



Hamish
Jack Thorne

It is 1981 and the electric wheelchair is available to purchase, but not yet available on the NHS. Hamish's parents organise a fundraiser to buy Hamish a new, self-operated wheelchair. In this speech, Hamish recounts his experience of using an electric wheelchair for the first time.

Recommended reading age for the full script is 15+.

HAMISH: They'd done a raging meat raffle, done a stall at the fair, I saw my poor old da standing in front of the tombola. Jar on the bar for change. Charity singalongs. Non-school-uniform day at the school where ma waves a lollipop. They'd sold themselves again and again, trying to get the money together.

And it had come. Eight hundred and eight-five pounds of it, plus ten pounds delivery.

My ma had this grin her face as the truck came down the road. Neighbours standing in the road. Alan, Deirdre, Blythe, Mark and bawbag Derek. International Year of Disability and they've given two pounds to make themselves feel a little bit less bad.

There is it - the BEC-14 with speed control and direct rear-wheel drive.

I'm loading in and to whooping and applause I'm soon whizzing up and down the street.

'How does it handle, Hamish?' 'Handles great, Da.' More clapping.

But people are bored and turning away even as they do. That's enough with the lad in the chair. He's had his moment. We've had our two pounds' worth.

Then it's time for tea. Da goes back to his girlfriends's, me and Ma linger, as is our way, and wash ready for bed. But no way am I doing that.

I've always needed someone to push me wherever I needed to go.

I've always felt someone's breath on the back of my neck. Not tonight. I wait forty minutes, quiet as a mouse, takes some doing but then I'm out and I'm free.

You don't get freedom like this on the NHS - the meat raffles have paid - and I am free. On the BEC-14.

Four miles an hour, midnight, wind in my hair, pass the house of Alan, Deirdre, Blythe, Mark and bawbag Derek. I've known them all, all my life. With their sorrowful looks towards my mother. I pass Mrs McGoonagh weaving down the street in her mini-skirt. 'Hello, pet,' I say.

She looks astonished. I know she'll tell my ma as soon as she sobers up. I don't care. Six miles per hour.

Ridgemount Hill. The wheels are screaming. I'm screaming.

YEEEEEEAAAAHHHHH!!!!

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!

And there is it- laid out in front of me - Cratchit Woods.