

AYRES

My position is difficult. I'm as angry as you about the bullying, but if you won't tell me the names of the boys involved there is nothing I can do.

KEVIN

Since when does he get to call you -

STEVE Johnny!

AYRES

As for this other issue, the boy may indeed be going through a phase, a phase most people come out of.

HUTTON Not everyone.

STEVE Johnny -

AYRES

Then it's up to people in our position to encourage them to realise that they're too young to know what they want.

JOHN Steve! I love --

*As John exits the scene resolves into Hutton and Ayres alone in the playground.*

HUTTON

-- it's such a frightening thing that none of the homosexuals here would dare talk about it. They're not all as brave as Steven Carter.

AYRES

You make it sound as though we

have an epidemic.

HUTTON

It's not a disease. Listen, even if you take the most conservative estimate -

72.

AYRES

No statistics, please!

HUTTON

- in a school this size there must be fifty boys with homosexual potential.

AYRES That's a distressingly inappropriate word. And you suggest we should encourage them to achieve this "potential"?

HUTTON

I'm suggesting we should anything to ensure they achieve their potential as happy, kind and loving people. To feel they belong. We have to help. It's why we're here.

AYRES

My hands are tied by the law.

HUTTON

The law that seeks to protect

young people? Doesn't anyone realise that it does anything but protect them. It actually removes any possible safety net because they feel unable to talk to anyone?

AYRES

If the boy wants help he must talk to his parents. I'll ring them. Carter, you said.

HUTTON

Oh, Jesus. Look, Mr Ayres, at least let me talk to Steven first.

AYRES

I have a very strong feeling you are the last person who should talk to him.

HUTTON But...

AYRES

Mr Hutton, the matter is out of your hands. Thank you for bringing it to my attention. However, I must say I find your obvious obsession with... this subject...very alarming. If you value your position at this school please note that I positively forbid you to talk to Carter about it. And Simon, I have the law on my side.