quid

If we give them out to everyone on the last day of term

*Celebrate Our English Village*

**BETH**

Gramps asks me one last time if I'm all right with this



**ALI** You won't get it up the lane. And what are we even gonna do there?

**BETH** Hang out. Go to the multiplex, eat pizza. Have *fun*? Nothing happens on last day anyway, none of the teachers can be bothered.

**ALI** What if we get caught? Not like we're gonna outrun a police car.

**BETH** It's only half an hour.

**ALI** Or two in this. Do I get to drive?

**BETH** No.

**ALI** Wow. This totally absolutely sounds amazing guys.

**BETH** Look, literally everyone in our entire school is going to eat a pile of pizzas the size of a house at Charlie Hinton's tomorrow, while we sit in the village bored out of our minds.

**JOSH** What about money?

**BETH** You're telling me you don't know where your parents keep their wallets?

**ALI** You're like an evil genius.

**BETH** Army parents. You get good at organising.

**JOSH** And school?

**BETH** You bring your clothes like I asked?

**ALI** Yep.

**BETH** Put them in the van. Leave for school in uniform as normal tomorrow. I'll park the van round the back of the church, no-one'll even notice.

**ALI** I'm not changing clothes in front of you two.

**BETH** Change in the back, there's no rear-view mirror anyway.

**ALI** What!?

**JOSH** God you are such a chicken.

**BETH** Tomorrow might be the last day we ever see each other.

**ALI** I still dunno...

**BETH** Everybody else goes to this stupid party at Charlie Hinton's like a bunch of sheep –

**ALI** Flock.

**JOSH** Shut up.

**BETH** - but we get to *choose* what we do. Like blazing a trail.

**ALI**                    Yeah, when this rust-bucket catches fire.

**JOSH**                 Come on Ali. We don't need them. This'll be just for us. What's the big problem?

**ALI**                    There's just... this thing, on the last day of term, Dad's expecting me to...

**JOSH**                 What?

**ALI**                    Nothing.

**BETH**                 Great. Then it's on.

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## **15. JOSH'S SPACE**

An empty space of possibility

Nothing before or after

When he's with Dad

It seems like there's just here and now

He talks to him on FaceTime every week

This time he gets a tour of all the white-washed rooms

Full of potential

Asks if he can visit the apartment soon

And wonders when he gets to have the same

A blank white space to shape himself

No crosses on the wall

No quotations in calligraphy

Hung in the hallway or above his door

Dad says he's sorry for the hundredth time

Asks how Mum is

But he just stares into the screen

Takes in the blank white space

Where there's a different choice

A canvas waiting to be coloured

An empty space of possibility

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## **16. ROAD TRIP**

**ALI**                    Go go go!

**BETH**                Hold on tight –

**JOSH**            There's nothing to hold on to!

**BETH**            The suspension's a bit -

**ALI**                Not there?

**BETH**            I'm used to driving it round a field, it's bumpy anyway!

**JOSH**            I can see Charlie Hinton! Looooseeeerrrr –

**ALI**                Shut up and get down!

**BETH**            Not like he's gonna outrun us.

**ALI**                Sure?

**BETH**            The village limit is thirty!

**JOSH**            There's Mr Stratton –

**ALI**                Duck!

**BETH**            What!?

**JOSH**            Not you!

**ALI**                How am I meant to get changed back here it's tiny!?

**BETH** We'll be out the village soon just hold on –

**ALI and JOSH** To *what!*?

**BETH** Roundabout!

**TOGETHER** Whhhooooooooooooooooo –

**JOSH** We speed out of the village on the A roads

**ALI** Farms and houses flashing by as Josh counts up the cash

**JOSH** Getting the strangest looks from other drivers

**BETH** You see her face? Classic!

**ALI** Living the dreeeeeeaaaaaam!

**JOSH** We got over forty quid between us!

**ALI** Nice!

**JOSH** Gonna get the biggest bucket of chicken ever in my *face*.

**ALI** Then about three miles out from the village...

**JOSH** What's that?

**BETH** Um - nothing, the engine always does that –

**ALI** Sounds like it's about to die?

**BETH** It's fine –

**ALI** We get this sort of bluey smoke

**JOSH** What is that smell? Oh Ali gross –

**BETH** It's probably from the fields.

**JOSH** It smells more... oily.

**ALI** Pouring out the back

**ALI** The car's gonna explode!

**BETH** It's not going to explode –

**ALI** There's smoke coming out the bonnet!

**BETH** We're only halfway –

**ALI** It's not like we can hitchhike to Boston –

**JOSH** It's gonna be fine we'll just keep –

**ALI**                                Then there's this massive bang

**BETH screams.**

**JOSH**                                Bonnet flies right up

**ALI**                                    I think to myself this is it

**BETH**                                I can't see I can't see I can't see –

**JOSH**                                Just braaaaaake!

**TOGETHER**                        Aaaaaarrggghhhh!

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## **17. BREAKDOWN**

**ALI**                                I can't believe you drove us out in that dump –

**JOSH**                                It's not her fault –

**ALI**                                We could've died!

**BETH**                                We didn't.

**ALI**                                We nearly crashed headfirst in the ditch! My parents are gonna kill me and it's your fault for making me do this stupid plan, and now my Dad's got even more reasons to keep me away from you just like he did before!

**BETH**           What reasons?

**JOSH**           Not you, *me*. Because he / thinks I'm –

**ALI**             Don't tell her!

**BETH**           Tell me what?

**JOSH**           His Dad's got some pretty stupid ideas that's all.

**BETH**           Like thinking you're a Muslim just 'cos you're Asian?

**JOSH**           Well... yeah, actually. Wow.

**BETH**           You know the village is tiny, right? And what happens when new people move in? There's so much Googling the broadband keeps crashing.

**ALI**             So what... *everyone* knows what they're like?

**BETH**           I dunno. My Nana told me.

**ALI**             And you didn't tell *me*?

**BETH**           You're not your Dad, are you?

**JOSH**           That's what I said –

**BETH** Maybe you need to tell him what *you* think.

**ALI** What, tell my Dad that every night I pretend I'm in a mosque so I can believe just for one second that he doesn't exist anymore?

**BETH** You do that?

**ALI** He said he'd send people after my best mate! How are you meant to say the *right* thing when people hate what you think?

**JOSH** But if you don't say anything –

**ALI** Oh, right, like you have? Being massively understanding and not hating?

**JOSH** That's different –

**BETH** I know about what Josh thinks anyway –

**ALI** Wow. And you're still hanging out with him?

**JOSH** We were talking about *you* –

**BETH** People can believe what they want –

**ALI** Like painting 'Christians Are Liars' all over a church door?

**JOSH** Great, thanks –

**BETH** That was you?

**JOSH** (To **ALI**) I said that was private, I trusted you –

**BETH** That's where I go to be with Mum...

**ALI** I sat there in that special assembly when the vicar got up and did that massive speech about respect and faith and tolerance, and asked if anybody knew anything, and what did I do?

**JOSH** ...nothing.

**BETH** Why'd you do it?

**They both look at him.**

**JOSH** I thought... if I did something really bad, they'd send me back to Lincoln to my Dad's.

**ALI** That's not all of it.

**JOSH** Seriously –

**ALI** You're the one telling everyone they have to face up to things.

**BETH** Well?

**JOSH** It's why they broke up. Dad had this... crisis of faith, or something. And when the church wasn't there... it's like there wasn't anything sticking them together. Mum felt all this shame and then just ran away and took me with her, made me part of her big plan. Do you even know what that's

like? To be told you *have* to believe in something, when all you've seen it do is mess up everything around you?

**ALI** Er – yeah?

**JOSH** I just want to choose for myself.

**ALI** I know.

**BETH** I already have.

**ALI** Great, good for you –

**BETH** My Gramps is dying and I told him he had to be buried in the churchyard with my Mum or his spirit will be lost forever and she'll never find him.

**ALI** *Woah.*

**JOSH** What'd he say?

**BETH** Held my hand. Said he understood.

**ALI** So... he changed his mind?

**BETH** No.

**ALI** Then it didn't work, durr –

**BETH** / felt better! He said my Mum's funeral made him feel really uncomfortable. He wanted to be true to himself. He was still *him*.

**JOSH** Sooo... you really believe *you'll* see her one day? Up... in the sky?

**BETH** Why not?

**ALI** How'd she even die?

**BETH** She was giving first aid to another soldier when she was shot.

**JOSH** God. Sorry. But... *God*.

**ALI** That's horrible.

**BETH** I thought... us being friends, meant I could... start again somehow. I could be more than just 'the girl with the dead Mum'.

**ALI** But... that *is* who you are.

**BETH** And who are you two?

**JOSH** Hi. I'm Josh.  
I don't believe in God at *all*.

**They look to ALI.**

**ALI**                    You know who I am.

**They both wait for him.**

**ALI**                    Hi. I'm Ali. I feel better in a mosque than I do in my own house.

**JOSH**                There you go.

**ALI takes his rucksack off. He takes out a bunch of flyers.**

**ALI**                    My Dad gave me these. I thought we could have a little bonfire. What do you reckon?

**JOSH**                That he'll still do what it says on here, even if you burn them.

**BETH**                But he might not, if you talk to him. He's still your Dad.

**ALI**                    I think we should go to Boston anyway.

**JOSH**                How?

**ALI**                    The sun's out. And we've just met for real.  
What else are we gonna do?

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## **17. PILGRIMAGE**

**ALI** We hide the banger underneath some bushes

**BETH** And march onwards

**ALI** Sun's rays beating down

**JOSH** Like there's something guiding us here for a new beginning

**BETH** Sort of like a statement

**ALI** Though we're the only ones who really understand it

**JOSH** We share Walkers Coke and Haribo

**ALI** Nabbed them from the van before we ditched it

**BETH** Take a rest along the verge for a few swigs

**JOSH** Make new promises  
Now that we've found each other properly

**ALI** I'm gonna talk to Dad and Mum and Tyler all together  
I'm gonna tell them what I think and then I'm going back to see Daanish

**BETH** I'll go to Gramps' burial in the woodland  
But I'm going to talk to Nana about saying something too  
Maybe a little private service just for me and him to say goodbye

**JOSH** I'm gonna ask my Mum to take back down the Bible bookshelf  
Redecorate my room so I can have a space at her's *and* Dad's  
Where *I'm* the one who chooses what it says about me

**ALI** We keep on walking

**BETH** Sharing all the things we'd been too scared to say

**JOSH** Asking stupid questions underneath the summer sun

**BETH** A pilgrimage to Boston's Cattle Market Car Park

**ALI** When we arrive we arm ourselves with the world's most massive pizza

**JOSH** Plus a chicken bucket on the side

**ALI** And agree to come back every year to share the story

**JOSH** We know the future's unpredictable  
But suddenly it feels like we can be in charge of it

**ALI** Decide some of what's coming next at least

**BETH** Open our eyes  
But most of all

**ALI** Stop waiting round for everybody else to do the same

**An integrated moment of the design of the piece stretching out over the audiences' heads, like the May Pole colours enveloping the whole audience and stage.**

**JOSH**            I do a reading at the church but it's about belief  
What I believe and all my questions  
And when Mum storms up the aisle to me right after  
Telling me *it's not the place to do this*  
Loads of other people smile and thank me  
They don't all agree  
But some keep talking and don't stop  
We get through a *lot* of biscuits  
When I do R.E. at school now I'm a total boss  
Teacher puts me in charge of the debates

**ALI**                Me and Daanish set this meeting up all by ourselves  
Both of us are absolutely bricking it but when we tell our families  
Everyone agrees  
Think they're taken by surprise we planned it out  
That they saw how much it mattered to the two of us  
Both our families sat inside a booth in Grantham KFC  
Neutral territory  
It's not the best 'cos they don't do Halal in there  
But Daanish says it's okay they'll go veggie  
It's pretty much massively awkward the whole time  
But when our Dads manage to talk football for three whole minutes  
Me and Daanish feel like champions of the world

**BETH**            Every Sunday lunchtime

Me and Nana go down to the woodland by the dyke to visit Gramps  
I usually say a prayer  
Nana won't join in but says *Amen*  
I start to read online about what Gramps believed  
How his body and his energy have gone into the woodland and the soil and  
all of nature  
I go down to the woodland sometimes  
Try to think the same way for a bit  
To feel like Gramps is all around me in the energy of everything  
It doesn't always work  
But I'm keeping open to the possibility

**ALI** We're creating something none of us knew how to see all on our own

**JOSH** Somewhere we didn't even know we'd have to get to

**BETH** Our future places

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## 12. DIGITAL 4 – Futures

An exploration of:

- how young people see themselves in the future
- what they think the world's most important values will be
- how an ever-increasing population is going to live harmoniously
- what changes they'd make in themselves / family / school / town to get there

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