

Written By Krishna Williams

Logline

A troubled man reaches out to the child he had deserted as a baby, not knowing if he will be rejected or forgiven.

Theme

15 is about how shame can lead to redemption.

Synopsis

A young KRISHNA (10) strides across the crumbling school yard, a cacophony of children's voices all around him. Fists clenched. Incensed.

Before BEN (10) has a chance to explain, Krish punches him.

Ben reels from the blow and turns to run. The sound of children's voices slowly dies down and eventually, Krish is left standing, alone, in the middle of an empty playground, tears streaming down his face. All we can hear is his breathing.

Krish and his mother SUHAILA (35), are in a dingy launderette, on Adelaide road. It has peeling light blue paint on the walls, worn wooden benches along one side of the gangway and large washing and drying machines along the other. Krish is 'playing jail', opening and closing the doors of the machines, as he is struggling with the shame of his dad not being around due to being in jail.

Krish, now 15, comes home from school, to a small flat in Liverpool, where, with his father back in jail, he now lives with his step mother Yael (25), and his baby sister, KALISHA.

He enters the living room, to find NIKKO (19), the girl he lost his virginity to, almost a year ago, holding a newborn baby, JORDAN. Krish's child.

As Krish takes the baby to hold, Krish gazes out into the distance, looking for an escape.

For the next seven years, Krish lives his life without the responsibility of fatherhood - a lot of partying, drugs and booze -- whilst, Nikko raises Jordan with her partner MARK (25), whom Jordan is raised to believe is her real dad.

At school, Jordan experiences constant bullying and doesn't understand why, until one day, someone calls her a "Brownie".

When Jordan comes home from school crying, her mum tries to explain the incident away. This only infuriates Jordan, who storms off shouting "I'm not even brown".

Meanwhile, in an attempt to assuage the guilt he feels at abandoning his daughter, Krish has written to Nikko, asking for the opportunity to be in Jordan's life. The time is right and Jordan's parents share the letter and the truth with Jordan.

It does not go well and Jordan is furious, accusing them of lying.

Eventually though, Jordan is able to let go of her anger at being lied to, her sadness at losing a father, and the humiliation of being abandoned by her father.

The day comes when Krish meets Jordan and her family for the first time. It is a tense occasion, and as much is communicated in the silence, as in the words exchanged. But, against all odds, the green shoots of a relationship between Krish and Jordan, sprout.

Main Characters

KRISH (15), riddled with the shame of having a father in prison, and ashamed of himself for abandoning his child. Krish hopes to find a way to heal himself and his child.

JORDAN (11), Krish's daughter, raised by white parents, the only brown person in her family, carries a sense of humiliation, from being abandoned by her father. She hopes that getting to know her father will solve this for her.

NIKKO (19), Jordan's mother, carries a sense of guilt at having a child at such a young age and not being honest with her daughter about who her father is. She hopes to redeem herself through letting Jordan's real father into her life.

Writers motivation

I wanted to explore the themes of shame, guilt, humility, vulnerability, responsibility and redemption, because these are the themes that I feel define my life and experience.

Shame, around being the child of a single parent and having an absent father.

Guilt around abandoning my child (as my father had abandoned me).

Humility and vulnerability were essential in enabling me to accept that I was in pain and that I was causing pain, and that I wanted to address this.

Responsibility - through taking responsibility for my actions, I was able to make a different choice about how I behaved. That was an empowering lesson for me and something I want to communicate to others.

Redemption - The reward. In my case, becoming someone I could be proud of. Showing that the work is worth doing is important to me.

Directors motivation

I didn't want an overly dramatic or overly emotional story.

I wanted a lot of silence.

As a director, I thought I could tell the story in a way that was true to me as a writer, in the way I experienced it.