

Extract from Scene 4 Gemma and Tyler



Photograph by Robert Workman

- TYLER Look Gemma, I don't know how much you know about me, but I'm a Carer, OK? I help look after people in my family. Yes the school *is* meant to give me help and support but to be honest, it doesn't happen as much as it should do.
- GEMMA Right. Well I . . . teachers are busy aren't they, I guess they don't have enough time for . . . (everything)
- TYLER (SHARP, CUTTING IN) I know they're busy, I don't think that's a good enough excuse.
- GEMMA (TAKEN ABACK) Well, you know, they do have alot on their plates. My Mum, she was an Art teacher, she used to come home late, exhausted, loads of marking to do. She really cared a lot about her students but she couldn't do everything. 'We're not social workers, we're teachers' that's what she . . . [used to say.]
- TYLER (GETTING ANGRY, CUTTING IN) I *know* they're not social workers Gemma, but they're meant to support vulnerable students, including young carers, it's a (PRONOUNCING CAREFULLY) 'statutory obligation,' that means they have to do it by law. I learnt about it in this Group I go to.

GEMMA Ok.

TYLER It's really important. There's at least two young carers in every class, 14,000 in our area (Surrey) alone!

GEMMA Really?

TYLER Yes!

GEMMA I didn't realise.

TYLER Look. Some teachers *do* help. Miss Nolan's been really good, it was her who identified me. (SIGHS)

PAUSE. TYLER LOOKS A BIT DOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE WE MET HIM

GEMMA Well, you know, Maisie's brother got a B in English Lit last year and he hadn't even read any of the books.

TYLER (BITTER) Yeah, Maisie's Dad is probably a University professor or something.

GEMMA Hah!

TYLER What?

GEMMA He's a lecturer in English Literature.

TYLER There you go.
(BRAVADO) Anyway, why do I need to pass an exam to do Health and Social Care? I've been living Health and Social Care all my life. I've got enough Life Skills to *run* the Health and Social Care course.

GEMMA Yeah but like you said, you still need the Grade 4 in Maths to get *on* the course. Get on the course first eh? Then you can think about running it.

TYLER If I'd been given more help with Maths in the first place we wouldn't even be talking about this.

BRIEF PAUSE

GEMMA You, em, you've got a brother with Asperger's haven't you?

TYLER Yeah.

GEMMA Zeb the Legend. He's got a bit of a following on Youtube hasn't he?

TYLER (PROUDLY) (80 000?) and counting. Do you follow him?

GEMMA No but I will do now.

TYLER You should, his music is amazing. And also cos *I'm* on it, doing all the intros and stuff.

GEMMA Your Mum is, em, disabled as well isn't she? I saw you pushing her wheelchair in town.

TYLER Yeah, I help to look after her, and my dad's got bi-polar.

GEMMA That's a hell of a lot to cope with.

TYLER Yeah but I cope with it really well, I'm good at it, that's what I'm saying, I shouldn't *need* no GCSE maths to do the poxy Social Care course.

GEMMA (QUICKLY) My, er, *my* Mum's, em, not too well at the moment actually.

TYLER (BEAT) Yeah?

GEMMA Yeah she's, em, she's got Multiple Sclerosis, MS . . .