



Appendix A: Source Text

No Quarter

By Polly Stenham

*For Anne
1955-2012*



Characters

Robin

twenty-four

Oliver

thirty-four

Lily

early sixties

Coby

fourteen

Scout

twenty-five

Arlo

Twenty-five

Tommy

nineteen

Esme

Twenty-four



Previously¹

Lily, Robin and Oliver's mother, ran away from the nursery home where she was staying due to Alzheimer's. Oliver goes to their country home to look for her. Instead, he finds a seemingly drunk Robin, who claims not to have seen Lily. They argue and Oliver leaves. Lily is discovered in the kitchen, where she has been hiding. Robin was not drunk, but merely claimed so in order to be able to later explain to Oliver why he missed Lily coming to their house. Together, they have some last drinks, and then Robin helps Lily take the pills to terminate her life. When she lies dead on the sofa, Coby, Robin's 14 year old neighbour, walks in and discovers the body. Robin manages to calm her down and makes her promise she won't tell anyone what happened. She reveals to Robin that Lily sold the house, but he refuses to believe it. End of act one.

Fragment A. Dialogue: Robin and Tommy.

Act Two

Six weeks later. Robin's birthday. Night.

The stage is dark. A figure smashes the door from outside. It crashes open. The figure enters, hood up. An alarm starts to wail. The figure turns on the light and snaps the alarm off. He pulls down his hood. It is Robin. He slings his top off. Underneath he is wearing a dark three-piece suit. He has the beginnings of a black eye and some blood on his sleeve. He holds an axe and brightly wrapped present. He sets the axe down and places the present on the piano.

The room is shabbier, scuzzier. Exactly half the furnishings have gone. The heating and hot water have been cut off. A portable heater sits next to a makeshift bed. There are several cans of paint and tools stacked in a corner, and what looks like a crossbow nearby. The birthday box remains as it was. There is now a stack of musical instruments by the piano. Ranging from traditional (violin) and modern (synth) to weird (air-raid siren). The repaired clay mouse sits on a bookshelf. Clothes hang from a mounted stag's head in the corner.

¹ 'Previously' and similar fragments in the rest of this document have been added by me in order to explain to the reader what has happened so far. They are not part of the original source text. Also, the layout used in the source and target texts is different from the layout used in the rest of this thesis, because I wanted to use a font that I believe is easy to read for actors during practice.



Robin has set up camp in this room. It has the atmosphere of a makeshift headquarters. A bolt hole in a siege.

Tommy enters through a side door. He is nineteen, a skinhead ex-squaddie. He's just woken up. Tommy takes in the unhinged door. He lets out a low whistle.

Robin Someone padlocked it.

Tommy Yeah. A guy came round.

Robin Who? What 'guy'?

Tommy The caretaker bloke who came round before.

Robin So he's jumped sides too? Goodo. Oliver must have bribed him. The code on the gate was changed. I had to climb over it. It's like he's baiting me. But he couldn't have me evicted tonight. It would be too cruel. I call his bluff. BLUFF.

He picks up the padlock and turns it in his hands.

When did he padlock it?

Tommy This morning.

Robin While I was at the memorial? How elegant. I need a drink.

He goes to the bar.

Tommy You owe me some money.

Robin I'm aware of that, yes.

Robin What are you drinking?

Tommy Two hundred and forty quid.

Robin Let's have... gin.

He hands him a drink. Tommy doesn't take it, Robin sets it near him.

Cheers.

He raises his glass. Tommy doesn't drink.

(His voice cracks.) I've just been to my mother's memorial. Have one drink with me.

Beat.

Be a fucking human being for Christ's sake.

Tommy takes his drink.

Thank you.

They sip.

What's the time?



Tommy looks at the Pink Panther alarm clock.

Tommy One.

Robin Rats. I'm really late, aren't I? Sorry.

Tommy Yeah. You fucking are.

Robin I got waylaid in London you see. Plan A failed so I got stuck into Plan B. We outlined the plans, didn't we? Last night.

Tommy I don't remember.

He pulls back a bit of curtain to reveal details of Plan A, Plan B and Plan C scrawled on the wall.

Oh... yeah.

Robin Intriguing spelling. Ha. Listen. Plan B. (*Reads from the wall.*) 'Going to every single person mother ever broke bread with to see if they will help me raise some pennies or dollar or moolah or fucking cash.' Moolah spelt pretty uniquely.

Beat.

Well, I did. After the memorial I went to everyone. Well, not everyone. A few people. The lawyer. That illustrator cunt.

Beat.

You should have seen the crowd. If you can call a dozen people a crowd. Hardly a crowd. Which was. Heartbreaking. People forget. I always thought...

Beat.

Anyway. Nobody I cornered seemed to be too keen to loan me the money. Which might have something to do with the fact I definitely did actually literally did corner them. So I rustled up a new plan.

Tommy What happened to A? You were keen on A.

Robin Ha. See. You do remember. Well. It would appear that taking out a mortgage to save this place is 'not a priority' for Oliver. Things got a bit heated after that. I think him and that girl are planning for a baby. She looked fatter then normal anyway.² I know convinced her to sell. He must have. I bet he handed her the bloody biro when she was out of her mind. She wouldn't have done this to me. Why you would bring a baby into this shit-hole of a planet I don't know. But it's fine. I've got a new plan.

Tommy What happened to C?

² There are some elements in the text that must have been editing mistakes, such as the use of 'then' here instead of 'than'. But as this is a faithful transcription of the source text, I have decided to leave all these elements in.



Robin points at his black eye.

Robin Let's push the boat out and call the new one Plan D. D for... dastardly... D for...

Tommy Desperate.

Beat.

Robin Don't be a cunt. It doesn't suit you.

Tommy sets his empty drink down. Robin goes to refill it.

Tommy You said one drink.

Robin That was half a drink. Look at the size of the glass.

He refills them both.

Robin I was born on this floor. Did you know that?

Tommy You mentioned it, yeah –

Robin Right here. Look at the stain. There. There on the floor.

Tommy About that two hundred and forty-quid –

Robin How much more do you have on you? Last night. You said you had more.

Tommy I do, yeah.

Robin I'll buy all of it.

Tommy All of it?

Robin On one condition. You stay and do it with me.

Beat.

Come on. That's a win-win scenario if ever I heard one.

Tommy stares at him for a moment, then gets some wraps out of his sock. There are six in total.

Tommy I've got two gear, four MD.

Robin Done.

Tommy That makes it five-sixty then. In total.

Robin Wow. I'm going to have to go to a cashpoint for that. I'm imagining you don't take cheques.

Tommy Let's drive to one then.

Robin Yes. Little hiccup on that front.



Tommy Like what?

Robin I somewhat totalled the car in that tiny lane round the corner. So getting to a cashpoint this evening might be a bit tricky. I'll get the car towed tomorrow and we can get a lift into the village. You'll get your cash first thing I swear. Look. Here's my card. Keep it as collateral.

He offers him the card. Tommy doesn't take it. Robin ploughs on.

A Borrower couldn't drive down that lane. It's ridiculous. Although I suppose we are in mouse country... Little lanes for the talking, smoking, drink-driving mice –

Tommy What?

Robin It doesn't matter. Tomorrow. I swear. Cross my heart and hope to die.

He has racked up.

Line?

Tommy You should have told me you couldn't get the cash before you... What the fuck –

Robin Look. I'm sorry, but there isn't really another option. Unless you fancy a three-hour walk in the dark.

Tommy How much?

Robin Let's call it a cool seven fifty. But only if you stay. I can't. I don't want to be on my own.

Tommy I don't know.

Robin does a line. Proffers the note to Tommy. He ignores it.

Robin I thought you were staying for a bit anyway. Like we agreed last night. We had a plan. We had several.

Tommy We were high.

Robin As a pilot's crotch, but that doesn't mean I didn't mean it, that means I didn't...

He tails off. He stares at his glass.

Mother's ruin.

Tommy What?

Robin That's what they call gin.

He jumps up.

Are you reneging? You are, aren't you? You fucking renegade.

Beat.



Please. You were going to stay. I was going to show you the lake and the woods and we were going to go shooting and I was going to lend you my crossbow and we were going to get high and drink what was left of the wine cellar then listen to jazz and shoot rabbits. It was going to be *ace*. It could still be *ace*. Why would you go back out there? Its just roads and shit pubs. There's a stag in our forest. A *stag*... Have you ever seen a real live stag before? Fucking stunning.

He goes to the window.

Look at the moon, the moonlight on the trees.

Beat.

When a view is that beautiful it's like God is flirting with you. Lifting his skirt, parting his legs.

Beat.

The slut.

He proffers the note again. After a beat Tommy takes it and walks over to do his line.



Previously

Robin manages to persuade Tommy to stay with him and do drugs together. He finds out Tommy has a large St. George's Cross, the red cross on the flag of England, tattooed on his back. It triggers him to try and coax out of Tommy why he left the army.

Fragment B. Monologue: Robin

Robin Tell me why you left the army? I want to know.

Tommy Why did you?

Robin What?

Tommy Leave the music place.

Robin I didn't like it. They wanted me to play things I didn't want to play. I didn't like the other students. I didn't like the way they... thought. I was educated with pages, you see. Not screens. I wasn't prepared for...

Tommy What?

Robin The internet. Technology. I was out there with the badgers and the books. No one had told me, you see. No one had warned me. That this new mind was in session. That no one was present any more. That no one was actually. There. And this new mind, it turns out, is different. This new mind thinks in bursts. It trades information, not thoughts. No one follows anything through. It's about knowledge, not thought. Knowledge over thought. And that's fucked up. That's wrong. Because knowing is not the same as thinking. We compare the two because knowing has more immediate value. And we fool ourselves that it is as useful but no one talks ideas anymore. Haven't you noticed? I noticed. Kids my age just trade information. And the future portends more and more information but no one is really thinking about it. Think about that...

Beat.

We're fucking up our minds. Maybe it takes an un-fucked mind to see it. Because without language, without proper narrative of thought, without the linear literary mind behind every intellectual revolution of the civilised world. What have we got left. We're marching into the dogs playing fucking Pacman on our phones. Brain cells... melting.

Pause.

Yikes. Good coke. Isn't it?



Pause.

Although there was one thing I didn't mind about the new gizmos and gadgets.

Tommy And what's that?

Robin gestures to the synthesiser and sequencer.

Robin New music.

Tommy So that's why you left. Difference of –

Robin Philosophy. Yes. Well. That and... There was an incident.

Tommy Right.

Robin A fracas.

Tommy I see.

Robin You'd be amazed how far you can fit a phone in someone's mouth. If you really try.



Previously

Robin shows Tommy the birthday box. Together, they search for the key, which Lily always hid away on Robin's birthday. We find out that today is also his birthday, and he is convinced Lily hid something in the birthday box that will help him save the house. Arlo and Scout, Robin's only two friends from music school, arrive at the house. Robin is glad to see them, but his happiness disappears when they find the key and he discovers there is nothing in the birthday box but costumes. To lighten the mood, the friends decide to throw a party Lily-style, with cocktails, fireworks, dressing up and playing hide and seek.

During the game, Tommy has private conversations with Arlo and Scout from which it becomes clear that they are there on Oliver's orders to get Robin out of the house. Robin sees through them and, feeling vengeful, secretly puts drugs in their drinks. We also find out Robin has some sort of relationship with Scout, but is kissed by Arlo, which is overseen by Scout. She is angry about this, and at the start of this final fragment, she has just been having a conversation with Tommy, trying to flirt with him in order to get back to Arlo, who doesn't like Tommy. Robin is off stage playing hide and seek. Arlo re-enters.

Fragment C. Dialogue: Robin, Tommy, Arlo, Scout, Esme and Coby.

Arlo enters, brushing leaves off himself.

Arlo Good. You're both here.

He closes the doors and lowers his voice.

I spoke to Oliver. I had to climb a fucking tree to get a signal but I got through.

Beat.

Hold on. Why are you sitting together?

Scout Why? Does it bother you?



Arlo What's going on?

Scout slides on to Tommy's lap. He looks terrified.

Scout Because I wouldn't want to make you uncomfortable, darling twin. I wouldn't tread that line.

Arlo Mankoi, Scout –

Scout Intya toro –

Scout - sut mankoi I mela ho delotha Ila delotha Ila –

Arlo - I mela ho vithell –

Scout - ro haba dhaeraow –

Arlo - I mela ho vithell –

Tommy What the fuck? You sound mad.

Scout A third of the English dictionary was made up by a –

Arlo/Scout - madman, don't you know.

Scout Alye then.

Arlo Alye.

They touch hands briefly.

Anyway, quick, before he. Look. I've got an offer for you.

Scout For me?

Arlo No. For Man Friday. To help us get him in the car tomorrow. Just in case he pulls any funny business. I told him we were staying here tonight and he suggested. You're stronger than us and. I think between you and me –

Tommy So the brother did send you. I knew it.

Arlo Don't you get it? He's been lying to you. He doesn't have a fucking dime. He's stone broke.

He starts writing a out a cheque.

Oliver says he'll cover Robin's debt to you if you help us. And he'll throw in a grand more. As a thank you for helping during, I quote, 'a difficult time'.

Tommy Judas.

Tommy just stares.

Arlo This is a serious offer. Just to help. That's all. It's the right thing for him. And you do. Seem to care.



He shows Tommy the cheque.

Look... I'm putting it in my pocket. Think about it.

Scout is staring at her hands, flexing them.

Scout?

Scout I think I need some air.

Scout goes out the garden doors.

Arlo stares hard at Tommy.

Arlo And by the way. Don't even think about it.

Scout suddenly reappears. She is ashen.

Scout I... I... There's a... I can see... It looks like –

Arlo See what?

Scout There's the shadow. A moving shadow, of a woman, a hooded woman...

Arlo Don't be ridiculous.

Scout Look.

He sticks his head around the door.

Ok. Right. Yes. There is a silhouette. Coming up the drive. Getting closer.
Yes. Right. That's definitely happening.

Tommy You're winding me...

He looks. Yelps, turns to the others open-mouthed.

There is the sound of footsteps. Crunching gravel.

Arlo Oh shit oh shit oh shit.

Esme (off) ROBIN?

Arlo Oh God oh God oh God.

All three hide behind the sofa. Huddling close together.

Esme ROBIN?

The door opens. Tommy, Arlo and Scout cower. Esme is revealed. A girl of Robin's age. She is in a hooded raincoat and holding an oil lantern.

Hello? Robin?

She walks around the side of the sofa and sees the others. They all have their eyes closed and are holding hands.

Esme Hi.



Arlo opens his eyes.

Arlo It's Sarah! Thank God. Living breathing one-hundred-per-cent-real. Sarah. Come here.

Arlo clasps her. She clearly hates it. He releases her.

Esme (icy) Scout.

Scout (equally icy) Esme.

Arlo Who's Esme?

Esme My. Name. Is. Esme.

Arlo Shit. Sorry. Esme. Of course. It's OK. We're OK! Esme, we're OK. Fucking hell. That was trippy.

Esme What is he talking about? Where is Robin? Who is that boy? And what the hell has happened to this room?

Arlo We thought you were a ghost, Robin's wandered off, that's Tommy, he's a florist, and... Robin's squatted the room.

Esme It's freezing in here.

She turns on the portable heater.

Tommy Who are you?

Esme Sarah. Apparently.

Scout She's Robin's... cousin?

Esme Where is he?

No one answers. They look a bit disoriented.

Arlo We were playing hide-and-seek. I think he's still. Hiding.

Esme Shall someone have a little look for him, maybe? You know, given the circumstances.

Small pause. Tommy nods and exits.

Thank you.

She starts to tidy the room as best she can.

Esme How is he?

Arlo OK. Ish. I suppose.

Esme He was in such a state at the memorial.

Scout You were there?



Esme Of course I was there. I should have been here earlier. Dad was so distressed after the service. It took me a while to get him back home and into bed. Jesus. Look at this place.

She stops tidying and sighs.

I need a drink. What's that smell?

She goes to the spiked jug and pours a large glass. Throughout the scene she drinks it.

Esme Has he eaten anything?

Scout There's some... some... rabbits.

Despite herself she starts to laugh.

Esme Do you think this is funny?

Scout Pardon? No. It's just been a weird day –

Esme Do you think what's happened here is funny, that it's a game?

Arlo No. Obviously we don't.

Esme I don't think you realise.

Beat.

This is just tourism for you.

Arlo Now look here. How dare you suggest that we would take advantage –

Scout We came here to get him. This is a party, he wanted a party. He's leaving. Tomorrow. He's coming home.

Esme Back with you? Home with you?

Scout Yes.

Esme He was fine before he met you, you know. A bit weird. But fine. You...

Scout What? Corrupted him? He's a big boy, Esme.

Esme You have no clue, do you?

Scout Do you not think he maybe changed because he left home and his mother got sick? That his life changed. That maybe, just maybe, it wasn't evil old us.

Esme No. I don't actually.

Scout I think you're just angry that...

Esme That what?

Scout He outgrew you.



Esme smiles slowly.

Esme You think what you do and how you act is grown-up? Do you think that being rich and being from the city and being talented makes you better? You know you're a bit crap, don't you? A bit unjustified... That's why you need him around. Because for some reason. He validates you.

Arlo Bitch.

Esme What you don't seem to understand, because you're too busy pretending you're in some sexy little film of your own lives, is what you think is exciting about him is actually damage.

Scout That's not what we –

Esme He was kept here, Scout. Away from everything. He barely went to the village. He grew up in his own weird little kingdom shooting things and wearing no shoes. Half the reason he's excellent at the piano is there was quite literally, nothing. Else. To. Do. She wouldn't let him go to school. Do you ever wonder why talks like Peter Pan on crack? All that yikes, crikey, rats vernacular. That's because his only friends as a kid were his mother and a battered Enid Blyton. He actually thought that's how people talked. No wonder he went crazy when she finally let him go. He'd never seen a city, let alone the hard drugs you wooed him with. He was, in his own way... innocent.

Beat.

If you really care about him. Leave him alone after this. He needs to find his own way now. He doesn't need to be. Encouraged.

Beat.

Scout gets out a compact mirror and looks at her own eyes.

Scout Um. My pupils are huge, They look like they could eat me.

Blinks.

Eat me.

Arlo holds her face. They stare at each other. It dawns on them.

Arlo Oh my God.

Tommy appears in the doorway.

Tommy I can't find him.

Arlo You. What did you give us? What did you fucking give us?

Tommy I think Robin may have... I think maybe he...

He points to Esme's empty glass.

Esme What? No. You're joking. Did I drink drugs?

Beat.



I drank the drugs.

Arlo starts laughing.

This is NOT funny.

Arlo It really is.

Tommy finds the empty wraps on the bar.

Tommy Wow. It was all of the MDMA.

Arlo How much?

Tommy Four grams.

Arlo whistles.

Esme What's going to happen to me?

Scout You're going to be fine.

Esme I get fucking drug tested. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Tommy What do you do?

Esme I'm training to be a policewoman.

Arlo Now that is really funny.

Esme FUCK OFF!

Scout It's OK. I promise. If you relax you'll feel good.

Esme I don't want to feel good. I want to feel fucking normal. I'll lose my job.

Arlo A policeman. Seriously?

Esme Policewoman.

Arlo Wow. A real life policewoman.

Esme DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD IT IS TO GET A JOB AT THE MOMENT? ANY IDEA?

Arlo Wow. Relax.

Esme DO NOT TELL ME TO RELAX, YOU UTTER COCK.

Scout This will be out of your system in a week. Take time off.

Esme It doesn't work like that. What planet are you guys on? Fuck. Fuck.

Arlo The same planet you're going to be on in a minute.

Esme IT'S NOT FUCKING FUNNY.



She reigns herself in. Tries to compose herself. She wins. Just. But is shaky.

Mind over matter. Mind over matter.

Scout I won't leave your side, OK? I promise it will be fine. But you've got to go with it. Ride it.

They sit together. Close. Scout takes her hand.

Esme Will I see things?

Scout Unlikely.

Arlo I see things on MDMA sometimes.

Scout SHUT. UP. Arlo.

Tommy Maybe you should make yourself sick.

Esme I feel tingly.

Scout A good tingle though, right? Make it a good tingle.

Arlo If she's sick it'll still be in her system and she won't get the high.

Tommy I don't think she wants the high –

Arlo Well, she might as well embrace it now.

Suddenly the lights cut.

Scout What's going on –

Arlo The power, it must have –

Tommy There's a fuse box over –

Suddenly there is the sound of piano playing. It is classical. Rachmaninov. Perfectly executed.

Scout Robin?

Arlo Robin, that's fucking creepy.

A few more notes.

Esme ROBIN, STOP IT!

Scout You've spiked us, haven't you?

Robin I could say no but that would be lying, but then again you know all about lying don't you...
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are...

Beat.



Fucked.

A bright torch snaps on. Robin aims it at each of them.

Robin The code for the gate was changed. Oliver changed it. He must have given you the new numbers. That's the only way you could have got in.

Beat.

Robin You lied.

Scout It was for you. To help you

Robin What did he offer you? Money. What?
Is that Esme? You've been sent too? Who do you have to fuck for some loyalty around here? Christ.

Esme I have nothing to do with this.

Robin I don't believe you.

Esme I climbed the gate by the woods, I came here on foot. I haven't spoken to Oliver. I wouldn't know how to even call him. You know that.

Robin You of all people –

Scout She's telling the truth.

Arlo OK, look, Robin, we spoke to him, but it wasn't for anything, we're not profiting from this I swear, we wanted to help, we're here for you, we are.

Robin Liar liar.

Scout It's true.

Robin Breeches on fire...

He stares at them.

Coby appears in the doorway.

Angel.

Coby I saw the lights, then none, then one came on again.

Robin My angel, my mouse, she followed the light, come here.

Robin puts his arm around her, she clings to him.

Coby Happy birthday.

Robin You're just in time.

Arlo Robin. Please. Let's just. Why don't we sit down –

Robin My body aches and my head shrieks and you're telling me to sit down...
Maybe you should STAND UP.



Beat.

Think of everything in the world that is going on this very second. The wheels screeching, wings beating, mouths screaming.
All. Right. Now. Can't you feel it? If you try you can.

Beat.

You've seen someone die, Tommy. I can tell. There are heartbeats everywhere. Hear them. Everywhere. Let's celebrate.

Robin switches on a dance track by remote. He goes to the piano and plays along as the song builds and builds. He whips his arms into the air.

Fucking DANCE!

They dance. Arlo and Scout join in with making the music. They grab instruments and the sequencer. They riff off Robin's piano, then off each other, building the song into a ferocious climax.

Robin lets them take over and gets out cans of paint. He opens one and in a sudden movement throws the contents. Colour slashes across the wall. Slowly Robin becomes still amidst the pandemonium. He takes the fireworks and slips out of the garden door. The paint fight continues. Esme has stopped fighting and is dancing wildly in the corner. Only Coby notices Robin is missing.

Coby Where did –

Esme is still dancing to a beat in her head.

Esme Dance like this, guys, like this.

She is trying to get them to follow a synchronised dance. Scout tries to copy her.

Yes, Scout.

Scout Whoop whoop.

Esme Yes, Scout.

Scout Whoop.

Arlo joins in. Tommy is bent over laughing.

Coby GUYS.

They all turn.

Where's –

There is a bang. The sky outside flashes. Tommy ducks down as if for cover.

It's only a firework.

They go to the garden doors. Another bang. Robin is setting off the fireworks. Tommy flinches at every bang. Cowers.

She used to do it every year on his birthday.



Arlo He's doing it a bit close to the –

Tommy Has he put it –

Another bang.

Holy shit –

BANG BANG BANG.

They charge outside.

After a moment Robin creeps in the side door. He is breathing hard. HE is holding a firework. He lights it. HE points it around the room. It fizzles out.

You're here. Thank God. We thought –

Arlo charges in.

Arlo The fire is really catching. We need water. Something. Fuck

Robin picks up the axe.

Scout What are you doing? Robin... What are you doing with that?

Robin smashes the axe into piano. He turns around slowly.

He flicks the lighter. The flame illuminates his face.

Robin I jump. I choose.

Esme runs in, Tear streaked, panicked.

Esme We tried to stop her but she went in – she thought Robin was in there, we couldn't hold her back

Robin Who?

Esme Coby.

Another firework explodes. Filling the room with a flash of light.

Blackout.