

Mother and Father

LOVING AND CARING

PART 5

MOTHER AND FATHER

“I talked to her about last night, what time she came in.

- What did she say?

- Well, it was gone... Well, she wouldn't tell me at first. She pretended it was early.

- What time was it?

- It was gone midnight.

- As late as that?

- You were asleep. I was lying there worrying, wondering what she was up to, where she got to.

- Where had she been, then?

- Round to Simon's.

- Her boyfriend.

- Yeah. She reckons they were playing records from about 6 o'clock in the evening till midnight.

Up in his bedroom.

- There's nothing wrong with that surely, is there now?

- On their own.

- You're sure about that?

- Yes!

- Did she tell you that?

- Yes, she told me they were on their own. I say: 'what about his mother?' No, she didn't know about his mother. She might have been in, might have been in, in the kitchen, she thought. She's never met the mother, you know. I don't know if she cares what they get up to. It's alright for her, she's got a boy.

- She's quite a sensible, level-headed kid.

- Yeah, at 16, that's the whole point. She thinks she's grown. She's strong-headed like you, you know.

- Well, what's wrong with that?

- Knows it all.

- No, no, no. I can't have that now.

- Look... Oh, here's John and Jackie.

- Could well do without them.

- Hello, hello, it's Doug and Sheila.

- Hello.

- We don't see you here very often, do we?

- No, we don't often come.

- No, we come here for a quiet chat.

- Quiet chat? That reminds me, Doug, you and I must have one. I've got a filthy story to tell you.

- You two girls have a hen party.

- How are you then?

- Oh, I don't know. Just having a moan.

- Well, what's the trouble?

- Sandra.

- Sandra? What has she been up to?

- Well, I had an awful row this morning with her, Jackie, on her way out to school and she went off and slammed the door. You know, she seems to hate me now. It's dreadful.

- What did you have a row about?

- Well, she came in late again last night. It was nearly midnight, you know. She'd been around to that boy again, Simon. She reckons they were round at his place in his bedroom all evening playing records.

- Well, I expect his mum and dad were there, weren't they?

- No, that's the whole point. I said: 'who else was there?' and she didn't know. Perhaps his mum was in the kitchen. She never meets the mother, you know. She can't seem to be bothered, can she? I think it's dreadful.

- I don't think you should take it too seriously.

- Well, I can't help it. She won't tell me anything, you know, I ask her and she says I'm prying and I don't understand. I feel so worried about her, I really do.

- Maybe they're in love.

- In love? She's only just 16.

- You're really worried about this, I can see it.

- I am. You know, supposing something happened and...

- Do you think they're sleeping together?

- They might be, mightn't they? I mean from 6 o'clock until midnight in a bedroom, anything can happen. She won't tell me.

- She won't talk to you at all?

- No.

- Perhaps it's asking too many questions that's making her clam up and perhaps if you were not so worried, tried to relax more, then she could feel she could come and talk to you about it.

- Well, I don't find it easy. I'm not being nosy, Jackie. I really care about her, I'm worried that she's throwing herself away. She's given up all of her old friends, she's just been out with this Simon for 3 months like an old married couple.

- This might be causing her a few problems herself. She might really want to talk to you but you know, if, if the basis was better, if you were just on a more friendly basis, she might be able to speak to you.

- It used to be like that but suddenly she seems like a different person, you know. It's rows... I can't stand all the rows, it's awful. Do you have this too with your Brian?

- Oh, no. We don't have any trouble with him. We never have, he's always been very open. Of course his dad, you see, does treat him as an equal a good deal of the time. Maybe this is it. Maybe if you got her more involved in your problems."

"Where did you get that one from?

- I'll tell you. I got it from Brian. He comes back from school everyday with one.

- A chip off the old block.

- Well, of course. What do you know about it? Let's face it. He tells me everything and I've told him quite a bit too. Some of the kids nowadays seem to think they invented the whole thing. I'm more for being out-there. I think if you put things under covers, if you make it sound dirty... Mind you, I asked my old man, ages ago it was: 'is sex dirty?'. And he said: 'if you do it right, yes'. When you start hiding it, you make something dirty, you make it illegal, people... They fancy it more, you know how it is. I'm sure you had it when you were a kid yourself.

- Well...

- Let's face it, it takes two to tango, doesn't it?

- That's true.

- It doesn't take just one boy, the girl's got to say yes. If she says no, he's gonna believe it. Brian tells me how many he's made.

- Really?

- Yes. I think it's good to spread the oats before you get married. Have the rehearsal first and the show afterwards.

- You've got a boy and I've got a girl, it's quite different you know.

- It isn't really, honestly. The silly thing is: let the boy practice, rehearse a bit, you know. I mean, so many marriages have broken up because mum and dad can't talk to them, they don't know what they're doing with their kids. It has broken up more marriages.
- It's probably true.
- I think you've got a very wrong attitude. You hide it and they're going to do it anyway, aren't they?
- Well, I suppose so.
- It's that human nature. Let's face it, Doug, when you were younger, you tried, didn't you?
- I suppose I did, yes.
- You didn't come near any harm, you didn't do any harm.
- No.
- You just play it cool. Let's go break up that hen party over here. My word, you do yack around, don't you?
- Don't forget, any time you want to have a chat, just ring me up.
- Sorry to be in such a mood.
- Oh, it's alright.
- Come on, Jackie, we'd better go and see what Brian is up to. See you soon, kids.
- Bye, bye.
- Bye, bye Jackie.
- Bye, John.
- I'm absolutely astounded.
- What do you mean?
- What he had to say about his Brian. I mean if I thought that our Sandra was at home with him, carrying on the way he encourages almost the seduction, open seduction. It's absolutely astounding. It's got me a bit worried because from what you told before with this Simon playing records or so they say until midnight. I think we should rather call a halt to this. I think we should make it again and to come in at about 11 o'clock at the latest.
- I don't how we're going to stop her there, Doug. I don't know how we can make her stay in and sort of tying tie her in her room. I mean, if she just goes out and doesn't come in, what do we do?
- I suppose it's a lack of communication.
- Well, it is but not for the want of trying. You never talk to her, do you? You leave it all to me.
- I think it's the mother's job.
- That's good. It's Dad's job to do the nice things and Mum's job to do the nasty.
- With a boy, with a boy, I think it's better.
- Jackie reckons that girls can sometimes talk to their fathers. She says they don't have any trouble. I'll tell you what Jackie said. I asked, you know, if they have this trouble with Brian and she said that he sort of tells her things but she doesn't ask. She seems to think that I ask too much, you know, and if I wasn't quite so anxious and didn't keep asking her things, she might just come and tell me.
- Perhaps she's got something there.
- You think it's my fault?
- No, I don't say it's your fault.
- Well, I think it might be, Doug, I don't know...
- It's nobody's fault.
- I don't know. I feel so fed up about it all.
- No, don't take it like that.
- Always done what we could for her and...
- Those are our responsibilities.
- She doesn't seem to realize how much we love her. That's all it is. We just want her to be happy. Not throw herself away on the first boy she meets.
- Well, it's all. It's for her own good, love. If we talk to her sensibly, surely....
- Well, I do talk to her sensibly, all the time. She just doesn't want to know.

- If she's going through this phase, I suppose it's understandable, she's only 16. Now, what are we supposed to do?
- She doesn't act like 16, you'd think she was 25 sometimes the way she goes onto me, what she knows and what she doesn't know, she can lead her own life. I don't know. Perhaps Jackie is right.
- We can only do what we think is right, what's good for her for the future, you know, for her happiness, she could see how well we get along together.
- Perhaps I should try harder and not just go on at her, question her all the time. Maybe she is right, maybe it is me.
- Perhaps I can have a word with her as well.
- Would you try?
- I wouldn't mind. I'll try, I'll try."

Transcript: Ariane Fénart