



THE GAME OF LIFE

BY

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Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

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Characters, in order of appearance
[Minimum performers required - 4M, 7F]

Brandon Blackett 20s

Norman Blackett Brandon's father

Elsie Blackett Brandon's mother

Petunia Blackett Early 20s Brandon's younger sister. Overweight.

Grandma 70s/80s Elsie's mother

Mrs. Bishop Norman's client

James Bond (*doubled with Norman*)

Moppet late teens

Bugs Boloney/Eric Strauss Criminal(s)

Dollface/Tiffany 20s/30s Criminal(s)

Inspector Nabworthy/Scott (M) Police inspector(s)

Constable Samson/Smith (F) Police constable(s) Late 20s/early 30s

Agent (*can double with Inspector or Strauss*)

Prologue

Voices 1, 2, 3, and 4 (*doubled as appropriate*)

Get-a-Life avatars

Goldilocks Featherdew Petunia's avatar (*Doubled with Moppet*)

Victor Supremo Brandon's avatar (*Doubled with Brandon*)

Norman Blackett Norman's avatar (*Doubled with Norman*)

Pussy Galore Elsie's avatar (*Doubled with Elsie*)

Edna Grainger Grandma's avatar (*Doubled with Grandma*)

Tom Grainger 70s-80s Avatar of Grandma's husband (*can double with Inspector or Strauss*)

James Bond (*Doubled with Norman*)

Buck Steel (*Doubled with Constable Smith, though this should not be too obvious*)

The action takes place in the Blacketts' family home, a large, comfortable, superior north London suburban property, now rundown and shabby; in nearby exterior locations; and in the online virtual world *Get-a-Life*.

Time - the present.

Summary of scenes

Prologue Dark stage

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ACT 1

Scene 1 The Blacketts' home. Sunday afternoon.

4

Scene 2 As before. Monday, late afternoon.

18

Scene 3 Outside the grounds of Lord Sheraton's mansion. Late that night.

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ACT 2

Scene 1 The Blacketts' home. Tuesday morning.

38

Scene 2 A city square. Tuesday, approaching 2.00 pm

49

Scene 3 The Blacketts' home. Thurs late morning.

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Scene 4 Get-a-Life virtual world. Outside Goldilocks' and Buck's house. A few days later.

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Prologue

The stage is in darkness. Silence. Perhaps an owl hoots. The following is played out in sound only, but with suitable lighting effects - headlights, blue flashing lights etc.

A car draws up leaving the engine running. Two doors are opened.

Voice 1: All right, 'Arry. Wait here and be ready for us.

Voice 2: Don't worry about me. You get the moolah. I'll look after the getaway.

Two pairs of feet run off. A door is smashed down and an alarm starts. A powerful motorcycle approaches quickly and stops.

Brandon: Just in time.

Running feet then a car door is opened.

Voice 2: Hey!

Brandon: Sorry, I'm the new getaway driver. You - out!

A scuffle

Now - into the boot.

A car boot is opened, a body dumped in, the boot is slammed. The sound of Brandon getting into the car and slamming the door. Shouts in the distance, then two pairs of running feet approach. A police siren as a car draws up and two policemen get out and start to run..

Voice 3: Stop! Police!

Voice 1: Jesus! The fuzz!

Brandon: *(to himself)* Oh, no! Look out, you fools. These guys are armed.

Three shots. A body falls. Running feet and two car doors are slammed.

Voice 1: Right, 'Arry. Drive, drive, drive.

A car engine is revved and the car roars off.

Hey! You're not 'Arry.

A short scuffle and a blow.

Voice 4: What the hell...?

Brandon: Now you, sonny.

Another blow. Sound of the car swerving.

Whoops. Nearly lost it.

The car roars off. Pause then car arrives from distance and pulls up. Steps approach. Car door opens.

Good evening, Inspector - bank robbers delivered as promised.

Inspector: Good man, Brandon. We'll take over now.

Brandon: Couple of your chaps interfered. Should have been warned. I'm afraid one of them bought it.

Inspector: They were warned, damn it.

Brandon: And remember. Keep my name out of it. Or my undercover value is destroyed.

ACT 1

Scene 1

The Blacketts' home. Sunday afternoon.

The set can be as minimal or detailed as desired. The action is more important than the surroundings. Part represents a reception room with a large window, three chairs, a table, a phone and anything else desired. Another area represents Norman Blackett's study, with two chairs, a desk with a PC, monitor & keyboard, printer and a phone. Possibly but not necessarily elevated are parts of Brandon's and Petunia's upstairs rooms, each with at least a small desk, with laptop or tablet (referred to as 'laptop' throughout), and a chair. The reception room has access to a hall from which are reached the front door and stairs; another access, to a rear hall, leads to the kitchen and the back door. There are entrances to the study from the front hall and from the reception room. The upstairs rooms have access to the landing and the top of the stairs.

Brandon and **Petunia** are sitting at their desks, working on laptops. **Norman** is also at his desk in the study. **Elsie** is polishing the table in the reception room. After a moment **Brandon's** mobile phone beeps as a text is received. He checks it and sighs.

Brandon: (to the audience) My expertise is in demand again. Hardly surprising, given the success of my undercover work fighting crime. As you may have heard. Well - me and my team. That's my laptop and my trusty Ducati Streetfighter motorcycle.

He goes into a slight reverie and the sound of the motorbike is heard.

Norman: (looking at the journal) Ha!

He opens the door to the reception room.

It's working, Elsie. Now you're going to believe me.

Elsie: What's working?

Norman: You'll find out soon. The rumours are starting to spread. I'll check websites now.

*He closes the door and goes to work on the PC. **Elsie** sighs, shrugs, then carries on polishing.*

Brandon: Well, to be honest, not exactly a Ducatti Streetfighter. Not yet. But it's a bit frustrating. All right - lots of success with local criminal gangs. Picking up gossip, hacking into computer systems. Then taking action. But, well... Look. (*He indicates his mobile.*) Just heard from the local detective inspector. Rumours of a planned robbery. Maybe tomorrow. Possibly Lord Sheraton's place. So, OK - they need me. And, of course, I'll help. But...

Elsie: (*rubbing hard at the table*) Why do they insist on putting hot mugs down on the table? (*Pause*) I bet Pussy doesn't have to polish tables.

Brandon: I don't seek publicity. I need the anonymity. But I have the skills for more significant work. Getting in with the top people. Not the police. No, I'm aiming at intelligence. The real professionals. I need to make my mark with the best. Like MI6. I've already found hints of something really big. Online. It's knowing where to look.

He starts working on his laptop.

I just need a breakthrough. I find leads but get nowhere. Find networks even I can't hack into. But I'm constantly improving my information and my experience. Honing my skills. It's just a matter of time.

Petunia: Come on, Buck. Time you committed yourself.

Brandon: Of course, I've had to tell my family. They've seen too much to be kept in the dark. I've sworn them to secrecy. But they don't get it. They don't realise...they think it's all made up. Probably for the best, I suppose. But ...if I could just show them. Them and all those other bastards who used to laugh at me. Fact is - it's their lives, my family's, which are made up of daydreams. Let me guess what they're doing. My father will be at his desk continuing to delude himself that, despite having spent or lost all the money his father left him, he can still run an accountancy business, while making a fortune on the side from some ridiculous investment scheme or other.

Norman: Oh, yes. Now that is excellent. This'll show her. And bloody Brandon.

He tries to print but realises the printer has no paper.

Damn!

He checks in a drawer, then slams it shut, gets up and starts towards the front hall.

Brandon: My mother is doing her best to keep this once delightful but now decrepit house looking decent. Scarcely surprising she needs the occasional escape into dreamland.

Elsie sighs, goes into a brief reverie, taking on a slinky, sexy attitude, mimes some impressive karate moves, then sighs again, gives the table a final rub and exits to the rear hall.

And Petunia - that's my sister, I'm afraid - is in her room playing silly games online. An alternative world where you can live the life you've failed to achieve in the real world.

Petunia giggles, claps her hands and blows a kiss at her laptop.

Petunia: Nearly there. He's quite easy to control, really. Just have to be forceful.

Brandon: They call it Get-a-Life. Sad isn't it? Scarcely surprising they can't grasp the concept of my success. Though my mother has a sort of vague idea. Most of her ideas are vague.

Norman: *(shouting up the stairs)* Brandon!

Brandon doesn't respond.

Brandon! Come down here. I've got a job for you.

Brandon: I've enough to do without helping him.

Norman: Did you hear me?

Brandon: *(shouting)* I'm busy.

Norman: Busy? You? Your usual nonsense?

Brandon: Yes, yes, my usual 'nonsense'.

Norman: Come downstairs.

He returns to his desk.

Brandon: *(reluctantly exiting to the stairs, bringing his laptop)* Oh, for God's sake.

He enters the reception room, sits down and carries on working. Norman enters from the study, carrying a financial journal.

Norman: I said come in here.

Brandon: You said come downstairs.

Norman: I don't know why you keep up this farce. Crime-fighting. Just an excuse to do nothing. I want you to get on your bike and fetch me some printing paper.

Brandon: I haven't got time. Father. I have criminals to deal with.

Norman: Criminals.

Brandon: Oh, mock if you want. At least I've achieved things. All you've ever done is lose money. Yours and your clients'. That inspector relies on me. He's asked for help in getting a breakthrough in an investigation.

Norman: Don't make me laugh. Just a job would be a breakthrough for you. Even a paper round.

Elsie enters from the rear hall, wearing a scruffy housecoat and carrying a brush and a dustpan. She brushes the floor vigorously.

Brandon: *(to the audience)* See what I mean? *(To Norman)* Why do I get no respect? All you respect is money. Though any you get goes into schemes that go arse-upwards soon as you look at them.

Norman: I'll not respect you until you respect me. I respected my dad. Became an accountant like him, a Financial Adviser. As he wanted. And my new scheme...

Elsie: That's not what he wanted. He said you were so bloody useless there was no point in trying.

Norman: He did not.

Elsie: Yes, he did. I was there. And you told me that you were determined to do it and succeed just to prove him wrong. I admired you for that.

Brandon: Is that true?

Elsie: Oh yes. I thought your dad was so brave and determined. I think that was the moment I fell in love with him.

Brandon: Really? I have to admit, I've often wondered why...

Elsie: But after we were married, he only managed to prove his dad had been right all the time.

Norman: Elsie!

Brandon: Is that why you pushed me to become an accountant? Despite constantly telling me I could never make it because I was so bloody useless.

Norman: Well, that was true, wasn't it?

Brandon: If so, it now seems, no more bloody useless than you.

Norman: Take no notice of your mother. She never had a clue what was going on. My success is assured. The evidence is here (*showing the journal*). While you...

Brandon: The last thing I wanted was to copy you. But you wouldn't let me think about other options. You were worried I'd find something I could succeed at. When you've constantly failed. Right from the start, apparently.

Norman: I have not failed. Not much. While you've never even tried...

Brandon: And now I've found something I'm good at you refuse to believe it. Because you're scared at the idea that I can succeed. Do better than you. Of course, you found a way of avoiding competition from Petunia, too, didn't you?

Norman: Petunia?

Brandon: Telling her girls didn't need qualifications. She just needed to find a man.

Norman: Well, that was true, too.

Brandon: You really believe that, don't you? Anyway, she soon proved that was one thing she was no good at. Not in real life, anyway.

Norman: Listen, sonny jim. You'll soon find out what I can do. Look at this.

He points to an article in the journal. Brandon ignores him.

Brandon: (*to the audience*) Of course, it's easier for him if he can pretend my achievements don't exist. And probably better for my work, too. But his attitude really pisses me off.

Elsie: Norman, why are you always on at Brandon? Leave him alone, poor little chap.

Norman: Him and his fantasies.

Elsie: They don't sound like fantasies to me.

Norman: Really? So what about the time he tried to jump that fellow down the road he thought was robbing the Royal Mail?

Elsie: Well, he was taking the letters out of the pillar box.

Norman: Elsie, he was the postman.

Elsie: But Brandon wasn't to know that, was he?

Norman: He was wearing a postman's uniform and he'd just got out of a postman's bloody van.

Elsie: We-e-ell.....

Brandon: For heaven's sake, that was years ago. What was I? Thirteen? Anyway, to me he had every indication of being a crook dressed as a postman with a stolen van. He had steely eyes and criminal fingers.

Norman: Criminal fingers? (*He shakes his head in despair.*)

Brandon: *(to the audience)* That was what set me off on my crime-fighting career. After he laughed at me. Just like the guys at school used to. Gave me the determination to be a success.

Elsie: Steely eyes?

Brandon: That's right. Gunmetal grey and they looked right through you. And a cruel mouth.

Elsie: Oh, my! Just imagine – if there'd been a real, steely-eyed crook here in our neighbourhood. Breaking into houses in the dead of night. Creeping into bedrooms. Imagine him finding me in my nightie. What might he have done?

Norman: When he saw you without your make-up he'd have cut and run.

Elsie: Well, you'd have been no help. Quivering under the bedclothes, you'd have been. Anyway, everyone needs a release from reality. You dream of making yourself rich. While I *(dreamily)* can be Pussy Galore whenever I want.

*She carries on sweeping. **Petunia**, still staring at the screen, squeaks with delight, claps her hands and starts vigorously typing again*

Norman: Pussy Galore? *(He laughs)*. Anyway never mind dreams. *(Brandishing the journal)* This is reality. Starting now. Then see where I'll be by next year.

Elsie: But it was next year last year and now that's this year.

Brandon: All your schemes come to nothing. No wonder your clients are leaving.

Norman: They are not leaving. I've just lost a couple recently who went bankrupt.

Brandon: And whose fault was that?

Norman: It's a sign of the times.

*Elsie is now sweeping round **Norman's** feet.*

Norman: *(moving away irritably, tripping over the brush)* Stop sweeping me, woman.

Elsie: If you bought me a new vacuum cleaner I wouldn't have to. Pussy Galore knows how to get a man to treat her right.

Norman: So Bond bought her a vacuum cleaner, did he? Anyway, I bought you this house, didn't I?

Elsie: With your dad's money.

Norman: What you really need is for that lazy streak of putrefying waste to get off his backside and do something useful. If he doesn't want a job he could at least help you. Even tidy his bloody room, perhaps.

Elsie: If I wasn't a slave to this place and to you I could have got a job myself.

Norman: Don't be silly.

Elsie: Anyway, I couldn't ask my little man to help. He's too busy chasing after all those crooks; aren't you, Brandy-pops?

She chucks him under the chin, ruffles his hair and kisses him fondly on the cheek. He pulls himself away, stands up and stomps downstage.

Brandon: *(to the audience)* And there you have it. God, sometimes they really make me want to...

*He mimes violently grabbing, pummelling and throttling. **Norman** and **Elsie** freeze while the action is under way. Then, after a brief pause, they return to normal.*

If I could just get this breakthrough into MI6...

Norman: If I could just get this pig-headed family to take an interest in my work...

Elsie: If I could just be Pussy Galore...then he'd be James Bond.

Pause.

Brandon sits down, working on his laptop. **Petunia** leaps to her feet.

Petunia: Oh, yes!

Elsie: *(calling upstairs)* Are you all right, lovie?

Petunia: I'm wonderful, Mummy. I'm pregnant.

Elsie: Oh.

Norman: What did she say?

Elsie: *(calmly)* She said she's pregnant.

Norman: That's three times this week, isn't it?

Elsie: It seems to come and go.

Petunia exits to the landing, carrying her laptop. **Grandma** enters from the front hall, carrying a bulging old-fashioned rucksack. She sets off towards the rear hall, then turns and calls.

Grandma: Come on, Tom. We're nearly there. *(She waits a moment, then smiles and links arms with someone who apparently catches her up.)* You pitch the tent. I'll build a fire. *(She stops and looks downstage.)* Oh, look. Bunnies. Aren't they sweet?...OH!

Oh, you naughty bunnies. *(She smiles, giggles and snuggles up to her invisible companion.)* Ooh, Tom! 'That'll be us when the tent's up'? You bad, bad man.

She giggles again and exits to the rear hall.

Norman: Your mother seems happy.

Elsie: Well, she found Daddy again yesterday.

Norman: Found him? Where?

Elsie: Who knows?

She exits to the rear hall but returns immediately, having exchanged the brush and pan for a duster, with which she starts to dust the furniture, irrespective of whether there is anyone using it. She also perhaps gives Norman's shoes a bit of a rub in passing.

Norman: Are you going to get me some paper?

Brandon: I'm not your slave.

Norman: All right, damn you. Fiona'll have to do it on Monday.

***Petunia** enters from the front hall, carrying her laptop.*

Petunia: He's finally said he's happy to have a baby.

Elsie: But isn't that your job?

Petunia: To have one with me. He never wanted one before. Got quite rude whenever I told him I was pregnant. But this time I've made him agree.

She sits down and works on her laptop.

Elsie: Remind me - who is he?

Petunia: So who do you think? It's Buck, obviously.

Norman: Buck!

He sighs, shakes his head, sits in the remaining chair and starts to read the journal.

Elsie: Buck? Oh yes. He's your psycho friend, isn't he?

Petunia: *Cyber*, Mummy. Not psycho. And he's more than a friend. He's my cyber partner. Like, in Get-a-Life?

Elsie: Oh, yes. Partner. Does that mean that you and he are, well...are...you know...sort of...with each other?

Petunia: Yes, of course, Mummy. How else could we have a baby?

Elsie: Well, I'm not sure how you could have a baby at all on the internet. I don't know how you actually...you know...

Petunia: Oh, Mummy, for heaven's sake, we just...

Elsie: No, no – it's all right, dear, I'd rather not know. I don't understand anything about this Get-a-Life thing.

Petunia: Oh, Mummy, I've told you how many times? It's a complete new world. It's so cool. You can make yourself an avatar and be whoever you want and do whatever you want and, you know, make anything you need, and it's really, like..WOW!.

Elsie: Oh. Well, I was with you as far as 'new world'.

Petunia: Anyway, me and Buck, we live in a house we designed together? I design avatars and things to sell to other residents. And Buck, he trades land and designs houses. Using special money called GaL dollars. That's short for Get-a-Life, right? We're doing really well, too.

Elsie: I don't think I'll ever understand. (*Looking at the laptop*) Oh, look. Isn't that fancy? Did you draw that little picture?

Petunia: Avatar

Elsie: Have a what, dear?

Petunia: *Avatar*. That's me, Mummy. My online persona. Goldilocks Featherdew.

Norman reacts

And yes, I did sort of draw it. I designed it.

Elsie: Oh. She doesn't look much like you, does she dear?

Brandon: Are you surprised?

Petunia: (*ignoring him*) Well...

Elsie: I mean, she's very thin, isn't she? And sort of, well, pretty.

Petunia: But Pussy Galore doesn't look like you, either, does she?

Elsie: No, dear – you mean Honor Blackman doesn't look like me. Pussy does.

Norman and Brandon react

Norman: How on earth could she? Anyway, Pussy Galore is a dyke.

Petunia: Daddy!

Elsie: (*shocked*) Well, my Pussy Galore certainly isn't a... what you said. Especially when she's with James Bond.

Petunia: That's a horrid word, Daddy.

Norman: Well, it's not a very nice thing to be, is it?

Petunia: Why not? What's wrong with it? It's just as nice as being straight. Only different. You're so out of date and ignorant.

Norman: I'm ignorant? That's rich coming from you.

Elsie: You are a bit old-fashioned, dear. And Pussy really does look like me.

Norman: No, that's Oddjob you're thinking of.

Elsie laughs, assuming he's joking. She finishes dusting and exits to the rear hall, returning with an ironing board, which she struggles to set up. No-one offers to help.

Elsie: Have you ever met him in real life?

Petunia: Who?

Elsie: Chuck...Duck....

Petunia: Oh, Mummy! It's Buck. No, I haven't met him. Why would I?

Elsie: Probably just as well, dear. If he thinks you look like that

Petunia: His avatar is so cool. Really big and strong. Our baby's going to be ace.

Brandon: While his real self is probably gross, greasy and gruesome. Get-a-Life? It's unhealthy.

Elsie: Oh, Brandy-pops...

*During the following exchange, **Elsie** exits to the rear hall and returns, carrying an iron and a pile of ironing which she plonks down beside the ironing board, before plugging the iron in and starting to iron methodically.*

Petunia: Just shut up, right? It is not unhealthy. Brandy-pops. (*She sticks her tongue out at him*)

Elsie: (*looking at the screen*) Oh look. You've got a little bump in your avacado's tummy.

Petunia: My *avatar's* tummy, Mummy. Anyway (*to **Brandon***) what about your fantasies? They are so pathetic. At least there are other real people in Get-a-Life. Millions of them .

Brandon: Real? (*He laughs*) Try Twitter. Or Whatsapp or Facebook. Those are real people. I follow real criminals on there. Though only amateurs there, of course. Amazing what they give away by boasting.

Norman: While you're a professional, are you?

Brandon: The pros use their own systems. And I hack into them. Using my highly professional skills, yes. Which will one day be recognised.

Norman: Not by me.

Brandon: You wouldn't recognise anything professional if it bit you on the bum.

Petunia: Yes, well, your so-called 'real' people on Facebook and stuff only reveal what they want to reveal. On Get-a-Life you meet fully rounded characters, real or not.

Brandon: Not.

Petunia: Anyway, remember, the 'real people' on social media could be horrid.

Elsie: (*carrying on ironing*) Yes, that's right. They were very cruel to you, Petty darling.

Brandon: Because you acted so stupidly.

Elsie: Brandy-Pops! Don't be mean.

Brandon: Well, she went chasing after boys without any thought. Desperate to be like the other girls when in reality she'd never been bothered about boys until they started laughing at her.

Petunia: That's not fair.

Brandon: Anyway, she hadn't a prayer. Not without going on a crash diet.

Petunia: Huh!

Elsie: Oh, Brandy-pops.

Brandon: Mind you it would have had to have been a pretty cataclysmic crash.

Petunia: While you were such a success with the girls. I don't think.

Brandon: I was too busy with important work.

Elsie: Yes, but don't you think, Brandy-pops, that your little adventures might be more fun if you had some chums to join in, like Petty has now. Wouldn't you like a little girlfriend?

Brandon: Don't call me Brandy-pops. And they are not 'little adventures'. Like I said - I'm too busy to bother with girls.

Elsie: Oh...well...perhaps a little...boyfriend then?

*Brandon's anger silently boils over. **Elsie, Norman and Petunia** freeze. **Brandon** stands, draws an imaginary knife, tests the blade and point with his thumb, then strides over to **Elsie** and plunges the knife several times into her chest. This is accompanied by a 'Psycho' style screechy violin and loud screams. **Brandon** then wipes the blade, pockets the knife and returns to his chair and laptop. The other three resume from where they froze. **Elsie** rubs mildly at her chest, then pulls out the front of her top and looks down it.*

Elsie: I'm getting an itch. It's not a rash, is it, Petty?

Petunia: No, I don't think so.

Brandon: I may have to go out later.

Elsie: All right dear. Don't be late for dinner. It's Grandma Grainger's hotpot.

Brandon snorts, then exits with his laptop, starting work again in his room.

Norman: Off to the Bat Cave to get the Batmobile.

Elsie: Don't be like that. So long as he's enjoying himself. Anyway – I believe his little tales.

Norman: You'd believe anything.

Elsie: (*looking towards the laptop.*) Ooh, look! What's that?

Petunia: What?

Elsie: That. Coming towards your avalon.

*She scurries over to **Petunia**, still holding the iron, and kneels beside her, her arm going automatically round her and pressing the iron against her.*

Petunia: (*looking at the screen*) Where? Oh. It's Buck. He's...Owww! Mummy! Be careful.

Elsie: Oh, I'm sorry, darling. (*She gets rid of the iron, kisses **Petunia**'s arm, then peers at the screen.*) That's Buck? That's his avalanche?

Petunia: Avatar, Mummy. Yes.

Elsie: But it looks like...is he some sort of lady warrior, darling?

Petunia: Well, he's, like, being an amazon at the moment. You can be all sorts of things on Get-a-Life. Buck likes to be a big fierce amazon. It's sort of, well, a game he likes to play.

Elsie: Oh... He's ever so big. Or is it she?

Petunia: It doesn't matter.

Norman: It matters if you want to get pregnant.

Elsie: Do you dress up, too?

Petunia: Sometimes. I like to be a little bunny.

Norman: Ah. That explains the pregnancies.

Elsie: But isn't that confusing?

Petunia: No, it's fun, Mummy. You can have fun in all sorts of ways you can't in real life. It's called role-play. And he likes my bunny. And I like his amazon.

Brandon: How bizarre. Like a combination of Wonder Woman and Beatrix Potter.

Elsie: But wouldn't you like real boyfriends and... oh, I don't know. I don't understand young people now. They seem to spend all their time on phones and tablets and things even when they're out together.

Petunia: Right. And remember what happened to me. Anyway, Buck's real enough for me, Mummy. Honestly.

Elsie: Oh, I see. (*She doesn't*) Oh, look. Everyone's got labels with their names. Isn't that useful?

Norman: Get-a-Life. What's wrong with the life we gave her. To think we installed parental control software to keep them innocent. Rather than this nonsense I'd have preferred it if she'd been put up the duff properly at the age of fifteen like all her friends.

Elsie: One of her friends.

Norman: Well, that was all of them.

Petunia puts her tongue out at him then hurries off to the rear hall, leaving her laptop on her chair. Elsie watches the screen. Grandma enters from the rear hall. She is carrying an empty parrot cage.

Grandma: Has anyone seen Hendrick? He's flown off. He was after a lady pigeon in the garden. Oh. What's on? Is it Coronation Street? Do you remember sitting in the snug in the Rovers Return with Ena Sharples? The things we got up to!

Elsie: Oh, Mummy...

Grandma: That Albert Tatlock fancied me. He used to do odd jobs for me, looking for the chance of a quick feel.

Elsie reacts

Coming back from the greengrocer with my basket full of fruit once I found him with his hand up my drainpipe. Then he tried to fondle my grapefruit.

Elsie: Mummy!

Grandma: Anyway. Hendrick must have had his way with that pigeon by now. Always was a quick worker. A bit like you, dear.

She giggles, links arms with her invisible husband and exits to the front hall, as Petunia enters from the rear hall with a canned drink and a plate with a pasty, and picks up the laptop.

Petunia: Don't bother with any hotpot for me, Mummy. I have to talk to Buck.

She exits and returns to her desk.

Norman: And so Alice returns to Wonderland.

Switch to **Brandon**, working urgently on his laptop.

Brandon: Well, it took no time at all to find out the details of that planned robbery. Fortunately - as it's scheduled for tomorrow night. So, now I can get on with researching the real stuff. The international conspiracy and terrorism.