

I root in my school bag. I find his cap and throw it at him. 'This has been stinking up our flat,' I say.

'Look, I'm sorry. I didn't know you were in here.'

'You fancy my *mum*? She's in her thirties, and she told me that she thinks you're immature and stupid,' I say. 'Anyway, she's got a boyfriend. He's rich and he drives a Porsche and he's ... an architect. So you haven't got a chance.'

Egan goes pale. 'Oh. Yeah. I mean, I didn't really think ... you know. Andrew and I were messing around.'

I don't want to hear any more. I want to go home.

I storm out of the music room, across the playground and into the nurse's office. I tell her I have the worst period pains ever. She asks all the usual questions, like what classes I have and whether I've had an argument with someone. When she's satisfied with my lies, she calls Mum to pick me up. But Mum can't because she hasn't got a car.

So I walk.

At home Mum is lying on the couch watching TV. 'Hey sweets. I've got painkillers in my bag, if you need them.'

'I'm OK,' I say. I sit next to her.

'You're sweating. Have you got a temperature?' She places the back of her hand against my forehead.

'Mum, would you go out with someone who was seventeen?'