



Bumpy Angels

Written by Sue Rider

Coral

I didn't know I was black til four years ago. Can you believe that?

(Silence)

I was brought up spotless white. Oh, I had the kindest foster-parents. Taught me all about standards. Good school, piano lessons, ballet. They were great, my mum and dad. I knew I was darker, but I thought maybe Greek, Indian eve, something exotic? Mum and Dad never said a thing. But at school, something was changing. I got left out of groups. I was the last to be picked on a team. Wherever I went there were whispers, words I could only half hear. I thought it was because I was fat. I used to bounce when I was running. You know, boing, boing, boing. But that wasn't what they were saying. One day I caught them writing on one of my books. 'You dirty boong'.

(Pause)

Well, it hurt, but do you know what? At last it was honest. At least they made me see what I was.

(Pause)

You're all so nice, I can't stand it. You're all so *terribly* nice. Pretending not to notice, careful what you say, keeping up standards. But I know what you're thinking. You can't believe it when I know things you don't. How could *she* know that?

Look at my skin. It's coloured, see? Black. *(the others don't know how to cope)* Oh, does that shock you? Have I shocked you, Sister? Martha's shocked, aren't you, Martha? With your missionary zeal and raging guilt and standards. Even Mildred, honest, outspoken Mildred. Even you can't look me in the eye and say I'm black. And Felicity-bloody-Elizabeth, nose in the air, plum in the voice. Well, the pretending's over, everyone. So don't come the I'm-better-than-you-are bit. We're all here together, having babies where the world can't see us, and when it's over we'll all go away pretending it didn't happen. Black, white, slut, beauty queen. The only difference is, none of you seem to want your men and I love Tom and they won't let me have him or his baby. Bloody standards. *(Beginning to break down)* Leave me alone, the lot of you!