

Oh, there's life in the old dog yet.

Scene 2

JEFF, bright-eyed and eager, comes in, and holds the door open for GREG.

JEFF. Dad? *(To Greg.)* Come on in, mate.

(GREG comes in. HE is nervous.)

JEFF. This is it, home, sweet home. Nothing flash, or anything, but—well—it's home. Beer?

GREG. Yeh. *(HE relaxes a little.)*

JEFF. *(Goes to the kitchen to get the beers.)* Make yourself comfy.

GREG. It's a bit like our place. Same layout, nearly.

JEFF. Oh, sorry, dunny's first on the right, if you—

GREG. No, I was just saying. Where's—um—is your dad out?

JEFF. He'll be in bed.

(GREG's nervousness returns.)

JEFF. *(Comes back with the beers.)* He's got a telly in there, and he always goes to bed early, if he thinks I'm going to stop out, tom-cattin'. *(He could bite his tongue off for the last slip.)* Sorry, I didn't mean—

GREG. *(Whispering.)* Shouldn't we be a bit quiet, then?

JEFF. What for?

GREG. *(Still whispering.)* In case we wake him up.

JEFF. He won't be asleep, not yet. He'll probably come and say g'day in a tick. You want to meet him? I'll let him know we're back—

GREG. No! I mean—let's have our beers first—

JEFF. It's all right. I told you, he knows all about me, what I do, and who I do it with. I bring blokes back all the time—*(And could bite his tongue off for that one, too.)* Not that there's that many! Cripes, I should be so lucky. The thing is, Dad knows and he doesn't mind.

GREG. Well, if you're sure—

JEFF. Scout's honour. If they've got any left. *(HE winks.)* Well—come one, sit down—relax. *(HE sits on the sofa, and pats the space beside him.)*

(GREG sits.)

JEFF. That's more like it. Cheers, eh?

GREG. Yeh. Cheers.

(THEY suck on their beers. There is a little silence.)

JEFF. Real glad you turned up tonight. Wasn't sure you would.

GREG. I said I would.

JEFF. Yeh, but some blokes don't keep their word.

GREG. I know. Been stood up a few times myself.

JEFF. Cripes, any bloke that stood you up must need his head read. I really liked you, first time I saw you, down at the pub. Took me yonks to pluck up courage to say g'day.

GREG. I thought you weren't interested. I'd seen you there before. And in the park, too. I work in the park, sometimes, and I've seen you there, jogging, in footy gear. Those shorts look really sexy on you.

JEFF. (*Can hardly believe his ears. Someone thinks he's sexy?*) Ah. Just training. For the club.

GREG. You play footy?

JEFF. Just the local club. Amateur stuff. But it's a laugh.

GREG. (*Giggles.*) More'n a laugh, what I've heard. What goes on in those locker rooms.

JEFF. That's just talk. Everybody's trying to out-butช์ everybody else, in there. It's all spit on the floor and how many sheila's did you root last night.

GREG. But haven't you ever—y'know—with any of 'em?

JEFF. Nah, not really. Oh, they know about me all right. Crack a few jokes sometimes. They call me Baxter.

GREG. (*Laughs.*) Back's ter the wall, boys—

JEFF/GREG. —here comes Jeff!

(*THEY laugh together.*)

JEFF. You play any sport?

GREG. Swimming, I do a lot of swimming. It keeps me away from home a fair bit, I s'ppose that's why. All by yourself, in the water, no one to hassle you, no one to give you a hard time. Won a few medals too, at school.

JEFF. Don't you get on at home?

GREG. Mum's all right, but Dad's a bit tricky, always picking on me, finding fault with everything I do. He went through the roof when I got my job.

JEFF. Gardening, what's wrong with that? That's butch enough.

GREG. He reckoned it wasn't good enough for me, there wasn't any future in it, but I'm bringing home nearly as much money as him already. Mum wanted me to go to dancing classes once, ballroom dancing, she said it was a good way to meet people, but he wouldn't hear of it, no son of his was going to dancing classes, all the usual bullshit. It wasn't as if it was ballet, or anything. He's always been the same, ever since I can remember, whatever I wanted to do he'd say it wasn't good enough, or what would all his mates think. I don't know. That's why I took up swimming.

JEFF. Wouldn't mind seeing you in your speedos.

(*GREG looks at him and they are both sexually tense.*)

GREG. (*Grins.*) I'll show you later, I got 'em on now, if you wear your footy shorts.

JEFF. You're on.

(*The tension holds, and THEY sip their beers again. JEFF leans back onto the sofa, and pulls Greg into the crook of his arm.*)

GREG. What about the other teams? The other footy teams?

JEFF. You're just an old footy perve, aren't you?

(*GREG giggles.*)