

Your boyfriend, what you give your love, your spirit, for five years, betrays you with a Swedish bitch what is twenty-two years old. You want to cut off his balls!

*(She is distraught, and covers her eyes.)*

TEACHER

He's such a bastard! I hate him!

POPPY

*(quietly)*

Are you alright?

*(The TEACHER runs out of the hall. The door slams. The class is stunned.)*

**In a pub. POPPY and HEATHER, at a table, are sipping white wine.**

POPPY

Didn't bargain for that. That was something else wasn't it?

HEATHER

I know. But all credit to her, though. She picked herself up, she came straight back into the class.

POPPY

As if nothing had happened. Like a little fireball, wasn't she?

HEATHER

Not a grain of sentimentality.

POPPY

No! Wipe the tears! Bless her - I just wanted to give her a hug.

HEATHER

I don't think she'd have quite appreciated that.

POPPY

No. *(The TEACHER's voice)* "This is my space - get off me!!" Does leave a nasty taste, though, doesn't it? Exploding her heart all over the floor.

HEATHER

Then it was, "put that away."

POPPY

"Stick that back in the box."

HEATHER

"Get it out another time."

POPPY

Perhaps never!

HEATHER

You'll be lucky!

POPPY

Yeah, I know. She must be going through some shit, though, mustn't she?

HEATHER

She's actually a good teacher.

POPPY

Oh, yeah. Definitely.

HEATHER

She's just going to burn herself out.

POPPY

I believed her when she said she'd cut off his balls, though. Didn't you?

HEATHER

I don't expect the guys'll be back next week, then.

POPPY

No. Snip! Snip!

*(She mimes big scissors. They laugh.)*

HEATHER

How's your love-life?

POPPY

How is my love-life?

HEATHER

Nothing doing?

POPPY

Not a sausage.

HEATHER

You okay with that?

POPPY

Oh, yeah!

HEATHER  
Good for you!

POPPY  
Cheers!

HEATHER  
Cheers!

*(They drink their wine.)*

POPPY  
How's your Beth?

HEATHER  
Darren's dumped her.

POPPY  
Oh, no!

HEATHER  
Just before her eighteenth birthday.  
Thanks, Darren!

POPPY  
Why do men always do that, eh?

HEATHER  
I know.

POPPY  
Christmas, Valentine's Day - Voom!  
They're gone!

HEATHER  
I'm just hoping he's not going to turn  
up to the party.

POPPY  
Name off the list!

HEATHER  
I'm looking at her, and I'm thinking,  
"Don't call him. Don't call him!"

POPPY  
Don't do it Beth! Don't do it!

HEATHER  
You can't say anything, though. You've  
just got to let'em get on with it.

POPPY  
You can't help being protective,  
though, can you? Course, she's got her  
A-Levels coming up, hasn't she?

HEATHER

Fingers crossed, she's going to Manchester.

POPPY

Fantastic. What does she want to do up there?

HEATHER

Sociology.

POPPY

Lovely.

HEATHER

I'm hoping she's going to take a gap year. Travel.

POPPY

That's important. Get out there - see the world!

HEATHER

Yeah, I think so. Cos I never got the chance.

POPPY

Nor me.

HEATHER

You made up for it later, though.

POPPY

Did I, just!

HEATHER

Where were you?

POPPY

All over the place. Taught in a school in Thailand. For six months. Me and Zoe. Started off in Australia. Zoe's got relations in Melbourne - and Sydney. Bali. Java. Malaysia. Vietnam - beautiful. Then Thailand.

HEATHER

Fabulous!

POPPY

Amazing. Gorgeous kids. Loved learning. Sixty in a class.

HEATHER

Sixty?!

POPPY

Oh, yeah!

HEATHER  
 Fantastic! Great challenge!

POPPY  
 And for them!

HEATHER  
 Especially for them!

*(They both laugh.)*

POPPY  
 D'you want another one?

HEATHER  
 I'd love to. But I'm driving, aren't I?

POPPY  
 Course you are. Got to be good. Work tomorrow.

**POPPY's school sits in the London landscape. It's playtime.**

**In her empty classroom, POPPY is tidying books. She glances out of the window. Children are playing. She notices two boys in particular. One looks as though he is bullying the other. She observes them for a moment.**

**Another driving lesson. POPPY is at the wheel.**

SCOTT  
 Okay, Poppy. This is your third driving lesson.

POPPY  
 Oh, I'm getting quite good, aren't I?

SCOTT  
 No, you're not good. You're smug.

POPPY  
 Ow!

SCOTT  
 You're too easily distracted. You're distracted by squirrels, by dogs, by children in the park, by old ladies in surgical stockings -

POPPY  
 Oh, but bless her!