

Tiny Treasures by Kevin Dyer, a cutting from Act I

Audition side – James

START

JAMES:

I can run
I can cope
Katy, have you gone over those ten words for your test?
I can sort stuff out.
Did you do it last night? All ten of 'em?
I can wash
I can dry
I can pick things up
I can catch things that fall
I can spin plates
I can walk the high wire.
I'm sending Sniffy a text saying I can't meet him before school (He texts) 'Sorry no can do. Mum busy. See you in homeroom.'
He texts back; 'Don't be late, Bozo'
I can fix things
I can go into phone boxes and come out as Superman
I am the incredible hulk with no side-effects
I am Thor, flying with my hammer through the sky
Katy says none of the socks match. 'Where did you put the other one, ding dong?'
'Dunno.'
I go sock-searching, it's a new Olympic sport and I'm the world record holder.

He finds a new pair.

JAMES:

I can hold the house on my shoulders; I can get the lid off the pickles when it's too tight for everyone else; I can forge my Dads signature on this letter: (He writes) 'Dear Mister Taylor, I'm sorry James hasn't done his homework; it's cos he did the Tudors in Grade 3, Grade 5, Grade 7 and doesn't want to be doing them again in Grade 9. Quite frankly he doesn't give a crap about History.' ...
Joke. (Writes again) 'Dear Mister Taylor, I am very sorry that James has not done his homework, he has been very sick and on antibiotics all this week. However he really loves the Tudors and will catch up on Henry Eight and his six wives over the weekend. Yours, unreadable squiggle.'
That's a lie: I have not been sick, I am not on antibiotics, and my dad doesn't know whether Henry Eight had six wives or Henry Six had eight wives. (Calls) Katy! Last warning!

And a letter to Miss Signet about PE. (He starts to write.) I love PE but I need to skip it cos it's my only chance to finish my English. Anyway I need new shorts and I haven't got any. (Whilst writing) I finish Mum's breakfast, I take it in, on a tray, knife on the right, fork on the left; cos that's the way she has it, and a glass of orange juice. I make her promise to drink it.

Every morning I get her tablets from the drawer in the kitchen; lay them out on her tray - two red, a little white one... (He does this)... and then the capsule: half green, half the colour of the sky - that's what we me and Mum say.

He realises they are missing. Stops.

JAMES:

Mum... where are your capsules? The green and blue ones. Where are they?

Not in the kitchen drawer where we keep the tablets, not by her bed, not under her bed, not under the fish. I know they're not under the fish, but when you're panicked you'll look anywhere won't you. (Calls) Mum, I can't find 'em.

I look at the clock; need to go in 7 minutes.

(Calls) 'Katy!'

No capsules. It was all going smoothly, and then the wheels come off. That's a metaphor, cos I'm not talking about anything with wheels I'm talking about Mum and what happens when she doesn't take her medicine. Today is a train - fast, heavy, an engine speeding forwards... and then bang crash the wheels come off! The day is screaming and train cars are on their side and the sound is the sound of disaster.

(Quietly) She says, she says she doesn't want to take them anymore. She says yesterday morning, after I went to school, she got up, went to the kitchen drawer, got them and threw them away.

I go cold then hot, my mouth is dry, then start to explain; Mum if you don't take them...

She's angry. 'James leave me alone! Mum is never angry; Mum is amazing, she holds us together.

'Katy get going! Get up!' She says she is up. I look in the kitchen; she's putting two Weetabix in her bowl. Back to mum. She's in bed sitting there like a child. That's a simile. Cos I used the word 'like'. Mum, fists clenched, is sitting there *like* a child. So not a metaphor.

Mornings like this are hell; this is when I need Katy to be completely on target. That is a metaphor. I need her to be straight and fast and going where I want her to go and doing what I need her to do. But now Mum won't look at me and Katy is yelling and kicking off. She's poured the milk on her Weetabix and the milk is sour and she's screaming it tastes like sick. *Like* sick - simile. I tell her to grow up - that is not a metaphor, not a simile, that is an order. And if she doesn't do it I'm going to explode. That is exaggeration or hyperbole. I wish Mrs Wilkins was here now; I'd be getting an A-plus for this stuff. Actually I'm really glad she isn't cos the house is in chaos; and the garden: Uncle Dave saw a rat in the garden last week cos I hadn't put the trash out. Back to mum. I say 'Mum, after Katy and I have gone...

phone the chemist for some more capsules.

Silence.

You have to.

Silence.

I hear Katy scraping the brown sickly sludge into the sink.

(Calls) There's more milk in the fridge.

She pours another bowl of milk.

Mum is quiet.

Katy shouts there's no Weetabix left.

(Shouts back) 'Well get something else.'

Mum, I say, promise me.

She rolls over with her back to me.

She is a machine that has turned itself off.

Last time Mum missed her capsules for two days we had to call the ambulance. She didn't take them yesterday and she isn't gonna take them today cos she's chucked 'em away, so that'll be two days and there'll be blue lights coming down the street and then green uniforms and then oxygen masks and everything.

(Beat)

I can sort things

I can solve things

I'll get some more for you from the chemist's.

END