

Extract from Scene 3 Tyler



Photograph by Robert Workman

TYLER (TALKING TO THE AUDIENCE) I was identified as a Young Carer by my English teacher, Miss Nolan, in Year 8. She started wondering about me cos I never did any homework and I was always turning up late for English class, period one on Tuesdays. She had to demote me into the B set cos I was falling so far behind, but the last lesson I had with her, she kept me behind after class to talk to me, and that's when it all came out.

My Mum'd been having big problems with her Arthritis, her knees were swelling up like footballs, and my Dad had been having one of his episodes, wandering round the house all night talking to himself in this *loud* voice, and Zeb was getting more and more anxious and worried and scared. I started telling Miss Nolan about it, it just came flooding out, how worried I was about everyone and everything, and she just, she just suddenly leaned towards me, she looked me in the eye and she said:

'And what about *you* Tyler. How are *you*?'

And I just . . . well, to be honest, I burst into tears.

After that, the school referred me to Social Services, my family started getting more help and I realised I should have been identified years ago.

I got involved in the Young Carers' group then, that's a group I go to outside of school, it's run by a local charity. But I still didn't get as much support as I needed at school. It was like once they'd referred me that was it, job done, let someone else sort him out.

I makes me angry, but now when I'm angry I write about it, stead of shouting at people and lashing out liked I used to. Cos ever since Miss Nolan told me I was good at poetry, I've been writing a little bit here and there. My latest is called 'A Day In The Life of Tyler Dodds, Young Carer.' My plan is to see if they'll let me perform it live at the next school INSET day. I wanna show the school what it's really like for someone like me, then maybe they'll start doing their job properly.

So. Watch this space. A poem type thing will be coming up soon. If I find the time to write it . . .