

WHO'S BREAKING?

By Philip Osment

Characters

Steve	(Late teens)	Steve's girlfriend
Linda	(Late teens)	Steve's best mate
Ma1c	(Late teens)	A volunteer at an Aids
Chris	(early twenties)	Advice Centre
		Chris's boyfriend
Rob	(early twenties)	

Other characters and the chorus played by the cast.

WHO'S BREAKING? was commissioned by Red Ladder Theatre Company for performance in youth clubs. The characters of Malc and Rob were played by the same actor. The actor playing Chris doubled as the Father.

CHORUS (The chorus is made up of the four actors. 1, 2 and three are men, 4 is a woman.)

4 Saturdays.
1 Best day of the week.
2 Even if our team's just lost
3 Making plans for a night on the town.
1 See you down the pub.
3 Game of pool before we go to the club.
4 Bonaparte's,
1 Fancy place,
2 Newly opened,
3 Loadsa birds.
4 Tweet, tweet, tweet.
2 Get home from the match.
3 If they're playing at home.
1 Mam, I'm back, where's me tea?
2 You'll get no bloody tea till you've cut that grass.
1 But dad, I'm going out tonight.
2 You said you'd do it a week ago.
1 I'll do it tomorrow, promise you, Dad.
4 Leave him, Bill, his tea will get cold.

2 Too bloody soft on him that's your trouble.
1 Finish your tea, then its upstairs for a bath.
3 Only to find the bloody door's locked.
1 Who's in there?
4 Me.
1 Well, hurry up.
2 I'll be late for me mates.
4 I'm washing me hair so you can bloody well wait.
1 Families,
2 It won't be like this when I've got one,
3 Oh, I want to get married,
4 Raise kids of my own,
1 I thought about six,
2 Three boys,
3 Three girls
1 But not till I'm old
4 About twenty-five
1 But one thing's for sure,
2 My kids will all know,
3 That my word is law,
1 And what I say will go.
4 So you're in the pub by twenty to eight

2 And you needn't have hurried 'cause the others are late,
3 A game of pool,
4 Another jar,
1 Discussing the match in the public bar,
2 Then it's off down the club for a few more pints,
3 (Using a current club hit) They know
1 What is what
4 But they don't know
3 What is what
2 They just strut.
3 Spotting the talent.
2 Perhaps trying to score.
1 Unless of course
 You're spoken for

SCENE 1.

The club.

Linda Steve, Steve, over here.

Steve There you are. Malc, over here in the corner!

Linda Oh, you haven't brought him with you.

Steve (To Malc) Get me another pint. You want one?

Linda Yeah.

Steve Linda'll have one. No, she'll have a pint. Tightfisted sod.
(Sings) I'm gonna get myself connected. (He starts to dance with her.)

Linda Get off you daft bugger. Where've you been? Thought you weren't coming.

Steve Pub. (He continues trying to make her dance. He bumps into someone.) Sorry love. (He rolls his eyes as if he finds the girl very attractive.)

Linda you? (Laughs) Been getting tanked up with your mate, have you?

Steve S'right

Linda Don't know why you always have to bring him.

Steve He's me mate.

Linda Your little lamb.

Steve He's harmless.

Linda Sometimes think he's jealous of me.

Steve Don't talk crap.

Linda Anyway you're lucky I'm still here. Bloke kept asking me to dance.

Steve Just landed, had he?

Steve What planet was he from?

Linda Very funny.

(He kisses her. Malc comes up with the drinks.)

Malc (Pointedly) Don't mind me.

Steve (Taking the drinks) Thanks mate.

Malc Prices in here. Flash a few lights in your face and expect you to take out a mortgage to come here.

Linda Don't worry, Malc, I'll buy the next round.

Malc Full of bloody queers, too. Whole group of 'em at the bar. Make sure you don't drink outa nobody else's glass. Never know what you might catch.

Steve You'll be alright, mate, just keep your back to the wall.

Malc Alright, then, Lin?

Linda Yes thanks, Malc. You?

Malc I'm alright.

Steve She reckons some bloke's been after her.

Malc Hard up, was he?

Linda Oooh, you're such a comedian, Malc.

Steve Who was it anyway?

Linda Lenny Richards from work.

(Malc and Steve splutter into their drinks.)

Steve My name's Lenny Richards and I work in personnel at
Next.

Malc Bloody ponce.

Linda There's nothing wrong with working at Next. Least we're
not on the dole.

 (Malc and Steve wince.)

 Anyway, I thought he was your mate.

Steve No. His brother was, Barry.

Malc You heard about him?

Steve Who?

Malc Barry Richards.

Steve What about him?

Malc He's really ill they reckon.

Linda Yeah. Lenny said their Mam's got to go over to Manchester
to look after him.

Steve What's wrong with him, then?

Malc Dunno. Serious though. Oh no, look at that.

Steve What?

Malc Them two blokes dancing together.

Steve Where?

Malc There.

Linda Oh, yeah.

Malc That's bloody disgusting that is.

Steve (Laughing) What a sight.

Malc Ugh, 'nough to turn your stomach.

Linda They're really good looking an all.

Steve Get away, Lin.

Linda They are. It's a real shame.

Malc How can you say that? Bloody perverts

Linda If you dressed like that you might stand a better chance,
Malc.

Steve Who with? The lasses or the lads?

Malc Piss off.

(Steve makes up to Malc in quite a camp way.)

Steve Oh, Malcy sweetie, didn't mean it. Give us a kiss.
(He tries to dance with Malc.)

Malc You're bloody mad you.

Steve No I'm not. (he starts singing again) I'm connected. Come on, Lin, let's have a dance.

Linda Look after our drinks, Malc.

Steve If one of them comes up and asks you for a dance, just say you're spoken for.

CHORUS

2 At half past twelve you're chucked out of the club.
3 Out of the warmth and the sweat and the noise,
4 It's cold outside and it's starting to drizzle,
1 And you stand there shivering in your t-shirt and jeans.
2 But you say to your mate,
3 By God, it's parky.
4 And you've had a few drinks.
1 So you don't give a damn.
3 Let's run for the bus.
1 No, I'm feeling peckish.
2 Well, what shall we have?
1 Pancake roll and chips.
4 So you walk down the street to the Chinese takeaway,
1 Trying to avoid the lads looking for a fight.
2 Whistling at lasses,
3 And chanting about United.
4 It's great being a lad on a Saturday night.
1 On the bus going home you have a row with the driver,
3 Sorry, lads, no chips on the bus.
1 So you stand to one side and eat them up quickly,
2 And jump on the bus just before he drives off.

4 Sitting upstairs with the windows all steamy,
1 Trying to make out if this is our stop.
3 Going round a corner you start to feel queasy,
1 Oh, I wish I hadn't had that sweet and sour bluuuurgh.
3 Oh, god, he's thrown up.
2 Shh, the driver will hear you.
 Let's get off before he comes up.
4 We can't get off here,
 We're only on the ring road.
1 I've got to get off before I do it again
2 So you end up walking the last mile and a half,
3 Staggering along with frequent stops.
1 And you open the back door as quietly as possible,
2 But you still hear a voice saying,
4 Is that you home?
1 Which wakes up your Dad
 And he starts to grumble:
2 Bout bloody time too.
 I'll be waking you at nine to cut that grass.
1 You get yourself upstairs,
2 And fall into bed,
3 Reaching out to switch off your bedside light.
4 As you drift into sleep the last thought you remember is

1

What a way to spend your Saturday night.

SCENE TWO

Pub. A Pool Table. The actors don't play with real balls but mime their shots. Linda and Steve play some shots. Linda takes aim. Steve moves round the table and puts his finger where he thinks the ball should hit the cushion.

Linda Alright. I know.

(He keeps moving his finger.)

Cut it out, Steve.

(Steve continues. Linda deliberately hits the ball so that it comes off the table and hits him in the groin.)

Steve Owww.

Linda Good shot, eh?

Steve (Picking up the ball) Great. (He continues playing.)

Linda So when can we go flat hunting?

Steve Not Saturday.

Linda Why not?

Steve I'm going to the match with Malc.

Linda Steve.

Steve What?

Linda I thought you were fed up of living with your Mum and Dad.

Steve I am.

Linda You never seem very keen on looking.

Steve Well..

Linda What?

Steve I don't know if I can afford it.

Linda We could manage on my wages.

Steve Be your toy boy?

Linda Hardly.

Steve Thank you.

Linda Anyway you might get a job.

Steve Pigs might fly.

Linda Oh God, what's he doing here?

Steve Who?

Linda Malc.

Steve I told him we'd be in here.

Linda Is he coming to see the film with us an all?

Steve Yeah, he can hold the popcorn. 'Lo Malc.

 (Malc enters.)

Malc Hello, lovebirds. (To Linda) Hello, sexy. (She doesn't respond.) Oh, don't be like that.

Linda Like what, Malc?

Malc You love it, sexy.

Linda Is that true, Malc?

Steve Cut it out, you two.

Malc Yeah, you all like to think you turn us on.

Linda You should know, Malc. You' re the expert.

Malc Yeah.

Steve Fancy a game, Malc?

Malc Alright.

Linda We haven't finished this one yet.

Steve Come on then.

Malc Heard the latest on Barry Richards?

Steve No.

Malc It's AIDS.

Steve Who told you that?

Malc His sister told our Tracey.

Steve I don't believe it.

Linda It's true.

Steve How d'you know?

Linda Lenny told me.

Malc They reckon he hasn't got long. Is he queer, then, Steve?

Steve Don't be bloody daft.

Malc Thought you'd know seeing you was such good mates.

Steve Piss off.

Linda It's drugs.

Malc You what?

Linda He caught it sharing needles.

Steve (To Linda) Your shot.

Malc Barry Richards a junkie? He was into all that bodybuilding.

Linda Was he a junkie, Steve?

Steve No.

Malc He might be queer though. They reckon a lot of those bodybuilders are. They might just be saying its drugs.

Steve Look, are we playing this bloody game?

Linda Alright. Keep your hair on.

Malc I reckon they ought to round up everyone with AIDS and put 'em all in quarantine, like, so they can't pass it on.

Linda You mean like dogs with rabies.

Malc They shouldn't be given any food - they should just be allowed to die quickly.

Steve You talk such bloody rubbish sometimes, Malc. Do you ever listen to what comes out your mouth. You just open it and say the first thing in your head. And seeing as you're full of shit its mainly crap that comes out.

Malc Oooh, bloody hell. Someone's touchy tonight.

SCENE FOURTEEN

The pub. Pool table. Malc is playing on his own. Steve joins him with two pints.

Steve Here you are, Malc.

Malc Ta. Your go.

(Steve starts playing.)

Malc Did you get over to Liverpool for the quarter final the other week?

Steve Yeah, I got a lift.

Malc We got right pissed that night when we got back.

Steve Where did you go?

Malc Chichester Arms. I was well out of it. You should've been there.

Steve Mmmm.

Malc You coming down Bonaparte's wi' me later?

Steve No, I'm meeting some mates.

Malc I thought I was your mate.

Steve Eh?

Malc I said I thought I was your mate.

Steve Your go.

Malc Ta.

Steve Bloke got beaten up down the Chichester that night, I heard. That true? Got set upon by a group of United supporters.

Malc You know how the lads can be.

Steve Know anything about it, Malc?

Malc I heard he was queer.

Steve Makes it alright, does it?

Malc What's got into you?

Steve Make you feel good, did it?

Malc Look it weren't me. It was Tod and his lot.

Steve You know it was going on?

Malc Might have.

Steve He was a mate of mine.

Malc Who?

Steve The bloke who was beaten up.

Malc The queer?

Steve Yeah, the queer.
(He takes the cue from Malc.)

Malc You on the turn then, mate?

Steve You asking me if I'm gay, Malc?

Malc Yeah, sure.

Steve What if I were?

Malc Oh, come off it, Steve.

- Steve You never know.
- Malc You're having me on.
- Steve You'll have to figure that out for yourself, won't you? (He pots the final ball) Two games to me. Want another?
- Malc Uhh, no, I'll be off.
- Steve OK, Malc. See you round. I'll be in here Tuesday.
- Malc Right.
- Steve Bye then.
- Malc Yeah, see you Tuesday.
- (Malc goes. Steve continues playing on his own. Linda enters. Stands watching him. Steve doesn't see her.)
- Linda Steve?
- Steve (He turns) Well?
- Linda Negative.
- Steve Thank Christ.
- Linda I gotta go back in three months for another. But we haven't been exactly close lately, have we? So they think that'll be negative too.
- Steve Right.
- Linda How've you been?
- Steve Ok. Spending quite a bit of time down the Advice Centre. There's a group I go to.
- Linda Yeah. Chris said.
- Steve You went in and saw him did you?

Linda Yeah.

Steve Good. (Pause) Well, thanks for coming and telling me.

Linda That's OK.

 (Pause)

Steve I'll be seeing you then.

Linda Yeah.

 (He goes back to the pool game. Linda hesitates. His attention stays on the pool table. Suddenly she grabs the cue from him.)

Linda Why did it take you so long?

Steve Hey?

Linda Why didn't you tell me?

Steve I didn't know what you'd do.

Linda You should have told me. I didn't know what was going on. You had no right not to tell me. What did you think I was going to do?

Steve Dunno. Go off with someone I suppose.

Linda Don't blame Lenny Richards. The way you were behaving. Not telling me what was going on. Going all quiet and moody.

 Pause.

Linda Look at you. You're doing it now.

Steve I'm not.

Linda You bloody are. (Pause)

Steve I was seared of losing you, Lin. (Pause)

Linda You playing?

Steve OK.

Linda You break.

(They start to play.)

Steve What you doing tomorrow?

Linda Me uncle's taking me hang-gliding.

Steve Your uncle who's got cancer?

Linda S'right.

Steve Bloody hell, what happens if he pegs out up there?

Linda Wouldn't be a bad way to go.

Steve They'd never get him down again, he'd just float off.

Linda He said he's always wanted to do it. So he's blown all his savings on a glider.

Steve I wouldn't mind doing that.

Linda You asking me if you can come?

Steve Yeah.

(Chris enters.)

Chris Sorry I'm late.

Steve That's OK.

Chris Rob's just parking up the bike. Oh, hello, Linda.

Linda Hello.

Chris I didn't know you were going to be here.

Linda No, well, perhaps I should be off.

Chris No, stay. Was it alright?

Linda Yeah.

Chris Good.

(The three of them look at each other)

Steve You've moved on from licking envelopes then.

Chris Yeah. Oh, look, I spoke to the landlord about the flat above mine. He said if you're interested you should give him a ring.

Steve Oh, oh right. Good.

Chris Who wants a drink?

Steve Half, please.

Chris Linda?

Linda Please.

(Chris goes.)

Steve I was going to tell you.

Linda Sounds familiar.

Steve I didn't think you'd want to...

Linda What?

Steve Move in with me.

(Rob enters.)

Rob Right you lot. Let me show you how to play this game.

Steve This is Rob, Lin. Rob, this is Linda.

Rob Hi Linda.

Linda Hello.

Rob You've got very good taste in boyfriends.

Linda Have I?

Rob Don't you think so?

Linda Maybe.

Rob Well, if you ever get bored with him just pass him onto me.
(Chris returns with the drinks)

Linda Wanna do a swap do you?

(They both look at Chris.)

Chris What?

Rob Nothing.

(Rob and Linda laugh)

Steve (Holding the cue) Shall we have a foursome?
(The other three look at him in alarm.)
I meant at pool.

Chris)
Rob)
Linda)

Rob Alright. Me and Steve against Linda and Chris.

Chris You're on.

Steve Heads or tails?

(He throws a coin in the air. They all look up.)

CHORUS (Hang-gliding.)

- 1 Up with the birds,
- 2 Flying high.
- 3 Looking down at the earth,
- 4 From a clear blue sky.

END