

P'Tang Yang Kipperbang

Jack Rosenthal

Alan Duckworth is 14 and a pupil at a co-educational school. He has all the usual adolescent worries about growing-up, and at present his life is a mixture of cricket and appearing in the school play, opposite the girl he loves, the unattainable and lovely Ann. In this scene, which takes place outside Ann's house, she has been friendlier than before, and this gives Alan courage.

Time: The late 1940, after the Second World War.

ALAN

(looking at ANN. He speaks quietly, solemnly, completely unselfconsciously, and very, very simply). You're beautiful, Ann. Sometimes I look at you and you're so beautiful I want to cry. And sometimes you look so beautiful I want to laugh and jump up and down, and run through the streets with no clothes on shouting T'tang, yang, kipperbang' in people's letterboxes. *(Pause.)* But mostly you're so beautiful - even if it doesn't make ME cry it makes my chest cry. Your lips are the most beautiful. Second is your nape . . . *(After she queries this word.)* The back of your neck. It's termed the nape. . . . And your skin. When I walk past your desk, I breathe in on purpose to smell your skin. It's the most beautiful smell there is.... It makes me feel dizzy. Giddy. You smell brand-new. You look brand-new. All of you. The little soft hairs on your arms. . . . But mostly it's your lips. I love your lips. That's why I've ALWAYS wanted to kiss you. Ever since 3B. Just kiss. Not the other things. I don't want to do the other things to you. *(Pause.)* Well. I DO. ALL the other things. Sometimes I want to do them so much I feel I'm - do you have violin lessons? . . . *(ANN is rather thrown by this.)* . . . On the violin. *(She doesn't.)* Well, on a violin there's the E string. That's the highest pitched and it's strung very tight and taut, and makes a kind of high, sweet scream. Well, sometimes I want you so much, that's what I'm like. ... *(A pause. ANN thanks him for this remark.)* ... I always wanted to tell you you were lovely. Personally, I always think it's dead weedy when Victor Mature - or whatsisname - Stewart Grainger - or someone says a girl's lovely. But you are. *(Pause.)* And I know girls think it's weedy when boys call them sweet. But you are. *(Pause.)* I don't suppose I'll ever kiss you now in my whole life. Or take you to the pictures. Or marry you and do the OTHER things to you. But I'll never forget you. And how you made me feel. Even when I'm 51 or something.