

SCENE 1 – CLASS ROOM- a screen is up with a video about animals

The teacher is up front and the video turns off. The cast are sat amongst the audience.

TEACHER: So, remember everyone – the project is on the difference between people and animals – see if you can find any! The best project wins a prize!
Have a good weekend.

Teacher leaves. Kids come onstage as if leaving classroom. Their physical posture is really important – Tyler and Roy swagger, Ben and Nelson are confident – but Jamie keeps his head down – whole body shows fear. Ben and Nelson are together. Jamie is on his own but sort of hanging around them. Fizz, Kerry, Charlotte and Elli are a group. Tyler and Roy are a group. J is hanging out with Oi-Ki

OIKI: This is going to be short project – I mean there’s no difference between Tyler and an animal.

CHARLOTTE: Oh yes there is – animals wash themselves. *[Girls laugh]*

ELLI: Oh Gross! When was the last time you had a bath Tyler? Last year?

TYLER: You know you love it girls! I’m all animal – grroooowl *[growls at them and they giggle]*

J: Anyway we aren’t animals. My religion says that we’re different – we’ve got souls – animals don’t have souls.

ROY: But we came from the apes – ooh, ooh darling – *[grabs a bit of Kerry’s hair and pretends to eat something]* – mmm that was tasty!

[Girls scream indignantly]

J: I don’t believe that! We never came from the apes – we were made in the image of God

ROY: Will someone shut her up?

OI-KI: Yeah but don’t you believe in evolution? I mean everyone knows the earth is like billions of years old and...

J: I’ve got a right to say what I believe

TYLER: Heh – gay boy – why don’t you go and shut J up? Maybe if you kissed her, we’d change our minds about you? Heh Gay boy! I’m talking to you!

[As soon as Tyler turns on Jamie, Nelson and Ben move away from him]

ROY: Go on, kiss her gay boy!

[Girls all make gross noises]

TYLER: He’s not that bad girls – but he’s not listening....

[Jamie is trying to ignore Tyler – Tyler grabs his bag and he snatches for it – Tyler

passes it to ROY who empties it on the floor]

ROY: *[puts on patronising teacher voice]* Good morning James Chapman....

JAMIE: Can I have my things back? *[Roy picks up some of Jamie's lunch]*

ROY: *[in a funny voice]* Dear me, 'James', you aren't eating properly... crisps and chocolate... haven't you been listening to the healthy eating lessons? Everyone have a crisp and help 'James' here out – he doesn't want to get porky does he? *[Hands round crisps to people who are all laughing] – Heh! These are smoky bacon! Come on porky! [Keeps handing out crisps]*

TYLER: Heh! That's a difference between people and animals – we can choose to eat healthy food– animals stuff down whatever comes their way.

OI-KI to J: Should have seen that burger he was stuffing down his gob yesterday! Does that make him an animal? *[J giggles and nods -]*

TYLER: And there's another one Roy – Animals aren't freaks – no gay animals *[Tyler gives Roy look and Roy grabs Jamie and holds him as the conversation continues – Tyler slows eats Jamie's chocolate bar]*

OI-KI: Why can't you just leave him alone? *[They ignore her]* Come on J – *[quietly]* I'm telling... *[Oi-Ki and J leave]*

NELSON to Ben: There are gay animals – I read about it on this website – gay penguins and dolphins – even orangatans.

BEN: You're having me on! I bet you saw that on wikipedia – my Dad says don't take any notice of info on there – like ½ of its wrong.

NELSON: I swear its true and it wasn't wikipedia – it was the National Geographic....

ROY: That'd be funny – a couple of gay pigs! Or gay frogs!

JAMIE: I'm not gay!

They laugh. Roy pulls a wallet out of Jamie's pocket and gives it to Tyler. Tyler takes the fiver out and throws the wallet on the floor.

JAMIE: Give it back – that's my lunch money.

Tyler tempts him, waving the money near him. Jamie makes a grab for it but Tyler waves it out of his reach. Tyler is taller than him. Roy is laughing - others are watching, laughing or ignoring

TYLER: Sit up and beg – and I'll give it to you. My dog can sit up and beg. What about you gay boy? *[Roy does a sit up and beg impression which makes everyone laugh – Jamie doesn't do anything]*

EVERYONE FREEZES – CAST MEMBER TURNS TO AUDIENCE

CAST MEMBER: Think its funny do you? Or just glad it isn't you?

UNFREEZE –ACTION STARTS AGAIN.

BEN: Give him back his money. *[Tyler calmly pockets the money and looks at Ben – a challenge – Roy closes ranks – a teacher comes on]*

TEACHER: There's a lot of noise going on here. What's happening? *[Silence – teacher sees all Jamie's stuff on the floor]* What's this?

JAMIE: I dropped it. *[Teacher looks around at everyone]*

TEACHER: You alright, Jamie?

JAMIE: yes miss.

EVERYONE FREEZES

CAST MEMBER: Why doesn't Jamie tell the teacher about the money? Perhaps because of what happened last time he did.

CAST UNFREEZES TO RE-ENACT

JAMIE: He took my money miss.

TYLER: Why would I do that? It's not like I'm poor or anything.

TEACHER: Ok – anyone here see Tyler take Jamie's money?

ROY: Tyler never took his money, miss.

TEACHER: Nelson

NELSON: yes miss.

TEACHER: What happened?

NELSON: I didn't see anything miss – I was talking to Ben here.

TEACHER: Nelson, I could hear shouting all the way from the class room –you're telling me that you didn't notice anything?

NELSON: There's always shouting miss – I just ignore it.

SCENE FREEZES

CAST MEMBER: After school they beat Jamie up for that. Badly. Everybody knows. Jamie hasn't made that mistake again. What could anyone have done to help Jamie? What would you have done?

TEACHER: Very well. Keep the noise down will you?

Teacher leaves/or is off stage and goes. Jamie is picking bits up off the floor. Nobody helps him. The group of girls leave chatting.

TYLER: Looks like lunch is on me – come on Roy.

THEY LEAVE – EVERYONE IS OFF STAGE EXCEPT NELSON AND BEN.

NELSON: Now that was typical animal behaviour

BEN: What was?

NELSON: In the animal world the males all have to show off to attract the females – that's what Tyler and Roy are doing –

BEN: what, by taking Jamie's food and money?

NELSON: It shows how strong they are.

BEN: But that was 2 on 1 – that's just bullying. I bet animals don't bully each other.

NELSON: Chimps do. And with a litter of puppies the smallest one can get pushed out of the way by the others and not get the mother's milk – that's bullying. It's called the 'runt' of the litter.

BEN: Why didn't you tell the teacher what happened?

NELSON: Why didn't you?

BEN: She didn't ask me.

NELSON: She asked everyone. So why didn't you 'tell'? *[Ben stares at the ground, ashamed]*

BEN: We could tell the teacher quietly – anonymously?

NELSON: It's not our business. Jamie's weak, he's the runt. It's the strongest that survive – you don't want to be associated with the weak, Ben.

BEN: But we're not animals. We've done well by being clever. Lions are much stronger than us – they can tear us apart easy but we invented guns and now we can just shoot 'em.

NELSON: Then it's up to Jamie to find himself a gun... come on! Let's go. [EXIT]