

HPEN6024 SCRIPTWRITING THE STAGE AND BEYOND

A SCREENPLAY BY JANE MANLEY
AN ADAPTATION OF HER SHORT STORY 'HAIR'

'TRICKY STUFF' - A 1960s DRAMA

JEM PRODUCTIONS
LLANGYNOG 2020

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ACT I

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

August 1969 on a north Wales very basic farm campsite, it is raining. In a large orange frame tent Jill is standing next to a washing up bowl on a stand, banging plates and cutlery as she washes up. The muddy floor is strewn with the detritus of last night's storm, a transistor radio is hanging from the top of the tent playing classical music.

Ray is clearing out the back of the family green and white Vanguard car, it is still attached to a home made trailer parked next to the tent. He sports a large handlebar moustache and is chewing the stem of a meerschaum pipe.

Their four daughters sit on seats around a low camping table in front of the tent playing cards.

JULIET

No no no, you can't do that

ALICE

What? That card is alright, stop shouting at me.

JULIET

It's a heart not a spade. Use the other one you thicko

ALICE

Mum (a shouting whine) she called me a thicko.

JULIET

Shut up you sneaky cow.

JILL

Just be nice to each for five minutes, please. Juliet don't shout, Alice look at the cards properly.

RAY

Girls give your mother some peace for a change. She's on holiday as well isn't she?

JILL

I just wish it was somewhere with a proper bed, restaurant and no damn mud.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

I heard that, the girls deserve a holiday, it's the only one they get.

JILL

Do they look like they're having fun to you? and I'm having a fabulous time aren't I?

Jill and Ray scowl at each other, then continue with their jobs.

The card game continues in semi whispers, inaudible during the voice over.

ADULT JULIET

(VOICE OVER)

Oh the joys of childhood camping holidays in Llanystumdwy. Wet everything; tent, sleeping bags and clothes. Tents blown down, snapped tent poles. Sometimes sitting in the car in our underwear and itchy jumpers outside Pwllheli's one and only launderette while our wet stuff was dried off. God, I remember I'd just started my periods to add to the joy of the situation, what a nightmare that was.

The girls jump up off the seats, scattering cards onto the grass, they start chasing each other around the field. All are wearing black wellies, shorts and jumpers. They look grubby, all have long pigtails which are in various states of dishevelment.

ADULT JULIET (CON'T)

Look at us, gone feral after just three days. How the hell my parents didn't just drive off and leave us there, I'll never understand. Beatification is not good enough for them.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE
(Shouting) We're going to the loo
Mum, we'll take Phoebe as well.)

JILL
O.K Don't forget to wash your hands,
and tidy that hair while you're at it.
Let the world know where you're going
why don't you? (She sighs deeply).

The girls run across the field towards the toilet block,
Phoebe and Alice skipping and singing, they stop to pick
flowers on the way which are put into their plastic
buckets. Juliet looks back at her three sisters.

YOUNG JULIET (VOICE OVER)
Why can't we go to Butlins like
everyone else does? We can land on the
moon now, and we have to sleep under a
sheet. Why have I got so many sisters?
Shut up you lot, shut up. It's not
fair, nothing is, Dad won't let me get
my hair cut, I'd do anything to get
rid of it. I'm leaving home at
sixteen, I'll get a job and a bloody
hair cut. And my period is now and it
hurts.

JULIET
Hurry up can't you?

The four of them reach the toilet block, hold their noses and
go in.

INT. TOILET BLOCK - DAY

PHOEBE
(Crying) It's smelly, I don't like it.

SOPHIE
Well you have to wee or you'll wet
your knickers.

ALICE
What's a period?

(CONTINUED)

JULIET

It happens when you're old enough to know what it is.

SOPHIE

Do you know what it is then?

JULIET

It means your hair has stopped growing.

SOPHIE

Wish I'd got a period.

PRELAP: ELVIS PRESLEY'S L.P. '1968 LIVE'

CUT TO:

A MONTH EARLIER.

INT. AUNTY JENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Elvis music is playing loudly throughout the scene. Jenny's wedding dress and the four sisters' bridesmaid dresses hang on the picture rail, the matching head dresses hang over the coat hanger hooks. Juliet, Sophie, Alice and Phoebe are sitting on the bed in a row scowling for Britain. Wearing dressing gowns they have their hair loose, it's so long they are sitting on it, apart from Juliet who has rags in hers.

JILL

Come on girls, it'll be fun when everything is ready. Look at the lovely dresses Aunty Jenny has chosen and the pretty shoes (points to ballet shoes at the side of the room). She and Uncle Dean are having a special day so we're all on our best behaviour remember.

ALICE

I don't want to wear those shoes, I'm not going to dancing class am I?

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

No, it's so you can look pretty in your dress and then dance with everybody at the party afterwards.

SOPHIE

I hate parties. And frocks.

JENNY

Why do I bother with your girls, more trouble than it's worth.

JILL

I know if you could, you'd just have the bloody hair following you down the isle.

JENNY

For God's sake Jill, don't be so damn touchy. I love the girls but its such hard work.

PHOEBE

Are we hard Mummy? (whispers loudly) but i'm soft aren't I? When I touch me.

JILL

Yes, you're all soft, Aunty Jenny is a bit nervous about her big day. Right then girls, lots of smiles today please.

Shots of the hair of the three younger girls being brushed into ringlets and ribbons braided in. Then Juliet's rags are removed, her hair is poker straight.

JENNY

How long did you have those rags in?

JILL

As you demanded, three days, do you have any idea how difficult it's been to keep them in?

JENNY

But look at it, it's straight, she should have curls.

JILL

I told you it wouldn't work didn't I?

(CONTINUED)

JULIET

She did.

JILL

Shssh Juliet, we'll sort something out, won't we Auntie Jenny?

JENNY

Well what are you going to do then, it'd just so straight.

JILL

As I originally suggested, a top bun with wispy bits and a ribbon trailing behind.

JENNY

She won't match the others.

JILL

I'll redo the other three then.

JENNY

It'll have to be fine won't it.

Scene continues with Jill redoing the girls hair in silence, the girls' faces still scowling.

ADULT JULIET

(VOICE OVER)

Only those who suffered with the joys of excessively long hair as a child, can truly understand the torture it involved. Face lift pigtails, hair washing once a week lying on the ironing board in the kitchen, accused of being witches, and worst of all the dreaded bridesmaid duties. As my Mother always said, it was tricky having girls with long hair.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

EXT. WOOD NEXT TO CAMPSITE - DAY

Juliet, Sophie, Alice and Phoebe are in the woods next to the stream, it's drizzling. They are dressed as witches; blankets for cloaks over anoraks, rainbow coloured bobble hats instead of black pointed ones, mud smeared on their faces plus the obligatory wellies. A trivet made of twigs has a saucepan on top full of flower petals and water, a duffel bag is next to it with a sandwich, crisp and pop lunch in. The girls are dancing around the trivet when Sophie suddenly stops.

SOPHIE

We don't look like the witches did in Macbeth do we? They had mad hair with stuff in it.

JULIET

It was brilliant wasn't it, perhaps school will go to Stratford and see it again.

ALICE

Will we go when we go the other school? Phoebe don't eat the perfume.

JULIET

Probably see a different one, Romeo and Juliet I reckon.

ALICE

Yuk, too much kissing you said.

SOPHIE

We showed you the book didn't we, you remember Al, feathers and twigs in their hair. Jules why don't we undo our hair and do it properly?

ALICE

Mum will tell us off.

JULIET

No, I'll do it up before we go back, she won't know then will she. Come on then lets do it properly.

They undo their pigtails and put the ribbons in their shorts pocket. Twigs, feathers and flowers are found and arranged to the satisfaction of each one of them.

A Royal Shakespeare Company recording of Macbeth plays quietly through the scene.

(CONTINUED)

PHOEBE
(Screaming) I'm a witch, I'm going to
eat you all.

SOPHIE
No, hubble bubble toil and trouble.

JULIET
When shall we three.

ALICE
Four, we're four one two three four

JULIET SOPHIE
When shall we four meet again
(laughing so can't continue)

A panoramic shot shows them playing around the trivet
stirring their perfume, laughing and making a noise.

PHOEBE
I'm hungry I want my sandwiches now.

Sandwiches are shared out, pop drunk and crisps eaten.

ALICE
Do you reckon people will think we're
real witches if they see us now?

SOPHIE
Yes, probably call the police and get
us arrested, we'll all go to prison.

JULIET
Belt up, don't scare Pheeb's, she'll
tell Mum and we'll get moaned at
again, Dad would probably stop our
pocket money.

SOPHIE
True, it's OK Pheeb's, pulling your
leg. Suppose we'd better go back,
(looks at her watch) it's four o'clock
now and Mum said to be back at the
tent by five. Can you do our hair now
Jules?

(CONTINUED)

JULIET
(She pulls a comb out of the duffel bag). Right who's first?

SOPHIE
Do the baby first, come on Pheeb.

PHOEBE
I'm not a baby, I'm four.

Phoebe goes and sits on a log in front of Juliet who removes the debris, combs the frizz and plaits her hair.

PHOEBE
That hurt, even more than Mum does.

JULIET
It's done now, give me your ribbon.

PHOEBE
You've got it cos it's not in my pocket.

SOPHIE
Let me look, nope its not there.

They all look for Phoebe's ribbon in their pockets, the duffel bag and in the saucepan.

ALICE
Mine's gone.

JULIET
And mine.

SOPHIE
Bloody hell...

ALICE
Don't swear, I'll tell..

JULIET
Ssh, be quiet, shut up all of you. I'm thinking. How much pocket money have we got between us?

(CONTINUED)

Anorak and short pockets are emptied onto the wet grass and Juliet counts it out; a mixture of sixpences, pennies and threepence pieces.

JULIET
Three shillings and eleven pence. Hmm.

SOPHIE
What does hmm mean then?

JULIET
It means everyone has to keep a secret, especially you Pheeb or else we're in big trouble, understand.

ALICE
Why such a big fuss, you've scared her now.

JULIET
Because the ribbons are holiday ribbons, we never have them at home do we? We just have elastics at the end of the pigtail. Bloody hair.

SOPHIE
So why do we need it long then?

ALICE
Bridesmaids work.

JULIET
True, but that doesn't matter now does it? Look I know how to get to the shop, and I know it has ribbons, and I think there's enough money to get two long ones we can tear, or four little ones. Do you all promise to keep it a secret?

Sophie, Alice and Phoebe nod their heads in unison.

JULIET (CONT)
Cross your heart and hope to die? On the cat's life and Grandma's.

SOPHIE
We said so.

JULIET
Pheeb?

(CONTINUED)

PHOEBE
Promise.

JULIET
Alice you as well?

ALICE
Yes, don't want Skitzi or Grandma to die.

JULIET
Right, give me the money, look after the comb Soph, lets go.

ALICE
Don't forget the saucepan.

Alice runs back to get the saucepan, they walk off with the hats in the duffel bag and blankets neatly folded under their arms. Juliet is holding Phoebe's hand.

JULIET
Litherland gang, forward march, one, two, three, four girls are we, marching to see..

SOPHIE
What we can find to save our skins (laughs).

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF SMALL VILLAGE SHOP - DAY

It has stopped raining. The village shop is typical of its time, it sells everything you could ever need. The exterior has a bow fronted window the frame painted green, the door is open despite the damp day. Under the window is a faded red wooden bench and a litter bin.

The four girls have been into the shop and purchased a ribbon each, they are now tidying up their hair before going back to the campsite.

JULIET
I'll work backwards, come on Pheeb, you first.

(CONTINUED)

Phoebe sits on the bench and Juliet starts to comb her hair, there is grumbling from the younger girl.

PHOEBE

It hurts too much, be gentle and don't forget the ribbon.

JULIET

No Princess Phoebe, whatever you say your highness.

PHOEBE

I'm going to be a Princess when I grow up.

SOPHIE

Of course, you will Princess Pheeb's Persephone Litherland.

PHOEBE

Ow ow ow.

SOPHIE

Stop moaning it's almost done.

ALICE

Who's that?

The Shopkeeper has come out of the shop; about thirty five he is wearing a brown work coat over black drainpipe trousers, a white shirt and tie. Black dusty winkle-picker shoes are on his feet. Brown greasy hair hangs down over the shirt collar, and a half smoked cigarette butt is behind his left ear. White, of slight build and with a north Wales accent when he speaks.

SHOPKEEPER

Ah so that's what you ladies are up to, tidying up that scruffy old hair of yours.

PHOEBE

Yes Mister, look at my new ribbon.

SHOPKEEPER

Very pretty little one, your hair, did your sister do it for you?

SOPHIE

That's not your business Mister.

(CONTINUED)

SHOPKEEPER

Now now, no need to get upset Miss,
just making conversation.

ALICE

Is everything in the shop yours
Mister? I want a shop when I grow up.

SHOPKEEPER

And I'm sure you'll get your wish.
(Then to Juliet). That's not a very
tidy job now is it, I'll do it for
you, don't want your Mum knowing what
you've been up to do we?

ALICE

Juliet, how does he know what we were
doing?

SHOPKEEPER

Grownups are very clever, and always
know everything. But I won't tell your
Mum or Dad so don't worry. Now, Juliet
wasn't it, give me the comb. Don't
look so wary, I used to be a
hairstylist. Come on, give it to me.

Reluctantly Juliet hands over the comb to him, Sophie glares
at Juliet.

JULIET

He's old, it'll be OK.

SOPHIE

But Grandma and Miss Bauser at school
said don't talk to strangers.

JULIET

But again he's old and we're supposed
to be polite to old people, and we can
run faster than him if it goes wrong,
probably.

The Shopkeeper beckons to Alice to sit on the bench, she does
as she is told. Juliet and Sophie sit at the other end and
give him their best glares, he is oblivious while he brushes
Alice's hair. He plaits it and ties in the ribbon at the
bottom of the pigtail. He hums tunelessly while brushing and
plaiting, a flush on his face. Phoebe is throwing stones into
a puddle by the shop door.

(CONTINUED)

SHOPKEEPER

Now that wasn't so bad was it?

ALICE

No, much better than when Mum does it.
It didn't hurt Jules, honest.

SHOPKEEPER

Who's next then? Sophie isn't it?

ALICE

He's very kind Soph, it's fine, and
Mum won't know.

Sophie takes Alice's place on the bench next to him.

SHOPKEEPER

What a glorious frizz you have Miss
Sophie, this will take a bit longer I
think.

Apart from his humming and laboured breath there is silence
as he combs her hair. Juliet and Alice sit at the end of the
bench and watch him intently. Juliet looks at her watch,
they're going to be late back.

SHOPKEEPER

Don't worry almost done, just you now
Juliet.

JULIET

No thank you Mister, we'd better hurry
up now. Thank you for doing the hair.

SHOPKEEPER

Just a minute, I've got something for
you all.

He runs into the shop and comes out almost immediately with a
bag of sweets and some comics for them.

FOUR GIRLS TOGETHER

Thank you Mister.

(CONTINUED)

SHOPKEEPER
Come again when you can.

As the girls walk away from the shop the sweets and comics are stuffed into the duffel bag.

JULIET
Remember, not a word to Mum or Dad, or I'll tell them you all stole the sweets when I wasn't looking.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIET/SOPHIE'S SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

JULIET
(Whisper) Soph are you awake?

SOPHIE
Yes, what do you want?

JULIET
Do you want some more sweets tomorrow cos I have a plan.

SOPHIE
We haven't got any money left after today have we, we'll have to wait till we get some more.

JULIET
I know, but I've got a plan to get some.

SOPHIE
Money.

JULIET
No stupid, sweets.

SOPHIE
That's OK then, how?

JULIET
If you tell anyone I'll kill you, cos we'll be in real proper trouble if we get found out.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE TENT - DAY

It is sunny, Juliet and Sophie are talking to Ray who is trying to read the paper, Jill is sitting in the tent porch. The two youngest are playing with dolls on a tarpaulin next to their Mum.

JULIET

Can we all go to the shop Dad? I know where it is, I can remember from last year. Please.

RAY

Ask you're Mother, if she says yes then you can go.

SOPHIE

Can we Mum? Please.

JILL

You two may, but I'm not having Alice and Phoebe crossing that road on the way to the shop. Make sure you bring some sweets back for your sisters.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF THE SHOP - DAY

Throughout the scene the sound of birdsong and wind in the trees is heightened. Juliet and Sophie are sitting on the bench undoing their pigtails. They giggle and chat loud enough to make sure the Shopkeeper can hear them, when he appears they are combing each others hair.

SHOPKEEPER

Lost your sisters today then.

SOPHIE

Dad says they are too little.

SHOPKEEPER

Never mind ladies, us grown ups will be fine. Who's first for a tidy up?

(CONTINUED)

Sophie is pushed forward by her sister, scowling she sits next to the Shopkeeper on the bench. Through out her hair brushing and plaiting ordeal she sits rigidly mouthing rude words to her sister.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT)

Now it's not too bad is it, such beautiful blonde hair, it needs some love doesn't it Sophie?

Sophie makes a fist at Juliet and a middle finger gesticulation. Juliet laughs and puts a finger to her lips.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT)

All done Sophie, doesn't she look lovely Juliet. See I've put the ribbon all through the pigtail, perfect hair for a perfect little girl.

SOPHIE

I am not little, I am twelve, almost thirteen.

SHOPKEEPER

A lovely age, now you go in the shop and choose some sweets to take back for you all.

Sophie disappears into the shop. The Shopkeeper invites Juliet to sit down with him, she does so slowly.

JULIET

I'm not sure now, I'll leave it loose I think, I can tell Mum I lost the ribbon. (She starts to stand up).

SHOPKEEPER

Sit still now please, or I might make a poor job of it and that would not be good Juliet.

JULIET

Yes Mister.

(CONTINUED)

He brushes her hair very very slowly, there is lots of pulling it up and then dropping it down so he has to touch her face and shoulders. When she shivers he licks his lips, sweat is glistening on his face and a sweat stain can be seen under his arms. A camera shot of her face shows her eyes squeezed shut and fists tight on her lap. She is smiling.

As he is putting the final hair grips into an immaculate chignon, Sophie comes out of the shop clutching a large bag of sweets and stands in front of the bench.

SOPHIE

That looks like a teachers bun, makes your face look all red and sweaty. Can we go swimming now?

Juliet jumps up from the bench, grabs Sophie's hand and starts to walk briskly towards the campsite.

SOPHIE (LOOKING BACK)

Thanks for the sweets Mister, Juliet says so as well, don't you Juliet?

SHOPKEEPER

Come back tomorrow and I'll show you how to do your hair like that without a mirror.

JULIET

Hurry up.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF TENT - DAY

Jill is sitting in front of the tent, she takes one look at the girls.

JILL

You two in the tent now, Ray take the others to the swings.

RAY

Why now?

(CONTINUED)

JILL

Just go now, please. (She nods towards Juliet and Sophie).

Ray walks off with Alice and Phoebe, he looks concerned and looks back several times. Juliet and Sophie start to cry after seeing the look on their Mother's face.

INT. TENT BEDROOM - DAY

Jill and the girls are crying, Jill has her arm around them.

JILL

Are you sure he didn't hurt any of you, you're sure now. Promise me, Juliet, Sophie promise me. It'll be all fine girls, nothing to worry about. Daddy will go and see the Shopkeeper and we'll go home tomorrow.

SOPHIE

But we're not going home till Saturday, I want to go to the beach tomorrow. You got us a new lilo. I promise he brushed my hair, that's all.

JILL

I don't think so Sophie, it's better we go home, isn't it Juliet?

JULIET

I don't know. What will Daddy sort out? He didn't hurt us and we got sweets.

JILL

Don't you two worry yourselves why, no more questions now. Time to go to sleep, Daddy and I need to have a talk.

JULIET

I don't know why we're going home early, what's wrong? And it's only six o'clock, and I like it here now.

(CONTINUED)

JILL

Definitely time to go home, no more arguments, night night girls. Our secret, just you, me and Daddy, no need to worry anyone else. Don't ever forget we love you all more than you can know.

She kisses them, leaves the sleeping compartment and closes the zip. Juliet and Sophie cuddle up together.

SOPHIE

What will be all right Jules?

JULIET

I don't know, she'll probably tell us later.

CUT TO:

TWO DAYS LATER

INT. HOME KITCHEN - DAY

The four girls are sitting on dining room chairs, Phoebe and Alice now have ear length bobs, Sophie has a pixie cut. Jill is cutting Juliet's into a crop as well. Four pigtails are on the draining board, there is a ribbon at each end securing them for posterity. Apart from the sobbing of the five, and the sound of the scissors, the scene is acted in silence.

Ray is standing in the doorway of the kitchen, his pipe is empty, but he chews on it throughout the hairdressing session. He turns and walks away as Jill finishes Juliet's haircut.

CUT TO:

INT. JILL AND RAY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jill is sitting on the bed. On it are four memory boxes lined up in a row, inside are first teeth, baby shoes, christening cards, all the memories she had collected since her daughters were born. On the lid of each box was a label with names on, embroidered by her while she was pregnant with that child.

(CONTINUED)

In her hand are the four pigtails she cut off that morning. The colour of the ribbons on them corresponds to the colour of the boxes.

JILL

Pink for Juliet, blue Sophie, yellow Alice and turquoise for Pheeb. My poor babies, where have they gone? How did we get it all so wrong?

(CRYING)

JILL (CONT.)

One for each box, Juliet, Sophie, Alice, Phoebe.

Jill wraps each pigtail in the appropriately coloured crepe paper, puts in an A4 manilla envelope, seals it, kisses the packet and then puts them into the memory boxes.

ADULT JULIET

(VOICE OVER)

She never did tell us how upset she was, we always thought she was so angry with us she couldn't speak about it. We never did realize we weren't in trouble, so as kids do, we just carried on and forgot about it.

Jill puts the lids on the boxes, then in an old suitcase and then pushes it under the bed.

ADULT JULIET (CONT)

Look at her, broken hearted, she cared so much for us. So many years of keeping it all bottled up, how that must have hurt inside. My poor lovely Mum.

(CONTINUED)

Ray walks into the bedroom, goes and sits next to Jill, he puts his arm around her, hugging her tightly.

JILL

I couldn't let them keep their lovely, beautiful hair after he did that to them, I couldn't could I? I know you loved that crazy hair, but I, well you know.

RAY

It was the right thing to do darling, neither of us would have been happy would we. Just the thought of it...

JILL

We can try and forget it now, if the girls want to grow it long again we'll cope with it. He won't have touched it will he, it will be OK; they know you loved their mad hair so they might want it long again.

RAY

Do you think if we'd known what tricky stuff hair was, we'd have kept theirs short like young Edie's up the road?

JILL

It's not our fault or the girls Ray, it happened, they'll be fine I think. We need to let it go for their sake.

RAY

Jill Litherland, I love you.

Together they leave the bedroom, walk along the landing and look into the girls' bedroom. There are two sets of bunk-beds, each one covered with toys and clothes. In the middle of the room Sophie is quietly reading a story to her sisters. They all look up at their parents, smile briefly and go back to the story. Jill and Ray carry on down the landing.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

THIRTY YEARS LATER - 1999

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

In a dimly lit room, Juliet is lying on a green leather couch with her eyes shut. She fiddles with her long hair constantly; wrapping it around her little finger again and again. The therapist looks up from her notes and addresses Juliet.

THERAPIST

You haven't worked it out yet have you? Think back to the day you left the campsite, and the next when you all had your hair cut off.

JULIET

And.

THERAPIST

You told me she was crying, why was she crying?

JULIET

She was so angry at we'd done, at what he'd done I suppose. So why didn't anything happen to him then?

THERAPIST

1969 is a long time ago, what was taken for granted then is not acceptable now.

JULIET

Yes some stuff is, but I don't get what you're obviously trying to tell me.

THERAPIST

It has to come from you Juliet, or this isn't going to work.

JULIET

For God's sake woman, what won't work.

THERAPIST

Sorting out your relationship with your parents.

JULIET

I want to know why I've been married three times, not anything to do with my parents.

(CONTINUED)

THERAPIST

Sort that out and everything else will make sense.

JULIET

They were just so angry, so so angry.

THERAPIST

But not with you.

JULIET

So why didn't they ever talk about not being angry with us then?

THERAPIST

If you go back to the sixties, the general advice to parents about handling children who'd been groomed or abused..

JULIET

Hang on, we weren't either.

THERAPIST

Oh yes you were, an unknown man touches you, one of the most intimate parts of you. You were fourteen, the others younger, you did not know him, your parents were absent.

JULIET

He didn't touch us intimately, what the hell do you mean? He brushed our hair. We let him.

THERAPIST

You were fourteen years old, it was abuse, your parents were terrified of what else he might have done. They believed they had let you be groomed because of their neglect.

JULIET

Come on, we all ran around on our own all the bloody time.

THERAPIST

It doesn't change how they felt.

JULIET

So why didn't they ever talk about it?

THERAPIST

Because the experts of 1969 would have told them it would be another unnecessary trauma to put you through.

(CONTINUED)

JULIET

We weren't traumatised, I keep telling you. It was them not talking that caused the problems, that feeling of constantly being wrong for something you didn't understand.

THERAPIST

See it from their point of view Juliet. Think about it. The experts of the day advise you not to traumatize your children again. Discussing it with them they say, will do irreparable damage. What would you do?

Juliet sits up abruptly to face the Therapist.

JULIET

(Gasps) Oh Jesus, all those years, all those bloody years, Mum and Dad buried it for our sake. Is that it?

THERAPIST

I think you know it is. The experts expertise, damaged you, your parents and sisters.

JULIET

So the cure was worse than the so called problem. All those years wasted on guilt for all of us. Bastards. Can't even sue them as they're probably all dead. My God.

THERAPIST

Yes, yes and definitely yes. Today you would correctly be identified as victims of a paedophile and receive the appropriate care. Then, well, it was thought best for it all to be tidied away and not spoken of again.

JULIET

Thank you, thank you Megan, so much of the past makes sense now. I'm not sure how long it will take to reorder in my head, but I'll get there. I wish I'd come years ago.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

EXT. A BUSY STREET OUTSIDE THE THERAPISTS OFFICE - DAY

Juliet is walking down the street, she takes a mobile phone out of her bag.

JULIET

Hi Mum, I've just made an appointment
at Dolores's place, I'm getting it all
cut off, yes my hair.

Juliet is singing quietly to herself as she listens to her
Mother, the words cannot be heard.

JULIET

Oh it went really well, and yes you
know I always wanted it short really.
Shame Dad's not around to let him know
everything has turned out fine. Love
you Mum, see you later.

She puts the mobile back in the bag and her singing can be
heard now, the words are to the tune of Elvis Presley's 'Blue
Suede Shoes'.

JULIET (CONT)

You can do anything, but don't mess with my new short hair.
Sisters three and up there Daddy, don't mess with my new
short hair. We're all done now, so good to know. Yes, yes and
I love you all.

FADE OUT.

THE END.