

# LIKE LEGO BRICKS

by C.T. McBain

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# Like Lego Bricks

A play by C. T. McBain

## Characters

Neil Hanson	<i>mid-late 30s</i>
Chris McKay	<i>the same age</i>
Radio DJ	<i>voice only</i>

## Setting

*The play is set exclusively in an abandoned warehouse somewhere in the UK in the present day.*

## Running Time

*Around 30 minutes.*

## Synopsis

*Two old school mates - now adults - meet in an abandoned warehouse whilst separately on the run from the law for different crimes. They reminisce about their time in school together and their love/hate relationship over the years. They reflect on their experiences and whether it was worth sticking together back then and right now, despite their differences.*

## Other info

*This play was previously published by New Theatre Publications in 2010, which has now ceased trading. It has never been produced nor has it won any awards.*

*(An abandoned warehouse. There are rubbish and boxes everywhere, one of which contains a large heap of Lego bricks USC. There is an old radio DSR, which still works. An old-fashioned typewriter is USR. There are two wooden chairs CSR and DSL.)*

*(CHRIS rushes in L, breathless. He takes a few moments to catch his breath. He then begins wandering around the warehouse with a certain amount of distress. He walks over to the radio DSR and tries to turn it on but gets an electric shock. He yelps in pain.)*

**CHRIS:** Damn it! Stupid thing! *(Walks over to the box of Lego bricks USC and picks up a handful of pieces.)* Why do every single building in Britain have Lego bricks in them? *(Looks around the warehouse, still in some distress. Goes back to the radio and starts fiddling with the radio until some sound comes out of it. Eventually he tunes it onto a station.)*

**RADIO DJ:** Well, that was the dulcet tones of Carol Decker we just heard with that haunting melody, 'China In Your Hand'. What a song, eh? Yeah, I don't like it either. Anywho, let's continue with harking back to the days of mullets, micros, the poll tax and red, black and chrome apartments. Those were the days. Yeah, I hated them too. You're listening to Oldies Hour, playing songs from the last forty years.

**CHRIS:** Oldies Hour? 80s songs aren't 'oldies'.

**RADIO DJ:** And coming next is this delightfully decent song by Shakin' Stevens. Let's see if any of you cronies remember this one.

*(‘This Ole House’ by Shakin’ Stevens comes on the radio.)*

**CHRIS:** 'Cronies'? You're playing songs from the 80s and you're calling us 'cronies'? Fascist! *(Looks around, walks over to the typewriter USR and begins typing some of the keys. Then gets his finger caught between the keys and struggles it out while yelping in pain again)* Christ! *(Rubs his finger then goes over to the chair CSR, sits and buries his head in his hands.)*

*(After a pause, NEIL rushes in L, breathless. He takes a few moments to get his breath back. Once he regains some of it, he notices the radio playing. He looks around the warehouse pensively but initially doesn't notice CHRIS. Suddenly, the sound of a police siren is heard approaching outside. NEIL suddenly perks up and listen out L; after a few moments, the police siren fades into the distance. NEIL relaxes. He looks around some more and walks slowly towards the radio.)*

**NEIL:** Hello? *(Notices CHRIS. Walks slowly towards him)* Hello? *(Slightly louder)* Oi!

*(CHRIS looks up and notices NEIL. They stare at each other.)*

**RADIO DJ:** Well that was fun, wasn't it? Yeah, I disagree too. Anywho, let's continue our stroll down memory lane, amble down recollection street and even a little jog down reminiscence avenue with a classic by Michael Jackson. He wasn't just a pretty face, was he?

*(‘Somebody's Watching Me’ by Michael Jackson comes on. NEIL then walks over to CHRIS and punches him in the face. CHRIS stumbles to the floor.)*

**CHRIS:** *(Looks at NEIL while clutching the side of his face.)* Hey, what the hell??

**NEIL:** What's wrong? Can't take it?

**CHRIS:** You just punched me in the face for no apparent reason!

**NEIL:** Just checking your balance.

**CHRIS:** Oh, piss off!

**NEIL:** Oh I will, all right. All over you.

*(CHRIS Glares at NEIL.)*

What? You can't take it? Are you gonna turn the radio off?

**CHRIS:** *(Sighs.)* I bet you've broken my jaw. *(Still rubbing the side of his face, goes over to the radio and tries to switch it off but gets another electric shock.)* Ow!

**NEIL:** Hah. That was a good trick. Do it again.

**CHRIS:** No I will not do it again! I don't fancy dying of heart failure. It'd be the first interesting thing to happen to me while, though.

**NEIL:** Eh?

**CHRIS:** Nothing. You didn't answer my question. What did you just punch me for? Are you psychotic or something?

**NEIL:** Naw, I'm not psychotic. I just remember things. Like you, for example.

**CHRIS:** *(Looks at NEIL.)* Well, I don't remember you. Maybe it's your imagination.

**NEIL:** It's not my imagination. It's you that has the imagination.

**CHRIS:** I'm not the kind of person who imagines things.

**NEIL:** Really? Cos I imagine yer a snotty wee shit.

**CHRIS:** Hey!

**NEIL:** All right, all right, keep your hair on, mister uptight.

**CHRIS:** No, no it's all right. It's just that I don't like being called names like that, whether it's a joke or whatever.

**NEIL:** Hmm. *(Looks closely at CHRIS.)* You remind me of someone. Someone I knew once.

**CHRIS:** Who?

**NEIL:** Oh, I don't know. Can you?

**CHRIS:** How can you know of someone you can't remember?

**NEIL:** Don't tell me you've still got one of *those* kinds of personalities.

**CHRIS:** What kind of personalities?

**NEIL:** One of *those* kinds of personalities.

**CHRIS:** What the hell do you mean, 'one of *those* kinds of personalities'?

**NEIL:** You know what I mean. One of those nit-picky personalities. One of those picking-the-nits-off-the-nits personalities. I hate people like that. People who have to be perfect and who point out every single imperfection of others. He who does everything by the book, and may the good Lord above pity all those who go against it, even for a second.

**CHRIS:** What are you talking about?

**NEIL:** You're a nippy wee arse!

**CHRIS:** Oh shut up.

**NEIL:** See? You can't take it.

*(CHRIS turns away.)*

**CHRIS:** Look, I don't know that you're on about but I have never met you before and I certainly don't recognise you. So what are you doing in this warehouse in the first place?

**NEIL:** That's my business. What are *you* doing in this warehouse in the first place?

**CHRIS:** That's my business.

**NEIL:** Jesus. *(After a moment's thought)* Well, I'm here because I'm hiding from the dreaded Lord Badperson and I must escape from his clutches or I'll be brought to his evil lair and be forced to look at his holiday photos.

**CHRIS:** *(Unimpressed)* That's not really what you're hiding here for.

**NEIL:** Oh, you'd be surprised. Lord Badperson is a cunning bugger. *(Stares at CHRIS.)* Aw c'mon, will you lighten up? I mean, do you never have time for a laugh?

**CHRIS:** I have time for a laugh. I just don't appreciate crass humour that's only funny because it has swearing in it. *(Half to himself)* Unless I use the radio. *(Looks suspiciously at the radio.)*

**NEIL:** I'm here because I'm hiding from some folk. It's complicated. Basically, I'm staying here until they go away. What are you doing here?

**CHRIS:** *(Sighs.)* Oh, I suppose I'm here to contemplate, think about where I'm going.

**NEIL:** Why, are you lost? I've got an A to Z map at home.

**CHRIS:** No, that's not what I mean. I'm here to think about where my life is going.

**NEIL:** *(Without much interest)* Oh.

**CHRIS:** I mean, I've got a good job and all. Well, a decent job. It pays the bills. It's just that I want to do something more, better than what I've got now, whatever that is. I just don't know.

*(Short pause.)*

**NEIL:** Which primary school did you go to?

**CHRIS:** Why?

**NEIL:** Is your name Chris? Chris McKay?

**CHRIS:** *(Beat.)* Yes. How did you know that?

**NEIL:** We were at primary school together. I'm Neil Hanson. Remember *now*?

**CHRIS:** *(Looks at NEIL.)* Neil? Oh, right.

**NEIL:** What's wrong? Don't you recognise me?

**CHRIS:** I do now.

*(They look at each other. Pause.)*

**NEIL:** You whacked me in *[primary seven/year six]*. That's why I punched you.

**CHRIS:** Oh. Sorry.

**NEIL:** *(Short pause.)* So how long has it been? 'Bout twenty years, twenty-five years?

**CHRIS:** Probably.

**NEIL:** We went back a long way, didn't we? Meeting during lunch break and chatting to each other. We were great mates, weren't we? You and me?

**CHRIS:** *(Looks at NEIL.)* No we weren't. As I remember it, we were always fighting in the playground. There were times where we didn't chat at all.

**NEIL:** Okay, so we didn't get on all the time. But usually we were okay.

**CHRIS:** Usually? You were always taking the mick out of me and treating me like a piece of dirt, rather than care about any kind of friendship we ever had.

**NEIL:** Rubbish! I never treated you like dirt, you big bloody fairy.

*(CHRIS stares at NEIL.)*

I'm joking, I'm joking! Listen, the way I remember it, we first met in *[primary one/reception class]*. I think. *(Goes over to the radio.)* I was running about the playground and you were sitting on the ground doing nothing - as usual.

*(NEIL switches the radio on to 'Notorious' by Duran Duran, then exits R as CHRIS sits on the ground DSR. Flashback to primary one: NEIL runs on with his arms outstretched and making airplane noises then exits L. He runs back on, doing the same thing, and runs off R. He runs back on and then crashes into CHRIS before falling to the floor.)*

**NEIL:** Hey, watch where yer going!

*(CHRIS starts crying.)*

What's wrong?

**CHRIS:** *(Between sobs)* You crashed into me!

**NEIL:** All right, all right. *(Gets up.)* Only asking.

**CHRIS:** Well don't!

*(NEIL gives CHRIS a look of indifference and switches the radio off. He sits down next to him.)*

**NEIL:** What's your name?

**CHRIS:** Chris.

**NEIL:** I'm Neil.

**CHRIS:** Hi.

**NEIL:** Sorry for knocking into you. What you doing?

**CHRIS:** I'm thinking.

**NEIL:** Thinking's no fun. You do that in class, not outside.

**CHRIS:** I like thinking. It's better than talking' to people.

**NEIL:** Wanna play airplanes with me?

**CHRIS:** I dunno.

**NEIL:** C'mon, chase me. *(Gets up and runs off R with his arms outstretched and making airplane noises.)*

**CHRIS:** Wait! How do you play? What am I meant to do? *(Gets up and runs off R.)*

*(After a moment, CHRIS re-enters R after NEIL in the present day.)*

**NEIL:** That's what happened, as far as I recall.

**CHRIS:** Didn't you call me names when I started crying?

**NEIL:** I don't think so. Nah, I'm pretty sure I didn't.

**CHRIS:** I'm sure you did. I'm sure you called me a crybaby.

**NEIL:** I did not call you a crybaby. I might've called you a boring old fart for sitting down in the playground just thinking'.

**CHRIS:** How could I be a boring old fart if I was five years old?

**NEIL:** How could you not be a boring auld fart if you ask questions like that?

*(Short pause.)*

**CHRIS:** I thought you were very aggressive when we first met.

**NEIL:** Aggressive? I was just being a kid, that's all. So what if I was aggressive? We played with each other didn't we?

**CHRIS:** Not much.

**NEIL:** Yeah we did. We played together for years after that.

**CHRIS:** Well, maybe later on but we definitely didn't play with each other a lot to start with.

**NEIL:** Whatever.

*(Flashback to [primary two/year one]: NEIL produces a bag of marbles from his pocket and they both sit DSC. NEIL pours the marbles on the floor.)*

**CHRIS:** I've never played marbles before.

**NEIL:** You've never played marbles before? *(Plays a marble.)*

**CHRIS:** Nope. I've never played marbles before.

**NEIL:** What, you've never played marbles before?

**CHRIS:** *(Looks at NEIL.)* I've never played marbles before. *(Plays a marble.)*

**NEIL:** You've never played marbles before?

*(CHRIS stares at NEIL.)*

All right. Calm down. *(Plays a marble.)*

**CHRIS:** No, I've never played marbles in my life. *(Plays a marble.)*

**NEIL:** That's bad, Chris. This is the best game I've ever played.

*(CHRIS plays a marble but miscalculates and it rolls off the performance space, either off one of the wings or off the front.)*

**NEIL:** Ha. You're losing your marbles!

**CHRIS:** Very funny.

**NEIL:** Yes, it is, isn't it? *(Laughs. NEIL plays a marble.)* C'mon. Your turn.

*(CHRIS plays a marble but miscalculates again and it rolls off the performance space.)*

**NEIL:** See? You've lost your marbles! *(Laughs.)*

**CHRIS:** Shut up. It's not funny.

**NEIL:** C'mon pal, it's just a joke. *(Looks off R.)* Listen, there's the bell. You coming or what? *(Collects the marbles, jumps up and runs off R.)*

**CHRIS:** I didn't hear the bell. Wait for me!

*(CHRIS collects any remaining marbles left and runs after NEIL off R. After a moment, they re-enter in the present day.)*

**NEIL:** Yeah, we got on much better then.

**CHRIS:** No we didn't. You kept making fun of me.

**NEIL:** No I wasn't. I told you, we were just being kids. That's what kids do. They don't really mean it, they're having fun. Don't you remember fun?

**CHRIS:** I remember fun. Obviously I consider different things as 'fun' as you do. Maybe that's why we didn't get on.



**NEIL:** Well, I wouldn't say we didn't get on. I mean, we did.

**CHRIS:** Just.

**NEIL:** *(Sighs)* What about that school disco we went to in, when was it, **[primary four/year three]** or something? *(Goes to the radio)* We got on perfectly well then. We helped each other out.

**CHRIS:** I've no idea what you're talking about.

**NEIL:** Let me remind you. *(NEIL switches the radio on to 'Big Fun' by Inner City before exiting R. Flashback to primary three: CHRIS walks over and sits on the chair DSL. He looks at the floor, dejected. After a short pause, NEIL enters R.)*

**NEIL:** Hey Chris!

*(CHRIS does not move. NEIL switches the radio off and walks over to him.)*

Great party, eh? Did you see what happened? My date's gone off with someone else. She said he was better looking than me so I said, 'fine. I'd rather be by myself than be with you. You smell yucky anyway.' *(Looks at CHRIS.)* What's wrong with you?

**CHRIS:** My partner hasn't turned up.

**NEIL:** What? You asked a girl to come to the disco with you? You mental or something?

**CHRIS:** *(Looks at NEIL.)* No, I was hoping she would come she's not here.

**NEIL:** Just as well, eh?

**CHRIS:** I was looking forward to coming here with someone.

**NEIL:** Listen, you cheer up right now before I belt you. You don't need girls. It's not right to like girls. It's not natural. It should be against the law to like girls.

**CHRIS:** You don't understand.

**NEIL:** I understand that I don't like girls.

*(CHRIS gets up and storms off R.)*

Chris!

*(NEIL exits R. They re-enter in the present day.)*

**CHRIS:** I do not remember that happening.

**NEIL:** Well it did.

**CHRIS:** I mean, that was not how it happened.

**NEIL:** So how did it happen?

**CHRIS:** *(Hesitant)* Not like that.

**NEIL:** I don't know what your problem is, but that's how it happened. You were always uptight and taking things too personally. That's always been your trouble. *(Goes to the typewriter and starts playing with it.)*

**CHRIS:** That's not my fault. I'm just a caring person. It was your lack of sympathy that put me down. Why could you not be more considerate for other people's feelings?

**NEIL:** Are there any paper round here?

**CHRIS:** I dunno. You might have to look around. Anyway, what I'm saying is...

**NEIL:** *(Points R)* Go check over there, would you?

**CHRIS:** Sure. *(Walks USR then stops.)* Neil!

**NEIL:** What, you found some?

**CHRIS:** Will you listen to me?

**NEIL:** Why, what're ye saying?

**CHRIS:** *(Sighs.)* What I'm saying is, why couldn't you be more considerate for other people's feelings?

**NEIL:** Look, it's not in my nature to be thinking like that. It's a waste of time. To be honest, I couldn't give a shit about other people's feelings.

**CHRIS:** Then why did ye give a shit about me then?

**NEIL:** *(Stares at CHRIS then looks away.)* I was young. I didn't know any different.

**CHRIS:** And why are you talking to me now and 'harking back to the good old days' stuff?

**NEIL:** *(Short pause)* I always thought you were too smart for your own good. Maybe all that time sitting in the playground thinking wasn't a waste of time after all. Look, I'm sorry for not showing more appreciation for your feelings, Chris.

**CHRIS:** Oh, it's alright. Maybe I am too sensitive, never mind smart.

*(Suddenly, the sound of a police siren is heard approaching outside. NEIL and CHRIS move US to listen out. After a few moments, the police siren fades into the distance. They relax and look at each other.)*

**NEIL:** I take it we're both in trouble.

**CHRIS:** How do you mean? *(Walks down to about CS.)*

**NEIL:** *(Follows him)* What are you really hiding in this warehouse for?

**CHRIS:** What are *you* hiding in this warehouse for?

**NEIL:** Don't start all that again. *(Looks at CHRIS for a moment.)* If you must know, I'm hiding from the coppers.

**CHRIS:** What?