

Extract from *Protest Song*

By Tim Price

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Characters**Danny**

It's just like being back in prison, there's all sorts there. Mentally ill, professors, drug dealers, soldiers, bankers, musicians. And every one of them is fucking Allie's mate. She introduces me to everyone as 'Dannyfromthekitchen,' and it sort of becomes my new name. 'Dannyfromthekitchen'. Even now, sometimes when I meet someone I'm like 'I'm Dannyf-.'

Beat.

There's this knackered piano outside the kitchen tent, out of tune, keys missing. Every cunt plays it all the time. Fucking chopsticks or the entertainer, it is torture.

Beat.

But this bloke comes along, and he spends hours pressing all the keys, over and over again. Like he was testing it, or getting to know it.

Beat.

And after a while, he starts to figure it out. He doesn't fix all the broken bits, he just learns where they are and plays around it.

Beat.

We've been fantasizing about all the different ways we could destroy this fucking piano for weeks, and then this bloke comes along and it's fucking beautiful. He just knew what it needed to make music again.

Beat.

uptight, Wooky says it's too bourgeois and Hal's a Buddhist. I don't know why they don't dance but they don't, and she looks at me, and I think I'm not getting involved in any of this.

'I'll dance with you,' I say and she nearly vaults the table.

Danny looks down at himself and is repulsed.

He holds his hands out at a distance.

He realises his hands are dirty and he furiously rubs his hands clean.

He holds his hands out at a distance.

'Hold me properly' she says and pulls me close. People don't touch me. I'm not, I'm not used to it. I never bump into anyone or brush past anyone. 'Cause people go.

Danny recoils.

She's holding me and I'm confused, people don't touch roughsleepers do they?

Danny addresses a patron.

Would you touch a roughsleeper?

Danny addresses patrons until someone says 'yes'.

When someone says yes, Danny's heart melts.

You would.

Summoning courage, Danny offers his hand to the patron.

Would you?

Beat.

Please?

Danny persists until patron joins Danny on stage. Or dances by himself.

As Danny takes her in his arms we hear piano music. They dance, and slowly, Danny turns patron so he is facing the audience and she is facing the back of the set.

We see Danny is overcome with happiness.

Beat.

We dance around the kitchen, and she puts her head on my shoulder.

Danny and patron dance.

We dance, and it's just me and her. And I don't feel repulsive or disgusting anymore.

Danny is in agony.

And I hold onto him and I promise I'll never let go.

Danny holds the audience member as if it is the last time he held his son.

And then slowly, he comes to.

Danny is embarrassed and apologise as he let's go of her.

Thank you.

Audience member returns to her seat.

Thank you.

Danny gathers himself.

Beat.

I tell her my ex-wife said I'll die alone, because I'm the most selfish man she's ever met. We sit on Banksy's Monopoly board together, and she tells me Allie isn't her real name. Her real name's Lucy. 'Allie's my activist name. She's who I want to be; changing the world. Lucy's a victim.' And we get pissed and watch bankers kick tents, and tourists take pictures, London go by, and it all feels new.

Beat.

The more people I meet, the more I start to understand what's going on, like, I met a blind diabetic woman in a wheelchair, with kidney and heart problems and the Government declared her fit to work. She was fucking double incontinent.

Beat.

month to buy stock, sell the clothes and then pay off the loan. The bank just fucking stopped lending to him. Just like that. He went bust overnight with a wife and kids.

Beat.

Every day there was someone. I was in the Info tent and this bloke comes in, he's in a super expensive suit, but looks like shit. Looks like he could do with a good meal, or a good sleep, I don't know what, but he needs something. He wants to make a donation. He gets his wallet out and gives us everything he's got and he starts to cry.

He's a millionaire, he's got wife, kids, mistresses but he's the most unhappy bloke I've ever met and *I* end up comforting *him*. That's the kind of mad shit that would happen in Occupy.

Beat.