

CHARACTER DETAILS (before casting) discussion Emily – Ate 22 jan 2015

BERLINER FAMILY – their overall trauma is WWII

DAVIES FAMILY – their overall trauma is death Ron (and Llion as outsider)

GEORGE

Lived his entire life in Wales, all his (male) family members worked in the steel mill. He was satisfied with his life, didn't complain.

Perhaps not the leader of the pack, but he was part of the community, played in the steel mill brass band, had friends, went to the pub.

Ron, his oldest son, was his pride and glory. When Ron died George's life collapsed.

deepest thought – how did I fail Ron

shows secrets via – silence / depression (undiagnosed)

dream -- possibly Arthur to become Ron

change -- death

future -- none

SARA

When young she once followed her passion, fell in love with a dark skinned man, got pregnant. He left her, disappeared.

After a few years, raising Llion alone, she met George. Married him --out of necessity and convenience, not love—and moved with him to Wales

Sara is an enabler.

She wants/thinks Vida to live with Arthur two doors down, so she can take care of the grandchildren

She wants Arthur to stay, after death George, as he is the only one left to take care of

deepest thought – What If / what if she had followed her passion in life?

shows secrets via – caring for others / her functionality

dream -- wants to be liked

change -- as she loses all (two husbands, a son) she becomes more sociable, she has to choose for herself (be selfish) or she may become a recluse

future -- Life gets value by what you do, not by what you wish you would or could have done. She accepts: You are what you are.

LEVI

He has a Polish Jewish back ground, his parents were poor emigrants who came to the UK just before WWII.

He became a GP, never a medical specialist which in a way is seen as a failure

He married up - Ethel brings in wealth and prestige – inherited via her family

Levi has humanity, he can accept things even if he doesn't like them

He does not want a divorce, does not want to loose his children, therefore turns a blind eye to Ethel's behavior

deepest thought – feels not worthy

shows secrets via – calmness

dream -- to be truly loved, receive kindness (not only giving it)

change -- he actually doesn't change

future -- to live a breath at a time

ETHEL

She's from rich European Jewish background. Parents survived camp playing violin.

She has a typical second generation WWII syndrome

Her parents felt meaningless after the war which made her feel not valuable

Ethel is dismissive of Levi's qualities

She hides her feelings behind a facade of sarcastic humour

She pretends; expensive dinners are important, perfect children, ambition

deepest thought – her fear: life is not perfect, she's afraid others will see this truth in her

shows secrets via – hedonism and sarcasm

dream -- would like to be 'normal' and not overbearing. She knows she is overbearing but can't change it.

change -- death

future -- none

EMILY

Fell in love with an Irish man working in Wales steel mills. He drank a lot and never felt accepted, moved back to Ireland. She followed him.

She is the opposite of everything we know to be right.

She is extremely accepting, never apologizes (has no inner need to do that)

She has no children. Both she and her husband live on welfare benefits

deepest thought – Why do I live in a bubble

shows secrets via – never questions anything (is a type of acceptance)

dream -- wants to go back in the bubble -- not beat alcoholism but embrace it because it shows more love than fighting it

change -- accepts the bubble (and accepts being a social outcast)

future -- lives without guilt

ADAM

He became a psychiatrist because it made him a medical specialist (better than his father, and his mother approves) but mainly to understand himself

He makes self effacing jokes all the time. He can't oppose his mother as she is too dominating, which prevents him from being what he wants to be

deepest thought – I want to be who I am

shows secrets via – always laughing, making funny, witty, remarks (not sarcastic)

dream -- to be able to be who he is

change -- comes out of the closet

future -- he will be more proud of himself

BRENDA

Youngest in the family. Feels no-one sees her qualities. She thinks she can be successful, but always fails in what she does, always blames others. She works as a cleaning lady in the steel mills. Married very young, hunky guy who quickly became a rugby loving, beer drinking man. Her ambition is to open a nail salon. She's quite defensive if someone questions her (creative) abilities.

When she was young Llion hit her regularly. She felt unprotected except by Arthur.

deepest thought – I am not dumb

shows secrets via – She wants to be heard, is a loudmouth

dream -- She wants to prove her value in a creative way; nails
change -- quits her job to start her own business
future -- Most likely she will fail in her business.

HELEN

Youngest in the family, super smart.
She controls the mood in the room by always looking for controversy
She knows she was conceived to 're-populate' the loss of so many Jews
She has a malicious streak, she can afford to be like that as it has no repercussions.
She can do no harm, but also no good and that frustrates her

deepest thought – why me?

shows secrets via – always disagrees / confrontational

dream -- she wants normality like other girls her age, stupidity almost, but knows her smartness stands in the way

change -- opts for something unusual, not normal, enlists in the Israeli army
-- you can't be normal and make a difference

future -- let life happen as it unfolds and probably embraces tradition which she so much detested as a teenager

LLION

The elephant in the room.
Never knew his father. Overprotected by his mother.
Knows he is unwanted in the Davies family. Also not accepted in Wales society.
Because he stands out—physically—he fights back as a street fighter / aggressive
He takes it out on weaker people like Brenda (when she was small) or gays, or women

deepest thought – entitlement

shows secrets via – aggression / hate

dream -- wants to be the 'good' half, not the bad half as everyone sees him

change -- becomes a uniform and acquires authority

future -- legal domination of the people he despises

ARTHUR

He's vulnerable and self effacing. He can't imagine he will ever change, until he meets Vida. He never experienced meaning anything to anyone until he meets her, and has at first a hard time accepting that.

Vida is his ticket out of Wales, but Ron (the emotional legacy his parents have towards him) pulls him back. He feels he can't change his circumstances. And he believes it is smarter to understand than being understood. Things don't matter – life is what it is.

Arthur is not a wimp, not a coward who goes along with everything. One of his great qualities – much admired by Vida—he has no fear of failure at all. He's ballsy, not afraid, but at the same time has no desire to succeed, no specific ambition (when he was young nothing really mattered and that squashed his ambition)

He can't take compliments, if someone loves you that is the ultimate compliment.

deepest thought – nothing will ever change

shows secrets via – he lives in the moment, has no future stress

dream -- choose emotion above responsibility

change -- he allows Vida to love him

future -- follows his creative impulses

VIDA

She's very honest in ethical ways, but she's not honest about herself (she lives a life that others want her to live, particularly her mother)

She carries a touch of mystery. She's funny (witty), energetic, sure of herself and that's intoxicating for others. She has class.

Arthur has to free her from living the life others want her to live. She hides her true self behind impulses and fun. She tries to make Arthur like her, which is wrong. She can be pushy but is not bitchy. She's a fixer, fixes problems for others. When she gives up music she starts studying medicine, as doctors are also fixers.

She wants reactions from Arthur, as her father does not react to her mother's insults. She wants to be free, open, passionate and he has to say I Love You because that's real, but she wouldn't marry. She's attracted to Arthur's harmony, which she lacks.

deepest thought – I'm good, not great

shows secrets via – energy and directness.

dream -- wants to lose the emotional weight, but as long as her mother is around she can't shift it.

change -- accepts she isn't great and she's ok with that, forgives herself

future -- She's herself, instead of what others want her to be. Matures.