



OUR SPACE – STICKS & STONES
BY
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Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

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OUR SPACE

Play One: *Sticks and Stones*

Characters:

Len: An elderly man

Rob: A lad doing community work

Dan: Friend of Rob

El: Friend of Rob and Dan

One: Len's Garden

(Rob is sitting on the ground hopelessly hoeing in a vegetable bed. Len comes in.)

Len No, no. That's not how you do it. You're just throwing things up in the air like that. You got to stand up to use a hoe. Come on. Give it here. Stand up, I'll show you. You got to stand up to use a hoe. I'll show you.

Now, you see these carrots. You put the hoe in here, like this, then you keep a-coming back. See. Come back. You keep a-coming back. That way you cut the roots off the weeds and you air-elate (*Len -pronounces aerate.*) the soil all round. Now you have a go.

No, don't hold it down there. You'll have to bend down, you'll do your back in. Hold it up here and stand up. And don't forget to come back a bit. Come back a bit each time.

(Rob has a go, following instruction.)

That's it. Don't forget to stand up. Lovely. Look at that. Bostin', that is. Now have a go at them ones. That's it. Now them, look, no need to stretch, use the hoe to reach. And don't forget to keep a-coming back. That's it. Now them, there. Have a go. That's it. Lovely. That's a smashing job you done there. Now you can hoe the row of lettuce and onions.

Rob You must be mad.

Len It won't take you more than an hour or so.

Rob It'll take me ages to do that lot.

Len No it won't. Here, look, I'll show you something else. When you bend over like this, you see, well don't. Because you'll do your back in. What you got to do is bend your knees. (Len demonstrates as he says it.)

Rob You have to what?

Len Bend your knees.

(Robs wants to hear this and see the demonstration once more.)

Rob So, to pick up a carrot . . .

Len You bend your knees.

(Rob joins in with the *bend your knees* . Len realises Rob is taking the mickey, but he's not upset.)

Len Oh you . . . Here, I'll show you. To pull up the carrot, bend your knees. Grab the carrot. (Pulls it up). There you go. Give it a shake, for the worms, wipe it on me trousers, rip off the top – give it a bit of a wipe down, and there you are.

(He takes a bite.)

Rob Ugh, you tramp.

Len Lovely that is. Very tasty. You have a go.

Rob That's dirty, that is.

Len You can always wash it under the tap if you're particular. My old dad always used to say you got to eat a peck of dirt before you die. I'll tell you what, we'll have a bit of a tea break shall we? Come on.

(Rob throws the hoe down. For the first time, now, Len is sharp with him.)

You pick that up! You don't go leaving tools lying around. Someone'll tread on it and get smacked in the face. Prop it up against the shed.

Right, now, come over here and we'll have a sit down. D'you want a cup of tea?

(Len has a flask in his pocket or somewhere else.)

Rob No.

Len Please yourself. (He pours and drinks tea.) Oooh, lovely this is. Right lovely. Now, would you like this?
(Len takes from his pocket a can of Coca-Cola.)

Rob Where did you get that?

Len Oh, I always carries a can of Coke in me pocket.

Rob Cheers. I'd rather have a Dr Pepper.

Len Please yourself.

Two: Outside a Boarded-Up Pub

(Dan and El are at a loose end.)

El See this pub's closed down now.

Dan Yea. Closed it the other day.

El Didn't your dad used to drink here?

Dan Yea. Didn't your Dad used to drink here.

El And me Mum. And me Gran. And your Gran.

Dan Standard.

El And your Gran's boyfriend.

Dan He wasn't me Gran's boyfriend.

El Alright then. Her toyboy.

Dan He wasn't – just because – help her with her shopping. He wasn't me Gran's boyfriend.

El Winston?! He was mental.

Dan Hey, you know, when he got drunk he always give me a few quid. I'd go up to the bar and get a coke and a packet of pork scratchings. And then I'd go round the back to where they had the pool table. And I'd play pool. It was massive. And I'd get that cue thingy. That had that cross thing on the end. And I'd lean over the table and line me shots up. It was well wicked. Can't do that no more.

(Dan and El mope around a bit. Dan picks up a stone and throws it at a window. Then El picks up one and does the same. Then again, Dan then El.)

El I bet you can't get that fifth one.

Dan Course I can. D'you know, I'm not even going to get that one. I'm going for that one.

El What, in the door?

Dan Yea.

El What with?

(The search is now on for a suitably impressive stone.)

Dan With this.

El Is that it? What about this?

Dan Or this one.

El What about this one?

Dan What about this one?

El That's too heavy.

Dan Give me a hand then.

(Together they lift the slab or rock and with a one, two, three, launch it at the door. Mission accomplished. As they do it, Rob joins them.)

Rob You should put your name on that.

Dan Yea.

El Have you got a pen?

Dan Nah. Have you got one?

El Nah.

Rob Here's one.

Dan Where d'you get it? Off the old man?

Rob No.

Dan How you getting on?

El How you getting on with his vegetables?

Rob It's just carrots really.

(Dan and El pick up on this and work together to wind Rob up. They never really give him time to answer but they do pick up on his attempts. Let the dialogue tumble over itself and build.. Here are some suggestions of lines for Dan and El – feel free to come up with others.)

- * Are they nice carrots?
- * Are they nice and long?
- * Long red carrots.
- * Does he like carrots?
- * Does he like you?
- * Do you enjoy each other's company?
- * Are you best friends?
- * Does he love you?
- * Are you in love?

(Rob attempts to answer.)

- * It's just hoeing.
- * It's a skive.
- * He's alright. For an old bloke.

(Eventually Rob explodes and brings the torment to a close.)

Rob He's an old git.

El Alright.

Dan Keep you hair on.

(Dan and El are amused and victorious.)

Rob I said he's an old git.

El / Dan Alright.

(Rob picks up a stone)

Rob Right. Which one?

El I reckon, that one right up there. In the attic.

Rob Right up there?

Dan Cool.

(Rob concentrates, smashes that attic window.)

Rob Done it. Can I write me name now?

Dan Yea. Next to ours.

(Rob write his name.)

El Come on.

Three: Len's Garden

(Len has a hoe. Rob some edging shears.)

Len Now, I'll tell you what to do. You see this line down here, where the path is? With all the grass growing over? Well, you go along and cut the grass careful like. And I'll follow you along and neaten it up with the hoe. Now, off you go.

(They work for a moment.)

Rob Here, Len. These scissors are well good.

Len Them's not scissors, them's edging shears. Garden shears them are.

Rob D'you want a haircut?

(Rob has lifted up the shears as if to give Len a haircut. Len is sharp.)

Len Put them down. You'll have someone's eye out like that. You got to respect tools, I told you that the other day. Now, keep going along, keep it nice and neat.

(They work for a moment.)

Len How you getting on at school, Rob?

Rob Alright.

Len What things you doing?

Rob Stuff.

Len That's good. Stuff. What sorts of stuff?

Rob All sorts.

Len What d'you like best?

Rob Nothing.

Len Bet there's something. Old ignoramus like me, of course, rubbish when I was at school. All puking crap is it?

Rob You can't say that.

Len I just did.

Rob Alright then. Music.

Len That's nice. Like guitars and bongos and all that?

Rob No. We're mostly in our studio.

Len Oh – ah . (*I see.*)

Rob It's nearly all done on computers now.

Len Oh – ah.

Rob You put your music on the computer. Then you can change the rhythm and the beats. It's all done on the computer. Used to use Audiocity, but it's Pro-Tools now. Honestly, Len, there's some in my class that can't even count beats. And it's so easy.

Len Don't sound easy to me. Sounds a bit technological. In my young days we didn't have computers, we had ukuleles.

Rob What?

Len Like a little guitar. (Len demonstrates with his hoe.)

*I'm leaning on the lamppost on the corner of the street
Until a certain little lady goes by,
Oh me, oh my.*

(Rob contributes by saying *Bend your knees* which Len does according to the demands of the music.)

Until a certain little lady goes by . . .

(Len gets quite carried away, Rob intervenes.)

Rob Len. Len. Len. I think it's time for your tea break.

Len Right you are.

(They prop their tools up. Go and sit down. Len pours out his tea and begins to drink. He's keeping Rob waiting.)

Oh dear, I nearly forgot. Here you am.

(He takes from his pocket a Dr Pepper.)

A Sergeant Pepper.

Four: Outside Len's House

(Len is inside watching the television. Dan and El come in, kicking a football between them)

Dan Me old lady got a phone call today.

El Does she know how to work a phone?

Dan From the school.

El What did they want.

Dan Told her I been wagging it.

El Oh yea. Like you haven't.

Dan Yea.

El What she say?

Dan That I can't come out tonight. I'll miss our tea.

(They've been kinking their ball against Len's fence. Len appears at an upstairs window.)

Len I say, you two down there. Sorry to stop you, but do you mind not kinking the ball against me fence. Only I just had it painted. Alright? Enjoying your game are you? That's good. Up the Baggies.

(Len goes back in.)

Dan Stupid old man.

El 'I just had it painted.'

Dan Nobody support West Brom.

El Winston.

Dan How much you got?

El £1.75 – what you got?

Dan About a quid. Share a mini fish and chips and a coke.

El Right.

(The ball accidentally hits the fence again. This makes them laugh and they make a point of hitting the fence now. Len comes out to them.)

Len Hey, hey. I told you – oh look at that. That's a right muck up that is.

El Sorry sir, it was an accident.

Len It wasn't no accident. It's just been painted. I heard you banging and a-banging. It's –

El We wasn't banging and a-banging. We done it once.

Len Look at them marks. I only –

Dan We didn't make them marks. They was already there.

Len No they wasn't. It - . I only –

Dan Don't blame us. We didn't –

Len It was you. And don't argue with me, young man. That's rude that is. It's a right muck-up.

Dan Don't blame us.

Len Why don't you go and play down your own end?

El Where we going to play down there? We ain't got –

Dan We didn't do it. It's not our fault –

Len Well just play so it don't hit my fence.

Dan We're not doing no harm. We got a right to play here.

Len Don't keep arguing with me. Or I'll call the police. Mark my words.

(Len goes in.)

Dan Call the police.

El Who does he think he is.

(They begin, now, viciously kicking the ball against the fence. Rob comes along.)

Rob What's going on?

El Some daft old geezer. Said we can't kick the ball against his fence. Came out waving his stick at us.

Dan Said he's call the police on us.

Rob Just leave it out.

El What's up?

Dan D'you know him or something?

Rob No.

Dan Yes you do.

El He's the old man you work for, Innit? Innit?

Rob Alright. Yea.

Dan I don't like him. Came out, waving his stick in my face. Saying he was going to call the police on me.

El I'll give him something to call the police about.

(She picks up a stone.)

Rob Oh don't.

Dan What you – Are you with him, or you with us?

El With us or against us? You do it.

(Suddenly the game turns really nasty. Rob picks up a stone.)

Dan Not that one, this one.

El No that one, this one.

Dan Nah bruv, not that one, this one.

El No . . . this one.

(Rob picks up each stone as required.)

Dan Go on, then, throw it.

El Go on.

Dan What you waiting for?

Rob You two are out of order.

Dan Shut up and throw the stone.

(Slowly Rob concentrates and takes aim. Len appears in his upstairs window.)

Len Rob. What are you doing, son?

