

Throw Down

Arthur Hopkins

Graham Rowe

Francis Miller

The setting is simple; three chairs facing forward, in front of each chair are potter's wheels. Hopkins sits on the SL chair, Graham in the middle, and the third one is empty.

Hopkins He's late.

Graham (*Checks watch*) Well, it's 1 o'clock now. So he's not late if he arrives now.

Hopkins Any second after 1 o'clock is late in my book.

Graham God you're going to be fun.

Hopkins Look if you're not going to turn up on time on day 1 of the course how can I respect you?

Graham You don't really have to respect-

Hopkins -But that's where you wrong. I do, it's my prerogative. As far as I see it, we're all here to learn. And the fastest to learn will be the better potter. Look, whatever your name is, don't take this as any disrespect, but I will be watching your every move until you disappoint me.

Graham I'm just here to have fun to be honest.

Hopkins Then you don't stand a chance against me.

Graham That's not why I'm here-

Hopkins -Throw in your apron now, go on.

Graham What's your problem?

Hopkins I don't have a "problem", don't be so rude.

Graham God you're intolerable.

Hopkins You're mistaking me, this is self-confidence.

Graham Please stop talking to me.

Hopkins decides to no longer speak to Graham.

That was easy.

Pause

Hopkins I have more things to think about than a runt like you.

Graham looks at Hopkins.

I have my clay, I have my water, I have my apron and I have a fantastic mind-set.

Hopkins looks over to Graham's table.

Where is your mind-set?

Graham Like I said, I'm just here to have a good time.

Hopkins Well you won't be having any sort of "good time" if you haven't got any clay, or water for that matter.

Graham I thought the teacher brings it out for us?

Hopkins If you always rely so heavily on others you'll never get anywhere.

At that moment Miller walks in from SL, he is carrying two buckets, one of clay the other of water.

Miller Afternoon!

Graham Afternoon-

Hopkins -You're late.

Miller I wouldn't call this late.

Hopkins It's past 1.

Miller And yet the class hasn't started. The teacher isn't here.

Hopkins But it starts at 1.

Graham Wait, you're not the teacher?

Miller No.

Miller *(Shares clay and water with Graham)* Here, I thought I'd get everyone's supplies. *(Looks over at Hopkin's table)* Oh you don't need any?

Hopkins I got my own, fail to prepare, prepare to fail. *(Hopkins adjusts his apron and sitting position)*

Miller Well, more for us.

Graham Thank you.

Miller goes to sit down at his table, both he and Graham sets up their clay and water.

Graham *(To Miller with an outstretched hand)* Graham by the way.

Miller Miller, charmed.

Graham Is this your first time?

Miller Practically yes, but I've read books about it, and seen the videos. I'm an experienced observer if you will.

Graham Oh so you revised for this?

Miller I revise for everything.

Hopkins Fail to prepare-

Graham Yes I got it.

Miller What's the matter?

Graham Nothing, I'm just here for the fun of it.

Miller Well good for you. There's too many of us these days wrapped up in the skill of pottery, and forget the fun of it altogether.

Graham And you? Are you here for business or pleasure?

Miller Both. I don't think you can be either one.

Hopkins Well I'm here for business, how does that work for your philosophy.

Miller I'm sorry I'm afraid we haven't been introduced.

Hopkins No need for that. I won't be here long.

Miller Yes, you fit the business brief very well.

Hopkins It's for a client, they want to look into this next week. It's best to practice.

Miller And you, Graham was it?

Graham Yes, Graham.

Miller Is it all pleasure for you?

Graham Yes I suppose so.

Miller No aim to improve yourself in any way?

Graham In pottery?

Miller Yes.

Graham Well it's not something I've thought about in that way. I mean it would be great to take my partner here in the future.

Miller So there's some degree of business too?

Graham I suppose so.

Miller Good. I thought so. The same goes for me. 50% pleasure, 50% business. Why not improve oneself whilst having a blast at the same time? It's the best way to live life I feel.

Pause. Miller stands to tie on his apron. Hopkins watches Miller with puzzlement.

Hopkins Do I not know you from somewhere?

Miller Me?

They both inspect one another.

I wouldn't have thought so.

Hopkins I do, I recognise your face.

Miller I'm no one important in the grand scheme of things.
Hopkins Where do I know you?
Miller I get this a lot actually, it's very strange. I think I just have a common face.
Graham I'm going to go find the teacher.

Graham stands up and goes to leave SL.

Miller Good idea.
Hopkins Were you at the Maiden Building last week in town?
Miller The Maiden? No, I wasn't.
Hopkins In the lobby.
Miller Uh no.
Hopkins Mid-week, on the Tuesday or Thursday?
Miller No I was away at a friend's.
Hopkins Not in town?
Miller No in the country.
Hopkins Hmm, you're certain?
Miller Yes I am. *(Beat)* Should I know you?
Hopkins *(Laughs to self)* Yes.
Miller Oh, well I apologise friend, your name?
Hopkins Don't pretend, "friend" – you must know me.
Miller I am ashamed to say I do not. I usually make it my habit to know everyone, and if I do not, I wish to know them immediately.
Hopkins My face, you can't tell from my face.
Miller You look like any man.
Hopkins *(Laughs in an offended manner)* You are certainly something!
Miller You are not, to me anyway.
Hopkins How dare you.
Miller You have a peculiar manner about you. Why do you toy with me when I clearly do not know you?
Hopkins Because I find it hard to believe.
Miller Well my friend, believe it. I may not be the only face here today that fails to recognise you.
 But you are-
Hopkins *(Raises his hand to silence Miller)* That's enough from you now.
Miller Let me finish, I was about-
Hopkins I've lost interest in you I'm afraid.
Miller *(Helplessly)* Because I do not know you?

Hopkins does not answer. Long pause.

(To himself) I do love the moment when one breaks a man's ego.

Hopkins Excuse me?

Miller Oh good, I have regained your interest.

Graham enters.

Graham Couldn't find them, *(Checking their watch)* must be running late.

Hopkins Well then. Perhaps we start ourselves?

Graham goes to sit.

Graham But we don't know what we're doing.

Hopkins Speak for yourself.

Hopkins grabs a mould of clay from his bucket and places it on the wheel. He pours some water in a little bowl and settles it beside the wheel. He dabs his fingers and begins to mould, badly at first.

Miller Graham, I can help you start.

Graham Shouldn't we wait? I mean, I'm sure the teacher has all sorts of health and safety things to talk about?

Miller Why wait, let's embrace the challenge.

Graham Embrace it?

Miller Yes, get stuck in like – that one.

Graham I'm sorry I don't share your enthusiasm, but there is a teacher for a reason.

Miller But you won't learn if you don't try.

Graham But I might do something wrong.

Miller Who would you wrong? The teacher, your partner or yourself? Feel free to fail.

Graham I'd prefer if you didn't try and argue with me.

Miller This is not an argument friend; this is encouragement, a rallying if you will.

Graham Look, I'll give them a bit more time, and then if they're not here - I'll go.

Hopkins *(To clay)* No, hold.

Miller Why go?

Graham Not much point.

Miller In waiting?

Graham I've got other things to do then sit around.

Miller But you would lose out on this new experience.

Graham Of sitting and chatting? I'm sorry but I'm more of a 'get on with it' sort of person.

Miller Like that one? (*Pointing to Hopkins, who has failed his clay on every level*). Why don't you just do it yourself then if you're all about action? Why are you holding back?

Graham Because I don't know what I'm doing.

Miller Does he? Do I?

Graham Yes, because you researched it.

Miller Like I said earlier, I know theoretically how to mould, but not practically, they are not one in the same.

Hopkins (*Stops peddling*) Will you please stop, you're disturbing me.

Graham We're not supposed to have started without a teacher.

Hopkins Ooh no! How frightening.

Miller Don't waste your breath on the proud, their ears are clogged up by their own opinions.

Hopkins (*Standing*) What did you say about me?

Miller See?

Graham He said you were proud.

Miller Graham?

Graham What? This'll be /entertaining and I'm bored.

Hopkins /Proud?

Miller Yes I said you were proud.

Hopkins Of course I am, I have no shame in that. I am proud of myself, I'm getting on with it, I'm accomplishing something.

Miller Are you? With the lack of guidance you have managed to make the lump of clay more unattractive than before.

Hopkins I do not need to explain myself to you, you pathetic worm.

Miller A base insult. This says a lot about you my friend.

Hopkins Do you think you're better than me?

Miller Better, better how? In what?

Hopkins In, general. Better in general.

Miller No one is better than another "in general". How could they be?

Graham checks his watch. Hopkins is salivating. Miller adjusts his glasses.

Hopkins It's measured in success.

Miller You say you are better than another man because of your success?

Hopkins Yes, clearly.

Miller Right, well let's prove this.

Miller grabs a mound of clay and places it on his wheel.

Graham, whose pile of clay is “better”?

Graham As in neater?

Miller No, this is our friend’s argument. They just stated, “better”. So who’s is better?

Graham Better.

Miller Yes better.

Graham They’re the same.

Miller Very good, they’re the same, two mounds of clay from the same bucket. They look different, neither look like a pot, and neither is better.

Hopkins Better is more successful I said.

Miller Yes you did. So let’s challenge that as well. Graham, which is more successful?

Graham Which mound is more successful?

Hopkins Yeah more successful. (*Pointing to his mess*) I mean, I’ve actively done something to it.

Graham Well neither look like a pot, so none.

Miller Okay, that is true. Neither has reached their goal, but that does not mean they are not successful in their efforts. So Graham, which is more successful in their efforts to look like a pot?

Graham Well, (*Speaking to Hopkins*) you put the most effort into yours, and Miller didn’t put in any. But Miller’s looks more like a pot, (*To Miller*) so I’d say yours.

Hopkins (*Gesturing at Miller*) But he hasn’t even tried.

Miller You’re right I haven’t, but it looks more like a pot. So it is the most successful. So, Graham, considering this, which is better?

Graham To be honest, they’re both shit.

Hopkins I haven’t had a chance yet.

Miller You had more time than me.

Graham Neither are better, they’re both shit.

Miller Thank you.

Hopkins What are you trying to prove here? We’re all beginners!

Miller (*Smiling*) That’s what I wanted to hear. We’re all beginners, no one is better than anyone else.

Graham Hold on though, once the teacher shows up they’re better, they’re better than all of us put together.

Miller But they’re late. They’re not punctual, certainly they’d be skilled in pottery but, in general, they’re not better than us.

Hopkins But they’ll be better than us at pottery.

Miller Does that make them a better person?

Hopkins A much better person than you that’s for sure.

Miller What have I done to offend you?

Hopkins Oh don't act surprised.

Miller Is this all because I don't recognise you?

Hopkins I don't give a rats arse that you don't know me. I don't care. It's the way you are with people; you say one thing and do another.

Miller You're calling me a hypocrite?

Hopkins You say no one is better than anyone else, but here you are telling us what is so. You throw my high self-esteem back in my face as 'pride' and you refuse to listen to either of us.

Miller I'm not better than either of you.

Graham You don't think that really, do you? He is right Miller; you do put yourself on a pedestal.

Miller I don't know what I've done to deserve this sudden attack?

Graham You're telling us what to do and think.

Hopkins I'm perfectly happy going about this pottery stuff by myself. It's my job; I've got to get to grips with this before next week. And you criticise me because of it!

Miller No, don't misquote me. You threw the first punch and insulted me. You made yourself the target.

Hopkins I started it?

Miller Graham and I were having a pleasant discussion, and you made yourself a target by your childishness.

Hopkins Yes, you were blabbing away whilst I was trying to what we came here to do! I'm sorry but I don't have time to have "pleasant discussions" I'm here to learn a craft and I'm going to do it.

Hopkins goes back to his clay.

Miller You coward.

Hopkins continues to mould.

You're not even doing it right.

Graham Miller, stop.

Miller Look at him he's pathetic.

Graham *(Glaring at Miller)* Shut up.

Miller is startled. Graham picks up his clay and places it on the wheel, he begins to mould. Miller just stands there.

Miller I thought you wanted to wait for the teacher. You said that, not me.

Hopkins Just ignore him.

Miller (To Hopkins) That's not helpful. Look, would you like some advice at least?
Hopkins No we're fine.
Miller I'm only trying to help.

Miller sits down at his table and begins to mould, he does this perfectly and has a pot in no time. Graham and Hopkins struggle but create very wide, uneven shapes. This should be played out in real-time. Miller pauses.

Miller Gentlemen.

They continue to mould.

Look at my table.

They keep their heads down.

You sir over there. If you want to get better at pottery, just let me give you some advice, then I'll be quiet.

Graham continues to mould. Hopkins stops, but keeps his head down.

Don't be stubborn. Just look.

Hopkins looks, he is surprised.

Hopkins How did you do that?

Graham stops and looks at Miller's pot.

Miller I just followed the instructions I recalled from the videos. Would you like my help or not?
Graham I'm fine thanks.

Graham goes back to his pot and tries to enjoy himself.

Hopkins Fine.
Miller You're using too much water.
Hopkins I am?
Miller Yes, that makes the clay lose its form. A little less water on your fingers. It's probably best if you start again. Your clay is too wet and will take too long to dry.

Hopkins Oh.

Hopkins clears his wheel and places the wet clay to the side, and puts new clay onto the wheel. Graham starts to use less water but carries on.

What else?

Miller That's it.

Millers goes back to his pot.

Hopkins That's it?

Miller Yes I think so. Like I said it's only from videos, I don't know that much.

Hopkins Here was me thinking I'd be lectured again.

Hopkins and Miller laugh. Graham keeps his head down and continues.

Miller I am sorry about before. It's my nature I like to challenge people.

Hopkins It's fine. I'm the same.

Miller I'm Francis Miller, by the way.

Hopkins Arthur Hopkins.

Miller Oh *the* Arthur Hopkins?

Hopkins You do know me! See!

Miller (*Laughs*) No, my apologies that was a joke.

Awkward silence.

Hopkins You made need to work on your jokes Francis.

Miller I guess we all have our faults.

Graham is not enjoying himself. And begins to get frustrated at his clay.

Hopkins I know mine.

Miller I'm still learning. We can't all be perfect.

Hopkins It's important to try though.

Miller Is it?

Hopkins Yes of course it is. What are you working towards otherwise?

Miller Happiness, surely?

Hopkins Making myself perfect makes me happy.

Miller What about others?
Hopkins Others?
Miller Your wife, kids?
Hopkins Divorced.
Miller And kids?
Hopkins I do what I can for them. They're teenagers though, so it's not often that they actually want anything from me.
Miller So you please yourself?

Graham stops wheeling and turns to Miller.

Graham You're doing it again.
Miller Excuse me?
Graham Don't belittle him.
Miller I wasn't.
Graham You were, I can hear it in your voice.
Hopkins It's fine really, he's actually right. I improve myself, I make myself happy. So eventually, in time, I can help others. I'll pay for my children's education; treat myself in retirement and so on.
Graham That's not the point, don't let him get to you.
Miller I'm sorry Graham if I have done you wrong, but I really wasn't trying to get under anyone's skin.
Graham Oh shut up.

Graham throws his current clay away like Hopkins, and starts again, using less water.

(Seriously) You love it.

He begins to peddle furiously.

Hopkins and Miller stop, they check their pots but turn their attention to one another.

Hopkins Francis, I heard you earlier on you said you were here for both business and pleasure?
 What's your business?
Miller It's not what you think; I'm not here for work. I'm just here to improve another skill.
Hopkins Does that not count as pleasure to you?
Miller No, actually Arthur we're quite similar. I'm here to tick a box as it were. But I do it for other reasons of course.

Hopkins You're here to improve yourself?

Miller No not exactly. I'm the kind of person who likes to try all sorts of different things, and expand my knowledge of the way the world works. It's craft for me this month, and last month I studied alchemy, I've yet to decide upon next month's adventure.

Hopkins Do you not work?

Miller I do, I'm a therapist.

Graham Hah!

Hopkins That explains quite a lot actually.

Miller Well, I like to meet and talk to all sorts of people. And if I can, pick up something new every so often. It sounds cliché but I'm thirsty for knowledge. And I think it's a wonderful thing to learn from others.

Hopkins You must be disappointed about the teacher not being here then.

Miller Yes I am. It would have been wonderful to learn from them directly. But then, I wouldn't have had a chance to meet the two of you.

Hopkins Yes actually it's been quite useful not having a teacher. I learn a lot more from doing it myself you see, but a little advice now and then goes a long way.

Miller Yes of course, I think it's really useful to share our knowledge.

Hopkins I'm afraid I know nothing about pottery. All apart from the fact that my client seems to love it!

Hopkins resumes peddling. Graham is getting a hang of it, but he's still not enjoying himself. His internal monologue reads "I can't believe I'm letting him get to me".

Miller Yes you said about your client, what is it you do?

Hopkins I'm in investment banking, I have clients now and again who I stay in contact with. And every so often they share an interest with me and I have to oblige. It's all about keeping them happy.

Miller Ah! So you do make others happy.

Hopkins If they're not happy, then I'm not happy. No clients, no returns. Usually I treat them to the opera, theatre or gallery. It keeps them in line. But this new client, they're very hands on. The pottery session is next week at their own studio. So it's best to be on good form.

Graham stops peddling and looks at what he's made, it's average.

Miller That must be difficult, constantly working.

Hopkins Yes it is.

Graham (*Frustrated*) Then why don't you stop?

Hopkins stops peddling.

Hopkins Was that directed at me?

Graham Yes, why don't you stop?

Hopkins Why would I?

Graham Because you seem trapped. You seem lonely, with every word I have heard you say it sounds like a cry for help.

Hopkins Excuse me you little brat, how dare you!

Graham You've lost your family and all you seem to care about is yourself. But the only thing that appears to make you, you, is your work.

Hopkins You realise you sound like him, now.

Graham No here's the thing; (*gesturing to Miller*) this guy is condescending and slimy. Whilst I'm being upfront and honest to you. Why don't you quit?

Hopkins I don't want to quit.

Miller Why should he quit?

Graham Why shouldn't you?

Miller Because I'm perfectly happy.

Graham But those around you aren't. I haven't known you for long and I'm already miserable. You say you're a therapist, but I suddenly feel anxious, and depressed. I was really really excited for this class earlier, and now all I can think about is your voice, telling me everything I do is wrong.

Miller You're wrong; I never made a comment against you-

Graham See you don't even realise you're doing it!

Hopkins Look I don't know what you're trying to achieve here kid, but enough, okay? Everyone enough. We hardly know each other, this is getting ridiculous.

Graham What's ridiculous is that neither of you have empathy for anyone else. It's always easier to gang up on the third man then to admit the truth.

Miller We're not ganging up on you.

Graham But you were with Hopkins earlier on, and now you're best mates!

Hopkins We're not friends, I have no desire in that.

Graham Of course you don't. You don't need any friends do you? You don't need anyone else?

Miller He took my advice though, and so did you.

Graham Only to make himself better. He didn't even say thank you.

Miller Neither did you.

Hopkins Thank you Arthur.

Miller You're welcome, you're pot is looking much better.

Hopkins Better than yours.

Hopkins and Miller laugh.

Graham God, enough of this! I can't stand it.

Graham stands up.

Miller Don't stop because of us.

Graham It's just so fake.

Graham starts to clean up.

Hopkins There's nothing fake about me, kid.

Graham Of course there is. Everything about you is fake Francis. It's literally written over your face in fake tan.

Hopkins *(Rises)* Right you little shit, you deserve a fucking smack.

Graham Big man act now? Didn't see that coming.

Miller Graham just sit back down and do what you came here to do.

Graham Don't tell me what to do.

Miller I'm not; you wanted to come here to have fun, so do it. Don't let us stop you.

Graham Oh come on, how can I possibly enjoy myself when I've got the therapist in one ear and this troll in the other.

Hopkins Right, come here.

Hopkins moves over to Graham, Graham moves behind Miller. Miller rises.

Miller Arthur no! He's just a kid.

Hopkins A big mouth little brat, why are you sticking up for him?

Miller Because he's no different than you and I. Now sit down.

Hopkins stands leaning forward on his toes, smoke venting through his nose. He slowly calms, leans back and goes to his chair.

He's just a boy.

Graham Mate, I'm not a boy. Why are you belittling me again?

Miller What are you? 17? 18?

Graham I'm 28.

Miller Christ.

Graham Yeah.

Hopkins You look like a foetus.

Miller Not helpful Hopkins.

Hopkins Funnier than your jokes.

Miller Sorry, Graham I thought you were still a teenager.

Graham What kind of teenager is called Graham?

Miller A good point. Please sit back down. I-

Graham Hold-

Miller -Wait. Before you say "stop telling me what to do" just listen. Please sit.

Graham sits down and attempts to create more distance between him and Hopkins.

We obviously have conflicting thoughts. All of us, and I'm not trying to make myself the main voice here, but it's what I do, okay. Let's just craft. Let's do what we came here to do. Let's make a damn pot. And it doesn't matter the teacher isn't here. How much better would you feel if you made something without a teacher's assistance? Let's just try to enjoy ourselves and not speak.

Hopkins I think that's wise.

Graham Smartest thing you've said.

Miller Good.

All three men make themselves comfortable on their stools and return to their pots. Miller dabs his fingers in the water and begins to peddle, he caresses the clay with a delicate touch as if it were another man. Graham, starts peddling, but suddenly stops, he then dabs his fingers and places them on the clay, and then starts peddling again. Graham is attempting to use all the finesse he can muster. Hopkins gets his breath back; he stands up and goes over to the sink. He washes his hands, and then dries them. He checks his phone for any updates. He begins to 'work'.

A moment.

Hopkins puts his phone away and sighs. He goes back over to his table and sits down. He dabs his fingers in the water and begins to mould the clay whilst peddling. He tries to not be too forceful with the clay.

A moment of calm.

Miller's clay is now forming into the elegant shape of a vase; he stops peddling and looks at it. He stands up and goes over to the tool table placed off stage right. He picks up a modelling tool and delicately tries to add in some design whilst peddling.

A moment of concentration.

Graham's pot is becoming a little too wide, but he is dedicated, and follows with the way the clay is going. He stops peddling and inspects it; he looks where he may need to place his hands. Then he starts to peddle again.

A moment of commitment.

Hopkins starts to panic and begins to throw a bit too much water on the clay, his pot hasn't made the right shape and it begins to spiral out of control. He tries all he can to get it under control.

Hopkins No, fuck! Stay still. No, godamit stop this! Stay fucking still.

Graham and Miller stop, they both look at Hopkins but do not say anything. Hopkins begins to get so frustrated his face turns red - even under his tan it is visible. He tries to keep the clay together, his strength however sends the clay flying out in different directions, and he ends up squashing the pot with his hands. He is furious.

Shit! Fuck you, fuck you!

Hopkins throws the pottery wheel and table over and it all spills out onto the floor, he proceeds to throw things around. Miller and Graham just watch.

God fucking damnit, why the fuck do I have to do this pathetic fucking clay crap. You stupid fucking man, you stupid fucking man!

Hopkins stands with his hands covering his face, it's hard to tell if he is crying. Graham and Miller look at one another, mouthing the words:

Graham Should we, do something?

Miller No, let him, do it himself.

They just sit there facing forwards in silence. Hopkins tries to get himself together. He struggles to pull himself up. He is a mess. He walks out SL. Now speaking at full volume.

Graham You've got to speak to him.

Miller Why me?

Graham Aren't you a therapist?

Miller Well yes, but, the best thing to do would be to leave him alone. Never meddle with a raging bull.

Graham He's distressed though.
Miller Don't say anything about it.
Graham What kind of therapist are you?
Miller You don't interfere straight away, you don't mention it. Look, help me with this Graham.

Miller stands up and walks over to Hopkin's table and wheel. He lifts them up with the help of Graham. And they put everything back as it was.

 He'll come back when he's ready.
Graham You sure about that?
Miller No.
Graham *(Looking at Miller's work)* That looks like a vase now.
Miller Yes it does. Thank you.
Graham Have you tried to draw on it?
Miller Yes I wanted to try a little pattern, quite a bit beyond my level but it was worth a shot.
Graham A real go getter you are.
Miller My husband would be proud.
Graham Oh, I didn't realise you were-
Miller -What gay?
Graham Yeah.
Miller Well, yes I am.
Graham Oh okay.
Miller Yours looks good.
Graham More shape to it yeah.
Miller Would make a good fruit bowl.
Graham Yeah.

Silence

 How do we actually turn them into bowls, don't we cook them?
Miller Yes I believe so, but I didn't watch the videos on that. I think that's actually where I draw the line on continuing without a teacher.
Graham What fire?
Miller *(Laughing)* Yes quite.
Graham I wouldn't mind painting this as well actually.
Miller Yes it would be quite nice to have it finished.
Graham Shame Hopkin's won't have anything.
Miller Well. Why don't we make him something?

Graham He won't like it.
Miller As a gift. Why not, these didn't take us long?
Graham How will that work?
Miller Well, we could work together, take it in turns. Here.

Miller stands up and removes his clay from his wheel and places it on the side. He grabs new clay and dabs his fingers in the water. He begins to peddle.

 I'll start. And then – come here, bring your chair over – then, you take over. I'll keep peddling.
Graham Won't it look weird if we both work on it.
Miller What you find two men making a pot together uncomfortable?
Graham No, not that. Won't the pot look weird?

Miller stops peddling.

Miller No, see, this is what I was thinking. You Graham have a grand talent of making your clay deep and wide. Whilst I have a skill of finesse! My vase is tall and thin, I think together we could create something Hopkin's would be proud of.
Graham But Miller. I hate to admit it, but you've been right about Hopkins, he's a proud guy. Wouldn't he prefer making the pot himself?
Miller Look how that turned out.
Graham Mm.
Miller What's the harm? We won't know how he'll react, he might love it.

Miller begins to peddle again. He begins to form the shape of the clay. Each time he and Graham swap over, Miller slows the peddling down. This takes some time, but they finally create something nice. It's a great looking vase.

Miller Brilliant.
Graham That looks great.

Hopkins returns. He stands by the entrance; he's cleaned himself up and has removed his apron.

Hopkins You cleaned up for me?
Graham Oh Hopkins. Yeah we did.
Hopkins That's embarrassing.
Graham No, honestly its not-

Miller -It's fine Arthur.

Graham Pottery is stressful work.

Hopkins *(Noticing the new vase)* You two seem to have done well.

Miller We actually worked together to make this.

Graham It's for you. We thought it would be nice for you to have.

Hopkins You made that for me?

Graham Yeah.

Hopkins Why?

Miller It's a gift. To remember us by.

Hopkins *(Unconvinced)* Right.

Graham We thought it would be nice if you had something to take home. And I dunno, you could impress your client with it.

Hopkins *(Amused)* You think my client would be impressed by that.

Graham and Miller smile.

Miller For a beginner's class without the teacher. I'd say, yes.

Hopkins I appreciate the sentiment, but I didn't make it.

Miller That's true, but you put the effort in. And surely that's all that matters.

Hopkins Not particularly, I like a positive result.

Graham What we're trying to do here Hopkins is be nice. So please, let us.

Hopkins *(Smiling)* Fine, fine. Thank you both.

Hopkins goes over to them and takes the vase. Graham goes over to his bowl and picks it up. Miller goes back over to his vase and picks it up carefully.

Not bad.

Graham We did all right didn't we?

Miller A good first lesson I think

Pause

Hopkins Who's is the most successful then?

They laugh.

Graham No competition really. I mean, mine's the best for fruit.

Miller Mine has the best design.

Hopkins And mine was made with the most care. First time someone's done that for me in a long time. Thank you both.

Graham/Miller You're welcome.

Hopkins leaves SL.

Miller Yes. No point in waiting for the teacher now. We've become the masters ourselves. Nice to meet you.

Graham You too.

Miller leaves SL. Graham stands there with his bowl, smiles. And lifts it up.

Better than I thought.

Graham then throws the clay bowl down onto the floor and it splodges into the ground. He looks at for a moment and then smiles – he's enjoyed himself at last.

Right.

Graham leaves SL.

- End -