

CAST
(in order of appearance)

ACT I

Clive JEFFREY JONES
Betty ZELJKO IVANEK
Joshua DON AMENDOLIA
Edward CONCETTA TOMEI
Victoria AS HERSELF
Maud VERONICA CASTANG
Ellen/Mrs. Saunders E. KATHERINE KERR
Harry Bagley NICOLAS SUROVY

ACT II

Betty E. KATHERINE KERR
Edward JEFFREY JONES
Victoria CONCETTA TOMEI
Martin NICOLAS SUROVY
Lin VERONICA CASTANG
Cathy DON AMENDOLIA
Gerry ZELJKO IVANEK

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made at the time of the performance.

Understudy for Men: Michael Morris, Martin Shakar
Understudy for Women: Barbara Berge

ACT I

Africa, 1880

ACT II

London, 1980

... but for the characters it is only 25 years later.

THERE WILL BE ONE TEN-MINUTE INTERMISSION

CLOUD NINE

ACT I

Scene 1

(*Low bright sun, Verandah, Flagpole with Union Jack, The Family—CLIVE, BETTY, EDWARD, VICTORIA, MAUD, ELLEN, JOSHUA.*)

ALL. (Sung)

Come gather, sons of England, come gather in
your pride,
Now meet the world united, now face it side
by side:

Ye who the earth's wide corners from veldt to
prairie roam
From bush and jungle muster all
Who call old England 'home'.

Then gather round for England.

Rally to the flag.

From North and South and East and West

Come one and all for England!

CLIVE.

This is my family, though far from home

We serve the queen wherever we may roam,
I am a father to the natives here.
And father to my family so dear,

(HE presents BETTY, SHE is played by a man)

My wife is all I dreamt a wife should be,
And everything she is she owes to me,
BETTY.

I live for Clive, the whole aim of my life
Is to be what he looks for in a wife,
And what men want is what I want to be.

(CLIVE presents JOSHUA, HE is played by a white)

CLIVE.

My boy's a jewel, really has the knack.
You'd hardly notice that the fellow's black.

JOSHUA.

My skin is black but oh my soul is white.
I hate my tribe. My master is my light.
I only live for him. As you can see,
What white men want is what I want to be.

(CLIVE presents EDWARD, HE is played by a woman)

CLIVE.

My son is young, I'm doing all I can
To teach him to grow up to be a man.

EDWARD.

What father wants I'd dearly like to be,
I find it rather hard as you can see,

(CLIVE presents VICTORIA, who is a dummy. MAUD
and ELLEN)

CLIVE.

No need for any speeches by the rest,
My daughter, mother-in-law, and governess.

ALL.

Then gather round for England,
Rally to the flag,
From North and South and East and West
Come one and all for England!

(ALL go except BETTY. CLIVE comes)

BETTY. Clive?

CLIVE. (BETTY.) Joshua!

(JOSHUA comes with a drink for CLIVE)

BETTY. I thought you would never come. The
day's so long without you.

CLIVE. Long ride in the bush.

BETTY. Is anything wrong? I heard drums.

CLIVE. Nothing serious. Beauty is a damned good
mare. I must get some new boots sent from home.
These ones have never been right. I have a blister.

BETTY. My poor dear foot.

CLIVE. It's nothing.

BETTY. Oh but it's sore.

CLIVE. We are not in this country to enjoy our-
selves. Must have ridden fifty miles. Spoke to three
different headmen who would all gladly chop off

each other's heads and wear them round their waists.

BETTY. Clive!

CLIVE. Don't be squeamish, Betty, let me have my joke. And what has my little dove done today?

BETTY. I've read a little.

CLIVE. Good. Is it good?

BETTY. It's poetry.

CLIVE. You're so delicate and sensitive.

BETTY. And I played the piano. Shall I send for the children?

CLIVE. Yes, in a minute. I've a piece of news for you.

BETTY. Good news?

CLIVE. You'll certainly think it's good. A visitor.

BETTY. From home?

CLIVE. No. Well of course originally from home.

BETTY. Man or women?

CLIVE. Man.

BETTY. I can't imagine.

CLIVE. Something of an explorer. Bit of a poet. Odd chap but brave as a lion. And a great admirer of yours.

BETTY. What do you mean? Whoever can it be?

CLIVE. With an H and a B. And does conjuring tricks for little Edward.

BETTY. That sounds like Mr. Bagley.

CLIVE. Harry Bagley.

BETTY. He certainly doesn't admire me, Clive, what a thing to say. How could I possibly guess from that. He's hardly explored anything at all, he's just been up a river. You should have said a heavy drinker and a bit of a bore.

CLIVE. But you like him well enough. You don't mind him coming?

BETTY. Anyone at all to break the monotony.

CLIVE. But you have your mother. You have Ellen.

BETTY. Ellen is a governess. My mother is my mother.

CLIVE. I hoped when she came to visit she would be company for you.

BETTY. I don't think mother is on a visit. I think she lives with us.

CLIVE. I think she does.

BETTY. Clive you are so good.

CLIVE. But are you bored my love?

BETTY. It's just that I miss you when you're away. We're not in this country to enjoy ourselves. If I lack society that is my form of service.

CLIVE. That's a brave girl. So today has been all right? No fainting? No hysteria?

BETTY. I have been very tranquil.

CLIVE. Ah what a haven of peace to come home to. The coolth, the calm, the beauty.

BETTY. There is one thing, Clive, if you don't mind.

CLIVE. What can I do for you my dear?

BETTY. It's about Joshua.

CLIVE. Joshua has been my boy for eight years. He has saved my life, I have saved his life. He is devoted to me and mine. I have said this before.

BETTY. He is rude to me. He doesn't do what I say. Speak to him.

CLIVE. Tell me what happened.

BETTY. He said something improper.

CLIVE. Well, what?

BETTY. I don't like to repeat it.

CLIVE. I must insist.

BETTY. I had left my book inside on the piano. I was in the hammock. I asked him to fetch it.

CLIVE. And? And did he not fetch it?

BETTY. Yes, he did eventually.

CLIVE. And what did he say?

BETTY. Clive—

CLIVE. Betty.

BETTY. He said fetch it yourself. You've got legs under that skirt.

CLIVE. Joshua!

(JOSHUA comes)

Joshua, madam says you spoke impolitely to her this afternoon.

JOSHUA. Sir?

CLIVE. When she asked you to pass her book from the piano.

JOSHUA. She has the book sir.

BETTY. I have the book now, but when I told you—

CLIVE. Betty, please, let me handle this. You didn't pass it at once?

JOSHUA. No, sir, I made a joke first.

CLIVE. What was that?

JOSHUA. I said my legs were tired, sir. That was funny because the book was very near, it would not make my legs tired to get it.

BETTY. That's not true.

JOSHUA. Did madam hear me wrong?

CLIVE. She heard something else.

JOSHUA. What was that, madam?

BETTY. Never mind.

CLIVE. Now, Joshua, it won't do you know. Madam doesn't like that kind of joke. You must do what Madam says, just do what she says and don't answer back. I'm very shocked, Joshua, very shocked. (CLIVE winks at JOSHUA unseen by BETTY. JOSHUA goes.) I think another drink, and send for the children, and isn't that Harry riding down the hill? Wave, wave. Just in time before dark. Cuts it fine, the blighter. Always a hothead, Harry.

BETTY. Can he see us?

CLIVE. Stand further forward. There, he waved back.

BETTY. Do you think so? I wonder what he saw. Sometimes sunset is so terrifying I can't bear to look.

CLIVE. It makes me proud. Elsewhere in the empire the sun is rising.

BETTY. Harry looks so small on the hillside.

(ELLEN comes)

ELLEN. Shall I bring the children?

BETTY. Shall Ellen bring the children?

CLIVE. Delightful.

BETTY. Yes, Ellen, make sure they're warm. The night air is deceptive. Victoria was looking pale yesterday.

CLIVE. My love.

(ELLEN goes. MAUD comes from inside the house)

MAUD. Are you warm enough Betty?

BETTY. Perfectly.

MAUD. The night air is deceptive.

BETTY. I'm quite warm. I'm too warm.

MAUD. You're not getting a fever, I hope? She's not strong, you know, Clive. I don't know how long you'll keep her in this climate.

CLIVE. I look after her majesty's domains, I think you can trust to look after my wife.

(ELLEN comes carrying VICTORIA, age 2, EDWARD aged 9, lags behind)

BETTY. Victoria, my pet, say good evening to papa.

(CLIVE takes VICTORIA on his knee)

CLIVE. There's my sweet little Vicky. What have we done today?

BETTY. She wore Ellen's hat.

CLIVE. Did she wear Ellen's big hat like a lady? What a pretty.

BETTY. And Joshua gave her a piggy back. Tell papa. Horsy with Joshy?

ELLEN. She's tired.

CLIVE. Nice Joshy played horsey. What a big strong Joshy. Did you have a gallop? Did you

make him stop and go? Not very chatty tonight are we?

BETTY. Edward, say good evening to papa.

CLIVE. Edward my boy, have you done your lessons well?

EDWARD. Yes papa.

CLIVE. Did you go riding?

EDWARD. Yes papa.

CLIVE. What's that you're holding?

BETTY. It's Victoria's doll. What are you doing with it, Edward?

EDWARD. Minding her.

BETTY. Well I should give it to Ellen quickly. You don't want papa to see you with a doll.

CLIVE. No, we had you with Victoria's doll once before, Edward.

ELLEN. He's minding it for Vicky. He's not playing with it.

BETTY. He's not playing with it, Clive. He's minding it for Vicky.

CLIVE. Ellen minds Victoria, let Ellen mind the doll.

ELLEN. Come, give it to me. (ELLEN takes the doll)

EDWARD. Don't pull her about. Vicky's very fond of her. She likes me to have her.

BETTY. He's a very good brother.

CLIVE. Yes, it's manly of you, Edward, to take care of your little sister. We'll say no more about it. Tomorrow I'll take you riding with me and Harry Bagley. Would you like that?

EDWARD. Is he here?

CLIVE. He's just arrived. There Betty, take Victoria now. I must go and welcome Harry. (CLIVE tosses VICTORIA to BETTY, who gives her to ELLEN)

EDWARD. Can I come, Papa?

BETTY. Is he warm enough?

EDWARD. Am I warm enough?

CLIVE. Never mind the women, Ned. Come and meet Harry.

(They go. The women are left. There is a long silence)

MAUD. I daresay Mr. Bagley will be out all day and we'll see nothing of him.

BETTY. He plays the piano. Surely he will sometimes stay at home with us.

MAUD. We can't expect it. The men have their duties and we have ours.

BETTY. He won't have seen a piano for a year. He lives a very rough life.

ELLEN. Will it be exciting for you, Betty?

MAUD. Whatever do you mean, Ellen?

ELLEN. We don't have very much society.

BETTY. Clive is my society.

MAUD. It's time VICTORIA went to bed.

ELLEN. She'd like to stay up and see Mr. Bagley.

MAUD. Mr. Bagley can see her tomorrow.

(ELLEN goes)

MAUD. You let that girl forget her place, Betty.

BETTY. Mother, she is governess to my son. I

know what her place is. I think my friendship does her good. She is not very happy.

MAUD. Young women are never happy.

BETTY. Mother, what a thing to say.

MAUD. Then when they're older they look back and see that comparatively speaking they were ecstatic.

BETTY. I'm perfectly happy.

MAUD. You are looking very pretty tonight. You were such a success as a young girl. You have made a most fortunate marriage. I'm sure you will be an excellent hostess to Mr. Bagley.

BETTY. I feel quite nervous at the thought of entertaining.

MAUD. I can always advise you if I'm asked.

BETTY. What a long time they're taking. I always seem to be waiting for the men.

MAUD. Betty you have to learn to be patient. I am patient. My mama was very patient.

(CLIVE approaches, supporting CAROLINE SAUNDERS)

CLIVE. It is a pleasure. It is an honour. It is positively your duty to seek my help. I would be hurt. I would be insulted by any show of independence. Your husband would have been one of my dearest friends if he had lived. Betty, look who has come, Mrs. Saunders. She has ridden here all alone, amazing spirit. What will you have? Tea or something stronger? She is overcome, Betty, you will know what to do.

(MRS. SAUNDERS sits down)

MAUD. I knew it. I heard drums. We'll be killed in our beds.

CLIVE. Now, please, calm yourself.

MAUD. I am perfectly calm. I am just outspoken. If it comes to being killed I shall take it as calmly as anyone.

CLIVE. There is no cause for alarm. Mrs. Saunders has been alone since her husband died last year, amazing spirit. Not surprisingly the strain has told. She has come to us as her nearest neighbors.

BETTY. We are not her nearest neighbors.

CLIVE. We are among her nearest neighbors and I was a dear friend of her late husband. She knows that she will find a welcome here. She will not be disappointed. She will be cared for.

MAUD. Of course we will care for her.

BETTY. Victoria is in bed. I must go and say good-night. Mother, please, you look after Mrs. Saunders.

CLIVE. Harry will be here at once.

(BETTY goes)

MAUD. How rash to go out after dark without a shawl.

CLIVE. Amazing spirit. Drink this.

MRS. S. Have you a gun? I have a gun.

CLIVE. There is no need for guns I hope. We are all friends here.

MRS. S. I think I will lie down again.

(HARRY BAGLEY and EDWARD have approached. EDWARD is holding HARRY's hand.)

MAUD. Ah, here is Mr. Bagley.

EDWARD. I gave his horse some water.

CLIVE. You don't know Mrs. Saunders, do you Harry? She has at present collapsed, but she is recovering thanks to the good offices of my wife's mother who I think you've met before. Betty will be along in a minute. Edward will go home to school shortly. He is quite a young man since you saw him.

HARRY. I hardly knew him.

MAUD. What news have you for us, Mr. Bagley?

CLIVE. Do you know Mrs. Saunders, Harry? Amazing spirit.

EDWARD. Did you hardly know me?

HARRY. Of course I knew you. I mean you have grown.

EDWARD. What do you expect?

HARRY. That's quite right, people don't get smaller.

MAUD. Edward, you should be in bed.

EDWARD. No. I'm not tired, I'm not tired am I Uncle Harry?

HARRY. I don't think he's tired.

CLIVE. He is overtired. It is past his bedtime. Say good night.

EDWARD. Goodnight, sir.

CLIVE. And to your grandmother.

EDWARD. Goodnight, grandmother.

MAUD. Shall I help Mrs. Saunders indoors? I'm afraid she may get a chill.

CLIVE. Shall I give her an arm?

MAUD. How kind of you Clive. I think I am strong enough. (MAUD helps MRS. SAUNDERS into the house)

CLIVE. Not a word to alarm the women.

HARRY. Absolutely.

CLIVE. I did some good today I think. Kept up some alliances. There's a lot of affection there.

HARRY. They're affectionate people.

CLIVE. Joshua! (*To HARRY*) I think we should sleep with guns.

HARRY. I haven't slept in a house for six months. It seems extremely safe.

(*JOSHUA comes*)

CLIVE. Joshua, you will have gathered there's being a spot of bother. You should be armed I think.

JOSHUA. There are many bad men, sir. I pray about it. Jesus will protect us.

CLIVE. He will indeed and I'll also get you a weapon. Betty, come and keep Harry company. Look in the barn, Joshua, every night.

(*CLIVE and JOSHUA go. BETTY comes*)

HARRY. I wondered where you were.

BETTY. I was singing lullabies.

HARRY. When I think of you I always think of you with Edward in your lap.

BETTY. Do you think of me sometimes then?

HARRY. You have been thought of where no white woman has ever been thought of before.

BETTY. It's one way of having adventures. I suppose I will never go in person.

HARRY. That's up to you.

BETTY. Of course it's not. I have duties.

HARRY. Are you happy, Betty?

BETTY. Where have you been?

HARRY. Built a raft and went up the river. Stayed with some people. The king is always very good to me. They have a lot of skulls around the place but not white men's I think. I made up a poem one night. If I should die in this forsaken spot, There is a loving heart without a blot Where I will live—and so on.

BETTY. When I'm near you it's like going out into the jungle. It's like going up the river on a raft. It's like going out in the dark.

HARRY. And you are safety and light and peace and home.

BETTY. But I want to be dangerous.

HARRY. Clive is my friend.

BETTY. I am your friend.

HARRY. I don't like dangerous women.

(*JOSHUA comes, unobserved*)

BETTY. Am I dangerous?

HARRY. You are rather.

BETTY. Please like me.

HARRY. I worship you.

BETTY. Please want me.

HARRY. I don't want to want you. Of course I want you.

BETTY. What are we going to do?

HARRY. I should have stayed on the river. The hell with it. (*He takes her in his arms. BETTY runs off into the house. HARRY stays where he is. He becomes aware of JOSHUA.*)

HARRY. Who's there?

JOSHUA. Only me, sir.

HARRY. Got a gun now have you?

JOSHUA. Yes sir.

HARRY. Where's Clive?

JOSHUA. Going round the boundaries sir.

HARRY. Have you checked there's nobody in the barns?

JOSHUA. Yes sir.

HARRY. Shall we go in a barn and fuck? It's not an order.

JOSHUA. That's all right, yes.

(THEY go off)

ACT I

Scene 2

An open space some distance from the house.

CLIVE. Why? Why?

MRS. SAUNDERS. Don't fuss, Clive, it makes you sweat.

CLIVE. Why ride off now? Sweat, you would sweat if you were in love with somebody as disgustingly capricious as you are. You will be shot with poisoned arrows. You will miss the picnic. Somebody will notice I came after you.

MRS. SAUNDERS. I didn't want you to come after me.

CLIVE. You will be raped by cannibals.

MRS. S. I just wanted to get out of your house.

CLIVE. My God, what women put us through, Cruel, cruel, I think you are the sort of woman who would enjoy whipping somebody. I've never met one before.

MRS. S. Clive, can I tell you something?

CLIVE. Let me tell you something first. Since you came to the house I have had an erection twenty four hours a day except for ten minutes after the time we had intercourse.

MRS. S. I don't think that's physically possible.

CLIVE. You are causing me appalling physical suffering. Is this the way to treat a benefactor?

MRS. S. Clive, when I came to your house the other night I came because I was afraid. The cook was going to let his whole tribe in through the window.

CLIVE. I know that, my poor sweet. Amazing —

MRS. S. I came to you although you are not my nearest neighbour —

CLIVE. Rather than to the old major of seventy-two.

MRS. S. Because the last time he came to visit me I had to defend myself with a shotgun and I thought you would take no for an answer.

CLIVE. But you've already answered yes.

MRS. S. I answered yes once. Sometimes I want to say no.

CLIVE. Women, my God. Look, the picnic will start, I have to go to the picnic. Please Caroline—

MRS. S. I think I will have to go back to my own house.

CLIVE. Caroline, if you were shot with poisoned arrows, do you know what I'd do? I'd fuck your dead body and poison myself. Caroline, you smell

amazing. You are dark like this continent. Mysterious, treacherous. When you rode to me through the night. When you fainted in my arms. When I came to you in your bed, when I lifted the mosquito netting, when I said let me in, let me in. Oh don't shut me out, Caroline, let me in.

(He disappears under her skirt.)

MRS. S. Please stop. I can't concentrate. I want to go home. I wish I didn't enjoy the sensation because I don't like you, Clive. I do like living in your house where there's plenty of guns. But I don't like you at all. But I do like the sensation. Well I'll have it then, I'll have it.

(VOICES are heard singing the First Noel)

MRS. S. Don't stop. Don't stop.

(CLIVE comes out from under HER skirt)

CLIVE. The Christmas picnic. I came.

MRS. S. I didn't.

CLIVE. I'm all sticky.

MRS. S. What about me?

CLIVE. All right, are you? Come on. We mustn't be found.

MRS. S. Don't go now.

CLIVE. Caroline, you are so voracious. Do let go. Tidy yourself up. There's a hair in my mouth. *(CLIVE and MRS. SAUNDERS go off. MAUD, BETTY enter, JOSHUA with a hamper.)*

MAUD. I never would have thought a guinea fowl could taste so like a turkey.

BETTY. I had to explain to the cook three times. MAUD. You did very well dear.

(JOSHUA sits apart with gun. EDWARD and HARRY with VICTORIA on his shoulders, singing The First Noel. MAUD and BETTY are unpacking the hamper. CLIVE arrives separately)

BETTY. Uncle Harry playing horsy.

CLIVE. And now the moment we have all been waiting for. *(CLIVE opens champagne. General acclaim)*

CLIVE. Oh dear, stained my trousers, never mind.

EDWARD. Can I have some?

MAUD. Oh no Edward, not for you.

CLIVE. Give him half a glass.

MAUD. If your father says so.

CLIVE. All rise please. To Her Majesty Queen Victoria, God bless her, and her husband and all her dear children.

ALL. The Queen.

HARRY. Excellent, Clive, wherever did you get it?

CLIVE. I know a chap in French Equatorial Africa.

(ELLEN arrives)

BETTY. Ellen come and play with me.

(BETTY takes a ball from the hamper and plays catch with ELLEN. Murmurs of surprise and congratulations from the men whenever they catch the ball)

EDWARD. Mama, don't play. You know you can't catch a ball.

BETTY. He's perfectly right. I can't throw either. (BETTY sits down. ELLEN has the ball)

EDWARD. Ellen, don't you play either. You're no good. You spoil it. (EDWARD takes VICTORIA from HARRY and gives HER to ELLEN. HE takes the ball and throws it to HARRY. HARRY, CLIVE and EDWARD play ball)

BETTY. Ellen come and sit with me. We'll be spectators and clap.

(EDWARD misses the ball)

CLIVE. Butterfingers.

EDWARD. I'm not.

HARRY. Throw straight now.

EDWARD. I did, I did.

CLIVE. Keep your eye on the ball.

EDWARD. You can't throw.

CLIVE. Don't be a baby.

EDWARD. I'm not, throw a hard one, throw a hard one—

CLIVE. Butterfingers. What will Uncle Harry think of you?

EDWARD. It's your fault. You can't throw. I hate you. (HE throws the ball wildly in the direction of JOSHUA)

CLIVE. Now you've lost the ball. He's lost the ball.

EDWARD. It's Joshua's fault. Joshua's butterfingers.

CLIVE. I don't think I want to play any more. Joshua, find the ball will you?

EDWARD. Yes, please play. I'll find the ball. Please play.

CLIVE. You're too silly and you can't catch. You'll be no good at cricket.

MAUD. Why don't we play hide and seek?

EDWARD. Because it's a baby game.

BETTY. You've hurt Edward's feelings.

CLIVE. A boy has no business having feelings.

HARRY. Hide and seek. I'll be it. Everybody must hide. This is base, you have to get home to base.

EDWARD. Hide and seek, yes.

HARRY. Can we persuade the ladies to join us?

MAUD. I'm playing. I love games.

BETTY. I always get found straight away.

ELLEN. Come on, Betty do. Vicky wants to play.

EDWARD. You won't find me ever.

(THEY all go except CLIVE, HARRY, JOSHUA)

HARRY. It is safe, I suppose?

CLIVE. They won't go far. This is very much my territory and it's broad daylight. Joshua will keep an open eye.

HARRY. Well I must give them a hundred. You don't know what this means to me Clive. A chap can only go on so long alone. I can climb mountains and go down rivers, but what's it for? For Christmas and England and children and women singing. This is the empire, Clive. It's not me putting a flag in new lands. It's you. The empire is one big family, I'm one of its black sheep, Clive. I know you think my life is rather dashing. But I want you

to know I admire you. This is the empire, Clive, and I serve it. With all my heart.

CLIVE. I think that's about a hundred.

HARRY. Ready or not, here I come! (HE goes)

CLIVE. Harry Bagley is a fine man, Joshua. You should be proud to know him. He will be in history books.

JOSHUA. Sir, while we are alone.

CLIVE. Joshua, of course, what is it? You always have my ear. Any time.

JOSHUA. Sir, I have some information. The stable boys are not to be trusted. They whisper. They go out at night. They visit their people. Their people are not my people. I do not visit my people.

CLIVE. Thank you, Joshua. They certainly look after Beauty. I'll be sorry to have to replace them.

JOSHUA. They carry knives.

CLIVE. Thank you, Joshua.

JOSHUA. And, sir.

CLIVE. I appreciate this, Joshua, very much.

JOSHUA. Your wife.

CLIVE. Ah, yes?

JOSHUA. She also thinks Harry Bagley is a fine man.

CLIVE. Thank you, Joshua.

JOSHUA. Are you going to hide?

CLIVE. Yes, yes I am. Thank you. Keep your eyes open Joshua.

JOSHUA. I do, sir.

(CLIVE goes. JOSHUA goes. HARRY and BETTY race back to base)

BETTY. I can't run. I can't run at all.

HARRY. There, I've caught you.

BETTY. Harry, what are we going to do?

HARRY. It's impossible, Betty.

BETTY. Shall we run away together?

(MAUD comes)

MAUD. I give up. Don't catch me. I have been stung.

HARRY. Nothing serious I hope.

MAUD. I have ointment in my bag. I always carry ointment. I shall just sit down and rest. I'm too old for all this fun. Hadn't you better be seeking, Harry?

(HARRY goes. MAUD and BETTY are alone for some time. THEY don't speak. HARRY and EDWARD race back)

EDWARD. I won, I won, you didn't catch me.

HARRY. Yes I did.

EDWARD. Mama, who was first?

BETTY. I wasn't watching. I think it was Harry.

EDWARD. It wasn't Harry. You're no good at judging. I won, didn't I grandma?

MAUD. I expect so, since it's Christmas.

EDWARD. I won, Uncle Harry, I'm better than you.

BETTY. Why don't you help Uncle Harry look for the others.

EDWARD. Shall I?

HARRY. Yes, of course.

BETTY. Run along then. He's just coming.

(EDWARD goes)

BETTY. Harry, I shall scream.

HARRY. Ready or not, here I come. (HARRY runs off)

BETTY. Why don't you go back to the house, mother, and rest your insect bite?

MAUD. Betty, my duty is here, I don't like what I see. Clive wouldn't like it Betty. I am your mother.

BETTY. Clive gives you a home because you are my mother.

(HARRY comes back)

HARRY. I can't find anyone else. I'm getting quite hot.

BETTY. Sit down a minute.

HARRY. I can't do that. I'm it. How's your sting?

MAUD. It seems to be swelling up.

BETTY. Why don't you go home and rest? Joshua will go with you. Joshua!

HARRY. I could take you back.

MAUD. That would be charming.

BETTY. You can't go. You're it.

(JOSHUA comes)

BETTY. Joshua, my mother wants to go back to the house. Will you go with her please?

JOSHUA. Sir told me I have to keep an eye.

BETTY. I am telling you to go back to the house. Then you can come back here and keep an eye.

MAUD. Thank you Betty. I know we have our little differences, but I always want what is best for you.

(JOSHUA and MAUD go)

HARRY. Don't give way. Keep calm.

BETTY. I shall kill myself.

HARRY. Betty you are a star in my sky. Without you I would have no sense of direction. I need you, and I need you where you are. I need you to be Clive's wife. I need to go up rivers and know you are sitting here thinking of me.

BETTY. I want more than that. Is that wicked of me?

HARRY. Not wicked Betty. Silly.

(EDWARD calls in the distance)

EDWARD. Uncle Harry, where are you?

BETTY. Can't we ever be alone?

HARRY. You are a mother. And a daughter. And a wife.

BETTY. I think I shall go and hide again. (BETTY goes.)

EDWARD. Uncle Harry!

HARRY. Edward!

(EDWARD comes)

EDWARD. Uncle Harry! There you are. I haven't found anyone, have you?

HARRY. I wonder where they all are.

EDWARD. Perhaps they're lost forever. Perhaps they're dead. There's trouble going on isn't there, and nobody says because of not frightening the women and children.

HARRY. Yes, that's right.

EDWARD. Do you think we'll be killed in our beds?

HARRY. Not very likely.

EDWARD. I can't sleep at night. Can you?

HARRY. I'm not used to sleeping in a house.

EDWARD. If I'm awake at night can I come and see you? I won't wake you up. I'll only come if you're awake.

HARRY. You should try to sleep.

EDWARD. I don't mind being awake because I make up adventures. Once we were on a raft going down to the rapids. We've lost the paddles because we used them to fight off the crocodiles. A crocodile comes at me and I stab it again and again and the blood is everywhere and it tips up the raft and it has you by the leg and it's biting your leg right off and I take my knife and stab it in the throat and rip open its stomach and it lets go of you but it bites my hand but it's dead. And I drag you onto the river bank and I'm almost fainting with pain and we lie there in each other's arms.

HARRY. Have I lost my leg?

EDWARD. I forgot about the leg by then.

HARRY. Hadn't we better look for the others?

EDWARD. Wait, I've got something for you. It was in mama's box but she never wears it. (EDWARD gives HARRY beads) You don't have to wear it either but you might like to look at it.

HARRY. It's beautiful. But you'll have to put it back.

EDWARD. I wanted to give it to you.

HARRY. You did. It can go back in the box. You still gave it to me. Come on now, we have to find the others.

EDWARD. Harry, I love you.

HARRY. Yes I know. I love you too.

EDWARD. You know what we did when you were here before? I want to do it again. I think about it all the time. I try to do it to myself but it's not as good. Don't you want to any more?

HARRY. I do, but it's a sin and a crime and it's also wrong.

EDWARD. But we'll do it anyway won't we?

HARRY. Yes of course.

EDWARD. I wish the others would all be killed. Take it out now and let me see it.

HARRY. No.

EDWARD. Is it big now?

HARRY. Yes.

EDWARD. Let me touch it.

HARRY. No.

EDWARD. Just hold me.

HARRY. When you can't sleep.

EDWARD. We'd better find the others then. Come on.

HARRY. Ready or not, here we come. (THEY go out with whoops and shouts. BETTY and ELLEN come)

BETTY. Ellen, I don't want to play any more.

ELLEN. Nor do I, Betty.

BETTY. Come and sit here with me. Oh, Ellen, what will become of me?

ELLEN. Betty, are you crying? Are you laughing?

BETTY. Tell me what you think of Harry Bagley.

ELLEN. He's a very fine man.

BETTY. No, Ellen, what you really think.

ELLEN. I think you think he's very handsome.

BETTY. And don't you think he is? Oh Ellen, you're so good and I'm so wicked.

ELLEN. I'm not so good as you think.

(EDWARD comes)

EDWARD. I've found you.

ELLEN. We're not hiding Edward.

EDWARD. But I found you.

ELLEN. We're not playing, Edward, now run along.

EDWARD. Come on, Ellen, do play. Come on, Mama.

ELLEN. Edward, don't pull your mama like that.

BETTY. Edward, you must do what your governess says. Go and play with Uncle Harry.

EDWARD. Uncle Harry! (EDWARD goes)

BETTY. Ellen, can you keep a secret?

ELLEN. Oh yes, yes please.

BETTY. I love Harry Bagley. I want to go away with him. There, I've said it, it's true.

ELLEN. How do you know you love him?

BETTY. I kissed him.

ELLEN. Betty.

BETTY. He held my hand like this. Oh, I want him to do it again. I want him to stroke my hair.

ELLEN. Your lovely hair. Like this, Betty? (ELLEN strokes BETTY's hair)

BETTY. I want him to put his arm around my waist.

ELLEN. Like this, Betty?

BETTY. Yes, oh I want him to kiss me again.

ELLEN. Like this, Betty? (ELLEN puts arm round BETTY's waist.)

BETTY. Ellen, whatever are you doing? It's not a joke.

ELLEN. I'm sorry, Betty. You're so pretty. Harry

Bagley doesn't deserve you. You wouldn't really go away with him?

BETTY. Oh, Ellen, you don't know what I suffer. You don't know what love is. Everyone will hate me, but it's worth it for Harry's love.

ELLEN. I don't hate you, Betty, I love you.

BETTY. Harry says we shouldn't go away. But he says he worships me.

ELLEN. I worship you Betty.

BETTY. Oh Ellen, you are my only friend.

(THEY embrace. The OTHERS have all gathered together. MAUD has rejoined the party, and JOSHUA)

CLIVE. Come along, everyone, you mustn't miss Harry's conjuring trick.

MAUD. I didn't want to spoil the fun by not being here.

(BETTY and ELLEN go to join the OTHERS)

HARRY. What is it that flies all over the world and is up my sleeve? (HARRY produces a string of union jacks from up HIS sleeve. General acclaim)

CLIVE. I think we should have some singing now. Ladies, I rely on you to lead the way.

ALL. (Sing)

Good King Wenceslas looked out

On the feast of Stephen

When the snow lay round about

Deep and crisp and even.

Brightly shone the moon that night

Though the frost was cruel

When a poor man came in sight
Gathering winter fuel.

(ALL have gone except JOSHUA. He sings)

In his Master's steps he trod
Where the snow lay dinted.
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.
Therefore Christian men be sure
Wealth or rank possessing
Ye who now do bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing.

ACT I

Scene 3

Inside the house. BETTY, MRS. SAUNDERS, MAUD with
VICTORIA. The blinds are down so the light
isn't bright though it is day outside.

MAUD. Clap hands, daddy comes, with his pockets
full of plums. All for Vicky.

(CLIVE looks in.)

CLIVE. Everything all right? Nothing to be fright-
ened of. Try not to listen. (CLIVE goes. Silence)

MRS. S. Who actually does the flogging?

MAUD. I don't think we want to imagine.

an independent
thinker

MRS. S. I imagine Joshua.

MAUD. I don't like the way you speak of it, Mrs.
Saunders.

MRS. S. How should I speak of it?

MAUD. The men will do it in the proper way. They
don't tell us what is going on among the tribes,
and I don't think it is up to us to wonder. *traditional woman*

MRS. S. I know a little of what is going on.

BETTY. Tell me what you know. Clive . . . wants to break away

MAUD. Clive knows what is happening. Clive will
know what to do. Your father always knew what
to do.

(Silence)

MRS. S. I wonder if it's over.

(EDWARD comes in)

BETTY. Shouldn't you be with the men, Edward?

EDWARD. I didn't want to see any more. They got
what they deserved. Uncle Harry said I could come
in. *tries to be tough*

MRS. S. I never allowed the servants to be beaten
in my own house. I'm going to find out what's
happening. (MRS. SAUNDERS goes out)

BETTY. Will she go and look?

MAUD. Let Mrs. Saunders be a warning to you,
Betty. She is alone in the world. You are not, thank
God. Since your father died, I know what it is
to be unprotected. Vicky is such a pretty little girl.
Clap hands daddy comes, with his pockets full of
plums. All for Vicky.

(EDWARD is playing clap hands with VICKY's doll.)

BETTY. Edward, what have you got there?

EDWARD. I'm minding her.

BETTY. Edward, I've told you before, dolls are for girls.

MAUD. Where is Ellen? She should be looking after Edward. (SHE goes to the door) Ellen! Betty, why do you let that girl mope about in her own room? That's not what she's come to Africa for.

BETTY. You must never let the boys at school know you like dolls. Never, never. You won't be on the cricket team, you won't grow up to be a man like your papa.

EDWARD. I don't want to be like papa. I hate papa.

MAUD. Edward! Edward!

BETTY. You're a horrid wicked boy and papa will beat you. Of course you don't hate him, you love him. Now give Victoria her doll at once.

EDWARD. She's not Victoria's doll, she's my doll. She doesn't love Victoria and Victoria doesn't love her. Victoria never even plays with her.

MAUD. Victoria will learn to play with her.

EDWARD. She's mine and she loves me and she won't be happy if you take her away, she'll cry, she'll cry, she'll cry.

(BETTY takes the doll away, slaps him, bursts into tears. ELLEN comes in)

BETTY. Ellen, look what you've done. Edward's had the doll again. Now, Ellen will you please do your job.

ELLEN. Edward, you are a wicked boy. I am going to lock you in the nursery until suppertime. Now go upstairs this minute. (SHE slaps EDWARD, who bursts into tears and goes out) I do try to do what you want. I'm so sorry. (ELLEN bursts into tears and goes out)

MAUD. There now, Vicky's got her baby back. Where did Vicky's naughty baby go? Shall we smack her? Just a little smack? There, now she's a good baby. Clap hands daddy comes with his pockets full of plums. All for Vicky's baby. When I was a child we honoured our parents. My mama was an angel.

(JOSHUA comes in. HE stands without speaking)

BETTY. Joshua?

JOSHUA. Madam?

BETTY. Did you want something?

JOSHUA. Sent to see the ladies are all right, Madam.

(MRS. SAUNDERS comes in)

MRS. S. We're very well thank you Joshua, and how are you?

JOSHUA. Very well thank you Mrs. Saunders.

MRS. S. And the stable boys?

JOSHUA. They have had justice, Madam.

MRS. S. So I saw. And does your arm ache?

MAUD. This is not a proper conversation, Mrs. Saunders.

(HARRY and CLIVE come in)

CLIVE. Well this is all very gloomy and solemn. Can we have the shutters open? The heat of the day has gone, we could have some light, I think. And cool drinks in the gazebo, Joshua. Have some lemonade yourself. It is most refreshing.

(Sunlight floods in as the shutters are opened. EDWARD comes)

EDWARD. Papa, papa, Ellen tried to lock me in the nursery. Mama is going to tell you of me. I'd rather tell you myself. I was playing with Vicky's doll again and I know it's very bad of me. And I said I didn't want to be like you and I said I hated you. And it's not true and I'm sorry, and please beat me and forgive me.

CLIVE. Well there's a brave boy to own up. You should always respect me and love me, Edward. Through our father we love our Queen and our God, do you understand? It is a thing men understand.

EDWARD. Yes papa.

CLIVE. Then I forgive you and shake you by the hand. You spend too much time with the women. You may spend more time with me and Uncle Harry, little man.

EDWARD. I don't like women. I don't like dolls.

I love you, Papa, and I love you, Uncle Harry.

CLIVE. There's a fine fellow. Let us go out onto the gazebo.

(THEY ALL start to go. EDWARD takes HARRY'S hand and goes with him. CLIVE draws BETTY back.)

last for Harry

BETTY. Poor Clive.

CLIVE. It was my duty to have them flogged. For you and Edward and Victoria, to keep you safe.

BETTY. It is terrible to feel betrayed.

CLIVE. I sometimes feel this whole continent is my enemy. I am pitching my whole mind and will and reason and spirit against it to tame it, and it will break over me and swallow me up.

BETTY. Clive, Clive, I am here. I have faith in you.

CLIVE. Yes, I can show you my moments of weakness, Betty, because you are my wife and because I trust you. I trust you, Betty, and it would break my heart if you did not deserve that trust. Harry Bagley is my friend. It would break my heart if he did not deserve my trust.

BETTY. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Forgive me. It is not Harry's fault, it is all mine. There is something so wicked in me Clive.

CLIVE. I have never thought of you having the weakness of your sex, only the good qualities.

BETTY. I am bad, bad, bad.

CLIVE. You are thoughtless, Betty, that's all. Women can be treacherous and evil. They are darker and more dangerous than men. The family protects us from that, you protect me from that. You are not that sort of woman. You are not unfaithful to me, Betty. I can't believe you are. It would hurt me so much to cast you off. That would be my duty.

BETTY. No, no, no.

CLIVE. Joshua has seen you kissing.

BETTY. Forgive me.

CLIVE. But I don't want to know about it. I don't want to know. It was a moment of passion such as women are too weak to resist. But you must resist it, Betty, or it will destroy us. We must fight against it. We must resist this dark female lust, Betty, or it will swallow us up.

BETTY. I do, I do resist. Help me. Forgive me.

CLIVE. Yes I do forgive you. But I can't feel the same about you as I did. You are still my wife and we still have duties to the household. *(THEY go out. As soon as THEY have gone EDWARD sneaks back to get the doll, which has been dropped on the floor. HE picks it up and comforts it. JOSHUA comes through with a tray of drinks)*

JOSHUA. Baby. Sissy. Girly. *(JOSHUA goes. BETTY calls from back of house)*

BETTY. Edward? *(BETTY comes in)* There you are my darling. Come, papa wants us all to be together. Uncle Harry is going to tell how he caught a crocodile. Mama's sorry she smacked you. *(THEY embrace. JOSHUA comes in again, passing through)* Joshua, fetch me some black thread from my sewing box. It is on the piano.

JOSHUA. You've got legs under that skirt.

BETTY. Joshua.

JOSHUA. And more than legs.

BETTY. Edward, are you going to stand there and let a servant insult your mother?

EDWARD. Joshua, get my mother's thread.

JOSHUA. Oh, little Eddy, playing at master. It's only a joke.

EDWARD. Don't you speak to my mother like that again.

JOSHUA. Ladies have no sense of humour. You like a joke with Joshua.

EDWARD. You fetch her sewing at once, do you hear me? You move when I speak to you, boy.

JOSHUA. Yes sir, Master Edward sir. *(JOSHUA goes)*

BETTY. Edward, you were wonderful. *(SHE goes to embrace HIM but HE moves away)*

EDWARD. Don't touch me.

ACT I

Scene 4

The verandah as in Scene 1. Early morning. Nobody there. JOSHUA comes out of the house, slowly, and stands for some time doing nothing. EDWARD comes out.

EDWARD. Tell me a bad story, Joshua. Nobody else is even awake yet.

JOSHUA. First there was nothing then there was the great goddess. She was very large and she had golden eyes and she made the stars and the sun and the earth. But soon she was miserable and lonely and she cried like a great waterfall and her tears made all the rivers in the world. So the great spirit sent a terrible monster, a tree with hundreds of eyes and a long green tongue, and it

came chasing after her and she jumped into a lake and the tree jumped in after her, and she jumped right up into the sky. And the tree couldn't follow, he was stuck in the mud. So he picked up a big handful of mud and he threw it at her, up among the stars, and it hit her on the head. And she fell down onto earth into his arms. And the ball of mud is the moon in the sky. And then they had children which is all of us.

EDWARD. It's not true, though.

JOSHUA. Of course it's not true. It's a bad story. Adam and Eve is true. God made man white like him and gave him the bad woman who liked the snake and gave us all this trouble.

(CLIVE and HARRY come out)

CLIVE. Run along now, Edward. No, you may stay. You mustn't repeat anything you hear to your mother or your grandmother or Ellen.

EDWARD. Or Mrs. Saunders?

CLIVE. Mrs. Saunders is an unusual woman and does not require protection in the same way. Harry, there was trouble last night where we expected it. But it's all over now. Everything is under control but nobody should leave the house today I think.

HARRY. Casualties?

CLIVE. No, none of the soldiers hurt thank God. We did a certain amount of damage, set a village on fire and so forth.

HARRY. Was that necessary?

CLIVE. Obviously, it was necessary, Harry, or it wouldn't have happened. The army will come and visit, no doubt. Treat for you Edward to see the soldiers. Would you like to be a soldier?

EDWARD. I'd rather be an explorer.

CLIVE. Ah, Harry, like you see. I didn't know an explorer at his age. Breakfast, I think, Joshua. (CLIVE and JOSHUA go in, HARRY is following)

EDWARD. Uncle.

(HARRY stops)

EDWARD. Harry, why won't you talk to me?

HARRY. Of course I'll talk to you.

EDWARD. If you won't be nice to me I'll tell father.

HARRY. Edward, no, not a word, never, not to your mother, nobody, please. Edward, do you understand? Please.

EDWARD. I won't tell. I promise I'll never tell. I've cut my finger and sworn.

HARRY. There's no need to get so excited Edward. We can't be together all the time. I will have to leave soon anyway and go back to the river.

EDWARD. You can't, you can't go. Take me with you.

ELLEN. (off) Edward!

HARRY. I have my duty to the Empire. (HARRY goes in, ELLEN comes out)

ELLEN. Edward, breakfast time. Edward.

EDWARD. I'm not hungry.

ELLEN. Come along, Edward, for goodness sake. I'm sick of all this mooning about. I sometimes see why your parents get tired of you.

EDWARD. I'm not hungry.

ELLEN. Betty, please come and speak to Edward.

(BETTY comes)

BETTY. Why what's the matter?

ELLEN. He won't come in for breakfast.

BETTY. Edward, I shall call your father.

EDWARD. You can't make me eat. (HE goes in.

BETTY is about to follow.)

ELLEN. Betty.

(BETTY stops)

ELLEN. Betty, when Edward goes to school will I have to leave?

BETTY. If you go back to England you might get married, Ellen. You're quite pretty, you shouldn't despair of getting a husband.

ELLEN. I don't want a husband. I want you.

BETTY. Children of your own, Ellen, think.

ELLEN. I don't want children, I don't like children. I just want to be alone with you, Betty, and sing for you and kiss you because I love you. I'd rather die than leave you, Betty.

BETTY. No you wouldn't, Ellen, don't be silly. Come, don't cry. You don't feel what you think you do. It's the loneliness here and the climate is very confusing. Come and have breakfast, Ellen dear, and I'll forget all about it.

(ELLEN goes, CLIVE comes)

BETTY. Clive, please forgive me.

CLIVE. Will you leave me alone?

(BETTY goes back into the house. HARRY comes)

CLIVE. Women, Harry. I envy you going off into the jungle, a man's life.

HARRY. I envy you.

CLIVE. Harry, I know you do. I have spoken to Betty.

HARRY. I assure you, Clive—

CLIVE. Please say nothing about it.

HARRY. My friendship for you—

CLIVE. Absolutely, I know the friendship between us, Harry, is not something that could be spoiled by the weaker sex. Friendship between men is a fine thing. It is the noblest form of relationship.

HARRY. I agree with you.

CLIVE. There is the necessity of reproduction. The family is all important. And there is the pleasure. But what we put ourselves through to get that pleasure, Harry. When I heard about our fine fellows last night fighting those savages to protect us I thought yes, that is what I aspire to. I tell you Harry, in confidence, I suddenly got out of Mrs. Saunders' bed and came out here on the verandah and looked at the stars.

HARRY. I couldn't sleep last night either.

CLIVE. There is something dark about women that threatens what is best in us. Between men that light burns brightly.

HARRY. I didn't know you felt like that.

CLIVE. Women are irrational, demanding, inconsistent, treacherous, lustful and they smell different from us.

HARRY. Clive—

CLIVE. Think of the comradeship of men Harry,

sharing adventures, sharing danger, risking their lives together.

(HARRY takes hold of CLIVE)

CLIVE. What are you doing?

HARRY. Well, you said—

CLIVE. I said what?

HARRY. Between men.

(CLIVE is speechless)

HARRY. I'm sorry, I misunderstood. I would never have dreamt, I thought—

CLIVE. My God, Harry, how disgusting.

HARRY. You will not betray my confidence.

CLIVE. I feel contaminated.

HARRY. I struggle against it. You cannot imagine the shame. I have tried everything to save myself.

CLIVE. The most revolting perversion. Rome fell Harry, and this sin can destroy an empire.

HARRY. It is not a sin, it is a disease.

CLIVE. A disease more dangerous than diphtheria. Effeminacy is contagious. Oh Harry, how did you sink to this?

HARRY. Clive, help me, what am I to do?

CLIVE. You have been away from England too long.

HARRY. Where can I go except into the jungle to hide?

CLIVE. You don't do it with the natives, Harry? My God, what a betrayal of the Queen.

HARRY. Clive, I beg of you do not betray my confidence.

CLIVE. Harry, I cannot keep a secret like this. Rivers will be named after you. It's unthinkable. You must save yourself from depravity. You must get married. You are not unattractive to women. Now Mrs. Saunders. She's a woman of spirit, she could go with you on your expeditions.

HARRY. I suppose getting married wouldn't be any worse than killing myself.

CLIVE. Mrs. Saunders! Mrs. Saunders! Ask her now, Harry. Think of England.

(MRS. SAUNDERS comes. CLIVE withdraws.)

HARRY. Mrs. Saunders, will you marry me?

MRS. S. Why?

HARRY. We are both alone.

MRS. S. I choose to be alone, Mr. Bagley, If I can look after myself, I'm sure you can. Clive, I have something important to tell you. I've just found Joshua putting earth on his head. He tells me his parents were killed last night by the British soldiers. I think you owe him an apology on behalf of the Queen.

CLIVE. Joshua! Joshua!

MRS. S. Mr. Bagley, I could never be a wife again. There is only one thing about marriage that I like.

(JOSHUA comes)

CLIVE. Joshua, I am horrified to hear what has happened. Good God!

MRS. S. His father was shot. His mother died in the blaze. (MRS. SAUNDERS goes)

CLIVE. Joshua, do you want a day off? Do you

want to go to your people?

JOSHUA. Not my people, sir.

CLIVE. But you want to go to your parents' funeral?

JOSHUA. No sir.

CLIVE. Yes, Joshua, yes, your father and mother. I'm sure they were loyal to the crown. I'm sure it was all a terrible mistake.

JOSHUA. My mother and father were bad people.

CLIVE. Joshua, no.

JOSHUA. You are my father and mother.

CLIVE. Well really. I don't know what to say. That's very decent of you.

(BETTY comes out followed by EDWARD)

BETTY. What's the matter? What's happening?

CLIVE. Something terrible has happened. No, I mean some relatives of Joshua's met with an accident.

JOSHUA. May I go sir?

CLIVE. Yes, yes of course. Good God, what a terrible thing. Bring us a drink will you Joshua?

(JOSHUA goes)

EDWARD. What? What?

BETTY. Edward, go and do your lessons.

EDWARD. What is it, Uncle Harry?

HARRY. Go and do your lessons.

(ELLEN comes out)

ELLEN. Edward, come in here at once.

EDWARD. What's happend, uncle Harry?

HARRY. Go away. Go inside. Ellen!

ELLEN. Go inside, Edward. I shall tell your mother.

BETTY. Go inside, Edward, at once. I shall tell your father.

CLIVE. Go inside, Edward. And Betty you go inside too.

(BETTY EDWARD and ELLEN go. MAUD comes out)

CLIVE. Go inside. And Ellen you come outside.

(ELLEN comes out)

CLIVE. Mr. Bagley has something to say to you.

HARRY. Ellen, I don't suppose you would marry me?

ELLEN. What if I said yes?

CLIVE. Run along now, you two want to be alone.

(HARRY and ELLEN go. JOSHUA brings CLIVE a drink)

JOSHUA. The governess and your wife, sir.

CLIVE. What's that, Joshua?

JOSHUA. She talks of love to your wife, sir. I have seen them. Bad women.

CLIVE. Joshua, you go too far. Get out of my sight.

ACT I

Scene 5

The verandah. A table with a white cloth. A wedding cake and large knife. Bottles and glasses. JOSHUA is putting things on the table. EDWARD has the doll. JOSHUA sees him with it. HE holds out HIS hand. EDWARD gives HIM the doll. JOSHUA takes the knife and cuts the doll open and shakes sawdust out of it. JOSHUA throws the doll under the table.

MAUD. Come along Edward, this is such fun.

(EVERYONE enters, making a triumphal arch for HARRY and ELLEN)

MAUD. Your mama's wedding was a splended occasion, Edward. I cried and cried.

(ELLEN takes BETTY aside)

ELLEN. Betty, what happens with a man? I don't know what to do.

BETTY. You just keep still.

ELLEN. And what does he do?

BETTY. Harry will know what to do.

ELLEN. And is it enjoyable?

BETTY. Ellen, you're not getting married to enjoy yourself.

ELLEN. Don't forget me Betty.

(ELLEN goes.)

BETTY. I think my beads have been stolen, Clive. I did so want to wear them at the wedding.

EDWARD. It was Joshua. Joshua took them.

CLIVE. Joshua?

EDWARD. He did, he did, I saw him with them.

HARRY. Edward, that's not true.

EDWARD. It is, it is.

HARRY. Edward, I'm afraid you took them yourself.

EDWARD. I did not.

HARRY. I have seen him with them.

CLIVE. Edward, is that true? Did you take your mother's beads? And try to blame Joshua, good God.

(EDWARD runs off)

BETTY. Edward, come back. Have you got my beads?

HARRY. I should leave him alone. He'll bring them back.

BETTY. I wanted to wear them. I wanted to look my best at your wedding.

HARRY. You always look your best to me.

BETTY. I shall get drunk.

(MRS. SAUNDERS comes)

MRS. S. The sale of my property is completed.

I shall leave tomorrow. I shall go to England and buy a farm there. I shall introduce threshing machines.

CLIVE. Amazing spirit. (HE *kisses* HER. BETTY *launches herself on* MRS. SAUNDERS. *They fall to the ground.*) Betty—Caroline—I don't deserve this—Harry, Harry.

(HARRY *and* CLIVE *separate* THEM. HARRY *holding* MRS. SAUNDERS, CLIVE BETTY)

CLIVE. Mrs. Saunders, how can you abuse my hospitality? How dare you touch my wife? You must leave here at once.

BETTY. Go away, go away. You are a wicked woman.

MAUD. Mrs. Saunders, I am shocked. This is your hostess.

CLIVE. Pack your bags and leave the house this instant.

MRS. S. I was leaving anyway. There's no place for me here. I have made arrangements to leave tomorrow, and tomorrow is when I will leave. I wish you joy, Mr. Bagley. (MRS. SAUNDERS *goes*)

CLIVE. No place for her anywhere I should think. Shocking behaviour.

BETTY. Oh, Clive, forgive me, and love me like you used to.

CLIVE. Were you jealous my dove? My own dear wife!

MAUD. Ah, Mr. Bagley, one flesh, you see.

(EDWARD *comes back with the beads*)

CLIVE. Good God. Edward, it's true.

EDWARD. I was minding it for Mama because of the troubles.

CLIVE. Well done, Edward, that was very manly of you. See Betty? Edward was protecting his mama's jewels from the rebels. What a hysterical fuss over nothing. Well done, little man. It is quite safe now. The bad men are dead.

(ELLEN *comes back*)

MAUD. Ah, here's the bride. Come along, Ellen. You don't cry at your own wedding, only at other people's.

CLIVE. Now, speeches, speeches. Who is going to make a speech? Harry, make a speech.

HARRY. I'm no speaker. You're the one for that.

ALL. Speech, speech.

HARRY. My dear friends—what can I say—the empire—the family—the married state to which I have always aspired—your shining example of domestic bliss—my great good fortune in winning Ellen's love—happiest day of my life.

(*Applause*)

CLIVE. Cut the cake, cut the cake.

(HARRY *and* ELLEN *take the knife to cut the cake.*

HARRY *notices the doll.*)

HARRY. What's this?

EDWARD. It was Joshua. It was Joshua.

CLIVE. Don't tell lies again. (HE *hits* EDWARD *across the side of the head*) Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking

(Cheers) Harry, my friend. So brave and strong and supple.

Ellen from neath her veil so shyly peeking.

I wish you joy. A toast—the happy couple.

Dangers are past. Our enemies are killed.

—Put your arm round her, Harry, have a kiss—

All murmuring of discontent is stilled.

Long may you live in peace and joy and bliss.

(While HE is speaking. JOSHUA raises his gun to shoot CLIVE. Only EDWARD sees. He does nothing to warn the others. He puts his hands over his ears.)

BLACK

ACT II

OPENING (—radio announcement)

ANNOUNCER: Cloudy today with sunny periods. The high in central London twelve, that's fifty-five Fahrenheit. A really nice, mild, winter day after all that cold weather, and I for one, am going to get out into the sunshine. Traffic news if you're coming into London from the south, avoid Tower Bridge this morning, there's a half mile tail back. Otherwise, traffic's moving pretty freely into London this morning. Its 8:33, ten degrees and a nice mild day to start the week, and here to start the week

CLOUD NINE song on radio.

ACT II

Scene 1

Winter afternoon. VICTORIA and LIN, mothers, CATHY, LIN's daughter, age 4, played by a MAN, clinging to LIN. VICTORIA reading a book

LIN. I like your shoes.

CATHY. Yum yum bubblegum

Stick it up your mother's bum

When it's brown

Pull it down

Yum yum bubblegum

LIN. Cathy do stop. Do a painting.

CATHY. You do a painting.

LIN. You do a painting.

CATHY. What shall I paint?

LIN. Paint a house.

CATHY. No.

LIN. Princess.

CATHY. No.

LIN. Pirates.

CATHY. Already done that.

LIN. Spacemen.

CATHY. I never paint spacemen. You know I never.

LIN. Paint a car crash and blood everywhere.

CATHY. No, don't tell me. I know what to paint.

LIN. Go on then. You need an apron, where's an apron. Here.

CATHY. Don't want an apron.

LIN. Apron. Lift up your arms. There's a good girl.

CATHY. I don't want to paint.

LIN. Don't paint. Don't paint.

CATHY. What shall I do? You paint. What shall I do Mum?

VIC. There's nobody on the big bike, Cathy, quick.

(CATHY goes out. VIC is watching the children playing outside)

VIC. Tommy, it's Jimmy's gun. Let him have it. Don't. What the hell. (SHE goes on reading.)

(SHE reads while she talks)

LIN. Victoria, I don't know how you can concentrate.

VIC. You have to or you never do anything.

LIN. I suppose Tommy doesn't let you read much. I expect he talks to you while you're reading.

VIC. Yes, he does.

LIN. I didn't get very far with that book you lent me.

VIC. That's all right.

LIN. I was glad to have it, though. I sit with it on my lap while I'm watching telly. Well, Cathy's off. She's frightened I'm going to leave her. It's the baby minder didn't work out when she was two, she still remembers. You can't get them used to other people if you're by yourself. It's no good blaming me. She clings round my knees every morning up the nursery and they don't say anything but they make you feel you're making her do it. But I'm desperate for her to go to school. I did cry when I left her the first day. You wouldn't you're too fucking sensible. You'll call the teacher by her first name. I really fancy you.

VIC. What?

LIN. Put your book down will you for five minutes. You didn't hear a word I said.

VIC. I don't get much time to myself.

LIN. Do you ever go to the movies?

VIC. Tommy's very funny who he's left with. My mother babysits sometimes.

LIN. Your husband could babysit.

VIC. But then we couldn't go to the movies.

LIN. You could go to the movies with me.

VIC. Oh I see.

LIN. Couldn't you?

VIC. Well, yes, I could.

LIN. Friday night?

VIC. What film are we talking about?

LIN. Does it matter what film?

VIC. Of course it does.

LIN. You choose then. Friday night. Not in a foreign language, ok. You don't go to the movies to read. (*LIN watches the children playing outside*)

LIN. Don't hit him, Cathy, kill him. Point the gun, kiou kiou kiou. That's the way.

VIC. They've just banned war toys in Sweden.

LIN. The kids'll just hit each other more.

VIC. Well psychologists do differ in their opinion as to whether or not aggression is innate.

LIN. Yeh?

VIC. I'm afraid I do let Tommy play with guns and just hope he'll get it out of his system and not end up in the army.

LIN. I've got a brother in the army.

VIC. Oh I'm sorry. Whereabouts is he stationed?

LIN. Belfast.

VIC. Oh dear.

LIN. I've got a friend who's Irish and we went on a Troops Out march. Now my dad won't speak to me.

VIC. I don't get on too well with my father either.

LIN. And your husband? How do you get on with him?

VIC. Oh fine. Up and down. You know. Very well. He helps with the washing up and everything.

LIN. I left mine two years ago. He let me keep

Cathy and I'm grateful for that.

VIC. You shouldn't be grateful.

LIN. I'm a lesbian.

VIC. You still shouldn't be grateful.

LIN. I'm grateful he didn't hit me harder than he did.

VIC. I suppose I'm very lucky with Martin.

LIN. Don't get at me about how I bring up Cathy, OK?

VIC. I didn't.

LIN. Yes you did. War toys. I'll give her a rifle for Christmas and blast Tommy's pretty head off for a start.

(*VIC goes back to HER book*)

LIN. I hate men.

VIC. You have to look at it in a historical perspective in terms of learnt behavior since the industrial revolution.

LIN. I just hate the bastards.

VIC. Well, it's a point of view.

(*CATHY has come back meanwhile and started painting. EDWARD comes in.*)

(*EDWARD comes in*)

EDWARD. Victoria. Vic. Mother's here, in the park. She's walking round all the paths very fast.

VIC. By herself?

EDWARD. I told her you were here.

VIC. Thanks.

EDWARD. Come on.

VIC. Ten minutes talking to my mother and I have to spend two hours in a hot bath. (VIC goes out)

LIN. You're gay aren't you? I really fancy your sister. I thought you'd understand. You do but you can go on pretending you don't. I don't mind. Shit, Cathy, what about an apron. I don't mind you having paint on your clothes but if it doesn't wash off just don't tell me you can't wear your dress with paint on, O.K.?

CATHY. O.K.

EDWARD. Don't go around saying that. I might lose my job.

LIN. That last gardener was ever so straight. He used to flash at all the little girls.

EDWARD. I wish you hadn't said that about me. It's not true.

LIN. It's not true and I never said it and I never thought it and I never will think it again.

EDWARD. Someone might have heard you.

LIN. Shut up about it then.

(BETTY and VICTORIA come up)

BETTY. It's quite a nasty bump.

VIC. He's not even crying.

BETTY. I think that's very worrying. You and Edward always cried. Perhaps he's got concussion.

VIC. Of course he hasn't mummy.

BETTY. That other little boy was very rough. Should you speak to somebody about him?

VIC. Tommy was hitting him with a spade.

BETTY. Well he's a real little boy. And so brave not to cry. You must watch him for signs of drowsiness. And nausea. If he's sick in the night, phone an ambulance. Well, you're looking very well, darling, a bit tired, a bit peaky. I think the fresh air agrees with Edward. He likes the open air life because of growing up in Africa. He misses the sunshine don't you darling? We'll soon have Edward back on his feet. What fun it is here.

VIC. This is Lin. And Cathy.

BETTY. Oh Cathy what a lovely painting. What is it? Well I think it's a house on fire. I think all that red is a fire. Is that right? Or do I see legs, is it a horse? Can I have the lovely painting or is it for mummy? Children have such imagination, it makes them so exhausting. (To LIN) I'm sure you're wonderful, just like Victoria. I had help with my children. One does need help. That was in Africa of course so there wasn't the servant problem. This is my son Edward. This is—

EDWARD. Lin.

BETTY. Lin, this is Lin. Edward is doing something such fun, he's working in the park as a gardener. He does look exactly like a gardener.

EDWARD. I am a gardener.

BETTY. He's certainly making a stab at it. Well it will be a story to tell. I expect he will write a novel about it, or perhaps a television series. Well what a pretty child, Victoria was a pretty child just like a little doll—You can't be certain how they'll grow up. I think Victoria's very pretty but she doesn't make the most of herself, do you darling, it's not the fashion I'm told but there are

still women who read Vogue, well we hope that's not what Martin looks for, though in many ways I wish it was. I don't know what it is Martin looks for and nor does he I'm afraid poor Martin. Well I am rattling on. I like your blouse dear but your shoes won't do at all. Well do they have lady gardeners, Edward, because I'm going to leave your father and I think I might need to get a job, not a gardener really of course. I haven't got green fingers I'm afraid, everything I touch shrivels straight up. Vicky gave me a poinsettia last Christmas and the leaves all fell off on Boxing Day. Well good heavens, look what's happened to that lovely painting.

(CATHY has slowly and carefully been going over the whole sheet with black paint.)

LIN. What do you do that for silly? It was nice

CATHY. I like your earrings.

BETTY. Do you darling?

VIC. Did you say you're leaving Daddy?

BETTY. Shall I put them on you? My ears aren't pierced, I never wanted that, they clip on the lobe.

LIN. She'll get paint on you, mind.

BETTY. There's a pretty girl. It doesn't hurt does it? Well you'll grow up to know you have to suffer a little bit for beauty.

CATHY. Look mum I'm pretty. I'm pretty, I'm pretty.

LIN. Stop showing off Cathy.

VIC. It's time we went home, Tommy, time to go home. Last go then, all right.

EDWARD. Mum, did I hear you right just now?

CATHY. I want my ears pierced.

BETTY. Ooh, not till you're big.

CATHY. I know a girl got her ears pierced and she's three. She's got real gold.

BETTY. I don't expect she's English, darling. Can I give her a sweetie? I know they're not very good for the teeth. Vicky gets terribly cross with me. What does mummy say?

LIN. Just one, thank you very much.

CATHY. I like your beads.

BETTY. Yes, they are pretty. Here you are.

LIN. Don't get paint on it.

CATHY. Look at me, look at me. Vicky, Vicky, Vicky look at me.

LIN. You look lovely, come on now.

CATHY. And your hat, and your hat.

LIN. No, that's enough.

BETTY. Of course she can have my hat.

CATHY. Yes, yes, hat hat.

EDWARD. There, get it straight.

CATHY. Look look look.

LIN. That's enough, please, stop it now. Hat off, bye bye hat.

CATHY. Give me my hat.

LIN. Bye bye beads.

BETTY. It's just fun.

LIN. It's very nice of you.

CATHY. I want my beads.

LIN. Where's the other earring?

CATHY. I want my beads.

LIN. You'll have a smack.

BETTY. Have you got the earring?

CATHY. I want my beads.

BETTY. Thank you darling.

CATHY. I want my beads, you're horrid, I hate you, mum, you smell.

BETTY. This is the point you see where one had help. Well it's been lovely seeing you dears and I'll be off again on my little walk.

VIC. You're leaving him? Really?

BETTY. Yes you heard aright Vicky, yes, I'm finding a little flat, that will be fun. (BETTY goes) Bye bye Tommy granny's going now. Tommy don't hit that little girl, say goodbye to granny.

VIC. Fucking hell.

EDWARD. Puking Jesus.

LIN. That was news was it, leaving your father?

EDWARD. They're going to want so much attention.

VIC. Does everybody hate their mothers?

EDWARD. Mind you, I wouldn't live with him.

LIN. Stop sniveling, pigface. Where's your scarf? Be quiet now and we'll have doughnuts for tea and if you keep on we'll have dogshit on toast.

VIC. Tommy, you've had two last goes. Last last last last go.

LIN. Not that funny, come on, scarf on.

EDWARD. Can I have your painting?

CATHY. What for?

EDWARD. For a friend of mine.

CATHY. What's his name?

EDWARD. Gerry.

CATHY. How old is he?

EDWARD. Twenty-five.

CATHY. You can if you like. I don't care. Kiou

kiou kiou kiou. (CATHY goes out. EDWARD takes the painting and goes out)

LIN. Will you have sex with me?

VIC. I don't know what Martin would say. Does it count as adultery with a woman?

LIN. You'd enjoy it.

ACT II

Scene 2

Spring. EDWARD is gardening.

GERRY. Eddie, come and sit down. (to audience) Two years I've been with Edward.

EDWARD. If the superintendent comes I'll be in trouble. It's not my dinnertime yet. Sometimes I pretend we don't know each other and you've come to the park to eat your lunch and look at me.

GERRY. That would be more interesting, yes.

EDWARD. Where were you last night? I think you owe me an explanation. We always do tell each other everything.

GERRY. Is that a rule?

EDWARD. It's what we agreed.

GERRY. It's a habit we've got into. Look, I was drunk. I woke up at 4 o'clock on somebody's floor. I was sick. I hadn't any money for a cab. I went back to sleep.

EDWARD. You could have phoned.

GERRY. There wasn't a phone.

EDWARD. Sorry.

GERRY. There was a phone and I didn't phone you. Leave it alone, Eddy, I'm warning you.

EDWARD. What are you going to do to me then?

GERRY. I'm going to the pub.

EDWARD. I'll join you in ten minutes.

GERRY. I didn't ask you to come. *(to audience)*
You have to get away sometimes or you lose sight of yourself. The train from Victoria to Clapham is one of the old type. Separate compartments, no connecting corridor, so once the train starts no one can get in or out until the next station. As soon as I got on the platform I saw who I wanted. Slim hips, tense shoulders, trying not to look at anyone. I put my hand on my packet just long enough so he couldn't miss it. The train came in. You don't want to get in too fast or some straight dumbo might get in with you. I stay by the window. I couldn't see where the fuck he'd got to. Then just as the whistle went he got in. Great. It's a six-minute journey so you can't start anything you can't finish. I stared at him and he unzipped his flies. Then he stopped. So I stood up and took my cock out. He took me in his mouth and shut his eyes tight. He was sort of mumbling it about as if he wasn't sure what to do, so I said, "A bit tighter son" and he said "Sorry" and then got on with it. He was jerking off with his left hand, and I could see he's got a fair-sized one. I wished he'd keep still so I could see his watch. I was getting really turned on. What if we pulled into

Clapham Junction now. Of course by the time we sat down again the train was just slowing up. I felt wonderful. Then he started talking. It's better if nothing is said. Once you find he's a librarian in Walthamstow with a special interest in science fiction and lives with his aunt, then forget it. He said I hope you don't think I do this all the time. I said I hope you will from now on. He said he would if I was on the train, but why don't we go out for a meal? I opened the door before the train stopped. I told him I live with somebody, I don't want to know. He was jogging sideways to keep up. He said "what's your phone number, you're my ideal physical type, what sign of the zodiac are you? Where do you live? Where are you going now? It's not fair." I saw him at Victoria a couple of months later and I went straight down to the end of the platform and I picked up somebody really great who never said a word. Just smiled.

(GERRY goes. CATHY comes.)

CATHY.

Batman and Robin
Had a batmobile
Robin done a fart
And paralyzed the wheel
The wheel couldn't take it
The engine fell apart
All because of Robin
And his supersonic fart

(CATHY goes. MARTIN, VICTORIA and BETTY walking slowly)

(MARTIN, VICTORIA and BETTY walking slowly)

MARTIN. Tom!

BETTY. He'll fall in.

VIC. No he won't.

MARTIN. Don't go too near the edge Tom. Throw the bread from there. The ducks can get it.

BETTY. I'll never be able to manage. If I can't even walk down the street by myself. Everything looks so fierce.

VIC. Just watch Tommy feeding the ducks.

BETTY. He's going to fall in. Make Martin make him move back.

VIC. He's not going to fall in.

BETTY. It's since I left your father.

VIC. Mummy, it really was the right decision.

BETTY. Everything comes at me from all directions. Martin despises me.

VIC. Of course he doesn't mummy.

BETTY. Of course he does.

MARTIN. Throw the bread. That's the way. The duck can get it. Quack quack quack quack quack.

BETTY. I don't want to take pills. Lin says you can't trust doctors.

VIC. You're not taking pills. You're doing very well.

BETTY. But I'm so frightened.

VIC. What are you frightened of?

BETTY. Victoria, you always ask that as if there was suddenly going to be an answer.

VIC. Are you all right sitting there?

(VICTORIA joins MARTIN. BETTY stays sitting on the bench.)

MARTIN. You take the job, you go to Manchester. You turn it down, you stay in London. People are making decisions like this every day of the week. It needn't be for more than a year. You get long vacations. Our relationship might well stand the strain of that, and if it doesn't we're better out of it. I don't want to put any pressure on you. I'd just like to know so we can sell the house. I think we're moving into an entirely different way of life if you go to Manchester because it won't end there. We could keep the house as security for Tommy, but he might as well get used to the fact that life nowadays is insecure. You should ask your mother what she thinks and then do the opposite. I could just take that room in Barbara's house, and then we could babysit for each other. You think that means I want to fuck Barbara. I don't. Well, I do, but I won't. And even if I did, what's a fuck between friends? What are we meant to do it with, strangers? Whatever you want to do, I'll be delighted. If you could just let me know what it is I'm to be delighted about. Don't cry again, Vicky, I'm not the sort of man who makes women cry.

(LIN has come in, and sat down with BETTY. CATHY joins them; SHE is wearing a pink dress, has holster with pistol)

LIN. I've brought her three new frocks. She won't wear jeans to school any more because Tracy and Mandy called her a boy.

CATHY. Tracy's got a perm.

LIN. You should have shot them.

CATHY. They're coming to tea and we've got to have trifle. Not trifle you make, trifle out of a packet. And you've got to wear a skirt. And tights.

LIN. Tracy's mum wears jeans.

CATHY. She does not. She wears velvet.

BETTY. Well I think your mummy looks very pretty. And if that gun has caps in it please take it a long way away.

CATHY. It's got red caps. They're louder.

MARTIN. Do you think you're well enough to do this job. You don't have to do it. No one's going to think any the less of you if you stay here with me. There's no point being so liberated you make yourself cry all the time. You stay and we'll get everything sorted out. What it is about sex, when we talk while it's happening I get to feel it's like a driving lesson. Left, right, a little faster, carry on, slow down . . .

(CATHY shoots VICTORIA)

CATHY. You're dead Vicky.

VIC. Aaargh.

CATHY. Fall over.

VIC. Yes, I'm dead.

CATHY. The Dead Hand Gang fall over. They said I had to fall over in the mud or I can't play. That duck's a mandarin.

MARTIN. Which one? Look, Tommy.

CATHY. That's a diver. It's got a yellow eye and it dives. That's a goose. Tommy doesn't know it's a goose, he thinks it's a duck. The babies get eaten by weasels. Kiou kiou.

(CATHY goes off)

MARTIN. So, I lost my erection last night not because I'm not prepared to talk, it's just that taking in technical information is a different part of the brain and also I don't like to feel that you do it better to yourself. I have read the Hite report. I do know that women have to learn to get their pleasure despite our clumsy attempts at expressing undying devotion and ecstasy, and that what we spent our adolescence thinking was an animal urge we had to suppress is in fact a fine art we have to acquire. I'm not like whatever percentage of American men have become impotent as a direct result of women's liberation, which I am totally in favor of, more I sometimes think than you are yourself. Nor am I one of your villains who sticks it in, bangs away, and falls asleep. My one aim is to give you pleasure. My one aim is to give you rolling orgasms like I do other women. So why the hell don't you have them? My analysis for what it's worth is that despite all my efforts you still feel dominated by me. I in fact think it's very sad that you don't feel able to take that job. It makes me feel very guilty. I don't want you to do it because I encourage you to do it. But don't you think you'd feel better if you did take the job? You're the one who's talked about freedom. You're the one who's experimenting with bisexuality, and I don't stop you, I think women have something to give each other. You seem to need the mutual support. You find me too overwhelming. So follow it through, go away, leave me

and Tommy alone for a bit, we can manage perfectly well without you. I'm not putting any pressure on you but I don't think you're being a whole person. God knows I do everything I can to make you stand on your own two feet. Just be yourself. You don't seem to realize how insulting it is to me that you can't get yourself together.

(MARTIN and VIC come back.)

BETTY. You must be very lonely yourself with no husband. You don't miss him?

LIN. Not really, no.

BETTY. Maybe you like being on your own.

LIN. I'm seeing quite a lot of Vicky. I don't live alone. I live with Cathy.

BETTY. I would have been frightened when I was your age. I thought, the poor children, their mother all alone.

LIN. I've a lot of friends.

BETTY. I find when I'm making tea I put out two cups. It's strange not having a man in the house. You don't know who to do things for.

LIN. Yourself.

BETTY. Oh, that's very selfish.

LIN. Have you any women friends?

BETTY. I've never been so short of men's company that I've had to bother with women.

LIN. Don't you like women?

BETTY. They don't have such interesting conversations as men. There has never been a woman composer of genius. They don't have a sense of

humor. They spoil things for themselves with their emotions. I can't say I do like women very much no.

LIN. But you're a woman.

BETTY. There's nothing says you have to like yourself.

LIN. Do you like me?

BETTY. There's no need to take it personally. Lin.

(MARTIN and VIC come back.)

MARTIN. Did you know if you put cocaine on your prick you can keep it up all night? The only thing is of course it goes numb so you don't feel anything. But you would, that's the main thing. I just want to make you happy.

BETTY. Vicky I'd like to go home.

VIC. Yes, mummy, of course.

BETTY. I'm sorry dear.

VIC. I think Tommy would like to stay out a bit longer.

LIN. Hello, Martin. We do keep out of each other's way.

MARTIN. I think that's the best thing to do.

BETTY. Perhaps you'd walk home with me. Martin. I do feel safer with a man. The park is so large the grass seems to tilt.

MARTIN. Yes, I'd like to go home and do some work. I'm writing a novel about women from the women's point of view.

(MARTIN and BETTY go. LIN and VIC are alone
THEY embrace)

VIC. Why the hell can't he just be a wife and come with me? Why does Martin make me tie myself in knots? No wonder we can't just have a simple fuck. No, not Martin, why do I make myself tie myself in knots. It's got to stop, Lin. I'm not like that with you. Would you love me if I went to Manchester?

LIN. Yes.

VIC. Would you love me if I went on a climbing expedition in the Andes mountains?

LIN. Yes.

VIC. Would you love me if my teeth fell out?

LIN. Yes.

VIC. Would you love me if I loved ten other people?

LIN. And me?

VIC. Yes.

LIN. Yes.

VIC. And I feel apologetic for not being quite so subordinate as I was. I am more intelligent than him. I am brilliant.

LIN. Leave him Vic, come and live with me.

VIC. Don't be silly.

LIN. Silly, Christ, don't then. I'm not asking because I need to live with someone I would enjoy it, that's all, we'd both enjoy it. Cathy, for fuck's sake stop throwing stones at the ducks. The man's going to get you.

VIC. What man? Do you need a man to frighten your child with?

LIN. My mother said it.

VIC. You're so inconsistent, Lin.

LIN. I've changed who I sleep with. I can't change everything.

VIC. Like when I had to stop you getting a job in a boutique and collaborating with sexist consumer-sim.

LIN. I should have got that job. Cathy would have liked it. Why shouldn't I have some decent clothes? I'm sick of dressing like a boy, why can't I look sexy, wouldn't you love me?

VIC. Lin, you've no analysis.

LIN. No but I'm good at kissing aren't I? I give Cathy guns, my mum didn't give me guns. I dress her in jeans, she wants to wear dresses, maybe she should wear dresses. I don't know. I can't work it out. I don't want to. You read too many books, you get at me all the time, you're worse to me than Martin is to you, you piss me off, my brother's been killed. I'm sorry to win the argument that way but there it is.

VIC. What do you mean win the argument?

LIN. I mean be nice to me.

VIC. In Belfast?

LIN. I heard this morning. Don't, don't start. I've hardly seen him for two years. I rung my father. You'd think I'd shot him myself. He doesn't want me to go to the funeral.

VIC. What will you do?

LIN. Go of course.

CATHY. What is it? Who's killed? What?

LIN. It's Bill. Your uncle. In the army. Bill what give you the blue teddy.

CATHY. Can I have his gun?

LIN. It's time we went home. Time you went to bed.

CATHY. No it's not.

LIN. We go home and you have tea and you have a bath and you go to bed.

CATHY. Fuck off.

LIN. Cathy shut up.

VIC. It's only half past five why don't we—

LIN. I'll tell you why she has to go to bed—

VIC. She can come home with me.

LIN. Because I want her out the fucking way.

VIC. She can come home with me.

CATHY. I'm not going to bed.

LIN. I want her home with me not home with you. I want her in bed. I want today over.

CATHY. I'm not going to bed.

(LIN hits CATHY, CATHY cries)

LIN. I'll give you something to cry for.

CATHY. I'm not going to bed.

VIC. Cathy—

LIN. You keep out of it.

VIC. Lin for God's sake.

(THEY are all shouting. CATHY runs off. LIN and VIC are silent. They embrace.)

LIN. Where's Tommy?

VIC. Didn't he go with Martin?

LIN. Did he?

VIC. God oh God.

LIN. Cathy! Cathy!

VIC. I haven't thought about him. How could I not think about him? Tommy.

LIN. Cathy! Come on, quick, I want some help.

VIC. Tommy! Tommy!

(CATHY comes back)

LIN. Where's Tommy? Did he go with Martin? Do you know where he is?

CATHY. I showed him the goose. We went in the bushes.

LIN. Then what?

CATHY. I came back on the swing.

VIC. And Tommy? Where was Tommy?

CATHY. He fed the ducks.

LIN. No that was before.

CATHY. He did a pee in the bushes. I helped him with his trousers.

VIC. And after that?

CATHY. He fed the ducks.

VIC. No no.

CATHY. He liked the ducks. I expect he fell in.

LIN. Did you see him fall in?

VIC. Tommy! Tommy!

LIN. What's the last time you saw him?

CATHY. He did a pee.

VIC. Mummy said he would fall in. Oh, God, Tommy!

LIN. We'll go round the pond. We'll go opposite ways round the pond.

ALL. (Shout) Tommy!

(VIC and LIN go off opposite sides. CATHY climbs on the bench.)

CATHY.

Georgy Best superstar.

walks like a woman and wears a bra,

There is is! I see him! Mum! Vicky! There he is! He's in the bushes.

LIN. (Comes back) Come on, Cathy love, let's go home.

CATHY. Vicky's got him.

LIN. Come on.

CATHY. Is she cross?

LIN. No, come on.

CATHY. I found him.

LIN. Yes. Come on.

(LIN and CATHY hug.)

CATHY. I'm watching telly.

LIN. OK.

CATHY. After the news.

LIN. OK.

CATHY. I'm not going to bed.

LIN. Yes you are.

CATHY. I'm not going to bed now.

LIN. Not now but early.

CATHY. How early?

LIN. Not late.

CATHY. How not late?

LIN. Early.

CATHY. How early?

LIN. Not late. (THEY go off together. GERRY comes on. HE waits. EDWARD comes. HE has changed out of HIS work clothes)

EDWARD. I've got some fish for dinner. I thought I'd make a cheese sauce.

GERRY. I won't be in.

EDWARD. Where are you going?

GERRY. For a start I'm going to a sauna. Then I'll see.

EDWARD. All right. What time will you be back? We'll eat then.

GERRY. You're getting like a wife.

EDWARD. I don't mind that.

GERRY. Why don't I do the cooking sometime?

EDWARD. You can if you like. You're just not so good at it that's all. Do it tonight.

GERRY. I won't be in tonight.

EDWARD. Do it tomorrow. If we can't eat it we can always go to a restaurant.

GERRY. Stop it.

EDWARD. Stop what?

GERRY. Just be yourself.

EDWARD. I don't know what you mean. Everyone's always tried to stop me being feminine and now you are too.

GERRY. You're putting it on.

EDWARD. I like doing the cooking. I like being fucked. You do like me like this really.

GERRY. I'm bored Eddy.

EDWARD. Go to the sauna.

GERRY. And you'll stay home and wait up for me.

EDWARD. No, I'll go to bed and read a book.

GERRY. Or knit. You can knit me a pair of socks—

EDWARD. I might knit. I like knitting.

GERRY. I don't mind if you knit. I don't want to be married.

EDWARD. I do.

GERRY. Well I'm divorcing you.

EDWARD. I wouldn't want to keep a man who wants his freedom.

GERRY. Eddy, do stop playing the injured wife, it's not funny.

EDWARD. I'm not playing. It's true.

GERRY. I'm not the husband so you can't be the wife.

EDWARD. I'll always be here, Gerry, if you want to come back. I know you men like to go off by yourselves. I don't think I could love deeply more than once. But I don't think I can face life on my own so don't leave it too long or it may be too late.

GERRY. What are you trying to turn me into?

EDWARD. A monster, darling, which is what you are.

GERRY. I'll collect my stuff from the flat in the morning. (GERRY goes. EDWARD sits on the bench. It gets darker. VICTORIA comes)

VIC. Martin's reading Tommy a story. Isn't it quiet. (THEY sit on the bench, holding hands)

EDWARD. I like women.

VIC. That should please mother.

EDWARD. No listen Vicky. I'd rather be a woman. I wish I had breasts like that, I think they're beautiful. Can I touch them?

VIC. What, pretending they're yours?

EDWARD. No, I know it's you.

VIC. I think I should warn you I'm enjoying this.

EDWARD. I'm sick of men.

VIC. I'm sick of men.

EDWARD. I think I'm a lesbian.

ACT II

Scene 3

Another part of the park. Summer night. VICTORIA, LIN and EDWARD enter with quilt and bottle of wine.

LIN. Where are you?

VIC. Come on.

EDWARD. Do we sit in a circle?

VIC. No, kneel down and face north.

EDWARD. Lost my compass.

VIC. Give me your hand. We all hold hands.

EDWARD. Do you know what to do?

LIN. She's making it up.

VIC. We start off by being quiet.

EDWARD. What?

LIN. Hush.

EDWARD. Will something appear?

VIC. It was your idea.

EDWARD. It wasn't my idea. It was your book.

LIN. You said call up the goddess.

EDWARD. I don't remember saying that.

LIN. We could have called her on the telephone.

EDWARD. Come on, Lin, this is meant to be serious.

VIC. Innin. Innana. Nana. Nut. Anat. Anahita. Istar. Isis.

LIN. I can't remember all that.

VIC. Lin! Innin, Innana, Nana, Nut, Anat, Anahita, Istar, Isis—(ALL repeat *Innin etc.*) Goddess hear us calling you back through time, hear us, Lady, give us back what we were, give us the history we haven't had, make us the women we can't be.

LIN. Come back, goddess.

VIC. Goddess of the sun and the moon her brother, little goddess of Crete with snakes in your hands.

LIN. Goddess of breasts.

VIC. Goddess of cunts.

LIN. Goddess of fat bellies and babies.

LIN. And blood.

(ALL repeat *Innin, etc.*)

LIN. I see her.

EDWARD. What?

LIN. I see her. Very tall. Snakes in her hands. Light light light—Look out! Did I give you a fright?

EDWARD. I was terrified.

VIC. Don't spoil it Lin.

LIN. It's all out of a book.

VIC. Innin,—I can't do it now. I was really enjoying myself.

LIN. She won't appear with a man here.

VIC. They had men, they had sons and lovers.

EDWARD. They had eunuchs.

LIN. Don't give us ideas.

VIC. There's Attis and Tammuz, they're torn to pieces.

EDWARD. Tear me to pieces, Lin.

VIC. The priestess chose a lover for a year and he was king because she chose him and then he

was killed at the end of the year. And the women had the children and nobody knew it was done by fucking so they didn't know about fathers and nobody cared who the father was and the property was passed down through the maternal line—

LIN. Don't turn it into a lecture, Vicky, it's meant to be an orgy.

VIC. It never hurts to understand the theoretical background. You can't separate fucking and economics.

LIN. Give us a kiss.

EDWARD. Shut up, listen.

LIN. What?

EDWARD. There's somebody there.

LIN. Where?

EDWARD. There.

VIC. The priestesses used to make love to total strangers.

LIN. Go on then, I dare you.

EDWARD. Go on, Vicky.

VIC. He won't know it's a sacred rite in honour of the goddess.

EDWARD. We'll know.

LIN. We can tell him.

EDWARD. It's not what he thinks, it's what we think.

LIN. Don't tell him till after, he'll run a mile.

VIC. Hello. We're having an orgy. Do you want me to suck your cock?

(*The stranger approaches. It is MARTIN*)

MARTIN. There you are. I've been looking everywhere. What the hell are you doing? Do you know

what the time is? You're all pissed out of your minds.

(THEY leap on MARTIN, pull HIM down and caress him.)

(Another stranger approaches)

MARTIN. Well that's all right. If all we're talking about is having a lot of sex there's no problem. I was all for the sixties when liberation just meant fucking.

LIN. Hey you, come here. Come and have sex with us.

VIC. Who is it?

LIN. It's my brother.

EDWARD. Lin, don't.

LIN. It's my brother.

VIC. It's her sense of humour, you get used to it.

LIN. Shut up Vicky, it's my brother. Isn't it? Bill?

SOLDIER. Yes it's me.

LIN. And you are dead.

SOLDIER. Fucking dead all right yeh.

LIN. Have you come back to tell us something?

SOLDIER. No I've come for a fuck. That was the worst thing in the fucking army. Never fucking let out. Can't fucking talk to Irish girls. Fucking bored out of my fucking head. That or shit scared. For five minutes I'd be glad I wasn't bored. Then I was fucking scared. Then we'd come in and I'd

be glad I wasn't scared and then I was fucking bored. Spent the day reading fucking porn and the fucking night wanking. Man's fucking life in the fucking army? No fun when the fucking kids hate you. I got so I fucking wanted to kill someone and I got fucking killed myself and I want a fuck.

LIN. I miss you. Bill Bill. *(LIN collapses, SOLDIER goes. VIC comforts LIN)*

EDWARD. Let's go home.

LIN. Vic, come home with us. Vic's coming to live with me and Edward.

MARTIN. Tell me about it in the morning.

LIN. Its true.

VIC. It is true.

MARTIN. Tell me when you're sober.

(LIN, EDWARD and VIC go off. GERRY comes on)

GERRY. I come here sometimes at night and pick somebody up. Sometimes I come here at night and don't pick anybody up. I do also enjoy walking about at night. There's never any trouble finding someone. I can have sex any time. You might not find the type you most fancy every day of the week, but there's plenty of people who just enjoy having a good time.

(MARTIN goes off)

GERRY. I quite like living alone. If I live with someone I get annoyed with them. Edward always put on Capital radio when he got up. The silence gets wasted.

I wake up at four o'clock sometimes. Birds. Silence. If I bring somebody home I never let them stay the night.

HARRY. (*From Act I, off stage*) Edward!

GERRY. Edward, Edward.

EDWARD. (*From Act I*) There you are. I haven't found anyone have you?

GERRY. I can't sleep at night.

EDWARD. I don't mind being awake because I make up adventures. You know what we did before? I want to do it again, I think about it all the time. Don't you want to any more?

GERRY. Just hold me.

HARRY. (*From Act I, off stage*) Edward!

EDWARD. When you can't sleep. (*EDWARD goes off*)

ACT II

Scene 4

Afternoon in late summer. MARTIN, CATHY, EDWARD.

EDWARD. You'll have Tommy and Cathy tonight then OK? Tommy's still on antibiotic, do make him finish the bottle, he takes it in Ribena. It's no good in orange, he spits it out. Remind me to give you Cathy's swimming things.

CATHY. I did six strokes, didn't I Martin? Did I do a width? How many strokes is a length?

How many miles is a swimming pool? I'm going to take my bronze and silver and gold and diamond.

MARTIN. Is Tommy still wetting the bed?

EDWARD. Don't get angry with him about it.

MARTIN. I just need to go to the launderette so I've got a spare sheet. Of course I don't get fucking angry, Eddy, for God's sake. I don't like to say he is my son but he is my son. I'm surprised I'm not wetting the bed myself.

CATHY. I don't wet the bed ever. Do you wet the bed Martin?

MARTIN. No.

CATHY. You said you did.

(*BETTY comes*)

BETTY. I do miss the sun living in England but today couldn't be more beautiful. You appreciate the weekend when you're working. Betty's been at work this week. Cathy. It's terribly tiring Martin. I don't know how you've done it all these years. And the money, I feel like a child with the money. Clive always paid everything but I do understand it perfectly well. Look Cathy let me show you my money.

CATHY. I'll count it. Let me count it. What's that?

BETTY. Five pounds. Five and five is—?

CATHY. One two three—

BETTY. Five and five is ten, and five—

CATHY. If I get it right can I have one?

EDWARD. No you can't.

(CATHY goes on counting the money)

BETTY. I never like to say anything, Martin, or you'll think I'm being a mother-in-law.

EDWARD. Which you are.

BETTY. Thank you, Edward, I'm not talking to you. Martin, I think you're being wonderful. Vicky will come back. Just let her stay with Lin till she sorts herself out. It's very nice for a girl to have a friend. I had friends at school, that was very nice. But I'm sure Lin and Edward don't want her with them all the time. I'm not at all shocked that Lin and Edward aren't married and she already has a child, we all know first marriages don't always work out. But really Vicky must be in the way. And poor little Tommy, I hear he doesn't sleep properly and he's had a cough.

MARTIN. No, he's fine, Betty, thank you.

CATHY. My bed's horrible. I want to sleep in the big bed with Lin and Vicky and Eddy and I do get in if I've got a bad dream and my bed's got a bump right in my back. I want to sleep in a tent.

BETTY. Well Tommy has got a nasty cough, Martin, whatever you say.

EDWARD. He's over that. He's got some medicine.

MARTIN. He takes it in Ribena.

BETTY. Well I'm glad to hear it. Look what a lot of money, Cathy, and I sit behind a desk of my own and I answer the telephone and keep the doctor's appointment book and it really is great fun.

CATHY. Can we go camping, Martin, in a tent? We could take the Dead Hand Gang.

BETTY. Not those big boys, Cathy? They're far too big and rough for you. I'm sure mummy doesn't let you play with them, does she Edward? Well I don't know.

(Ice cream bells)

CATHY. Ice cream. Martin you promised. I'll have a double ninety nine. No, I'll have a shandy lolly. Betty, you have a shandy lolly and I'll have a lick. No, you have a double ninety nine and I'll have the chocolate.

(MARTIN, CATHY and BETTY go, leaving EDWARD. GERRY comes)

GERRY. Hello, Eddy. I thought I might find you here.

EDWARD. Gerry.

GERRY. Not working today then?

EDWARD. I don't work here anymore.

GERRY. Your mum got you into a dark suit?

EDWARD. No of course not. I'm one of the unemployed. I am working, though. I do housework.

GERRY. Whose wife are you now then?

EDWARD. Nobody's. I'm living with some women.

GERRY. What women?

EDWARD. My sister Vic and her lover. They go out to work and I look after the kids.

GERRY. I thought for a moment you meant you were living with women.

EDWARD. We do sleep together yes.

GERRY. I was passing the park anyway so I thought

I'd look in. I was in the sauna the other night and I saw someone who looked like you but it wasn't. I had sex with him anyway.

EDWARD. I do go to the sauna sometimes.

GERRY. I don't think I'd like living with children. They make a lot of noise don't they?

EDWARD. I tell them to shut up and they shut up. I wouldn't want to leave them at the moment.

GERRY. Look why don't we go for a meal sometime?

EDWARD. Yes I'd like that. Where are you living now?

GERRY. Same place.

EDWARD. I'll come round for you about 7:30.

GERRY. Great.

(EDWARD goes. HARRY comes. HARRY and GERRY pick each other up and go. VIC and LIN come)

VIC. So I said to the professor, I don't think this is an occasion for invoking the concept of structural causality—

(BETTY comes)

BETTY. I'd like to ask you a question, both of you. I have a little money from your grandmother. And the three of you are living in that tiny flat with two children. I wonder if we could get a house and all live in it together? It would give you more room.

VIC. But I'm going to Manchester anyway.

LIN. We'd have a garden, Vicky.

BETTY. You do seem to have such fun all of you.

VIC. I don't want to.

BETTY. I didn't think you would.

LIN. Come on, Vicky, she knows we sleep together, and Eddie.

BETTY. I think I've known for quite a while, but I'm not sure. I don't usually think about it, so I don't know if I know about it or not.

VIC. I don't want to live with my mother.

LIN. Don't think of her as your mother, think of her as Betty.

VIC. But she thinks of herself as my mother.

BETTY. I am your mother.

VIC. But Mummy we don't even like each other.

BETTY. We might begin to.

(CATHY comes on howling with a nosebleed)

LIN. Oh Cathy what happened?

BETTY. She's been assaulted.

VIC. It's a nosebleed.

CATHY. Took my ice cream.

LIN. Who did?

CATHY. Took my money.

(MARTIN comes)

MARTIN. Is everything all right?

LIN. I thought you were looking after her.

CATHY. They hit me. I can't play. They said I'm a girl.

BETTY. Those dreadful boys, the gang, the Dead Hand.

MARTIN. What do you mean you thought I was looking after her?

LIN. Last I saw her she was with you getting an ice cream. It's your afternoon.

MARTIN. Then she went off to play. She goes off to play. You don't keep an eye on her every minute.

LIN. She doesn't get beaten up when I'm looking after her.

CATHY. Took my money.

MARTIN. Why the hell should I look after your child anyway? I just want Tommy. Why should he live with you and Vicky all week?

LIN. I don't mind if you don't want to look after her but don't say you will and then this happens.

VIC. When I go to Manchester everything's going to be different anyway. Lin's staying here, and you're staying here, we're all going to have to sit down and talk it through.

MARTIN. I'd really enjoy that.

CATHY. Hit me on the face.

LIN. You were the one looking after her and look at her now, that's all.

MARTIN. I've had enough of you telling me.

LIN. Yes you know it all.

MARTIN. Now stop it. I work very hard at not being like this, I could do with some credit.

LIN. OK, you're quite nice, try and enjoy it. Don't make me sorry for you, Martin, it's hard for me too. We've better things to do than quarrel.

I've got to go and sort those little bastards out for a start. Where are they?

CATHY. Don't kill them, mum, hit him. Give them a nosebleed, mum.

(LIN goes)

VIC. Tommy's asleep in the pushchair. We'd better wake him up or he won't sleep tonight.

MARTIN. Sometimes I keep him up watching television till he falls asleep on the sofa so I can hold him. Come on, Cathy, we'll get another ice cream.

CATHY. Chocolate sauce and nuts.

VIC. Betty, would you like an ice cream?

BETTY. No thank you, the cold hurts my teeth, but what a nice thought, Vicky, thank you. I'm going to have a quiet sit in the sun.

(VICKY goes. MAUD comes. GERRY comes)

BETTY. I think you used to be Edward's flatmate.

GERRY. You're his mother. He's talked about you.

BETTY. Well never mind. Children are always wrong about their parents. It's a great problem knowing where to live and who to share with. I live by myself just now.

GERRY. Good. So do I. You can do what you like.

BETTY. I don't really know what I like.

GERRY. You'll soon find out.

BETTY. What do you like?

GERRY. Waking up at four in the morning.

BETTY. I like listening to music in bed and sometimes for supper I just have a big piece of bread and dip it in very hot lime pickle. So you don't get lonely by yourself? Perhaps you have a lot of visitors. I've been thinking I should have some visitors, I could give a little dinner party. Would you come? There wouldn't be just bread and lime pickle.

GERRY. Thank you very much.

BETTY. Or don't wait to be asked to dinner. Just drop in informally. I'll give you the address shall I?

MAUD. Betty, I don't like what I see.

BETTY. I don't usually give strange men my address but then you're not a strange man, you're a friend of Edward's.

MAUD. You were such a success as a young girl.

BETTY. I suppose I seem a different generation to you but you are older than Edward. I was married for so many years it's quite hard to know how to get acquainted. But if there isn't a right way to do things you have to invent one.

MAUD. I'm too old for all this fun. (MAUD goes)

BETTY. I always thought my mother was far too old to be attractive but when you get to an age yourself it feels quite different.

GERRY. I think you could be quite attractive.

BETTY. If what?

GERRY. If you stop worrying.

BETTY. I think when I do more about things I worry about them less. So perhaps you could help me do more.

GERRY. I might be going to live with Edward again.

BETTY. That's nice, but I'm rather surprised if he wants to share a flat. He's rather involved with a young woman he lives with, or two young women, I don't understand Edward but never mind.

GERRY. I'm very involved with him.

BETTY. I think Edward did try to tell me once but I didn't listen. So what I'm being told now is that Edward is 'gay', is that right? And you are too. And I've been making rather a fool of myself. But Edward does also sleep with women.

GERRY. He does, yes, I don't.

BETTY. Well people always say it's the mother's fault but I don't intend to start blaming myself. He seems perfectly happy.

GERRY. I could still come and see you.

BETTY. So you could, yes. I'd like that. I've never tried to pick up a man before.

GERRY. Not everyone's gay.

BETTY. No, that's lucky, isn't it.

(GERRY goes)

BETTY. I used to think Clive was the one who liked sex. But then I found I missed it. I used to touch myself when I was very little, I thought I'd invented something wonderful. I used to do it to go to sleep with or to cheer myself up, and one day it was raining and I was under the kitchen table, and my mother saw me with my hand under my dress rubbing away, and she dragged me out so quickly I hit my head and it bled and I was sick, and nothing was said, and I never did it again till this year. I thought if Clive wasn't looking

at me there wasn't a person there. And one night in bed in my flat I was so frightened I started touching myself. I thought my hand might go through into space. I touched my face, it was there, my arm, my breast, and my hand went down where I thought it shouldn't, and I thought well there is somebody there. It felt very sweet, it was a feeling from very long ago, it was very soft, just barely touching and I felt myself gathering together more and more and I felt angry with Clive and angry with my mother and I went on and on defying them, and there was this vast feeling growing in me and all round me and they couldn't stop me and no one could stop me and I was there and coming and coming! Afterwards I thought I'd betrayed Clive. My mother would kill me. But I felt triumphant because I was a separate person from them. And I cried because I didn't want to be. But I don't cry about it any more. Sometimes I do it three times in one night and it really is great fun.

(JOSHUA comes)

JOSHUA. Did Madam hear me wrong? I said you've got legs under that skirt, and more than legs.

(JOSHUA goes. CLIVE comes.)

CLIVE. You are not that sort of woman Betty. I can't believe you are. I can't feel the same about you as I did. And Africa is to be communist I suppose. I used to be proud to be British. There

was a high ideal. I came out onto the verandah and looked at the stars. (CLIVE goes. BETTY from Act I comes. BETTY and BETTY embrace)

CLOUD NINE music

THE END