

CONTINUUM

By

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Cast:

- Ben** 27. Originally from Surrey, lives in Heaton. Private school, wealthy parents
- Jenny** 28. From Tynemouth originally, lives in Heaton. Educated locally, father worked for an estate agent, mother a teacher.
- Sarah** 37. Born in Cyprus to an army major, educated all over the place. Lives in Corbridge.
- Gary** 26. Born Wallsend educated and lives there.

BEN in a hospital bed apparently sleeping. He has a bandage round his head. JENNY sits at the bedside holding his hand. Long silence.

Jenny: I rang your Mum. She's going to come up and see you.

Pause.

Maybe Tuesday...

Pause

Said she was a bit tied up.

Pause

But she should manage Tuesday...probably...depending on the trains...

Pause

She's having a fight with the gardener about the laurel bushes by Jimbo's grave? Does that sound right? I don't know who Jimbo is and it didn't seem like the moment to ask...

Slight pause

...actually it didn't seem to be the moment to talk about laurel bushes either but your mother doesn't seem to give a ...

Slight pause

Sorry. The gardener wants to pull them up but she wants to keep them – something like that...

Pause.

So if you'd like to wake up for her visit...

BEN sleeps.

Please...

She fights tears for a moment. Then buries her face in the covers. Pause

CHANGE

JENNY walks in on SARAH

Sarah: I'm afraid you will have to wait outside.

Jenny: I've been sat out here for two hours...

Sarah: I'm sorry I have a very full diary...

Jenny: I need some answers...

Sarah: You'll have to wait...

Jenny: I am not waiting any longer. I need to know how he is.

Sarah: Who?

Jenny: Ben Savage.

Sarah: I can only discuss it with next of kin.

Jenny: I'm his partner.

Sarah: Wife?

Jenny: No.

Sarah: Oh. Girlfriend?

Jenny: Well... yes...

Sarah: You don't seem very sure.

Jenny: We live together, OK?

Sarah: I really should only be talking to the next of kin.

Jenny: Yeah, well good luck with that.

Sarah: What do you mean?

Jenny: I deserve some information. I've been here for three days and I've had nothing from the nurses and they keep saying they know everything the doctor knows but they know nothing. I want to hear it from you. You are the doctor, right? Do you know nothing?

Sarah: You must appreciate that we do have a responsibility to ensure that records...

Jenny: Will he wake up?

Pause

Sarah: Probably.

Jenny: OK. Will he be OK?

Pause

- Sarah:** He's had a very serious head injury.
- Jenny:** I can see that but what are the consequences of that? Will he...
- Sarah:** We don't know. What the nurse told you is true. We don't know how he will be when he wakes up. I'm here to try and ascertain whether his brain function has been affected but until he wakes up there isn't much I can tell you.
- Jenny:** I see.
- Sarah:** We're all playing the waiting game.

CHANGE

JENNY at BEN'S bedside. She tries holding his hand.

But it seems pointless and she stops.

- Jenny:** It was your indifference I suppose... Weeks of you not noticing, not valuing, not showing me anything – not weeks - ever since I known you – I mean you say you love me but... you never show it. I mean for fuck's sake, Ben, what was I supposed to build my faith on? It wasn't really... I mean...

Pause

God this is hard. They said "Keep talking to him." You that is. "Because he might be able to hear you." but I feel the one thing we need to talk about is... so what does that leave? Are you listening?

She laughs ruefully. Pause.

I checked the TV bill and... well, it's a lot! I think we need to discuss that. I know you like movies but unless we're earning a bit more... anyway, it was an extra eighty-five pound for films. Eighty-five! I know I haven't watched that many so... I know you like films but... it's a lot... with that and the boiler we're... I'm a bit broke...

Pause

Well, that's the easiest I've ever had it on the money front. No comeback for me? No irritation? No justification? Come on, Ben. Show me some irritation so I can try and humour it. Because that's all I do really – humour your irritations. Could be the title of our relationship... 'Humouring...'

She looks at him. She sighs and turns to look away. BEN wakes.

- Ben:** Jimbo was a hamster.
- Jenny:** Jesus Christ!

CHANGE

Sarah: I'd like you to count backwards in sevens from one hundred.

JENNY has gone. SARAH has appeared beside BEN, she is a woman in her late thirties and has medical notes and a pen.

As BEN calls the numbers SARAH is writing notes.

Ben: (*Slowly with difficulty*) Ninety-three...eighty-six...seventy-nine...seventy-two...er...

SARAH seems very interested in the difficulty he is having and is writing copious notes. BEN watches and then suddenly in an impressive rush...

Sixty-five, fifty-eight, fifty-one, forty-four, thirty-seven, thirty, twenty-three, sixteen, nine, two and minus five.

SARAH stops writing and looks at BEN exasperatedly.

Sarah: Not so hard eh?

CHANGE

JENNY sits with BEN. After a bit she takes his hand – a little self-consciously.

BEN smiles and looks her up and down.

Ben: Do we fuck?

CHANGE

BEN alone with ALSO BEN – They are the same actor – talking to himself.

Also Ben: Waste of time.

Ben: Plenty of it.

Also Ben: Waste of time.

Ben: No.

Also Ben: Waste of time.

Ben: No.

CHANGE

JENNY with BEN. Long, uncomfortable silence.

Jenny: Bored?

Ben: No.

Jenny: I can bring you books. Tell me which ones.

Pause

Ben: Who are you again?

CHANGE

SARAH and BEN

Sarah: OK, let's try another one. I'm going to hold up my fingers. When I hold up one finger I want you to hold up two. If I hold up two fingers then I want you to hold up one. Is that OK?

Ben: Wild.

SARAH holds up one finger. BEN holds up two.

SARAH holds up one finger. BEN holds up two.

SARAH holds up two fingers. BEN holds up one.

SARAH holds up two fingers. BEN holds up two fingers.

SARAH holds up two fingers. BEN holds up one - then two - then one.

SARAH holds up two fingers. BEN holds up two – then seems doubtful and holds up one – then two – then gets viciously angry and starts wagging his hand up and down in violent V signs in front of SARAH'S face.

SARAH looks interested and writes something down on her notes.

BEN calms down suddenly.

CHANGE

JENNY and BEN

Ben: Why are you hanging about?

Jenny: Stop trying to hurt me.

CHANGE

SARAH and BEN

Sarah: What have you been doing today?

CHANGE

BEN and ALSO BEN

Also Ben: Waste of time.

CHANGE

SARAH and BEN

Sarah: What have you been doing today?

CHANGE

JENNY and BEN - Silence

Jenny: When you're better, I thought...

BEN starts to laugh it's natural at first but grows in intensity until he directs it savagely into JENNY's face. It is so angry that she is forced to step away.

CHANGE

SARAH and BEN

Sarah: What have you been doing today?

CHANGE

JENNY with BEN

Ben: Why do you sit here with me when I'm not very nice to you?

Jenny: We have a lot of unfinished business.

Ben: So you're here for you?

CHANGE*SARAH and BEN***Sarah:** What have you been doing today?***CHANGE****JENNY and BEN***Jenny:** Partly I suppose.***CHANGE****SARAH and BEN***Sarah:** What have you been doing today?**Ben:** Wanking mostly.*SARAH is definitely taken aback but tries to hide it.***Sarah:** Oh?**Ben:** Yes.**Sarah:** You know that's...**Ben:** Inappropriate?**Sarah:** Yes. You know that?**Ben:** Yes.**Sarah:** But you said it anyway.**Ben:** Yes.**Sarah:** Why?**Ben:** Aren't you supposed to tell me?**Sarah:** I don't have the answers.**Ben:** Then why are you here?**Sarah:** To help you look.

Ben: Who helps you?

Pause

Sarah: Other doctors. Books, research...

Ben: Case studies about other nutters?

Sarah: Maybe.

Pause.

Why did you say that?

Ben: What “nutties”?

Sarah: No “masturbation”.

Ben: I said, “wank”.

Sarah: Why did you say that?

Ben: You asked me. You’re my doctor. I told you.

Sarah: You see the normal response might be: “I just had breakfast” or “This and that.” or “I watched a bit of telly and then had some coffee.”

Ben: But I’d been wanking.

Sarah: But most people wouldn’t say so.

Ben: But most people aren’t being asked by a doctor.

Sarah: Would you have said that to your mother?

Ben: If you fetch her we could find out.

Sarah: You see, I don’t mind what you say to me, but to help you we have to find out what you might say in... normal social situations?

Ben: Take me out for dinner. Let’s find out.

Sarah: Your flirting with me is not helping.

Ben: It’s fun.

Sarah: You’re trying it on.

Ben: Maybe.

Sarah: Can’t you stop yourself saying these things?

Ben: I don't know. Do you?

Sarah: No.

Ben: It's fun not knowing.

Sarah: You not knowing, or me not knowing?

Ben: Me. You. Both.

Sarah: You are trying it on.

Ben: For size.

Sarah: Are you improving?

Ben: I come more quickly.

Sarah: I'm sorry?

Ben: When I think of you. I come more quickly.

Sarah: Masturbation is a normal...

Ben: I thought *we* didn't use that word.

Sarah: You're right. I'm just saying that I am not making any moral judgements. I am simply trying to help you to readjust.

Ben: Maybe I don't want to. After all you have beautiful breasts.

SARAH is a little offended this time.

Sarah: Would you be happier with a male doctor?

Ben: No.

Pause

Sarah: Would you be more *comfortable* with a male doctor?

Ben: No.

Sarah: Would you rather discuss this with a male doctor?

Ben: No.

Slight pause

Sarah: Would you *also* like to discuss this with a male doctor?

Ben: No.

Sarah: Would you be more responsive to a male doctor?

Pause

Sarah: You didn't answer.

Ben: No.

Sarah: Did you stop yourself or did you simply not have anything to say?

Ben: I didn't have anything to say.

Sarah: Are you sure?

Ben: Yes.

Sarah: Because if you did and you stopped yourself that would be something to work with.

Ben: Yes.

Sarah: But you didn't stop yourself?

Ben: No.

Sarah: And you wouldn't rather see a male doctor?

Ben: No.

Sarah: But?

Ben: No.

Long pause

Sarah: I mean if you are being distracted by any feelings you may have...

Ben: I'm distracted by your breasts and by the fact that I just had a wank thinking about you.

Sarah: So with a male doctor this wouldn't be an issue.

Ben: That would depend on his breasts.

Sarah: Seriously.

Ben: Seriously. If he had breasts as nice as yours...

Sarah: No, I mean seriously. Is it an issue?

Ben: It's not an issue for me.

Sarah: But you are making it one for me.

BEN shrugs. Pause.

It's about realising what's appropriate.

Ben: You said.

Sarah: Did I?

Ben: Yesterday.

Sarah: You remember that?

CHANGE

JENNY sitting with BEN

Jenny: You remember?

Ben: I've established that from the other clues.

Pause

So you say we were arguing?

Jenny: What?

Ben: The night of the accident – before I drove off – you say we were arguing – and that you're my girlfriend.

Jenny: Well...

Ben: You're not my girlfriend?

Jenny: You really don't remember?

CHANGE

SARAH and BEN

Sarah: How is your memory?

Ben: Capital of Costa Rica is San Jose, the capital of Burundi is Bujumbura. The 1966 England World cup winning team was: Banks, Cohen, Charlton J., Moore, Wilson, Stiles, Charlton R., Peters, Ball, Hunt, Hurst. If two tankers are travelling at 70 miles an hour...

Sarah: Ok very funny... what about stuff to do with you?

Ben: My job?

Sarah: If you like.

Ben: I'm really an office gopher. I have floating brief. I do everything no one else does.

Sarah: But who do you work for?

Ben: TMK investment. They trade on the futures market. They're bookies for millionaires.

Sarah: You remember the places, the faces, the work?

Ben: Sure. We're the back office – the glamorous stuff happens in London.

Sarah: Do you remember the emotional context of work?

Pause

Ben: I see where you're going...

Sarah: Bully for you. Do you?

Ben: They let me do the photocopying and make the tea for the directors and they despise me for not trying to be like them.

Sarah: So you weren't very happy with your work?

Ben: I don't think I was very happy with anything.

Sarah: What about Jenny?

Ben: Who?

Sarah: Your girlfriend

Ben: I don't remember her.

Sarah: We talked about her last time.

Ben: I don't remember.

Sarah: But you remember the rest of our conversation?

Ben: I remember all of our conversations.

Sarah: Then you'll remember talking about Jenny.

Ben: No.
Sarah: She was visiting you this morning...
Ben: Oh her.

Pause

Sarah: What about your family?
Ben: (*Adopting cod Austrian accent*) My mother, Sigmund?

Sarah: If you like.
Ben: Bonkers.

Sarah: You don't mean that.
Ben: I'm very particular about what I mean. What about your family?

Sarah: We aren't here to talk about me.
Ben: Why not? Do you have a family?

Sarah: Yes. I have a daughter.
Ben: Husband? Or is she a bastard?

Sarah: I have a husband, thank you.
Ben: How old is your daughter?

Sarah: We aren't going to talk about this. Now tell me about your mother.
Ben: No. How old is your daughter?

Sarah: Three. Now...
Ben: What's her name?

Sarah: Natasha.
Ben: Of course it is.

Sarah: What is that supposed to mean?
Ben: Why did you choose that name?
Sarah: That's really not...
Ben: Of all the names why that name...?

BEN starts to cry.

- Sarah:** What's the matter?
- Ben:** What's she like?
- Sarah:** I don't want to...
- Ben:** Funny, beautiful, likes books... clever...?
- Sarah:** Well... of course but she's three...
- Ben:** *(Suddenly very intense and emotional)* I love her. Natasha.
- Sarah:** Who is Natasha?
- Ben:** Your daughter.
- Sarah:** Yes. *(Slightly confused)* You mean the idea of her? What do you mean?
- Ben:** It... must be nice to have a daughter. You look after her. She's very special.
- Sarah:** Yes. Yes I will.

Pause. SARAH makes some notes. BEN wipes his eyes.

- Ben:** Look at me. I'm a cry baby.
- Sarah:** It's OK to cry.
- Ben:** Really? I keep doing that. Crying like that. I never used to do that.
- Sarah:** Lesions in your right frontal lobe may have a number of...
- Ben:** In English. Please.
- Sarah:** You experience emotion very directly since the accident and the damage to the front of your brain means there is no ... balance to your processing of that. If you had damaged the left hand side it's possible that you wouldn't feel any emotion at all.
- Ben:** Left brain, right brain?
- Sarah:** Sort of but it isn't that simple. Some of the executive functions...
- Ben:** Blah, blah, blah...
- Sarah:** You don't want to understand?
- Ben:** I keep shouting and then feel incredibly happy, then I feel in despair then... I keep crying. It's exhausting. Those feelings...

Sarah: The accident... you're... not going to be the same person you were. It's likely that these emotional extremes will continue.

Ben: Crying?

Sarah: All those feelings.

Ben: Little girls cry. That's what he says... said...

Sarah: Who?

BEN looks depressed.

Mr. Savage. You have changed. Your brain is damaged and does not function as it once did. I haven't yet fully assessed all of these difficulties but we can come up with strategies to help you cope and part of that will be a process of accepting what has happened and accepting that you have changed.

Ben: Accepting that I am a hysterical little girl?

Sarah: Accepting that you see the world differently than you did before. I think we can start to...

BEN zones out for a moment.

Ben?

BEN returns.

That's one of the things we need to explore in your treatment. Those episodes – were you aware that you had an absence then?

Ben: Kind of.

Sarah: We need to think about where all this is going. It is unlikely that you will be able to stay in the hospital after your physical difficulties have healed – so that may be as soon as a week away, so... After that you will have to go home – or if you can't go home, I will have to hand you over to Neuro-rehabilitation, unless someone can be found to care for you. Now is there someone who can care for you?

Long pause

Ben: No.

Sarah: What about Jenny?

Ben: No.

Sarah: She seems very devoted.

Ben: Yes.

Sarah: You live together?

Ben: Yes.

Sarah: But I thought you said you didn't remember...

BEN is struck by a severe fit. He clutches his head and writhes in agony.

CHANGE

JENNY and SARAH

Sarah: So you said that contacting his next of kin might be difficult. Who is the next of kin?

Pause

Jenny: (Sighs) Bunty.

Sarah: Bunty?

Jenny: His Mum. Bunty Savage. It really is her name.

Sarah: Unusual.

Jenny: So is she.

Sarah: Does she know what's happened?

Jenny: I spoke to her, yes but she... she's inclined to be... I mean she isn't certified or anything but...

Sarah: What?

Jenny: She's a bit... distracted...

Sarah: So not ideal for consulting about permissions etc.?

Jenny: Not ideal.

Sarah: And you are... his partner?

Jenny: Well, yes but...

Sarah: Not married?

Jenny: No.

Sarah: But you are effectively the closest person to him?

- Jenny:** Well...It's complicated, it's why he crashed the car, we'd been arguing and he...
- Sarah:** But you're planning on being around?
- Jenny:** It's hard.
- Sarah:** Someone is going to have to take legal responsibility for him.
- Jenny:** Legal?
- Sarah:** Consent. Ben can give consent currently, but that may change if his condition were to deteriorate.
- Jenny:** Is that likely?
- Sarah:** We don't know.
- Jenny:** I see...
- Sarah:** And also with the police...
- Jenny:** The police have been here?
- Sarah:** Yes, I've sent them away but I don't know how long that will last and Ben isn't necessarily very lucid and may need legal support.
- Jenny:** Are they going to prosecute?
- Sarah:** I have no idea. My concern is Ben's health and right now that means I need someone to take responsibility as next of kin.
- Jenny:** But we're not married.
- Sarah:** I think with Ben's permission...
- Jenny:** He doesn't even recognise me!
- Sarah:** I expect that will change.
- Jenny:** Really?
- Sarah:** He's confused. Everything feels different and the injuries have affected the functioning of his brain. Everything is going to be confusing... for a while. Memory loss is nearly always a temporary factor and in any case may not be as simple as it is sometimes portrayed...
- Jenny:** Meaning?
- Sarah:** It's not *The Bourne Identity*.

Jenny: Is that a joke?

SARAH looks a little confused perturbed and starts to look efficient and look at her notes.

Sarah: Of course not. The issue of amnesia is a complex one... it's quite credible... possible... probable even, that he will not remember the accident itself. The other items of memory loss are less predictable... there is a danger that there may be an element of malingering...

Jenny: You mean he's faking it?

Sarah: Not exactly.

Jenny: What other meaning is there for 'malingering'.

Sarah: It may be a subconscious malingering.

Jenny: So he knows what happened that night but chooses not to remember?

Sarah: Sort of... it's hard to predict. There is a selection process going on which we don't fully understand and it may be that the memories will find their own way out in time as he starts to get some returning or improved function. But some things may not return.

Jenny: So there's no point waiting for him to remember me?

Sarah: Oh he remembers you.

Jenny: What?

Sarah: He just hasn't told you yet.

CHANGE

BEN goes to the sink with his wash bag. He looks at himself in the mirror and rubs his chin thoughtfully. He looks at the wash bag and then pauses, apparently indecisive. Eventually he opens the wash bag and gets out shaving tackle.

He lines up shaving foam and razor. Hesitantly, he picks up the shaving foam, puts it down. Turns on the tap. Turns it off. Picks up the razor goes to shave his dry un-soaped face. Then stops confused. Flings the razor down in frustration and throws himself on the bed.

CHANGE

BEN and SARAH. BEN is signing a document

Ben: So she's my next of kin, just like that, we're related?

Sarah: If you like.

Ben: Easier than getting married. Cheaper too. No dress, no party, no church, no vicar, no hymns, no best man, no stag do, no chained to lamppost, no left at the altar, no rings, no love, no hope, no mother in law, no... no...

Sarah: No. Nothing like that. It just gives us a better point of contact than your mother who does seem difficult to get hold of.

Ben: Too busy with the garden. Why would she agree to do this?

Sarah: Perhaps you should ask her?

Ben: Is she still seeing that guy?

Sarah: I really don't think it's my place...

Ben: Ethical issue is it, Doctor? Don't mix business and pleasure, business and gossip. Quick enough with the personal questions when it suits you, though, aren't you? You've been quizzing me about Jenny for the last few days, you've signed me up for your research project and (*Waving the paper at her*) got me institutionalised. Bet you've been gossiping away with Jen haven't you but you don't want to cross that boundary because... why... because you might have to take responsibility for me? Well that's OK because Jenny has taken responsibility for me. My next of kin... (*He starts to cry.*) ...she shows me this... not my mother, not Natasha, not Uncle Rupert... my ex-girlfriend. My next of kin is my ex-girlfriend. My next of kin is my ex-life...

SARAH holds the papers and looks uncomfortable

CHANGE

BEN sitting up. JENNY comes in. She has grapes.

Ben: Hello again.

Jenny: Hello, Ben.

Ben: Is this a job? Or do you belong to some charity?

Jenny: What do you mean?

Ben: Hospital visiting. You're obviously good at it – grapes, big smile, remember my name...

Jenny: Because we lived together for over a year. (*Pause*) Dr. Cowell says you remember me. Do you?

BEN zones out.

Ben. Ben.

Long pause. JENNY looks at him to see if he's faking it but he seems 'away'. After a while she eats some grapes. She gets out her phone and starts texting. Suddenly.

Ben: Odd that grapes should be such archetypal hospital food don't you think?

Jenny: No.

Pause

Ben: "No", they aren't archetypal or "No", it isn't odd?

Jenny: I asked if you remember me.

Ben: You were here yesterday.

Jenny: You know what I mean.

Pause

Ben: Doctor Cowell says it might take a while to remember some things...

Jenny: She also says you remember me.

Ben: No.

Jenny: And that at some level you only pretend not to remember. Do you remember me?

Pause

Ben: Like a first toy.

Jenny: What?

Ben: I know you existed. But you don't belong here.

Jenny: Here?

Ben: In the present.

Jenny: I don't know what that means.

Ben: I don't know what you mean.

Jenny: I didn't understand...

Ben: No. I mean, I didn't know what *you* mean. You the person, what does your presence mean?

Pause

Jenny: So you remember me?

Ben: Define "remember".

Jenny: Ben, please. Can we just talk and not make this an argument about...?

Ben: Have you waxed your bikini line recently?

Jenny: What? We were...

Ben: I just read an article about waxing your bikini line. I've been reading a lot of magazines.

Jenny: Ben you are...

Ben: Magazines. I don't seem to be able to stay with a book.

Jenny: Or a conversation.

Ben: You need to be careful. It is possible to contract cellulitis. It seems that pubic hair serves a useful function in protecting mucous membranes in the genital area. An over enthusiastic waxing can...

Jenny: Do they not have any men's magazines for you?

Ben: A contradiction in terms, I think. Men's magazines are not really magazines in the sense of the word suggesting variety. Though they are of course a 'storehouse' (from the French *magasin*) a storehouse of pornography, or erotic photography whereas a woman's magazine...

Jenny: Stop! Can I not bring you books?

Ben: No.

Pause

I can't concentrate – I need short...

BEN winces and seems to have a minor fit. JENNY goes to him and strokes his head.

It seems you are lovely to me. Was that always the case?

JENNY seems stung by the question and moves away.

Jenny: We need to talk about some stuff.

Ben: I don't want to...

Jenny: The choice isn't going to be yours much longer!

Ben: What do you mean?

Jenny: The police... Doctor Cowell thinks they will have to speak to you soon.

BEN shrugs

It might help to know some background before you go in.

Ben: I haven't got much going for me except that I don't remember, so let's not muddy that with facts.

Jenny: It's pretty muddy already, wouldn't you say?

Ben: What do you mean?

Jenny: You seem to have a mixed recollection about me, for example.

Ben: I've got an erection.

Jenny: Let's not do that.

Ben: Shame to waste it.

Jenny: Stop! We should talk about the day of the accident.

Ben: What's to say?

Jenny: There's going to be trouble.

Ben: Speeding ticket?

Jenny: It's more serious than that. The police say...

Ben: I don't remember. Come on let's do it. In the bed here, now. Why not?

Jenny: Ben! Dr. Cowell has sent the police away twice saying you aren't fit to talk but they told me that they were going to insist or get a second opinion –

Ben: Erections gone now.

Jenny: They are coming to talk to you...

Ben: That's fine. I don't remember.

Jenny: Like you don't remember me or is this a real 'don't remember'?

Ben: I don't remember!

Jenny: But...

Ben: I don't remember. I think that's best. I don't remember. I know you are Jenny. You tell me we are... were what we were and I believe you. I know some of that... but the accident... it's like new start...

Jenny: They aren't going to have a lot of patience with...

Ben: I don't care.

Jenny: There are things about us which feel... unfinished...

Pause

Ben: Would have been neater if I'd died.

Jenny: Don't say that.

Ben: It would have been simpler.

Jenny: No. You came in and I...

Ben: I forgot my lunch.

Jenny: You remember?

Ben: Sometimes.

Jenny: Dafydd was...

Ben: No.

Jenny: Ben...

Ben: (*Shouts*) No!

Jenny: There is stuff you need to know about me, about Dafydd...

Ben: (*Very fierce*) Coal miner is he? Sheep shagger is he? Poet and male voice choir member? Dafydd, Dafydd, Llareggub, Fireman Sam, rat-black, cat-black, fishing-boat-bobbing-sea...

Jenny: I don't need to be here you know...

Ben: Fuck off then. Go to Tenby, or Swansea or Port Talbot...

Jenny: I don't need to come here every day and be abused by you. I don't have to take your, hot and cold, your 'love you, hate you' thing. I don't need that. I could be living my life without being sucked into your drain.

Ben: (*Screams*) NO! Fuck off, you bitch! Fuck off! Leave me a-fucking-lone!

Suddenly calm.

What were you saying?

JENNY starts to cry. BEN watches curiously for a moment then suddenly starts walking around her looking worried. He fetches her a magazine and gives it to her. He gets a blanket and wraps it round her. JENNY is bemused, tears give way to puzzlement. Eventually, he starts patting her head gently, then stroking her hair tenderly. He is crying.

Ben: (Cont.) Are you better? Are you better? You were sad? Were you sad? Are you better?

JENNY takes his hand and holds it to her cheek.

CHANGE

BEN and SARAH. SARAH is organising some paper for a test.

Sarah: A zoetrope?

Ben: Yeah, like that... a strip of film, the individual pictures of a film encircling you. - you can see each instant of time as one little picture, a frozen moment, or you can spin it like a merry go round and see the whole moving picture – past, present...

Sarah: As if time stops?

Ben: ...as if it doesn't matter. As if it's optional. Time is an optional extra. "Yeah, OK, I'll take a bit of time, but not the whole packet – I wouldn't like to overdo it." So what's the point of the test?

Sarah: You have a page of words each word is the name of a colour but each word is printed in a different colour and the colour of the print does not correspond to the colour name that is printed.

Ben: Wild.

Sarah: Just a moment, don't look at that yet. I need to get my notes in order.

She does so while she speaks

So when you look at your film, you see your childhood, your parents, school, university, you also say you see us here?

Ben: Yeah. There's lots of us. The guinea pig and the doctor.

Sarah: Ok guinea pig. Here you are. In order, I would like you to tell me the colour in which each word is printed – ignoring the meaning of what the word says.

BEN is reads from a large sheet of paper with the words written in different colours.

Ben: Red...white...brown...green...green...er...green...brown...shit this is difficult...brown...green...red...white...er...white...white...what is the point of this?

- Sarah:** This test may help us to determine if the *anterior cingulate* area of your brain is damaged.
- Ben:** And then what? You going to give me a new one?
- Sarah:** No. You might think that recognising a colour is as instinctive a function as you can think of. But it seems that the learned skill of reading is easier to articulate...
- Ben:** But what's the point of the test?
- Sarah:** The *anterior cingulate* is a kind of conduit between the more impulse driven areas of the brain and the higher functioning frontal lobes. In this you are inhibiting your instinctive response and forcing yourself to voice the colour of the print instead of the colour that the word says. It's a measure of your ability to experience secondary emotion.

Pause. BEN puts down the paper

- Ben:** So what's the point of the test?
- Sarah:** Is your emotion getting in the way, Ben? Your pictures encircling you – your zoetrope? What happens to the pictures with Jenny? The bits with the night of the argument. The accident. Are they there but you can't see them or are they just not there?
- Ben:** You're getting good at this.
- Sarah:** Don't dodge it. Which is it?
- Ben:** They're there.
- Sarah:** So?
- Ben:** I just don't look at them.

CHANGE

JENNY and SARAH

- Jenny:** He won't get better?
- Sarah:** I don't think that's necessarily the best way of looking at it.
- Jenny:** That's just a clever way of trying to fob me off.
- Sarah:** Perhaps you can help me by telling me how he's changed.

Jenny: He never used to show his feelings. He looks the same, the smart remarks are there the fast chat occasional sarcasm but now he shows me what he's feeling. I'm overwhelmed by it. He cried today. That's why I came to see you. He never cries. He didn't cry when his father died, he just tucked it away and refused to talk about it. It's what caused the... my... the argument, the accident... sort of... but now he can be so tender, so vulnerable and yet also so...

Sarah: So what...?

JENNY is embarrassed

I won't be shocked.

Jenny: He's less... inhibited.

Sarah: He speaks bluntly to you?

She nods.

What does he say?

JENNY is very embarrassed.

Jenny: He talks...sexually very directly... graphically in fact.

Sarah: And that's a bit awkward?

Jenny: It's a bit surprising – we never...that is, he was very reluctant to talk about our sex life before. At least... so was I and... we had some issues...

Sarah: Anything else?

Jenny: He talks about you.

Pause

Sarah: Yes?

Jenny: In a rather...

Jenny: It's embarrassing...

Sarah: Sexually?

Jenny: Yes.

Sarah: I'm sorry. It's not uncommon for patients with right frontal lobe damage to be uninhibited and say...

JENNY nods.

Jenny: Does he say these things to you?

It's SARAH's turn to feel uncomfortable.

Sarah: People...everyone has thoughts which they dismiss immediately, or have no intention of responding to...

Jenny: He does say them to you.

Sarah: Yes.

Pause

Some of these things may correct themselves but...

Pause.

We view possibilities in our mind very quickly and choose the appropriate response from a myriad of options – we all think these things. It's just most of us can filter them out. The frontal lobe helps us to choose the appropriate...

JENNY is upset. SARAH gets up and goes to get a book. She flicks through it looking for something.

Let me show you something. Let me see if I can find it. There.

She shows JENNY the book.

Jenny: Oh God!

Sarah: It's pretty disgusting, isn't it? This is a diagram of the damage sustained to the head of Phineas Gage, a foreman on a railroad construction team in Vermont in 1848. He was setting a charge of dynamite to clear some rocks. He was pushing the charges in with a steel bar which was (*She reads from the book*) three feet seven inches long – like a fat steel broomstick. (*She indicates the size with her arms*) Anyway, the charge went off and the bar was blown in through his cheek bone and out of the top of his head. The bar landed about 30 yards behind him.

Jenny: Eburgh!

Sarah: It seems that he probably didn't even lose consciousness. He could see, hear, smell, touch, taste. He could talk, work, reason: but the railway didn't want him back because his personality had changed. He had been equable and pleasant and now he was unpredictable and profane. His colleagues said he was "No longer Gage".

Jenny: You believe that?

Sarah: That patients change their personality?

Jenny: That they aren't the same person.

Sarah: Ben's personality will probably never be the same.

Jenny: But then it's not Ben.

Sarah: Arguably.

Jenny: But Ben is Ben. You can't change that.

Sarah: Are you the person you were ten years ago?

Jenny: Of course...

Sarah: No changes?

Jenny: I'm a lot more relaxed than I used to be. I used be very up-tight about everything now I...

Sarah: Now you've changed your personality - a bit. It's just it happened gently so everyone got used to you and they think it's the same Jenny, right? Ben's just had to do it in a hurry. (*Pause*) We need to find out as much as we can about what is damaged and as much as we can about what has changed and try and help Ben adjust to the change.

Jenny: Yeah.

SARAH's phone rings. She answers it.

Sarah: Yes? ...Sweetheart! No, Mummy's still at work. About two hours. Did you? The Penguin was sick? Eurgh. No I'll be back for stories. Can you put Daddy on? (*To JENNY*) Sorry... (*To phone*) I am consulting! I can't just chat about... Because I thought it might be important. Look I can't discuss that now I'm with someone.

She hangs up

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have answered but it was home and I thought...

Jenny: Your family?

Sarah: Yes.

Jenny: Your daughter?

Sarah: Yes. She's three.

Jenny: Yes. Lovely. What's her name?

Sarah: Natasha.

Jenny: Natasha? That's the name of Ben's sister.

Sarah: Ah...

Jenny: What?

Sarah: Ben reacted strangely when I mentioned her name but that explains it.

Jenny: Strangely?

Sarah: There was obviously a strong emotional link...

Jenny: For Natasha but not for me.

Sarah: Jenny... I'm sorry. But you know although he's angry and although we know that his memory is... selective when he deals with you – or about you... that's also a sign of a strong emotional link with the past.

Jenny: He didn't choose to forget me lightly then?

Sarah: I don't think...

Jenny: He cried. That's not Ben. He cried! Don't you get it? It's not Ben!

Sarah: He wasn't a demonstrative person before the accident then.

JENNY laughs ruefully

Jenny: Hardly!

Sarah: What happened?

Jenny: We argued.

Sarah: Yes and he took the car etcetera. But why did you argue?

Jenny: It's none of your business.

Pause

Sarah: Ben has undergone a severe brain trauma. The executive function has been damaged. I am still running tests to try and determine the full effect of this damage and whether any other key areas are affected. Clearly from what you are saying the accident came out of a stressful and emotional situation. Sometimes he seems to know who you are other times he consciously denies you. I don't know what that emotional situation was but I am trying to disentangle the symptoms of Ben's injuries from the symptoms of whatever happened between you two. I'm not here to judge, just find out why Ben is behaving the way he is.

Jenny: It's not fair.

Sarah: No.

Pause

Jenny: I slept with someone from work. He... God it's like some dreadful soap... he came home and found us. We argued, he took the car and... there we are... does that help?

Sarah: Thank you. You should know the police have been on the phone again. I told them he wasn't coherent and wasn't fit to talk but... I can't keep them out for much longer.

Jenny: Have you told him?

Sarah: No.

Jenny: Should we?

SARAH shrugs.

Sarah: It would be best if he remembered himself but... it might be better to hear it from you than from strangers.

Jenny: Unless I'm a stranger.

CHANGE

BEN and SARAH.

Ben: Ask me something else.

Sarah: I'd rather ask this.

Ben: Let's play one of your games.

Sarah: You've been seeing Jenny almost every day...

Ben: Well, she keeps turning up.

Sarah: A few days ago when I asked you about Jenny before, you didn't seem to remember her?

Ben: Maybe I didn't.

Sarah: But you do now?

Ben: I saw her this morning. That's what I remember.

Sarah: But you don't remember her as your girlfriend?

Ben: Not in the way you mean.

Sarah: Do you find that alarming?

Ben: Aren't you supposed to reassure me?

Sarah: Not necessarily.

Ben: Maybe my memory is...

Sarah: What?

Ben: I don't know.

Sarah: Have a go, you like words, find one, your memory is...?

Ben: Capricious.

Sarah: Was it always capricious or only since the accident?

Ben: Cute.

Sarah: Was it?

Ben: More since.

Sarah: You need to face the past.

Ben: I don't remember it.

Sarah: It seems different?

Ben: It seems like another world.

Long pause

I know that Jenny and I were something... I know we were a couple... but... it all seems to belong to some film I saw, a book I read... my memories of her belong to... someone else... I dunno...

Sarah: And the accident.

Ben: I don't remember it.

Sarah: What's the last thing you remember before the accident?

Ben: Strawberries.

Sarah: Oh?

Ben: I bought some strawberries, for... lunch.

Pause

Sarah: What about your family?

Ben: I remember them OK.

Sarah: But do memories of them seem to come from a book?

Ben: No. Not like... Jenny. Not so much.

Sarah: The other day you said "little girl's cry. He said that." Who were you talking about?

Ben: My father.

Sarah: You have a clear memory of your father?

Ben: You'd have to chop my whole head off to forget him.

Sarah: And you remember the context of those remarks?

Ben: Yeah, so?

Sarah: So you remember a great deal. I'm trying to point out that perhaps your memory is not one of the issues we should be worried about.

Ben: You think I'm lying?

Sarah: No. I think your memory is particularly unreliable concerning Jenny.

Ben: Always harping on about Jenny.

Sarah: I just wonder if your past memories of Jenny might help you to organise your thoughts now. It might lead you to understanding what happened in the accident. These things may be important. The police are coming tomorrow and...

She leaves it hanging. BEN says nothing

The past is a thing we use to put ourselves in context.

Ben: Doctor of the fucking obvious now are you?

Sarah: You aren't ready to talk about that?

Ben: (*Suddenly angry*) Of course I'm not ready to talk about that. Why would anyone be ready to talk about that? It's my stuff! My stuff! My stuff! My job to sort it out. If you want to help me then leave it alone, or take me to the car and let me scrape up the bits of my brain that...

BEN zones out for a moment.

CHANGE

BEN and ALSO BEN

Ben: I was going somewhere. I don't remember where.

Also Ben: I was looking for a CD.

Ben: Or some slippers.

CHANGE

SARAH and BEN

Sarah: Those moments of rage what do they feel like?

Ben: It's a relief. It's nice to talk without thinking. It's the thinking that's painful with all that's happened and sometimes it's good to just speak the stuff that's there and not... filter it. It's such an effort not thinking about everything that...

Sarah: Uh huh...

Ben: (*Aggressively.*) I just want to understand some stuff and you're meant to be some kind of expert. Well, let's see some fucking expertise. Can't you help me understand this fucking...fucking...fucking...fucking mess?

Sarah: I think...

SARAH'S mobile rings

Sorry. (*She answers it*) Hello? Yes, darling, I'm working, I'm sorry...

Ben: (*Affably*) Why am I such a cunt?

Sarah: (*To BEN*) Sorry? (*To phone*) Yes, I'm with a patient. What did you say?

Ben: (*loudly – helpfully*) Cunt.

Sarah: Oh. (*To phone*) Well, of course I'd rather be with you and... Yes, he did say 'cunt'... Robert? Are you still there? (*She hangs up*) Thanks.

Ben: My pleasure.

CHANGE

BEN and JENNY

Ben: It doesn't matter.

Jenny: There's more.

Ben: I'll pay for the car.

Jenny: It doesn't matter.

Ben: You were angry about the car. It's your car. You've done a beautiful thing for me, being here and I... am... But I don't remember. I'll pay for it – when I get back to work. I'll pay for it. I know it's important you need it to visit your Dad. How is your Dad, still an arse? Or is he getting better? I say arse – he was better than my Dad who is now dead and was an arse but you know that and my mother is an arse and Natasha is a... Natasha is Dr. Cowell's... I mean she's lovely, not Welsh, the daughter or my sister. Neither, and I will definitely fix the car. Back to work exposing the dark secrets of investment opportunity. I will pay my way and outplay the Welsh or any other of the six nations if I have to, any corner of the principality – which could also be Monaco...

Pause

Jenny: Finished?

Pause

Ben: Was that weird?

Jenny: Yes.

BEN nods.

Ben: I'll pay for the car.

Jenny: It's not the car! Just be quiet and listen try and concentrate.

Ben: I'm all ears. Lobes, drums, anvils and... *(with an effort stops himself)* Listening.

Jenny: The reason the police want to speak to you is not straight forward.

Ben: Another car?

Jenny: Another person.

CHANGE

BEN talking to Police who cannot be seen or heard

Ben: I don't remember.

Ben: I don't remember.

Ben: I don't remember.

Ben: My doctor will tell you that it is quite normal for patients with my problem.

Ben: I don't remember.

Ben: Frontal Lobe.

Ben: You should ask my doctor.

Ben: It's Jenny's car.

Ben: I borrowed it.

Ben: She added me to her insurance.

Ben: No, I don't think she cancelled the insurance but I expect you can check.

Ben: Cramlington? I've never been.

Ben: Ok. So I have been. I don't remember...

Ben: Yeah, I've been told. There was someone else involved but...

Ben: That's right. I don't remember. So if that's all...

A pain begins to grow in BEN's head. His neck doubles over and he grasps the back of it. He goes into a fit.

CHANGE

BEN sits looking at the floor.

Ben: I was going somewhere.

Also Ben: Where?

Ben: I don't remember where.

Also Ben: I was looking for a CD.

CHANGE

BEN talking to police who cannot be seen or heard.

Ben: Well, yeah, I remember that.

Ben: You should talk to Dr. Cowell, she'll explain...

Ben: Well, she'll tell you that my memory is not straight forward. I don't remember. I do remember. I don't remember, you know. Some things come and go and...

Ben: Because my right frontal lobe is damaged.

Ben: Yeah. I remember that bit.

Ben: Well, the thing is, I can. I've been saying it ever since you came to speak to me. I remember leaving the house. I remember unlocking the car. I got into the car I started the engine... this I remember... I pulled out – up the hill then... then...

Pause

I was looking for a CD...

CHANGE

BEN and JENNY

Jenny: How did it go?

Ben: They said they'd come back.

Jenny: What did you say to them?

BEN shrugs

Do they believe you?

CHANGE

BEN alone. SARAH comes in with a small box.

Ben: Not another of your parlour games!

Sarah: No.

Pause

Ben: Oh. What then?

Sarah: It's a box of things from the car. The police left them for you.

Ben: Oh.

She gives him the box. He starts looking through it. SARAH watches intently. First a bunch of keys comes out. They don't interest him he puts them back. A box of tampons comes out.

Ben: If these are supposed to jog my memory then I'm in more trouble than I thought.

Slight pause he looks for a response from SARAH.

Do the police not know it's Jenny's car?

Sarah: Nothing else of interest in there?

He picks up a lighter. Puts it back then a packet of tobacco – some cigarette papers. He starts to roll a cigarette.

I did tell you, you can't smoke in here, didn't I?

BEN carries on.

Ben: My memory isn't functioning properly.

Sarah: Ben... don't be silly.

Ben: I can roll one, can't I?

He gets out papers lays one on his lap then picks it up and puts it down... he seems lost. He hasn't put any tobacco on the paper but he starts rolling the cigarette...

Sarah: There's no tobacco on there.

Ben: (Tight) Right. Right. That's wrong, right?

SARAH takes the materials and starts rolling a cigarette. BEN watches. She presents it to him.

Ben: Show off.

Sarah: A surprising number of doctors smoke...

Ben: (Dryly) You'll have to help me shave next.

Sarah: You have trouble shaving?

Ben: The nurse has to do it for me. I get the stuff out and I get stuck...

Sarah: It's a sequencing issue. It's an executive func...

Ben: ...function of the right frontal lobe. Will it get better or will I have to be a beardy git?

Sarah: Your brain has difficulty arranging simple things into a sensible order...

Ben: Like whether to wipe your arse before or after you've had a shit?

Sarah: Well... I suppose – have you had that problem?

BEN is about to answer but something in the box catches his eye. He pulls out a CD. This intrigues him.

Sarah: What is it?

Ben: A CD.

Sarah: What about it?

Ben: It's not mine.

Sarah: It was in your car.

Ben: Jenny's car.

Sarah: Were you listening to it?

Ben: No.

Sarah: You remember?

Ben: No.

Sarah: But it caught your eye – the other things in the box didn't seem to affect you but the CD made you stop.

Ben: I recognise the handwriting.

Sarah: Whose is it?

Ben: Give me a pen.

SARAH gives him a pen and a scrap of paper he writes something.

CHANGE

BEN alone

Also Ben: Dafydd, Dafydd, Dafydd, Dafydd, Dafydd, Dafydd,

CHANGE

BEN and JENNY

Jenny: I just needed someone who noticed I was there.

CHANGE

BEN alone

Also Ben: Coal miner is he? Sheep shagger is he? Poet and male voice choir member? Dafydd, Dafydd, Llareggub, Fireman Sam, rat-black, cat-black, fishing-boat-bobbing-sea...

CHANGE

BEN with SARAH. He has just finished writing

Ben: *(Deflated)* It's not mine. It's not my handwriting.

Sarah: Then whose?

CHANGE

BEN with Police

Ben: Does it really make any difference what I say?

Ben: My memory and my general health are not related. That's what my doctor says.

Ben: Yeah, well it's the only defence I have. I don't remember.

Ben: You keep coming to question me – so I guess it's not just a speeding ticket...

Ben: I might not remember.

Ben: Did I say that?

Ben: If you say so – I don't remember.

Ben: I don't remember a CD or taking my eyes off the road. I pulled up the hill and then over the brow and then there's a big gap and all the stuff here at the hospital...

Ben: I thought it was another car.

Ben: I don't know, I just did. I don't remember, remember?

Ben: A girl. How old?

Ben: Christ. How is she?

Ben: Here? Upstairs. Will she be...?

Ben: Of course I'm fucking sorry! What kind of a bastard do you think I am?

Ben: Yeah, well fuck you. I'm taking drugs for it. Why don't you have some?

Ben: I don't remember! I told you – this I remember. I remember telling you that I don't fucking remember! I told you this the last time you came in here to try and scare me into...

BEN zones out – suddenly.

CHANGE

BEN alone. SARAH comes in with a child's CD player.

Sarah: How are you?

Ben: Horny.

Sarah: (*With rehearsed patience*) How are you?

Ben: I don't know when I've had such a long headache but otherwise... peachy.

Sarah: How did it go yesterday?

Ben: I don't want to talk about it.

Pause

Sarah: OK. I forgot to look for a CD player for you so I borrowed this one from my daughter.

Ben: Great colour.

Pause.

You said she was three?

Sarah: Yes. (*Pause*) Are you OK?

Ben: She's six.

Sarah: Who?

Ben: The little girl. The one I hit. She's in here.

Sarah: I know.

Ben: Intensive care.

Sarah: Yes.

Ben: What's her name?

Sarah: I really don't think...

Ben: What's her name?

Sarah: I don't know.

Ben: You didn't ask?

Sarah: It's not my... I'll find out.

Ben: Thank you.

Pause

Sarah: Do you want to listen to this thing then?

Long Pause

Shall I come back?

Ben: Will she mind?

Sarah: What?

Ben: Your daughter... will she mind you borrowing her player?

Sarah: I didn't tell her. She uses it to listen to stories...

Ben: Sweet.

Sarah: Yes, she is. I don't spend enough time with her though.

Ben: Too much time with me?

Sarah: I do have other patients.

Ben: Yeah, I know. Natasha likes stories.

Sarah: Yes, she does.

Ben: She always wanted Mum to read her stories.

Sarah: Oh, your sister?

Ben: Yes. Loved stories but hated her own.

Sarah: Her own?

Ben: Her own story. So who looks after her?

Sarah: Mmm?

Ben: Who looks after Natasha?

Sarah: Her father. Robert.

Ben: Full time?

Sarah: Yeah.

Ben: How's that?

Sarah: Hard enough.

Ben: He's a 'new man' then?

Sarah: I suppose.

Ben: Like me.

Sarah: What?

Ben: A new man since the accident.

Sarah: Well...

Ben: And he – Robert – is a new man since the baby, right?

Sarah: I suppose so.

Ben: Are you a new woman?

Pause

Sarah: What about this music?

Ben: No, come on, it's a serious question. You tell me we define ourselves from our past and that it's because my personality has changed so abruptly that I am struggling to fit this new image of myself into the pattern of my memory – this is Ben, this is Ben, this Ben, this Ben, this Ben – ACCIDENT – who is this guy, who is this guy, who is this guy? See what I mean? You tell me this major event has disrupted my history *and* changed my personality and as such I'm struggling to fit myself into my self-image. So you've had this life changing event with Natasha – are you struggling to fit yourself into your self-image? Are you a new woman?

Sarah: You an irritating clever sod, aren't you?

Ben: Well, that hasn't changed anyway.

Sarah: We can't talk about this.

Ben: Why not?

Sarah: I don't want to. What about this music?

She presses play and 'Start' by The Jam plays.

Ben: It's an oldie.

Sarah: Ring any bells?

BEN contemplates taking SARAH up on this but thinks better of it.

Ben: "Loves with a passion called hate." Sound like me?

Sarah: Did you make the CD?

BEN fast forwards. "Romance is Dead" by Paloma Faith plays.

Ben: (Laughs) Sounds like it.

Sarah: But you didn't write the dedication?

CHANGE

JENNY and BEN

Ben: Write something for me?

Jenny: What?

Ben: Have a pen, write something for me.

Jenny: Is this a trick or something?

Ben: No...

Jenny: One of the doctor's tests – are you going neurologist on me?

Ben: Just pick up the pen will you?

JENNY laughs. She picks up - the pen.

Jenny: So what am I supposed to write?

Ben: Write "Songs Chosen for Jenny."

Pause. JENNY stares at him for a moment.

Jenny: Why are you doing this?

Ben: I'm trying to remember. Isn't that what you all keep trying to get me to do? Remember? Work my way back into the past – pull the fragments together – remember who I am what' I've done – what I didn't do.

Jenny: You don't have to turn over every stone.

Ben: That's not what the police are saying. They want to turn them all over – find out why I did this thing. Why I took this CD and took my eye off the road and crashed the car and did the thing and... did the... drove the car and... the girl... why was this CD so...

He seems to be on the point of tears. JENNY goes to put his arm on him.

Jenny: It's alright...

He shouts at her.

Ben: *(Fiercely shouting)* How is it alright? It's your handwriting! It's your fucking handwriting, isn't it?

Jenny: Yes.

Ben: So I made this CD?

Jenny: Yes.

Ben: For you?

Jenny: Yes.

Ben: Our tunes?

Jenny: Yes – our tunes.

Ben: So why did you write this on it?

Jenny: Because you made it for me.

Ben: But then I would have written on it.

Jenny: But you didn't.

Ben: I remember this.

Jenny: Well, good...

Ben: No, I really remember it. It feels like... it feels real.

Jenny: Ben, it's a CD you made me.

Ben: But I feel it – I feel it. Do you like the songs?

- Jenny:** I like that you made it.
- Ben:** Our tunes.
- Jenny:** Yeah.
- Ben:** The songs mean something to me. Do you see? They mean something to me and I like that. The first thing that means something that comes from before...
- Jenny:** But we...
- Ben:** No, I don't remember us from before but this, this is real – it means something...
- Jenny:** It means us.
- Ben:** You and me together? You think that's what it means? Then why did you write this? If this is us, why didn't I write it?
- Jenny:** Because... you asked me to.
- Ben:** No, I didn't.
- Jenny:** Calm down. Leave it. It's silly.
- Ben:** It's not silly. It's tangible, I can feel it. It means something. Why did you write it not me? It was gift from me. I should have written it.
- Jenny:** You should have.
- Ben:** I thought this might be Dafydd's writing.
- Jenny:** He wouldn't listen to this stuff.
- Ben:** No, it's my music I realise that. That's what speaks. I get that, so why did you write it?
- Jenny:** It's silly...
- Ben:** Then tell me.
- Jenny:** I feel silly.
- Ben:** Why?
- Jenny:** I wrote it...
- Ben:** Yeah?
- Jenny:** I wrote it because you couldn't be bothered!

CHANGE

SARAH comes in with some equipment. It's a kind of abacus with loose beads. She starts setting this up.

Ben: New game.

Sarah: Yes.

Ben: Bit late isn't it?

Sarah: You have an appointment?

Ben: Ouch! No, I've got nothing else to do.

Sarah: Good. I've had a long day and I don't need a fight.

Ben: Maybe you should go home then.

Sarah: Too much to do.

Ben: And coming to play beads with me is a priority?

Sarah: Are you going to be uncooperative?

Ben: Dunno – are you going to be interesting?

SARAH busies herself.

Sarah: Did you speak to Jenny about the CD?

Ben: Yes Mum.

Sarah: And?

Ben: She wrote it.

Sarah: And that's important because...?

Ben: Because I'm a bastard. I don't know why she wants to play Florence Nightingale. I'll just screw her over again.

Sarah: Again?

Ben: You know what I mean. Not... being there.

Sarah: Maybe it's time to start building a new relationship then. Start again. Take her out. You're well enough to go out of the hospital for a few hours. Build some new memories, together.

SARAH is still struggling to set up her abacus.

Ben: What about you?

Sarah: We aren't here to talk about me.

Ben: Why not? You need to talk to someone. Or else why are you at work at 8.30?

Sarah: Stop it, please.

Ben: You're all full of relationship advice today. Maybe I can give you some back.

Sarah: We need to do some more tests.

Ben: No!

Sarah: I thought you liked them.

Ben: I liked them when I thought there was some point to them. "Let's play a game." Oh that's interesting Ben, your *anterior cingulate* is knackered." "Let's play another game. Oh I think that shows there may be some ancillary damage to your right temporal, contextual bollock! Very interesting but there's nothing we can do about it, but hey – at least we know." There's no point. My head is fucked, I'm a grumpy bastard, it's just about learning how to live with that, right?

Sarah: I think if you can chart the nature of the problems and understand them it helps you to put your response to things in context.

Ben: In the context of knowing I'm screwed? Or just to give you some bloody thing to write in your notes.

Pause

Sarah: You aren't going to do this test then?

Ben: No.

Pause. SARAH starts angrily packing up. BEN is amused.

Like to play cards or something?

Sarah: No.

Ben: Eye-spy?

Sarah: No!

Ben: Is this how you argue with Robert?

Sarah: That is none of your business.

Ben: You're just running away. Stand up and fight. I'm a stroppy sod. Slap me down. He's a stroppy sod – is he?

Sarah: No.

Ben: So you bully him, do you?

SARAH is picking up the kit

Sarah: I don't wish to discuss my private life...

She drops it all.

Damn!

Ben: Seems like we've got a few moments.

She's angry and starts picking up the clobber. BEN relishes her discomfort

You think he's let you down. He thinks he's doing you a favour – big gulf. He is after all doing all the childcare – the shared part of your relationship – Natasha – is handled by him so, of course, he's resentful that you only dip in and out of it. He gets all the grief you get all the fun.

Sarah: Fun! Being here with you!

Ben: It's a blast, isn't it?

Sarah: I'm going to hand you over to someone else.

Ben: Running away!

Sarah: This is none of your business.

Ben: I like you, I'm trying to help. I'm testing the state of my empathic awareness - secondary emotion- seems to be functioning OK.

Sarah: Keep out of it.

SARAH carries on picking up the stuff off the floor.

Ben: Did it occur to you to listen to your own advice? You told me that I was a new person; that maybe the new me should try and deal with the situations he finds himself in, instead of trying to be the old me. You just now told me to start building new memories. Isn't that what you need to do? You used to be this independent working girl shacked up with this sexy Robert guy. You had time to work, time to go out, time to be together, time to do everything. You had it all. Happy Sarah!

Sarah: Ben, shut up.

Ben: No, I find my lack of inhibition makes it impossible not to tell you.

Sarah: I'm the doctor.

Ben: This isn't a medical problem, doctor. This is advice. So now you've got a kid. The situation's changed. Stop trying to be the person you used to be. You're someone new. Stop running away. Isn't that the advice you gave me?

SARAH has finally collected all her stuff.

Sarah: You are a smart arse.

She sweeps out.

CHANGE

BEN and JENNY. Outside sunshine.

Jenny: It's nice.

Ben: Yeah.

Jenny: Can't think why we never came here before.

Ben: I suppose we never knew it was nice.

Jenny: I suppose. Do you want to take a boat?

Ben: No. Let's sit under a tree or something. I haven't been out in the sun much.

They sit. BEN zones out.

Jenny: Are you back?

Ben: Yeah.

Jenny: What happens? In those moments?

Ben: My "episodes"?

She nods

They vary. There's usually a kind of moment at the start which is full of clarity, kind of like the whole world makes sense and the depression that I feel since the accident seems somehow less important or temporary or just insignificant – I kind of feel; vibrant and awake and alive – kind of more than alive – then there's all kinds of other shit.

Jenny: That was really eloquent until the end there.

Ben: Sometimes they're almost nothing, just fragments of life. Sometimes they seem almost like...presentiments of nightmares. Possible futures. I kind of feel like an oracle – the fire of the God passes through me – I speak in tongues – the truth is revealed. I feel like a German Expressionist film, strange representations painted on the floor and walls and the meaning clear to...no one. Does that help?

Jenny: I'm sorry.

Ben: I have the pity of a good woman.

Jenny: I don't mean...

Ben: I didn't mean it harshly.

Pause

Jenny: Why did you want to come here? We never came here.

Ben: Exactly

Jenny: Eh?

Ben: No. And I never came here. So it's new for you and new for me.

Jenny: I thought maybe you'd like to come home for the day.

Ben: Home?

Jenny: Yes.

Ben: Your place. Is that home?

Jenny: Maybe. If you want to... try...

Ben: The doctor says I'm not going to find some of those connections.

Jenny: But you might. It might just jog your memory.

Ben: It might not.

BEN zones out for a few moments. Then comes back.

It probably won't.

Jenny: But you said you remember most things.

Ben: But I can't make the connection that says they belong to me.

Jenny: But memories are like that. Things that happened yesterday are almost as distant to me as things that happened when I was a child. They're all in the past.

- Ben:** But you still feel them.
- Jenny:** What do you mean?
- Ben:** A smell can carry an emotion with it. I remember that used to be the case. I know that I used to smell a certain smell and it would remind me of school changing rooms – but not just a picture of school changing rooms but the emotion that went with that – for me that was the fear of being alone and being bullied – that's what the school changing rooms are in my memory – a place to be bullied. So I smelled the smell and felt the fear. But now if I smell that smell I can remember those things but I don't feel them. And yet everything else since the accident I feel so strongly, I feel – passionate fear, hope despair, love, anger they flood in and out of me and yet that other stuff...
- Jenny:** Why does that have to be a problem to us?
- Ben:** Because I don't feel our memories. I know we met at the Lit and Phil doing a creative writing class. I know that you asked me about another course I was taking and I spouted off a spiel about cosmology. You laughed – charmingly I expect – because I asked you out for a drink - I suppose I must have been trying a bit because you came. We had a drink and you agreed to come for something to eat. We went to *Malmaison* and I must have been feeling great and confident and full of...love I suppose... because I know I couldn't afford *Malmaison* and I paid even though you (in a way which I'm sure was delightful and demure) tried to go Dutch, I insisted so I suppose I must have felt some kind of warm glow. And then you, sensibly (but in a way that probably caused me to want you more) refused to come home with me and we said goodnight and kissed (probably that was a little nervous but exciting because we had a couple of false starts before finding a spot by a cafe on Dean Street where we kissed for some time) Then you said you had to go and I walked you to the station to find a cab and put you in it and said "Take care of her." to the taxi driver, like I was George Clooney - so I must have been feeling full of confidence and wanting to impress you - but I don't remember. You see? I know what I did, I know what you did. I know what that means... but I don't remember. (*Pause.*) The doctor says I should concentrate on new memories. All this. My fits. My anger. My crying. It's all a new me. I need to put the old me away and start from scratch. New places, new memories. New people.
- Jenny:** You're dumping me?
- Ben:** I can't find the connection with that stuff and the accident and our argument. It doesn't have anything to do with who I am now s...
- Jenny:** You fucking coward. You're running away. No responsibility. All our life – run away. Run away from school, run away from Daddy, run away from responsibility, run away from me. It was my car – but you drove it. Dumping me isn't going to get you off the hook and after all I've...

She stops herself and takes a long look at him and then storms off.

CHANGE

BEN and SARAH

- Sarah:** Why?
- Ben:** You told me to lay down new memories. How can I do that with the old ones all round?
- Sarah:** She's not just a memory she's here, your friend. She's helped you.
- Ben:** What the fucking Welsh, specky git?
- Sarah:** You know that's...
- Ben:** Offensive. I bloody hope so.
- Sarah:** She came here and sat by your bed... she's been here every day...
- Ben:** I am not that person. I've changed. I'm new. I have to be new otherwise how can I? How can I?
- Sarah:** How can you?
- Ben:** My zoetrope. Every piece of time on one carousel. Each little picture a moment of my life. Each little picture a fragment from the story frozen in time - Me, Jenny, Me Jenny, Me Jenny, and only if the carousel spins does it all start to work and the picture move – a bit jerky at first but then smoother and smoother until the flashing stops and it all feels like one smooth continuum the flood of life happening – racing by... me-Jenny-me-Jenny-me-Jenny-me-Jenny-Dafydd and it stops – the spinning stops a great skid and the thing crashes to a halt by a roundabout in Cramlington ... stationary... Jenny- Dafydd. Frozen. I still have the little pictures one at a time and I turn my head and there's another from over there – that time - and over there something from that time and maybe something here and now but all of it frozen and still and now this...
- Sarah:** I'm sorry. I think she...
- Ben:** No need. I saw it coming the picture was already there from before. Me dumping her. The other side of the carousel I just turned and her picture was over there waiting for me. Waiting for me to choose it.

CHANGE

BEN with police

- Ben:** I remember leaving the house. I remember unlocking the car. I got into the car I started the engine... this I remember... I pulled out – up the hill then... then...
(Pause) I was looking for a CD...

CHANGE

BEN on the phone

Ben: Jenny. It's me again. Just wanted to... I... please ring me.

CHANGE

Ben: I was going somewhere... I don't remember where.

Also Ben: With my slippers.

Ben: Where?

Also Ben: Cramlington

Ben: Never been.

Also Ben: Somewhere new. New start.

Ben: With music.

CHANGE

BEN sitting alone – he is zoned out.

Behind him GARY comes in. GARY is dressed in a plain shirt and trousers he is 26. He stands at the door watching BEN.

After a while he comes into the room looks closely at BEN who is still 'away'. He takes a chair and sits down opposite him. BEN suddenly snaps to.

Ben: Are you?

Gary: What?

Ben: Not again.

Gary: Eh?

Ben: I don't need it. I can't do it. I've had enough.

Gary: I don't know what you're talking about.

Ben: You've come to do some more tests.

Gary: No.

Ben: Thank fuck for that. I've had enough for one day. Fucking party games. Which number is the reddest? How many fingers do you remember me holding up last Thursday? Who are you then? Nursing? Rehab people? Social services? Yeah, well I am fucked. You can write that down. No one gives a shot about me. Not quite true my girlfriend did but I dumped her. Although she wasn't really my girlfriend this time. She was my hospital visitor – actually she was my next of kin. I didn't know I could get rid of my next of kin so easily. Apparently that's possible but the status always seemed to be quite debatable. I had a next of kin like anyone else – my mother – but she was considered unsuitable by my doctor, she's away with the begonias (my mother not my doctor) hopefully my doctor is sane otherwise what hope have I got? Next of kin could have been my sister but... Natasha... but she's also... but she doesn't love me any more... so my girlfriend – my ex-girlfriend – my ex-ex-girlfriend now actually – who also doesn't love me – I sense a pattern here - volunteered. Just a signature on a piece of paper apparently makes you next of kin. Doesn't seem likely, does it? Who is your next of kin? Why does it matter? Why should a signature on a piece of paper make a difference?

Gary: My wife.

Ben: What?

Gary: My wife is my next of kin.

Ben: Oh, right.

Gary: That was just a signature really – sign the registry – you know. That and a few sandwiches at the social.

Ben: Yeah, I suppose.

Gary: Little sausages, coronation chicken and handy little quiches. A few balloons, a bit of dancing and a week in Malaga. There you go - next of kin.

Ben: Your wedding?

Gary: Aye.

Pause

You were a bit out of it just now.

Ben: Was I?

Gary: I was here for a while before you...

Ben: A tame one.

Gary: Tame?

Ben: One of my "absences". They're OK it's the wild ones that hurt. That one I just was here, then I wasn't, then I was and you were here.

- Gary:** Looked like you were in a trance or something...
- Ben:** Oh yeah – it's a thing that happens now. Kind of like epilepsy they say. It's a kind of fit. Kind of *petit mal* Alexander the Great and Julius Ceaser suffered from it too - epileptics of some sort. All sorts of people suffer from epilepsy but in my case it's kind of self-induced. But artists too – Vincent Van Gogh – Agatha Christie – does she count as an artist? Seems they all suffered from some kind of epileptic seizures. So the whole thing is my own attempt at being Napoleon – who apparently suffered from *petit mal* – ideas above my station – *petit mal* – little bad. I didn't mean to... conquer Europe I was just a little bad. I didn't mean to...
- Pause*
- Was that weird?
- Pause*
- It's another thing that happens.
- Gary:** I'm sorry, man.
- Ben:** That and I talk about sex a lot. Probably because I think about sex a lot. Don't you? I'm surrounded by women and I think about fucking them, do you?
- Gary:** I...
- Ben:** It's not sexist it's just I see and I think – would I, wouldn't I and then I ask them if they want to.
- Gary:** Do they?
- Ben:** No. Apparently I'm a bit weird. Hole in the head strange behaviour, *petit mal* seems to be un-alluring on the sexual front. No one's wanted to fuck me since the accident. Maybe I should widen my remit how do you feel about a quick one?
- Gary:** Fuck off.
- Ben:** That's clear.
- Gary:** Were you always like this?
- Ben:** I think I was always a bit of a cunt. Just, it's a bit more obvious now and at least we all know where we stand now. I'm a cunt and everyone knows I'm a cunt. What do you think?
- Gary:** You don't seem well.
- Ben:** Well, that comes of sticking a steel rod into your forehead. Tends to bugger things up a bit... er... what's your name? You don't have your badge on.

Gary: I don't have a badge.

Ben: No badge! No badge! Call security this man has no badge. They'll fling you out of the NHS, or whoever you work for – who do you work for?

Gary: Lidl's.

Ben: The supermarket?

Gary: Aye.

Ben: You doing hospital delivery now? What are you doing here?

Pause

Who are you?

Gary: Gary. Ellie's dad.

Ben: Ellie?

Gary: The girl you ran over.

Long pause

Ben: Oh. I...

Gary: So your head? A steel rod you said. What happened?

Ben: The gear stick... went through my forehead.

Pause

Gary: The gear stick?

Ben: Yeah.

Gary: How?

Ben: I don't know. Hadn't really thought about it... but it's odd, isn't it? Get your head down there to get in the way of the gear stick but the car was pretty... bent up, I gather, written off... I think it was... that is... How is she?

Pause

Gary: That way you were, just now, is that... that what happened to you?

Ben: You mean?

Gary: All that bollocks pouring out. The sex stuff. The... all that... Is that what this did to you?

Ben: Yeah. I don't have any control. I just say stuff and then it comes out and then people get upset and they run away.

Pause

I didn't know she was... here... until the police told me and... they didn't tell me her name.

Gary: Ellie.

Ben: Yes. She's six?

Gary: Yes.

Pause

Ben: How is she?

Gary: She died last night.

Long pause

Ben: I... last night?

Gary: About four in the morning...

Ben: But it was days ago – nearly... weeks...

Pause

A lot of people die at four in the morning your bio-rhythm is very low... but it's been so long and you... you must have been. Oh... Gary... Gary...

BEN begins to weep copiously he goes towards GARY and tries to reach out to him. GARY backs away.

I... poor Gary. I'd... your... what are you your ... I... what did I do. Gary I'm so... your poor, you... you and your wife... Gary, your poor wife. Is she here? I...

BEN tries to hug GARY

Gary: Don't touch me.

BEN pulls away with some difficulty. He then has a head spasm which give him some pain and he sits. GARY watches fascinated. Eventually BEN's fit passes.

What happened?

Ben: I don't remember. (*Pause*) I don't... not all of it. I had a row with my girlfriend – well my ex - she was... I was upset because... you don't need that...

Gary: I'd like to know.

Ben: She'd shacked up with a new guy. I didn't know and I came round and she was... they'd obviously been – do you mind me saying 'fucking'? they'd been fucking and I was upset. I lost my temper and I took the car. I was upset. I was driving. On the Cramlington road. I was trying to put on a CD.

Pause

I don't remember the rest...

Gary: Was she in the road or on the pavement?

Pause

Ben: I don't know.

Gary: You need to know. I don't know if you, with all this... the police told me you were in here and that's how... they said they didn't know if they could prosecute because you were... with your head and that.

Pause

I wanted to kill you. The first couple of days... we sat up there and I wanted to kill you. I'd have killed you as easy as make a cup of tea... then last night when... (*Deep breath*) when she died. It didn't seem to make any difference who you were or what you were... but the police rang this morning. I was talking to the undertaker... nice guy... and it all goes fast when... anyway, they rang and they didn't know she was dead (the police) and they rang to say they didn't know if they could prosecute because they couldn't tell whether Ellie had been on the road or on the pavement. And they said you didn't remember. They started telling me that it might be over because without knowing whether it was your fault or Ellie's and... (I've got to face up to it)... if she was in the road... she's only six so it would be my... fault... if she was in the road and obviously not your fault but... you were going fast! Fast so... (*Pause*) So I told them she died. That shut them up for a bit. No one seemed ready to deal with that. Why should they be? I wasn't, and I've been sat here for three weeks and he said they'd have another think about it. That's when he said – kind of let it slip that they'd been interviewing you here – said they'd been at the RVI and I thought 'I'm at the RVI'. I'll go and see for myself. I'll ask for myself, "Was she on the road or on the pavement?" (*Pause*) Well, was she?

Ben: I don't ...

SARAH comes in.

Sarah: Good morning. I see you have new visitor.

BEN has a spasm.

CHANGE

BEN alone. He gets the CD player out and puts the CD on – ‘Should I stay or should I Go’ by The Clash plays.

BEN takes a pill from a pill box. He swallows it.

He takes a phone and dials.

Ben: (To phone) Jenny, it's me. (Pause) It's Friday... I think... Can you call me back...?

He hangs up. He takes another pill.

CHANGE

With the Police

Ben: I don't remember. Remember?

CHANGE

BEN and SARAH

Sarah: I'm the doctor!

CHANGE

BEN alone. He takes a pill from a pill box. He swallows it.

CHANGE

BEN with the Police

Ben: A girl? How old?

CHANGE

BEN and SARAH

Sarah: What have you been doing today?

CHANGE

BEN on the phone.

Ben: Jenny? Your answer phone is sounding too familiar... please call me.

He hangs up. He takes a pill.

He gives the pill box a shake.

CHANGE

SARAH and BEN

Sarah: What have you been doing today?

CHANGE

BEN and JENNY

Jenny: Running away!

CHANGE

Ben: I'M DEAD ANYWAY.

Also Ben: Who is she?

Ben: I WANT TO GO.

Also Ben: Yeah

Pause

But then toast is nice.

Ben: I could wait for toast.

Also Ben: With honey.

CHANGE

BEN and SARAH

Sarah: ...a zoetrope?

CHANGE

BEN alone stares at the floor takes a pill – rattles the box. Takes another. Rattles the box. Takes another. Tips up the whole lot.

CHANGE

SARAH is wrapping a present it is a plastic megaphone ‘voice changer’. The wrapping keeps coming unstuck. At the third attempt she starts to cry. JENNY walks in. SARAH tries to cover up.

Jenny: I’m sorry. The man outside said to come in and wait for you – he obviously didn’t know you were in here.

Sarah: No, that’s fine. Have a seat. I’m just wrapping this... it’s a present.

Jenny: What is it?

Sarah: It’s a voice changer for my daughter...

Pause – the thought seems to unsettle SARAH

Probably the wrong thing...

Jenny: No, it looks fun.

Pause. SARAH puts the toy to one side.

Well, here I am.

Sarah: Yes. Thank you. It’s good of you to come.

Jenny: I think it’s very unfair... I think it’s very unkind of you to...

Sarah: You are still listed as his next of kin. I was obliged to call you.

Jenny: You landed that on me. How the hell did he get all those pills?

Sarah: It was just Paracetamol not a very difficult drug to get hold of.

Jenny: I thought you were supposed to be looking after him.

Sarah: He was depressed.

Jenny: Please don’t tell me this was because of me.

Sarah: No. At least, obviously your going didn’t help...

Jenny: He dumped me! I’m not his bloody girlfriend any more.

Sarah: It’s just, you know he’s unwell and...

Jenny: How dare you? Don't you dare lay this at my door...

Sarah: I'm not. I'm not. That's not what I'm doing. I'm sorry.

Pause

There was more than you leaving. The little girl...

Jenny: What?

Sarah: She died.

Jenny: Oh no!

Sarah: But it's a bit more complicated than that.

Jenny: How can get any more complicated?

Sarah: The girl's father came to see him. I think that's what sent him over the edge.

Jenny: Did he threaten him?

Sarah: No, I don't think so. I think he was rather... quiet but the impact on Ben was...

Jenny: Well... what do you expect of me? I am trying to move on and...

Sarah: Just be around for bit longer.

Jenny: I didn't want any of this to happen – all that with Dafydd was just an accident. I was upset, lonely and he was... nice. All this because he was nice to me – tender! And then Ben... What a mess!

Sarah: You came. When no one else came, you came, and you sat there and you let him shout at you. You've kept coming back. You don't need to justify yourself to me you don't have to do anything but I suspect you are the one thing that can help him.

Jenny: And you say you aren't laying anything on me.

BEN bursts in.

Ben: Having a little secret meeting without me?

Sarah: Ben, you can't burst in here...

Ben: What, when you are talking about me? Can't interrupt when we are talking about Ben?

Jenny: No, we were talking about this gift Dr. Cowell has for her daughter. It's her birthday.

Sarah: Well, no it's just a present actually.

Ben: Lucky girl – voice changer! (*He speaks through the voice changer it comes out like a robot*) Natasha – we can change our relationship – all it needs is a few bribes.

Jenny: Ben!

Sarah: No, it's alright, Jenny. Ben would you give that to me and sit down and perhaps we should start again and remember that I am the doctor and you are a patient.

Ben: (*Through the voice changer*) He tried to kill himself. He tried to kill himself. He tried to kill himself. He is beyond the pale. Drag the girlfriend back maybe she can talk him back from the brink. (*Puts the voice changer down*) Well, it was nothing to do with you Jenny. I don't need you. The suicide was just... just me dealing with stuff just, just, just, that had nothing to do with you. It was all about Ellie. Ellie is the girl I killed – with your car so I guess that bit is kind of to do with you – just – (*into the voice changer*) The blood on the paintwork is Ellie's...

Jenny: Ben! Shut up and sit down.

Sarah: Give me that.

She takes the voice changer from him. BEN sits down.

Jenny very kindly came in to talk to me because obviously she is very concerned by your decision to take those pills. It should not be seen in any way as a promise of some kind.

Ben: What makes you think I want a promise?

Sarah: It would be a help (since you gate-crashed this meeting) if you tried to listen and not speak.

Ben: Is that how you talk to Natasha? No wonder you need a voice changer – maybe she will respond to the dalek voice better than your normal...

Jenny: Ben please.

Ben: Why are you here?

Jenny: Dr. Cowell asked me...

Ben: Why are you here?

Jenny: I told you...

Ben: Why are you here?

Jenny: Ben...

Ben: No, it's important. Do you want something from me? Do you want to be exonerated? Because that's fine. I exonerate you from blame. You can go home. I didn't try to kill myself because I'd separated from you. I tried to kill myself because I discovered I'd killed a six year old girl called Ellie. Gary came to see me – he told me all about it. He's brave Gary, he's brave and he told me...

He starts to cry

...that Ellie was out with her scooter and that I... so it was quite simple really...

Sarah: Ben, it was a terrible thing that happened but...

BEN immediately stops crying.

Ben: It's OK. I feel pretty good today. It's the drugs they've been giving me – some kind of upper, I suppose. Fantastic, seems you can feel good on a few drugs and avoid worrying about murder...

Sarah: It wasn't murder...

Ben: Vehicular manslaughter. Apparently that's the offence. I did some surfing. I had a look. I think that's what they can do to me.

Jenny: But the police... without a witness, without your memory, they said...

Ben: They'd drop it. I didn't remember. I didn't remember persistently enough so they dropped it. That's my defence.

He grabs the voice changer again.

I don't remember. I don't remember. I don't remember.

He puts the voice changer down.

Dr. Cowell keeps telling me that I have to accept that I've changed – embrace it – be the new me – start laying down new memories stop worrying about the old memories but... I do remember. I do remember. I do remember... much more...

Jenny: About us.

Ben: (*Savagely*) About the accident! (*Pause*) I think part of me always remembered it but... something about the... I don't know. I believed impossible things – I believed at least six impossible things before breakfast. Lewis Carroll – another nutter – another *petit mal* he may have had epilepsy – did you know – falling down the rabbit hole? That's what I've been doing. And somehow I want to stop and I try to realise which bits belong and which things don't and I think that you aren't the queen of hearts – although you are my queen of hearts - and love is confusing - or you were something and now - and that makes it all the more...

JENNY takes his hand and he stops

Jenny: (Softly) You said you remembered about the accident.

Sarah: It might be better for you, if I didn't hear this – legally I mean.

Ben: No, it's alright doctor. I'm through with malingering. Malingering... harsh but maybe. I remembered but I didn't remember – is that malingering? I don't know. I feel I've been malingering all my life – not feeling but malingering. And now I'm broken, I feel... The old me was running away and this new me – is much braver (and I like that) I want to be brave. Like Gary. Brave Gary. I want to be the new me and – I remember the accident.

Jenny: What happened?

Ben: I need to tell Gary.

Pause

I forgot my lunch and I popped home and on the way I bought you strawberries. Then there you were with... I was upset and angry and I drove away. I was cursing and just wanted to go. I drove fast and then I thought about you and I thought - I thought, I love you. Why doesn't she know that? I remembered the CD. I thought it was... I meant to show that I loved you but... it was all my songs and I didn't write on it and... but somehow I thought it said 'I love you'. So I thought I'd listen to it as I drove... wallow in it, think of you and drive. I started looking for the CD as I was driving into Cramlington – those new endless estates – roundabout after roundabout. I couldn't see properly and I was trying to get it out of the case and I looked down and when I looked up... Ellie... Ellie was stepping back onto the pavement...

Pause

She'd finished crossing the road and she was on the pavement. I couldn't make the corner. I drove onto the pavement.

Pause

I'm ready to tell Gary that...

Jenny: Are you sure?

Ben: No more running away – right? Have you got more of these drugs, doc. I feel great. I feel great. Is this me? Is this new me? It's fucking fantastic!

Pause

You two don't fancy a threesome?