

Scene Six

The Playground. A crowd. tight around a figure. There is noise from the crowd. A low mumble. Then a sharper noise. A stab. A movement and a figure falls. A long quiet. One by one the crowd move away. They take up positions with their backs to the figure, Paunch. Paunch raise3s his face and blows a long, faltering blast on his whistle.

Saunders and Dexter enter together.

Dexter All right. Break it up.

Quiet. They see Paunch. They look to the pupils whose faces remain steadily away from Paunch. Dexter looks briefly over Paunch.

Saunders Line. I want a line and I want it now.

The pupils move quietly to a line, avoiding Paunch.

Saunders Tell it to me... or the police. Probably both.

Dexter Mr Saunders

Saunders **(Sharply)** Yes?

Dexter Blacked out

Saunders The wound ?

Dexter Hard to see through blood.

Saunders We need the emergency services.

Dexter **(Sharply)** Yes.

Saunders And the police.

Quiet.

Dexter uses his mobile.

Saunders looks at the pupils.

Dexter comes to his side. Saunders is about to speak when...

The school bell rings. Pupils begin to leave.

Saunders No

Dexter To your places. To them !

The pupils continue.

Saunders Return to your places.

Dexter Line up ! Come on.
Saunders Now.

Pupils return to the line. During their movement the knife has appeared on the floor.

Saunders Who dropped it?

Dexter Who dropped it ?

Saunders Whosoever is responsible... please hand me the knife.

Nothing.

Saunders Finger-print technology is a marvel. I'd prefer it if the culprit owned up themselves without it. (Wait) Mr Dexter and I are waiting.

Nothing.

Dexter We are not in the mood. One of your teachers lies bleeding, maybe dying. Is there no drop of decency left in any of you ?

Nothing.

Saunders Take all their names.

Dexter (Glancing) I have them.

Saunders So. I am to take it that each of you is refusing a direct instruction from your Head teacher. I have asked for the knife to be picked up.

A young pupil comes forward. The other pupils look at him. He reaches down and picks up the knife. He returns to the line.

Dexter Surely not.

Saunders Is that an admission, son. Think very carefully.

Dexter It will be finger-printed.

The young pupil passes it to his other hand and then to the next in line, who does the same. It is handed down the line. Sean is at the end of the line. He hesitates momentarily then takes the knife. He tosses it in front.

Paunch has his whistle to his mouth again. He blows it.

Lights fade.

