

BURYING YOUR BROTHER IN THE PAVEMENT (EXTRACT 2)

Jack Thorne

TOM:

I wanted him to like me. And I knew he didn't – I knew he wouldn't – because I wasn't cool like him. I mean, even using the word 'cool' is probably uncool – I mean, I'm probably saying it all wrong or using it in totally the wrong way. I don't know.

There was this big marble competition – the Marble Wars of 2003 we called it – about three months after I'd joined Luke's class.

And three months in a nine-year-old's mind is like unbelievably long. I'd totally settled in by then - which means I'd been rejected by all the popular people and started musing with Martin about the kingdom we'd rule called 'Computer Club'. And we were far too old for marbles, everyone who took part I mean, nine-year-olds, ten-year-olds playing marbles – what is this, 1950? I mean, literally some kids played with a fag in their mouth and a knife in their pocket.

Still – somehow marbles became important and me and Martin, we practised loads and we won and kept on winning – shooting through the rounds - until we got paired together in the semi, and Martin said -

'No, this is totally ace, it means a member of the, Computer Club is guaranteed a place, a grand final. It's like two English clubs pairing each other in the Champions League semi-finals. It's perfect

Neither of us know much about football. Oh, and he didn't speak to me for a week when he lost. And then suddenly it was the final - and I was in it.