



WHAT GOES AROUND
BY
JULIA SWAIN

Extract

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by

J Swain

CHARACTERS

CHRISTOPHER MILTON From a 'good' family. Does well in school and joins his father in his law firm. Marries Sally and has two children, Charlotte and Daniel. Suffers with OCD and anxiety - likes things in order; when he becomes anxious he utilises the 'tapping' technique of NLP. Always felt he was trying to live up to his father's expectations which is why the loss of the penknife affected him so much

MICHAEL CARVER Father was in and out of jail. The youngest of three sons and bullied by his older siblings. Mother was a prostitute to help make ends meet. He himself turns to crime and has several spells in prison. He is unsuccessful in relationships as well and ends up with five kids from three different women. He took the penknife because he was jealous of the relationship Christopher appeared to have with his father. Michael constantly mis-pronounces words.

ACT ONE

OUTSIDE THE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - AGE 7

THERE ARE TWO CHAIRS CENTRE STAGE TO REPRESENT THE WAITING AREA OUTSIDE THE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL. THERE ARE A VARIETY OF POSTERS ON THE WALL ADVERTISING AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS AND PROMOTING THINGS LIKE HEALTHY EATING. THERE IS A DOOR WITH A SIGN SAYING 'HEADMASTER'.

ENTER MIKE AND CHRIS STAGE LEFT. MIKE IS DRAGGING A DISHEVELLED SCHOOL BAG ON THE GROUND AND CHRIS CARRIES A SATCHEL. MIKE IS KICKING A SCRUNCHED UP PIECE OF PAPER AS IF IT'S A FOOTBALL. CHRIS IS DRAGGING HIS FEET, LOOKING VERY UPSET.

MIKE: (KICKS THE PAPER BALL AGAINST THE DOOR) He shoots! He scores!

CHRIS: Stop it. We're in enough trouble already.

MIKE: Oh, stop whining like a girl.

CHRIS: I'm not whining like a girl.

MIKE: Yes, you are. You're a big girl Chris.

CHRIS: It's Christopher.

MIKE: (MIMICS) It's Christopher. Well, as you're a girl, you'd better be Christine, not Christopher.

CHRIS: Shut up. (SITS) You're used to being in trouble. I'm not.

MIKE: Yeah, well, it's your fault.

CHRIS: It's not my fault. You gave me a Chinese burn!

MIKE: You deserved it. You told on me to Miss.

CHRIS: Because you stole my penknife.

MIKE: I did not steal your stupid penknife. (SITS)

CHRIS: Yes you flipping did. You had your flipping hand in my satchel and, when I looked, my penknife was gone.

MIKE: Doesn't mean I nicked it. You could have left it at home and you only noticed it then because I put my hand in your girl's bag.

CHRIS: It's not a girl's bag. It's an Italian leather satchel.

MIKE: It's a handbag. It's one of those Kevin Klein handbags, Christine.

CHRIS: It's Calvin Klein, not Kevin Klein.

MIKE: How do you know so much about handbags? That proves you're a girl.

CHRIS: No it doesn't. I just know the names because I've been shopping with Mummy. She says she's allowed to spend some of the housekeeping money on nice things. Sometimes she buys handbags and sometimes she buys gin. These days it's mainly gin. (PAUSE) Oh, I am in so much trouble. Daddy is going to kill me. He might not make me a partner.

MIKE: A partner in what?

CHRIS: It's something to do with his job but I'm not really sure what it means. Mummy says it's a good thing and it means I can have a big house and a nice car when I grow up. And Daddy says that, if you have a big house and a nice car, it doesn't matter how old or ugly you are, even the pretty girls will kiss you. (STARTS WRINGING HIS HANDS WITH ANXIETY)

MIKE: Stop being such a baby, Chris. It's only the headmaster's office.

CHRIS: I've never been sent to the headmaster before. It's such a scary place. I mean, look at all these posters. They don't even line up properly and that one isn't straight at all. Why doesn't someone sort out the symmetry?

MIKE: What are you talking about? Listen, sad boy. We go in there, the headmaster shouts at us a bit, he asks us if we're going to behave from now on, we say "yes" then off we go.

CHRIS: I don't like being shouted at. I never get shouted at.

MIKE: Really? Because I so want to shout at you at the moment.

CHRIS: Mummy says that shouting means you've lost control of the situation. Daddy says gin does that as well.

MIKE: My dad shouts at me all the time. And he shouts at my brothers - and at my mum. Doesn't your dad ever shout at your mum?

CHRIS: Not really. Sometimes I hear him shouting when they're having happy prayer time in their bedroom.

MIKE: What?

CHRIS: Well, I hear him shouting, "Oh God, Oh God, Oh God" and then they both make a funny noise.

MIKE: Really?

CHRIS: Yes. I've asked Mummy about it and she says that it's a special noise adults make when the holy spirit comes over them. They must be really good at praying because it happens quite a lot.

MIKE: Sounds like a load of bollocks to me.

(PAUSE)

CHRIS: I am in so much trouble. (ROCKS WITH ANXIETY)

MIKE: Will you stop whining or I'll kick your teeth in.

CHRIS: Can't we get out of this somehow?

MIKE: Like how? Oh, wait. I'll use my invisibility shield and we can run away out of the school gates and go to the park.

CHRIS: Don't be stupid.

MIKE: Or maybe I could put a spell on Mr Hardcastle so that, just as he's about to tell us off, his underpants come to life and swallow him up.

CHRIS: Now you're just being piss-posterous.

MIKE: What the hell is a piss-a-potomus? Is it like a giant sloth-monster because maybe a giant sloth-monster is going to breathe fire on the school and

burn everything down and then we'll never have to come to school again.

CHRIS: How would that work? If you burnt the school down, we'd be killed in the fire. You really need to think these things through. And what the flip is a giant sloth-monster anyway? Sloths are lazy things that sleep in trees - and they don't breathe fire.

PAUSE.

MIKE: You're weird.

PAUSE.

MIKE: (LOOKING AT ONE OF THE POSTERS) What's ta-eek-wo-doh?

CHRIS: What?

MIKE: Ta-eek-wo-doh. It says "ta-eek-wo-doh classes every Thursday".

CHRIS: Taekwondo.

MIKE: What's that?

CHRIS: It's a martial art. My daddy wanted me to go but mummy said I was too delicate.

MIKE: I like martial arts. (PAUSE) What's your favourite Power Ranger?

CHRIS: What?

MIKE: What's your favourite Power Ranger?

CHRIS: I don't know. I don't really have one.

MIKE: Oh, come on. You must have a favourite. Mine's the red Power Ranger.

CHRIS: I like that one.

MIKE: No, no. You have to have a different one. What's your favourite Power Ranger?

CHRIS: (GUESSING) The black Power Ranger.

MIKE: Cool. (PAUSE) What's your second favourite Power Ranger?

CHRIS: What?

MIKE: Your second favourite Power Ranger? Black is your first one, what's your second one?

CHRIS: Um, blue.

MIKE: Good choice. Third?

CHRIS: Really? Um, yellow.

MIKE: Fourth?

CHRIS: We're actually doing this?

MIKE: (INSISTENT) Fourth!

CHRIS: The white one.

MIKE: Fifth? What's your fifth favourite Power Ranger?

CHRIS: Green. Can we stop now?

MIKE: Why?

CHRIS: Because it's getting silly and I know what you're doing.

MIKE: I don't know what you mean.

CHRIS: You're trying to get me to say "pink" and then you'll go "see, I knew you were a girl."

MIKE: Am I annoying you?

CHRIS: No.

MIKE: (POKES CHRIS IN THE ARM) What about now?

CHRIS: No.

MIKE: (POKES CHRIS IN THE ARM) Now?

CHRIS: No.

MIKE: (POKES CHRIS IN THE ARM REPEATEDLY) Now? Now? Now?

CHRIS: Will you flipping stop it!

MIKE: (POKES CHRIS IN THE ARM) No. (POKES CHRIS IN THE ARM)

CHRIS JUMPS UP FROM HIS SEAT. AS HE DOES SO HE KNOCKS HIS SATCHEL OVER

AND A VALENTINE CARD FALLS OUT. MIKE
SPOTS IT AND SNATCHES IT UP.

MIKE: What's this?

CHRIS: It's nothing. Give it to me. (CHRIS SCRABBLES TO
PUT EVERYTHING BACK INTO HIS BAG IN ORDER AGAIN)

MIKE: Ooh. It's a Valentine's card. Let's see who it's
for.

CHRIS: Give it back, Mike.

MIKE: (READS THE INSIDE) To Sally. Roses are red,
violents are blue, kittens are cute and so are you.

CHRIS: That's flipping private.

MIKE: Bleurgh! I think I'm going to be sick.

CHRIS: Don't be so mean.

MIKE: Yep, I'm definitely going to hurl (PRETENDS TO BE
SICK)

CHRIS: What would you know about writing love poetry.

MIKE: I know you don't write sappy mush like that.

CHRIS: It's not "sappy". And it says "violets" not
"violents".

MIKE: Stop telling me how to read.

CHRIS: But you're reading things wrong. "Violents are
blue" doesn't make sense.

MIKE: Well of course it doesn't make sense. You've
written it wrong. It should be "violence is blue".

CHRIS: Violence? Violence? It's a flipping Valentine's Day
card not an invitation to a fight. And how can
violence be blue?

MIKE: My brother Dan says jokes can be blue.

CHRIS: What's that got to do with violence?

MIKE: Nothing. I'm just saying that some things can be
blue.

CHRIS: Yeah. Lots of things are blue - like violets.

MIKE: What?

CHRIS: Violets. They're small blue flowers.

MIKE: What about them?

CHRIS: Violets are blue.

MIKE: Yeah. You just said that.

CHRIS: In the flipping rhyme. Roses are red, violets are blue.

MIKE: Ah. Yeah. That makes more sense. (PAUSE) That's what you should've written. You should have put "violets are blue" instead of "violence is blue". That would have made more sense on a Valentine's card.

CHRIS: That's what I - oh, never mind. (TAKES HIS PENCIL CASE OUT OF HIS BAG)

MIKE: So, do you fancy Sally Carter?

CHRIS: Shut up. (STARTS SORTING THROUGH THE PENCILS IN HIS PENCIL CASE)

MIKE: You do, don't you? (PAUSE) What are you doing?

CHRIS: The coloured pencils got out of order when my bag fell over.

MIKE: Out of order?

CHRIS: (GETTING ANXIOUS) Oh, look at them. The red one is next to the green one. That'll never do.

MIKE: (HITS THE PENCIL CASE OUT OF CHRIS' HANDS - THE PENCILS GO EVERYWHERE) So, tell me the truth, do you fancy Sally Carter?

CHRIS: (SCRABBLING AROUND ON THE FLOOR TO PICK UP HIS PENCILS) Why did you do that? It takes me ages to get them right. Now I've got to start from scratch again.

MIKE: I'll help you pick them up if you tell me whether you fancy Sally Carter.

CHRIS: What if we get called into the headmaster's office before I've picked them all up?

MIKE: I'll help - if you tell me.

CHRIS: Oh, okay. Yes I do like her.

MIKE: Ha ha. She's way out of your league, mate. She's not going to look twice at a snivelling little mammy's boy like you.

CHRIS: Are you going to help me pick up these pencils?

MIKE: No.

CHRIS: But you said you would.

MIKE: I say a lot of things I don't mean. It's called lying and I'm quite good at it.

BY NOW CHRIS HAS PICKED UP ALL THE PENCILS. HE SITS DOWN AND STARTS TO SORT THROUGH THEM.

CHRIS: What did you mean when you said jokes can be blue?

MIKE: I think it means they can be rude.

CHRIS: Rude? You mean about bottoms and farting and stuff?

MIKE: No. Ruder than that. About ladies' titties.

CHRIS: Really? Do you know any jokes about ladies' titties?

MIKE: Um, no.

CHRIS: Oh.

MIKE POKES CHRIS IN THE ARM.

Owww. Flipping stop it!

MIKE: Why do you keep saying "flipping"? Why won't you swear?

CHRIS: Because it's wrong to swear.

MIKE: Who says?

CHRIS: My Mummy and Father Thomas at church.

MIKE: You go to church?

CHRIS: Yes. I go with Mummy every Sunday while Daddy plays a round of golf.

MIKE: Plays around with another woman, more like. (PAUSE)
So, do you believe in God?

CHRIS: Yes. Don't you?

MIKE: No.

CHRIS: Why not?

MIKE: Because it's a load of old crap. He doesn't exist.
I prayed to God once to stop my Dad going to jail
and it didn't work.

CHRIS: Maybe God thought your dad deserved to go to jail.

MIKE: Shut up! You don't know anything, sad boy.

CHRIS: Maybe I'll pray to God and ask him to get you to
give me my penknife back.

MIKE: I didn't steal your bloody penknife.

PAUSE

CHRIS: How much longer is this going to take? Do they make
you wait longer than you need to just to get you
all worked up? Is it some form of torture?

MIKE: I don't know. (PAUSE) So, what's the most
disgusting thing you've ever eaten?

CHRIS: What? Not sure. Daddy had to send back a steak once
because it was well done and he wanted it rare. Do
you mean stuff like that?

MIKE: I don't know. What does that even mean?

CHRIS: Steak. You know. The way you have it cooked is
important.

MIKE: We never have steak. I have steak and kidney pie
from the chip shop sometimes. I think that's cooked
in an oven. I didn't know there were other ways of
cooking it.

CHRIS: I think this is different.

MIKE: Oh. I mean have you ever eaten something really
disgusting? My brothers made me eat worms once.

CHRIS: Why?

MIKE: It was funny.

CHRIS: Was it?

MIKE: What is wrong with you? Of course it's funny.

CHRIS: Not my idea of fun. Do your brothers make you eat lots of disgusting stuff?

MIKE: Sometimes. (PAUSE) I'm having chips for tea tonight.

CHRIS: What with? Slugs?

MIKE: No. On their own. Mum's working so I've got to sort my own tea. So I go up the chip shop and I get chips.

CHRIS: Where does your mum work?

MIKE: At home.

CHRIS: Doing what?

MIKE: Odd jobs for old men.

CHRIS: What do you mean, "odd jobs for old men"?

MIKE: I don't know. These old men come to the house, they go into Mum's bedroom and she does odd jobs for them. They must be pleased about it because they shout "yes" rather a lot.

CHRIS: Maybe she's praying with them like my Mummy and Daddy.

MIKE: I don't think so. Mum says it's work and it pays for my chips. What are you having for tea tonight?

CHRIS: It's lasagne tonight.

MIKE: What's laz-anger?

CHRIS: It's pasta, mince beef and sauce in layers with cheese on top. It's nice.

MIKE: Sounds disgusting.

CHRIS: Not as disgusting as worms.

MIKE: I like beans as well.

CHRIS: Runner? Broad?

MIKE: Baked. (PAUSE) Wanna know why I like beans so much?

CHRIS: Because they taste better than worms?

MIKE: No. Because they make you fart!

CHRIS: Why is that a good thing? My mother says that breaking wind is not the sort of thing a gentleman does.

MIKE: Well, you're a kid and it's exactly the sort of thing that kids do - so lighten up and let one rip. Look.

MIKE JUMPS UP OFF HIS SEAT, BENDS OVER AND DIRECTS HIS REAR END AT CHRIS. A FART NOISE IS HEARD. MIKE GIGGLES.

CHRIS: Oh, that's gross. Why did you have to do that?

MIKE: Because it's funny.

CHRIS: Is that your excuse for everything?

MIKE: Probably. Most things are funny. Have you got any food? I'm hungry.

CHRIS: Only my packed lunch. I haven't got any snacks.

MIKE: (MAKES FUN OF HIM) I haven't got any snacks. Give us your packed lunch then.

CHRIS: No. That's all I've got to eat until I go home. Mummy says I need to keep my energy levels up so that I can do well at school, so I need my lunch.

MIKE: Give me your lunch.

CHRIS: No.

MIKE: (PUNCTUATES EACH WORD BY PUNCHING CHRIS IN THE ARM) Give - me - your - lunch!

CHRIS: Oww. (TAKES LUNCH BOX OUT OF BAG) Okay. Have it.

MIKE STARTS EATING CHRIS' SANDWICHES.

MIKE: Eww. What the hell are these?

CHRIS: Pate and avocado.

