

MRS CLAY: And I'm tellin' you to go to Hell.

ORIEL: I'm sorry.

MRS CLAY: Go to Hell!

MRS CLAY goes.

SCENE 40

Pelican Point. TED is with a slightly older girl, MARY.

TED: You look like someone off the pictures.

MARY: Pull the other one, Ted Pickles.

TED: Swear to God.

He tries to fondle her breasts.

Specially right around here.

MARY: Get out of it.

TED: Come on, Mary. Take me while you got the chance.

MARY: Where are you off to?

TED: Dunno. But I'm gonna be a jockey.

MARY: Good in the saddle, are you?

TED: I can ride like blazes, yeah.

MARY: You're too young for me, Teddy.

TED: I'm sixteen.

She laughs with scorn.

Fifteen.

She looks at him steadily.

I'll be fifteen.

MARY: That's way too young.

TED: I'm old where it counts, Mary. Please.

MARY: Oh, Jesus... Go on.

She lets him touch her breasts.

TED: Holy shit...

He goes to it.

MARY: Now you tell me you love me.

TED: You got nice tits.

MARY: Is that all?

TED: This is going to change my life.

MARY: Likewise.

SCENE 41

QUICK returns from school, ignoring FISH.

QUICK: Quick's sixteen now, and bigger than his father. He tries to forget the pictures stuck on his wall. He thinks they're stupid now. At school he never speaks. He has to do an essay about the war. He writes about the atom bomb, says the Japs had it coming to them, it served them right. It was either us or them, writes Quick. Us or them. His teacher tells him Japanese people are more than just combustible material, and gives him a magazine with a long story about Hiroshima. Quick stares at photographs of what seem to be burnt logs, but when he looks close he sees the features of people. He takes the magazine home, but he's not going to read it...

FISH plays the piano. ROSE watches him.

ROSE: He's big now, Fish. Fourteen and growing like a man. Rose can't see the look on his face. She listens to him playing and wants only to touch him, to be friendly, and, yes, if she's honest, to get a kiss. It's ridiculous. She's too old for him, and he's a slowbo and a tenant, and a Lamb, for God's sake, but he's the grousest looking boy, and his hot, blue eyes make her go racy inside. She'd like to steal him and run away with him.

ROSE leaves the room.

Rose has her periods now, and hates her scrawny body. The minute she forces a bit of food into her, she runs outside and chucks it up. She watches those Lamb girls next door growing up. Hattie, the eldest, she starts going out to dances. Boys come to pick her up and off she goes. Elaine might like to be asked out too, but she gets a lot of headaches so she stays home. Red looks like she'd deck a boy if he came near her. Rose doesn't know any boys. Still, she's always got school.

DOLLY finds her reading.

DOLLY: Always got your head in a book, what's wrong with you?

ROSE: I got homework to do. Go away.

DOLLY: You shouldn't hate me. It doesn't help.

ROSE: Didn't you hate your mother?