



*Gillian stands on the swing and starts to get it going. She has her remote control and turns the music up. She swings in time to the music.*

*Joan returns to her gardening. She is potting hydrangeas. She is grinding down lumps of fertilizer using a mortar and pestle. There are a number of hydrangea plants in pots. She transfers one of the plants to a larger pot and adds the fertilizer.*

*Using a ph meter prong she tests the soil. She then adds a handful of lime from the lime box and goes back to grinding down the fertilizer lumps.*

*She watches Gillian on the swing*

**JOAN:**

Do you want me to film you?

**GILLIAN:**

You don't know how to do it

**JOAN:**

Yes I do.

**GILLIAN:**

You don't do it properly. You make mistakes

**JOAN:**

Once. I made a mistake once. It's because the buttons are so small and my fingers are swollen.

**GILLIAN:**

It's because you're a idiot.

**JOAN:**

Suit yourself.

**GILLIAN:**

I will.

*Gillian continues to swing. She turns the music up louder. It's uncomfortable.*

**JOAN:**

It's too loud.

*No response*

**JOAN:**

Did you hear what I said?

*Pause*

**JOAN:**

Gillian!

*Gillian continues to swing. Joan goes to the main switch of the stereo and turns it off. Gillian tries to make it work with the remote. She slows the swing down.*

**GILLIAN:**

Work! Jesus Christ! Bastard thing!

Gillian!

**JOAN:**

*Tries again with remote.*

**GILLIAN:**

It's broken!

*She throws the remote onto the floor*

**JOAN:**

Now you probably have broken it!

**GILLIAN:**

Yeah well, you made me!

**JOAN:**

It was too loud!

**GILLIAN:**

No it's not.

*Joan picks up the remote and puts the batteries back into it.*

**JOAN:**

You need to get your ears tested.

**GILLIAN:**

Do not.

**JOAN:**

You're going deaf.

**GILLIAN:**

You are.

**JOAN:**

Gillian?

**GILLIAN:**

*(sanctimonious)* All right mother!

*Joan puts the power back on. The sound blasts out. Gillian covers her ears. Joan points to the remote. Gillian turns it down. Gillian sits on the swing. Joan returns to crushing the fertilizer.*

**GILLIAN:**

Is that for the hydrangeas?

**JOAN:**

Yep

**GILLIAN:**

To make different coloured flowers?

**JOAN:**

Yep.

**GILLIAN:**

Did God made the flowers?

**JOAN:**

I suppose so.

**GILLIAN:**

So you're like God?

**JOAN:**

I don't know if I'd say that.

**GILLIAN:**

Yeah you are 'cause you make the colours.

**JOAN:**

I don't make the colours. I just change the colours.

**GILLIAN:**

Same difference but hey?

**JOAN:**

Maybe.

**GILLIAN:**

I like the purple ones best.

**JOAN:**

I know

**GILLIAN:**

The purple flowers are for me. Isabelle has pink. What does Martin have?

**JOAN:**

Blue.

**GILLIAN:**

Yeah, that's right. Blue. Martin has blue. But you don't do the blue ones any more.

*Gillian gets off the swing and gets her video camera. She starts to record Joan.*

**GILLIAN:**

Say something.

**JOAN:**

Have you finished your packing?

*Gillian films the contents of the mortar.*

**GILLIAN:**

Fertilizer.

**JOAN:**

mmm.

*Gillian puts the camera back on Joan.*

**JOAN:**

So, have you? I'll assume the answer's no then. Do you want a hand?

**GILLIAN:**

No!

**JOAN:**

When are you going to do it?

**GILLIAN:**

When I feel like it.

**JOAN:**

I think it would be good if you finished it tonight and then we won't have to rush around in the morning.

**GILLIAN:**

Yeah, well that's not what I think.

**JOAN:**

Right. So, what do you think?

**GILLIAN:**

None of your business.

*Gillian continues to film Joan – the back of her head, her bottom etc.*

**JOAN:**

I know what you're doing.

**GILLIAN:**

I know what you're doing.

**JOAN:**

Put it away Gillie. Please.

**GILLIAN:**

Don't want to.

*Joan looks at her watch.*

**JOAN:**

Look at the time.

*Gillian looks at her watch*

**GILLIAN:**

Get the tray.

**JOAN:**

I beg your pardon?

**GILLIAN:**

Get the tray.

**JOAN:**

Get the tray what?

**GILLIAN:**

Get the tray now.

**JOAN:**

Gillian!

**GILLIAN:**

What?

**JOAN:**

Could you get the tray please.

**GILLIAN:**

No. You get it

*Joan waits, then exits.*

**GILLIAN:**

Dickhead.

**JOAN:**

*(offstage)*

I can hear you!

**GILLIAN:**

*(Whispering)*

Dickhead.

*Gillian swears into her video camera.*

**GILLIAN:**

Dickhead. Idiot. Fuck.

*Giggles naughtily. Places the camera on the table. It is still on.*

*Joan enters with the tea tray.*

**GILLIAN:**

Where's the sugar?

**JOAN:**

Neither of us takes sugar.

*Gillian is annoyed*

**JOAN:**

Do you want it?

**GILLIAN:**

Its part of the set! Or didn't you know that?!

*Joan exits and returns with the sugar. Gillian snatches it from her and arranges it on the tray. Joan sits on the swing.*

*This event is a ritual. It is always done the same way. Gillian sets the cups, saucers and plates in place. Pours the tea and sets out the cake. She is earnest, methodical and rhythmic.*

*When it is ready Joan joins Gillian at the table.*

**GILLIAN:**

*(fast)*

For what we're about to receive may the lord make us truly grateful amen.

**JOAN:**

Amen.

**GILLIAN:**

Go!

*Gillian gulps her tea and shoves in the cake as though she is in a race.*

**GILLIAN:**

First! I finished first.

**JOAN:**

Yes. Get your ball then.

*Gillian gets her ball and turns on her music. She bounces her ball in time to the music. She moves on her toes.*

**JOAN:**

Issie'll be here soon to do your hair.

*Joan takes her tea to the swing. Sits and drinks her tea.*

*Gillian begins to pack up the tea things. She stands, with the tray, very close to Joan.*

**JOAN:**

What?

**GILLIAN:**

I'm clearing away.

**JOAN:**

I'll bring my cup in later.

**GILLIAN:**

I'm clearing away now.

*Joan continues to drink. Gillian hovers.*

**JOAN:**

I said I'd bring it in later.

*Gillian snatches the cup.*

**GILLIAN:**

I said I'm clearing away now.

*Gillian exits.*

**JOAN:**

Whatever you say Gillian. Whatever you say.

*Joan puts a gardening glove over the lens of the camera. She goes to her hidey hole and takes out a packet of cigarettes. She takes one, lights it and sits on the swing and smokes.*

*Joan talks aloud to Tom*

**JOAN:**

I'm just going to have one. Just the one. Help keep me calm. Don't worry, I'm not going to say anything, I'm just going to sit here and have this. I'm not going to say a word. She hasn't finished her packing. I knew she wouldn't. I've done some of it but she said she'd finish it. I probably should have done it but the people said it was good to encourage her to do it. But I'm not going to say anything. It's up to her. She knows it needs to be done and I'm not going to force her. No point in forcing her, not at this stage of the game. Anyway, they said not to force her, to let her do it. It'll give her more control.

*laughs*

Last thing Gillie needs more off! And if she doesn't want to do it, well, so be it. I'll just do it when she's asleep. No arguments about it then. I've been thinking about what you'd say. Calm and steady. That's what you'd say. 'No need to burst a boiler over it Joanie.' So that's what I'm going to do. Calm and steady. No tears.

*Looks at her pottings.*

I've potted a hydrangea for her. A purple one. I don't know whether it'll make it better or worse.

*Isabelle enters*

**ISABELLE:**

I thought you said you'd stopped!

*Joan puts out cigarette.*

**JOAN:**

I just had a couple of puffs.

**ISABELLE:**

A couple of puffs! Jesus Mum, either you give up or you don't. You may as well just go and have the whole packet! Same difference.

**JOAN:**

Maybe I just might.

**ISABELLE:**

Well that's a great attitude!

**JOAN:**

I don't want a lecture!

**ISABELLE:**

I wasn't going to lecture you. I just can't believe...

**JOAN:**

*(cuts her off)* It's hard all right! Anyway, they're low nicotine.

**ISABELLE:**

I don't care what they are. You shouldn't be smoking.

**JOAN:**

For goodness sake, get off my back. I told you, I'm finding it hard. Okay?

**ISABELLE:**

Okay! God, you're uptight!

**JOAN:**

I wasn't until you waltzed in and starting telling me what and I can and can't do.

**ISABELLE:**

I wasn't telling you what you can and can't do, I was letting you know that I hate seeing you smoke.

**JOAN:**

It's the first one I've had all week.

**ISABELLE:**

All right! Let's just drop it.

**JOAN:**

You don't believe me.

**ISABELLE:**

Where's the rest of the packet then?

**JOAN:**

I threw it out.

**ISABELLE:**

You must think I'm a complete idiot.

**JOAN:**

There's only a couple left.

**ISABELLE:**

So you've basically smoked a whole packet?

**JOAN:**

Yes, basically.

**ISABELLE:**

Why?

**JOAN:**

What difference does it make?

**ISABELLE:**

I can't believe you, I really can't.

**JOAN:**

Monday. I promise that I'll stop on Monday.

**ISABELLE:**

Yeah Mum, whatever you say.

**JOAN:**

You don't think I can do it do you?

**ISABELLE:**

It doesn't matter what I think, what matters is what you do.

**JOAN:**

I said I was stopping on Monday. I won't be able to send Gillie up to the shops to get them for me, so, that'll be that. Monday, okay?

**ISABELLE:**

Whatever you reckon.

**JOAN:**

I promise.

**ISABELLE:**

I'm not saying anything.

*Pause*

**ISABELLE:**

I'm going to tell Gillie that she's not allowed to go to the shop before she goes though.

**JOAN:**

I thought you weren't saying anything.

**ISABELLE:**

I'm not! Did you see the doctor today?

**JOAN:**

Yes

**ISABELLE:**

What did she say?

**JOAN:**

She said I'm cured.

**ISABELLE:**

Mum!

**JOAN:**

She said I'm dying.

**ISABELLE:**

Stop it!

**JOAN:**

I'm just making a joke.

**ISABELLE:**

It's not funny.

**JOAN:**

I thought it was. Come on Issie, don't sulk.

I'm not. **ISABELLE:**

*Pause*

Have you had a cup of tea yet? **ISABELLE:**

Just had it. **JOAN:**

Dam. I was hoping to get here in time. I'd love a cuppa. **ISABELLE:**

You'll have to wait. Not long till happy hour anyway. **JOAN:**

I really feel like tea. **ISABELLE:**

Oh well. Gillian's camera is still on. Under the glove. Turn it off will you. It's just wasting the batteries. **JOAN:**

*Isabelle picks up the camera and sings into it.*

**ISABELLE:**  
"Like a virgin, touched for the very first time"

*Laughs and turns it off.*

Don't do that! **JOAN:**

She loves it. **ISABELLE:**

I hate that song. **JOAN:**

She doesn't know what it means. **ISABELLE:**

But I do. It's awful. **JOAN:**

I don't think anyone takes it literally mum. **ISABELLE:**

Maybe not. **JOAN:**

So what did the doctor say? **ISABELLE:**

Nothing new. Surgery next week, then the chemo. **JOAN:**

We already knew that. **ISABELLE:**

I got something to help me sleep. **JOAN:**

Aren't you sleeping? **ISABELLE:**

**JOAN:**

Obviously not.

**ISABELLE:**

Well, did she talk about why you're not sleeping?