

MRS. CARTER (*calling*) Steve. Steven! What are you doing up there?

STEVE (*Calling from off*) Coming. I'm coming.

MRS. CARTER What he does up there I'll never know. Probably cleaning his room again. He's forever cleaning his room!

LINDA. It's alright, we don't want to get there too soon. The girls all arrive on time and cling to the walls in bitchy groups while most of the blokes are at the pub until about ten. That last hour will be desperate.

MRS. CARTER. Well, you and Steve can avoid the rush-hour. You've got each other.

LINDA Right.

*Pause. Mrs C steels herself to ask a question.*

MRS. CARTER. Linda, love. I hope you don't think I'm prying ... but I'm worried.

LINDA Oh?

MRS. CARTER You're very close to Steven, aren't you?. I really can't bring myself to speak to him about it. You see ... I know.

LINDA My God!

MRS. CARTER. It's alright, love. Steven's dad and I have always tried to have an open attitude to these things.

LINDA Really, Mrs. Carter. I think you should talk to Steve about it.

MRS. CARTER But Linda. It's your problem really.

LINDA It's not a problem.

MRS. CARTER Oh but it could be. And ... well, call me old-fashioned, but it's your responsibility in the end. Men don't worry about these things.

LINDA What things?

MRS. CARTER Babies, Linda. Babies. As I was saying, it's obvious that Steven and you are very close. You're both at an age where you may want to go further. It's natural, and Brian and I have always encouraged Steven to see sex as something beautiful ... to do with love, not sordid or dirty. But just be careful, Linda. We'd love a grandchild, but not just yet!

LINDA (Relieved) Thank God! Er ... thank God you're so open about it.

MRS. CARTER Just make sure you're safe.

LINDA Don't worry. Steven and I are safer than you can possibly imagine.

MRS. CARTER (*Calling from door*) Steven. Will you hurry up. I've got a train to catch. I'm joining Brian in London. His mother really is very low.

LINDA I'm sorry.

MRS. CARTER. She's a marvellous old woman. The other day she said "Don't worry about me, dear. I've had good kids and they've given me wonderful grandchildren. "That's what its all about" she said. Seeing your grandchildren before you pop-off so you know its all going to continue. She's so right.

LINDA                    I suppose that Steven has a great responsibility to you ... being an only child and that.

MRS. CARTER How do you mean?

LINDA                    Well, what if he didn't want children?

MRS. CARTER            Don't be silly, love. Everyone wants children. Just not right now, okay!

*Steven enters. Dressed for the disco he should have on a white tee-shirt.*

STEVE (flamboyant pose) Taraaagh! Will I do?

LINDA                    You'll do for me.

MRS. CARTER Overdone it with the aftershave, though.

STEVE Don't you start.

LINDA. It's not as if you need to shave!

STEVE Bitch!

MRS. CARTER. Steven! That's no way to talk to a lady!

STEVE                    I'm talking to Linda. Anyway, just think of it as my "instead- of shave".

MRS. CARTER            You know what your dad says when you put too much on.

LINDA What?

MRS. CARTER            He says "My God, Steven. You smell like a bloody poof."

STEVE                    I've told him, "Dad, it says "For Men" on the bottle. 'Savage Instinct, Pour Hommes'.

MRS. CARTER            Have a nice time the pair of you. I'll ring if there's any news. Bye, Linda, and remember what I said to you.

STEVE                    What was all that about?

LINDA                    I thought she was going to ask if you were gay. Instead it seems she's scared shitless you're going to get me pregnant.

STEVE                    Blimey. What did you say?

LINDA                    I told her we were always safe!

STEVE                    "Homosexuality. The ultimate contraceptive."

LINDA        I thought that was your after- shave.

STEVE        Piss off. I'm a real homme, I am. It says so on the bottle.