

Lia Can I just say I don't know?

Joanna God. That is incredible.

Lia Yes.

Joanna You're mad.

Lia Probably.

Joanna Oh God, I'm sorry. You're not, I mean even if you were, it'd be understandable, I mean, look, I'm a mother –

Lia Did you say you had a conference call?

Joanna I'm sorry I said you were mad, I didn't mean it literally, I just –

Nick It's OK. Like I said, it's complicated, and can we just leave it at that?

Joanna Of course, of course. I'd better go, before I make a complete dick of myself, hadn't I?

She gathers up the rest of her stuff.

I'll call you tomorrow. OK?

She goes.

Lia Thank you.

Nick For what?

Lia Being supportive. Pretending you understand why I got rid of everything.

Nick I'm not pretending.

Lia So what am I doing?

Nick You're doing a Frances Hewer.

Lia Am I?

Nick Well, aren't you?

Lia I feel as if I'm drowning in *stuff*.

Nick Exactly.

Lia As if my life has been dedicated to the accumulation of meaningless junk. In the hope that it might define me.

Nick What you've just described is what everybody does.

Lia I know. And I'd like to stop.

Nick The Bermuda Triangle where materialism and capitalism meet the fatal concept of good taste. We're all sucked in.

Lia I'm trying to pull myself out.

Nick OK. You've divested yourself of all your trappings. D'you feel any better?

Lia Not so far. No.

Blackout.

Scene Four

A park bench. One week later. It's very hot. Lia is with Joyce Tindle, who is cradling Adam's T-shirt.

Lia When he was three years old, I was about to dismantle his cot because it was time for him to have a proper bed. And he came into the room, and climbed into his cot and said, I just want one last go before I have to grow up. He lay there, crooning like a baby, and I started to cry, because I realised he understood loss and yearning, and it seemed too early for him to know these things.

Silence.

He could cook. That's quite unusual for a young boy.

Silence.

And he had this way of running downstairs. Two at a time, but with no perceptible effort.