



SUBTLE BODIES

Production Notes

This is a dream play; a comedy of altered states in which images that have been shaped by the private rages, frustrations and desires of the characters take public, or at least semi-public, form. On occasion, these dream-images seep almost unnoticed into the "real world" of the play, like the sand that is constantly blowing in under the doors of the Atlantic Hotel, where the story is laid. At other times, they supplant that world entirely, the most spectacular example of which occurs in the Third Act, when the hotel becomes a ship, and sails off into the night on what is to be its final voyage.

Plainly, such transformations make hefty demands upon the play's designer. In *Subtle Bodies*' first production these challenges were met by creating an environment that was a kind of no-man's-land between the real and the illusory, with the details of the hotel sketched in, but not completed. Walls were not solid, staircases were skeletal, windows were suspended in space. Reality was provisory here, and it seemed almost inevitable that the stuff of dreams would invade such an unfixed place.

This is by no means the only solution to the challenge however. Depending on the scale of the budget, and the sophistication of the stage machinery available, the play would certainly not be harmed by much more physical transformation. I'm a great fan of stage illusions, for instance; this might be a fine place to put the smoke and mirrors to work in a dramatic context. It would be quite something to see the hotel become a vessel in front of us, as Lear proclaims:

"Suppose a ship . . . And the sea. The way Sean dreamed it. Foamy and vast."

A little too elaborate for a lot of companies, I realize. Most productions will have to rely upon more stylized transformations, to which end I introduced the Dream Technicians, who—like Bunraku

puppeteers—move about the stage unseen by those they manipulate (the characters), and largely ignored by the audience. For a production of modest means, the Technicians are a useful device. They can construct and strike the scenic elements around people as scenes play out, helping to create the kind of flow of images that dreams are made of. The ship, the lifeboat and the sea can be nearly symbolic: cardboard cutouts, scrawls of light in the darkness, a patch of colored light and the sound of waves . . .

About the dialogue. Though the banter of the piece is designed to evoke the texture of ordinary conversation, it is, of course, highly stylized. There should be a whiff of artifice in even the most naturalistic scenes: in the Feydeauesque precision of the comings and goings, in the overlapping of dialogue, in the "confessional" scenes, when the characters, posing for a picture, speak their secret hearts. (These are, by the way, people who come from the North of England, their accents unmusical. At least, that's the way I've always heard them in my head.)

Finally, although the play has its farcical moments, and at its heart sits a poet dedicated to the poetry of nonsense, it is in fact a highly structured piece, providing every character with a very specific line of action. It is important that the audience be able to trace those lines of action, be able to see through the general mayhem into the nature of each of these people. We're not simply here to watch their exterior lives, after all. The glory of dream plays is that they carry us past the surface of behavior, into the maelstrom of motive. The passengers in Lear's doomed ship have a night in which to play out their most private dramas on the secret stage of their psyches. Little do they know there is an audience on the other side of the footlights.

Clive Barker—Los Angeles, 1996

The Cast:

DEXTER JUFFS: the bridegroom to be

CARYS SKINNER: the bride to be

SEAN

MRS. CORCORAN: a widow, now running the Atlantic Hotel

A VIRGIN

A GORILLA

MR. FOSS: a nonsense poet and watercolorist, also known as

EDWARD LEAR

ULYSSES

YOUNG MAN with bow and arrow

BEACH PEOPLE

MRS. MOCATTA of the Bureau

MR. TREADAWAY also of the Bureau

DREAM TECHNICIANS

THE WEDDING PARTY

PHOEBE SKINNER: Carys' mother

LINDBERG SKINNER: Carys' father

DONNA-MARIE SKINNER: Carys' sister

MELBA JUFFS: Dexter's mother

FRANK JUFFS: Dexter's father

ROSE GIDDY

VINCE BURROUGHS

ROBERT KIDD: the best man

PASSENGERS on the *Bear of Amsterdam*, a cruise ship

GUESTS at Mr. Foss' Wedding

Act 1

Act 1:

GULLS ON THE SOUNDTRACK. ORCHESTRAL MUSIC. SLOWLY THE LIGHTS COME UP ON ATLANTIC HOTEL, A SMALL, TATTY ESTABLISHMENT ON THE NORTH-WEST COAST OF ENGLAND.

THE HOTEL IS PRESENTED TO US, AS IT WERE, IN SNATCHES.

THERE IS A FRONT DOOR; A BALCONY; WINDOWS WITH VENETIAN BLINDS, INTERNAL DOORS PERHAPS, CERTAINLY A BACK EXIT LETTING ONTO A PATIO. ALL FRAGMENTS OF ARCHITECTURE WHICH WILL, WHEN LIT ACCORDINGLY, EVOKE A VARIETY OF SPACES.

SOMETIMES A BALCONY, SOMETIMES A ROOM, SOMETIMES A DREAM-SCAPE: A BEACH, A SHIP, THE SEA. THESE SPACES MAY BE ISOLATED BY A LIGHTING EFFECT, BUT OFTEN THE HOTEL CAN BE SEEN IN ITS STRANGE ENTIRETY, WITH VARIOUS EVENTS (OR NON-EVENTS) RUNNING SIMULTANEOUSLY BUT DISCREETLY. CAUSE AND EFFECT, OR SIMPLY EFFECT.

THE SOLID STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING IS SCARCELY REPRESENTED. NO SOLID WALLS OR DOORS, JUST FRAMES. THE BUILDING IS ALMOST TRANSPARENT, A DREAM HOTEL, HOVERING ON THE BRINK OF EXISTENCE. THE COLORS THE HOTEL IS PAINTED PERHAPS EMPHASIZE THIS. TONES OF MILKY LILAC, OF PALEST AMBER, OF TWILIGHT BLUE. A RECEDING WORLD, ONLY HALF-TRUE.

THROUGH THE LATTICE OF DOOR FRAMES, WINDOWS, ETC., WE CAN SEE THE DUNES THAT ENCROACH ON THE HOTEL ON EVERY SIDE. THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE SEA: THE DUNES ROLL ON FOREVER, IT SEEMS. THE TIDE HAS WITHDRAWN FROM THIS STRETCH OF COASTLINE, LEAVING VAST EXPANSES OF SAND WHICH SPREAD TO THE THRESHOLD AND BEYOND, THREATENING TO INVADE THE HOTEL.

THERE ARE A FEW LINGERING SIGNS OF FORMER SPLENDOR IN THIS WASHED-OUT (OR RATHER DRIED-OUT) WORLD. LOOPS OF COLORED LIGHTS HANG AROUND THE OUTSIDE OF THE HOTEL, AND OVER THE PATIO. THERE IS ALSO A SIGN, ONCE IMPRESSIVE, NOW ERODED, WHICH READS: "WELCOME TO THE ATLANTIC."

THE SET IS SIMPLY FURNISHED. ON THE PATIO A SMALL WICKER TABLE AND A CANVAS CHAIR (NOT A DECKCHAIR, THE UPRIGHT VARIETY); INSIDE, SUCH FURNITURE AS THE ACTION REQUIRES. NOT MUCH, PROBABLY, SO THAT EASE OF TRANSFORMATION FROM PLACE TO PLACE, FROM SCENE TO SCENE, CAN BE PRESERVED.

THE FLOOR, I IMAGINE, IS TILED; THE SAME WORN PASTEL TONES HERE AS ELSEWHERE. THERE SHOULD BE SOME CACTI IN POTS, FAIRLY LARGE—THIS DESERT HOTEL'S EQUIVALENT OF POTTED PALMS.

BEYOND THESE FEW DETAILS, THE SHAPE OF THE SPACE AND THE EPHEMERA THAT DECORATE IT ARE DISCRETIONARY. IN TRUTH, ALL OF THESE ARE DETAILS ARE. IF YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT DREAM OF THIS PLACE, BY ALL MEANS DREAM IT, AND GOOD LUCK TO YOU.

IT IS THE MIDDLE OF THE AFTERNOON OF FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND. A LIGHT WIND IS BLOWING OFF THE SEA. THE STRINGS OF LIGHTS ROCK GENTLY.

MAYBE THE SOUNDTRACK CARRIES, AT THE EDGE OF AUDIBILITY, THE LISP OF THE SEA. STANDING AT THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOTEL ARE DEX-

TER JUFFS AND CARYS SKINNER. THEY ARE IN THEIR EARLY TWENTIES; WELL-DRESSED; A GOOD-LOOKING COUPLE. DEXTER CARRIES A SUITCASE, CARYS A SMALL BAG. THERE IS AN UNMISTAKABLY FUGITIVE AIR ABOUT THEM.

DEXTER: You're not crying?

CARYS: I've got something in my eye.

DEXTER: Let me—

CARYS: (Coldly) I can do it, Dexter.

DEXTER: Sorry. (He watches her nervously) Shall we go in?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM, RELUCTANCE ON HER FACE.

DEXTER: (Sighs) Carys. We're not going back. Not 'til we've had time to sit down and be honest with each other.

CARYS: (Plainly) I don't want to be honest. I want to get married.

DEXTER: Listen to yourself.

CARYS: All right. I agreed to talk. But we're not fugitives. Are we?

DEXTER STEPS INTO THE HOTEL.

CARYS: (To his back) Is that what you think we are, Dexter? Run-away lovers? Will you speak to me?

DEXTER: Are you coming in or not?

CARYS: (Quietly) I hate you.

THE LIGHTS COME UP MORE STRONGLY ON THE REST OF THE HOTEL, AND WE ARE AWARE OF TWO OTHER FIGURES. ONE, MR. FOSS, IS ASLEEP IN THE CANVAS CHAIR ON THE PATIO. MORE OF HIM LATER. THE OTHER, SEAN, A YOUNG MAN IN A T-SHIRT AND JEANS, IS BRUSHING UP SAND AT THE FAR END OF THE HALL, HIS BACK TO THE FRONT DOOR. THIS RITUAL (SAND-BRUSHING) SHOULD GO ON THROUGHOUT THE PLAY.

DEXTER COUGHS. SEAN TURNS.

SEAN: Yeah?

DEXTER: I'm Dexter Juffs.

SEAN: You'll get over it.

SEAN GOES BACK TO HIS BRUSHING.

DEXTER: My—er—my wife and I have a reservation here.

SEAN: (*Disinterested*) Oh?

DEXTER: Juffs. We have booked.

SEAN: All right. Hold your horses. I'll tell herself.

HE EXITS. CARYS STEPS INTO THE HOTEL.

DEXTER: It's been a long time. It's smaller than I remember.

CARYS: It's falling apart.

DEXTER: Mind you, I was five. Worm's-eye view.

CARYS: It's still early. We can go back—

DEXTER: (*Without looking at her*) No.

CARYS: Tell them we took a long drive, just to chat things over. They'd understand.

DEXTER: You make it sound like a clash of taste in carpets.

CARYS IS SILENT.

CARYS: (*Almost throwaway*) It's only sex.

DEXTER: Only.

CARYS: Lots of marriages work without it.

DEXTER: Not this one.

CARYS: Good marriages.

ENTER MRS. CORCORAN, AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN IN MIDDLE AGE, WITH A GENTLE IRISH ACCENT. SEAN FOLLOWS; STARTS BRUSHING AGAIN.

MRS. CORCORAN: Mr. and Mrs. Juffs?

DEXTER: Yes.

CARYS: No.

MRS. CORCORAN: No?

CARYS: We're not Mr. and Mrs.

DEXTER: I'm Dexter Juffs and this is my . . . my fiancée—

MRS. CORCORAN: Oh.

DEXTER: Carys.

CARYS: Skinner.

MRS. CORCORAN: I'm Mrs. Corcoran.

DEXTER: Pleased to meet you.

MRS. CORCORAN: I'm sorry about the confusion. I thought you were married.

DEXTER: Well, we're almost married.

CARYS: It was supposed to be tomorrow. But we've decided to talk about it for a couple of years.

MRS. CORCORAN: It doesn't matter two hoots to me. (*To the boy*) Sean! (*To Dexter and Carys*) I've put you at the front overlooking the—

SEAN HAS APPROACHED THE GROUP.

SEAN: Sand.

MRS. CORCORAN: Beach. Will you take up Mr. Juff's case for him? Number 9. You do still want a double room?

DEXTER: Certainly.

MRS. CORCORAN: Sean.

SEAN DOESN'T MOVE.

CARYS: Just as a point of interest: where is the sea?

SEAN: Twenty minutes by taxi.

MRS. CORCORAN: Will you *please* take the cases up?

SEAN: That's Ulysses' job.

MRS. CORCORAN: Well, where's Ulysses?

SEAN: Search me.

MRS. CORCORAN: (*Gently threatening*) Would you find him please, Sean?

SEAN EXITS.

DEXTER: I came here as a boy. I remember the sea being closer somehow.

MRS. CORCORAN: It's the low autumn tides.

DEXTER: Oh.

SEAN: (*Off, yelling*) ULYSSES!

MRS. CORCORAN: It looks as though the weather's brightening up a bit.

DEXTER: Yes.

MRS. CORCORAN: It was quite squally last night. Come far?

DEXTER: Manchester.

SEAN: *(Off)* ULYSSES!

MRS. CORCORAN: You'll be wanting a bath and a change of clothes. Where's the boy got to? Would you like to sign the register, Mr. Juffs, on behalf of you both?

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS; CARYS EXHALES, SLOWLY.

CARYS: It's stifling here.

DEXTER: Is it?

CARYS: There's no air conditioning.

DEXTER HAS TAKEN OUT HIS PEN, BUT CAN'T GET IT TO WRITE.

CARYS: Did you ask for a room with a view of the sea?

DEXTER: My pen doesn't work.

CARYS: You don't hear a word I say.

DEXTER: Got a pen?

CARYS: *(Vehemently)* Jesus Christ!

DEXTER: *(Blandly)* You haven't.

CARYS: I could scream.

DEXTER: Scream then. Go on. Make a spectacle of yourself.

SHE OPENS HER MOUTH TO SCREAM. A SCREAM FILLS THE STAGE; BUT NOT HERS. WHEN SHE CLOSES HER MOUTH, FURIOUS THAT HER THREAT MEANS NOTHING, THE SCREAM GOES ON. SHE STANDS IGNORING DEXTER, STARING OUT AT THE AUDIENCE, WHILE DEXTER, BACK TO US, TRIES TO GET HIS PEN TO WORK BY SCRIBBLING WITH IT.

UNSEEN BY BOTH OF THEM (AND APPARENTLY UNHEARD), A LARGE GORILLA ENTERS, TRAILING SHATTERED SHACKLES FROM ITS WRISTS, AND CARRYING A SCREAMING GIRL OVER ITS SHOULDER. NEITHER DEXTER NOR CARYS FLINCH; THIS SPECTACLE IS CLEARLY NOT VISIBLE TO THEM.

VIRGIN: Let me be, you heartless brute! I'm technically still a virgin!

THE GORILLA PUTS THE GIRL DOWN, STILL HOLDING ON TO HER. SHE THRASHES IN ITS ARMS, BEATING AT ITS FACE AND CHEST. THERE'S SOMETHING CURIOUSLY FORMAL ABOUT THE DISPLAY: LIKE A SCULPTURE COME TO LIFE.

VIRGIN: I'll never love you! Not if you were the last thing on earth! I'll die first!

THE GORILLA PULLS HER CLOSE.

VIRGIN: Rape! Rape!

DEXTER: *(Looking up from the register, which he is now signing)* What did you say?

VIRGIN: You're heartless and repulsive!

CARYS: What?

DEXTER: You said something.

CARYS: No.

DEXTER: Oh.

VIRGIN: *(Overwhelmed now)* Oh God . . . God in Heaven . . .

SEAN HAS FOUND HIS WAY ONTO THE PATIO. HE CALLS OUT ACROSS THE DUNES.

SEAN: Ulysses!

CARYS: My watch has stopped.

VIRGIN: I want to die! Oh! Oh!

CARYS: Probably got sand in it.

DEXTER: *(As if he's being blamed)* Don't look at me.

SEAN: Ulysses!

CARYS: Damn.

MR. FOSS: *(In his sleep)* Somebody help her. Piggily-pot! Man in a white shirt. Shoot the simianky beast!

SEAN: What?

THE GIRL SCREAMS ONE FINAL TIME, WRAPPED IN THE GORILLA'S EMBRACE.

MR. FOSS: *(In his sleep)* Too late!

SEAN: *(Shaking him)* Mr. Foss!

THE SCREAM STOPS.

MR. FOSS: Oh!

HE WAKES. THE GORILLA DROPS THE GIRL.

SEAN: Mr. Foss! Are you all right?

MR. FOSS: What? (*Sees Sean*) Oh.

SEAN: You were talking in your sleep.

MR. FOSS: Was I?

HE STANDS UP; GLANCES INTO THE HOTEL AT THE GORILLA AND THE GIRL, WHO WAIT LIKE ACTORS ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LINE.

SEAN: Were you dreaming?

MR. FOSS: What did I say?

SEAN: Something about a simi . . . simi-something beast.

MR. FOSS: Nonsense.

SEAN: Beg pardon?

MR. FOSS: It was all . . . just nonsense. I'm forgetting already.

THE GORILLA AND THE GIRL WANDER AWAY IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

MR. FOSS: Foolishness.

SEAN: Was it dirty?

MR. FOSS: Not that I recall. Just the usual banalities. You'd think a man my age'd have a decent catalogue to rummage through. Puerile rubbish. I disgust myself.

MR. FOSS IS IN FACT EDWARD LEAR, WATERCOLORIST AND WRITER OF NONSENSE, LIVING AT THE ATLANTIC UNDER THE ASSUMED NAME OF HIS FAVORITE CAT. HE IS AN IMPRESSIVE MAN; WIDE, DOMED FOREHEAD, A DARK THATCH OF A BEARD. THOUGH HIS MANNER IS POLITE TO A FAULT, IT BARELY CONCEALS RAGES AND PASSIONS OF WAGNERIAN PROPORTIONS. HE WEARS MODERN CLOTHING: SUBDUED, ELEGANT. HE CARRIES A HALF-SMOKED CIGAR. OFTEN IT IS UNLIT, BUT HE SELDOM IS WITHOUT

IT FOR THE REST OF THE PLAY. ON OCCASION HE USES IT TO PROVIDE A SMOKE-SCREEN FOR HIMSELF IN FRONT OF HIM IS A SMALL EASEL, AND PAINTING EQUIPMENT.

SEAN: Have you seen Ulysses?

MR. FOSS: How old are you, boy?

SEAN: I'm nineteen.

MR. FOSS WASHES OUT A PAINT BRUSH.

MR. FOSS: Traveled much?

SEAN: I've been around. Newcastle. Glasgow.

MR. FOSS: (*Contemptuous of these boasts*) Ah. Go abroad. There's nothing left here.

HE PICKS UP THE GLASS THAT CONTAINS HIS WATER-COLOR WATER.

MR. FOSS: Did you know there were tides in a glass of water? Oh certainly. Dominion of the moon, this tumble glass. And the waters of my eyes. Tides there, even. And what do I do, surrounded by such wonders? I dream banalities. Loveless, the soul goes to dust.

SEAN: I'll remember.

MR. FOSS: You do that, nineteen.

HE GIVES THE GLASS TO SEAN.

SEAN: And you haven't seen Ulysses?

MR. FOSS: Oh, but I have. Half an hour ago, he went down onto the beach, accompanied by a shovel. I think it must be serious.

SEAN: What?

MR. FOSS: Between him and the shovel. They wanted to be alone together, no doubt, so that he could canoodle with the curve of her handle. You don't have a clue what I'm talking about, do you?

SEAN: Not much.

MR. FOSS: And quite right too.

FOSS STEPS THROUGH INTO THE HALL, LEAVING SEAN ON THE PATIO.

SEAN: (*Shouts*) ULYSSES!

FOSS LOOKS AT CARYS; CARYS STARES BACK.

MR. FOSS: Oh. I'm sorry.

HE WITHDRAWS AND TAKES COVER ON THE PATIO.

MR. FOSS: (*Hissing*) Psst! Sean! People. Flesh and blood. D'you see them?

SEAN: Newlyweds.

MR. FOSS: Now there's a profession. I'll go round the back. Young love is all I need.

FOSS GATHERS UP HIS BELONGINGS AND DISAPPEARS AROUND THE BACK OF THE HOTEL.

CARYS: Did you see that man?

DEXTER: No.

CARYS: Didn't he have sad eyes?

DEXTER: I didn't see him.

CARYS: He was staring. Like I had three heads.

DEXTER: Maybe he thought you were beautiful.

SHE ALMOST SMILES; TURNS TO MEET HIS GAZE; HE IS LOOKING AWAY.

ENTER MRS. CORCORAN.

MRS. CORCORAN: Everybody seems to have disappeared. I can't even find the boy now.

CARYS: There was a man in here. With a beard.

MRS. CORCORAN: Oh, that's Mr. Foss.

CARYS: I thought I . . . his face rang a bell.

MRS. CORCORAN: He stays here every year, late in the season. When everybody else has gone home.

CARYS: Foss.

MRS. CORCORAN: Says it reminds him of the Holy Land, being here. Of all places.

SEAN ENTERS.

MRS. CORCORAN: Have you found him?

SEAN: He's bugged off somewhere.

MRS. CORCORAN: Well, you'll have to take the bags up yourself.

SEAN: Typical.

DEXTER: Carys was wondering . . . can we see the sea from our room?

MRS. CORCORAN: Well, not exactly; but you have a panoramic view of the dunes.

SEAN: You lucky people.

SEAN PICKS UP THE BAGS AND LEADS OFF BEFORE MRS. CORCORAN CAN GIVE HIM ANOTHER LOOK.

MRS. CORCORAN: Will you be wanting dinner tonight?

DEXTER: Please.

MRS. CORCORAN: If you need anything, just dial through to me on the phone beside the bed. And if it's not working just yell down the stairs.

DEXTER: Thank you.

MRS. CORCORAN: I must say, it's lovely to have you here.

DEXTER AND CARYS FOLLOW SEAN UPSTAIRS. MR. FOSS, WHO HAS COME ALL THE WAY AROUND THE BACK OF THE HOTEL, NOW ENTERS BY THE FRONT DOOR.

MR. FOSS: Mrs. Corcoran.

MRS. CORCORAN: Mr. Foss.

MR. FOSS: I wonder, has there been any communication for me? A telegram perhaps?

MRS. CORCORAN: Not to my knowledge.

MR. FOSS: (*To himself*) I'm forgotten.

MRS. CORCORAN: Are you all right? You look tired.

MR. FOSS: I'm not sleeping well.

MRS. CORCORAN: Is it the pillows?

MR. FOSS: Oh no, the pillows are miracles of duck down.

MRS. CORCORAN: Only I can easily change them for you. Maybe something with a bit more spring.

MR. FOSS: (*To himself*) A boy.

MRS. CORCORAN: Sorry?

MR. FOSS: A buoyant thought. But no, really. No.

HE STARTS TO GO, LEAVING MRS. CORCORAN BEWILDERED, AS EVER. SUDDENLY, HE BRIGHTENS.

MR. FOSS: There is something.

MRS. CORCORAN: Yes?

MR. FOSS: I'd turn somersaults for a pot of coffee. Turkish coffee. So thickadicorice you can stand your spoon in it.

MRS. CORCORAN: Now?

MR. FOSS: My tongue has more fur than the back of a cat. I sweat if I stroked it, the thing would purr.

MRS. CORCORAN: It's probably all the coffee which is keeping you awake. Are you having nightmares?

MR. FOSS: I wish I were.

MRS. CORCORAN: Don't say that.

MR. FOSS: I wish once in a while my empty head could drum up a few terrors. Blue bottle cities, rains of flavorful fire, men with nutmeg graters for hands scratching at the door.

MRS. CORCORAN: Sounds like one of Sean's books.

MR. FOSS: You don't like bad dreams?

MRS. CORCORAN: When Mr. Corcoran and I bought the hotel—this is almost eleven years ago now—I dreamt somebody pulled the plug out of the sea and it all drained away. I think it was prophetic, don't you? In those days the sea used to come within twenty yards of the back door. In eleven years, it's receded so far you can't even see it. All caused by movements in the earth's crust—

MR. FOSS: Taken away your bread and butter.

MRS. CORCORAN: I'm glad Edwin isn't here to see it. The sand everywhere. It would have distressed him terribly.

MR. FOSS: I rather like it.

HE REACHES INTO HIS POCKET AND TAKES OUT A HANDFUL OF SOFT, DRY SAND, WHICH FALLS BETWEEN HIS FINGERS.

MRS. CORCORAN: It gets in everything. In the linen cupboard, in the carpets. I think it wants to bury us alive.

SEAN COMES DOWNSTAIRS. MRS. CORCORAN SEES THE SAND MR. FOSS HAS JUST LET FALL FROM HIS HAND.

SEAN: No tip.

MRS. CORCORAN: There's sand on the floor, Sean.

SEAN: What do I do? Applaud?

MRS. CORCORAN: I'll make your coffee, Mr. Foss.

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS.

SEAN: Lugged their stuff up two flights.

HE GETS BROOM OUT AND STARTS BRUSHING UP THE SAND AGAIN.

SEAN: It's slavery.

MR. FOSS: I was thinking, nineteen—

SEAN: Huh?

MR. FOSS: We could perhaps be of some use to each other. Do you dream?

SEAN: Sometimes.

MR. FOSS: Vividly?

SEAN: *(Smiles)* Oh yeah.

MR. FOSS: Dreams of some faraway tomorrow, are they? Futurial visions?

SEAN: I hadn't thought. Suppose so. Yeah.

MR. FOSS: And do you remember them? In detail? Colors? Faces?

SEAN: When I bother to.

MR. FOSS: I'll pay you for them.

SEAN: Are you kidding?

MR. FOSS: Deadly serious. You bring me a fistful of nightflights—erotic, traumatic, apocalyptic—I'll buy them all off you.

SEAN: Any kind of dream?

MR. FOSS: Anything. Except gorillas. Shall we shake on it, nineteen?

THEY SHAKE.

MR. FOSS: Good.

AS HE EXITS.

MR. FOSS: (*As he exits, jubilant*) GOOD, GOOD, GOOD.

SEAN GOES BACK TO BRUSHING UP THE SAND, A RHYTHMICAL BRUSHING THAT IS QUIET AND CALMING.

MUSIC. SLOWLY, THE LIGHTS CHANGE. LIGHT COMES THROUGH A VENETIAN BLIND. THE CASE WHICH DEXTER WAS CARRYING IS OPEN ON A CHAIR. DEXTER IS STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, SMOKING.

CARYS ENTERS. SHE'S CHANGED FROM THE RATHER TOO PRISSY CLOTHES SHE WAS WEARING; SHE'S BATHED: SHE FEELS CLEAN AND OPTIMISTIC.

CARYS: (*A joke*) Well, at least there was no sand in the taps.

DEXTER: Um.

CARYS: It doesn't matter, does it really, not having a view of the sea? We wouldn't have looked at it anyway.

A BEAT.

DEXTER: You were right: we shouldn't have come.

CARYS: (*Ignoring his pessimism*) I was thinking while I was in the bath. Everything's going to be all right.

DEXTER: Oh.

CARYS: Why don't you have a bath too? You'll feel better.

DEXTER: We *could* go back. Tell them it was all a joke.

CARYS: What's brought this on?

DEXTER: Being here. Talking's not going to change anything. We'll get married. What the hell. We'll raise kids, the way they want us to. What the hell. We'll raise bloody whippets if your father prefers.

CARYS: This is Rob's fault. This whole cynical routine. I can hear him now.

DEXTER: I'm not being cynical, I'm just saying you're right. What more do you want? Let's get married, for Christ's sake, next week could be too late.

CARYS: Bloody Rob.

DEXTER: You're talking about our best man.

CARYS: Best rat.

DEXTER: Cheap.

CARYS: Shall we have an argument, is that what you want?

DEXTER: No.

CARYS: Isn't it? Wouldn't you like to have one almighty row, 'cause I would. I'd really love that.

DEXTER: All right. You're on.

CARYS: No holds barred.

DEXTER: Where shall we start? Sex?

CARYS: Sex is good.

DEXTER: Ladies first.

CARYS: You're lousy in bed.

DEXTER: I'm not used to screwing for an audience.

CARYS: What?

DEXTER: Your mother taking a sperm count.

CARYS: Now *that's* cheap.

DEXTER: Your whole bloody family's cheap, paper bags, whippets and all.

LIGHTS HAVE BEGUN TO COME UP ON ANOTHER PART OF THE STAGE, GENTLY ILLUMINATING THE "AUDIENCE" FOR THIS ARGUMENT. MR. FOSS ON HIS BALCONY, DRINKING TURKISH COFFEE, POT IN HAND TO TOP UP HIS CUP. SEAN LEANING ON THE DOOR FRAME OF THE FRONT DOOR, SUNNING HIMSELF, SWEATING. MRS. CORCORAN INSIDE THE HOTEL. THE GORILLA ON THE PATIO READING PLAYBOY.

CARYS: It always comes back to my mother.

DEXTER: Oh, you've noticed that too.

CARYS: What about your holy family?

DEXTER: You leave them out of it.

CARYS: Then you leave my family out of it. Just because they've got money.

DEXTER: Paper bags.

CARYS: So they sell paper bags. Somebody has to sell paper bags.

At least they're not afraid of living it up a bit.

DEXTER: Flaunting their money, that's all it is. It's not life.

CARYS: You know the trouble with you—

DEXTER: Do tell.

CARYS: Everything makes you guilty. You're afraid any minute God's going to strike you dead.

DEXTER: (*Near tears*) I wish he would. I bloody wish he would—

DEXTER STARTS TO EXIT.

CARYS: Where are you going?

DEXTER: To drown myself.

CARYS: The sea's that way! (*Pointing*)

DEXTER EXITS.

CARYS: (*Shouts after him*) If you can find it!

THE LIGHT FADES ON CARYS, AS HER FACE BEGINS TO CRUMPLE. THE FOUR WATCHERS GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS. MRS. CORCORAN WATERS THE CACTI. FOSS RETURNS TO HIS COFFEE DRINKING. DEXTER EXITS FROM THE HOTEL BY THE FRONT DOOR, NUDGING SEAN ASIDE.

SEAN: Excuse me.

DEXTER: What?

SEAN: How about "excuse me"?

DEXTER: Sorry. I didn't mean to—sorry.

DEXTER EXITS.

SEAN WHISTLES GENTLY TO HIMSELF. THE SUN BEATS DOWN ON HIS FACE. THE GORILLA CROSSES THE STAGE AND LOOKS UP LONGINGLY AT FOSS ON THE BALCONY. FOSS STANDS UP AND RETURNS THE STARE.

MR. FOSS: I tried to conjure up a dream of pure energy, pure sexuality. Pure life. Something to prove my potency. And what do I get? An adhesive and love-lorn Gorilla. (*To the Gorilla*) Please fade away, there's a good fellow. Dreams should fade away once you've woken from them.

THE GORILLA SIGHS AND EXITS.

AT THE FRONT DOOR, SEAN IS STRIPPING OFF HIS T-SHIRT, STRETCHING AND WIPING SWEAT OFF HIS CHEST. MRS. CORCORAN, STILL AT THE CACTI, SEES HIM.

MRS. CORCORAN: You haven't forgotten the rest of the hallway have you, Sean? There's still sand. And those lights.

SEAN: No, I haven't forgotten.

MRS. CORCORAN: Another night like last night and they'll be blown down.

SEAN: I'm getting some sun while it lasts.

MRS. CORCORAN: Five minutes.

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS.

SEAN CLOSES HIS EYES. FOSS, THROUGH THE INVISIBLE WALLS OF THE HOTEL, WATCHES HIM, TRANSFIXED.

MR. FOSS: We possess two bodies. The physical and the subtle.

MRS. CORCORAN COMES BACK. SHE CALLS ACROSS THE HALLWAY.

MRS. CORCORAN: Sean?

SEAN: Five minutes, you said.

MRS. CORCORAN: Did you ever find Ulysses?

SEAN: No.

MRS. CORCORAN: He's supposed to be serving dinner at six-thirty.

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS.

SEAN: It's not my fault. (*No answer. He shrugs.*)

MR. FOSS: The subtle body is our dream-self. By day, it is discreet. Like a flame in sunlight, burning yet invisible.

SEAN SHIFTS TO CATCH THE SUN BETTER, FLITTING AWAY A FLY FROM HIS FACE. THE MOVEMENT CATCHES MR. FOSS' ATTENTION.

MR. FOSS: But by night, the subtle body goes, at the speed of thought, into . . .

HE'S LOSING CONCENTRATION.

MR. FOSS: . . . into . . .

SUDDENLY THE ANGER IN FOSS BREAKS OUT.

MR. FOSS: Go on, strip off your shirt if you must. Strip off your pants while you're at it. I don't care. I'm quite unmoved. You see?

RAISES HIS HANDS.

MR. FOSS: Scarcely a tremor. What do I care what's between your legs? No doubt your ears are unwashed, your fingernails bitten, no doubt you are entirely viliacious. Pumpy and slumpy and . . .

SEAN, WHO HAS OF COURSE HEARD NOTHING OF THIS, FLITS AWAY ANOTHER FLY.

MR. FOSS: Where was I? I get misled. It's so very easy to forget invisible things. The life of the mind.

SEAN STRETCHES.

MR. FOSS: (Re: Sean) This'll decay. Even this. But the subtle body dreams on.

MR. FOSS WATCHES SEAN FOR A WHILE.

THE SOUND OF GULLS.

SEAN'S EYES HAVE CLOSED.

MR. FOSS: Asleep, boy?

APPARENTLY HE IS. THE SEA SOUND IS CLOSER NOW.

MR. FOSS: Bring me something back, will you? Something bright and dangerous.

LIGHTS CHANGE. IN THE CHANGE, ENTER ULYSSES. HE'S FIFTY (AT LEAST); WEATHER-BEATEN; BLOODY-MINDED, AND A LITTLE SLOW. HE IS WEARING BOOTS AND WIND-CHEATER AND IS CAKED IN MUD AND WET SAND. AS HE CROSSES THE STAGE THE PHONE RINGS.

SEAN: (Opens his eyes) Shit!

HE GOES INSIDE. ULYSSES PICKS UP THE PHONE.

SEAN: Ulysses?

ULYSSES: Shhh!

SEAN WANDERS BACK TO THE FRONT DOOR.

ULYSSES: (Into phone) Hello? Yes, this is the Atlantic Hotel. Huh? Will you speak up? Juffs? No, there's nobody here name of Juffs. Sorry.

SEAN HEARS. POINTS TO THE REGISTER.

ULYSSES: Wait a minute.

ULYSSES LOOKS AT REGISTER.

ULYSSES: Sorry. My mistake. A Mr. and Mrs. Juffs booked in sometime this afternoon. You want a word with them? Uh? Oh I see. Yeah. How many? Is that all singles? Two doubles, rest singles. No problem. Fine. Yeah.

ULYSSES PUTS DOWN THE PHONE.

SEAN: Who was it?

ULYSSES: Wrong number.

SEAN: Where have you been?

ULYSSES: Watching a lady do very slow striptease.

SEAN: Lady? You don't know no ladies.

ULYSSES STARTS TO EXIT.

SEAN: Who is it? Eh? Ulysses. What are her tits like?

AT THIS MOMENT CARYS ENTERS WITH HER BAG, THE WORSE FOR A BOUT OF CRYING. SEAN CRINGES AND GOES OUTSIDE.

ULYSSES: How do,

ULYSSES EXITS. CARYS STANDS, LOOKING LOST, THEN GOES TO SPEAK TO SEAN.

CARYS: Have you seen Mr. Juffs?

SEAN: He went out a while back.

CARYS: Which way?

SEAN: I wasn't watching.

SHE GOES BACK INSIDE, AS MRS. CORCORAN COMES BACK IN. SHE SEES THE SAND ULYSSES HAS TRODDEN IN, AND THE MUD ON THE PHONE.

MRS. CORCORAN: (To Carys) Can I help you with something, Mrs. Juffs?

CARYS: I'm leaving. Sorry it's been such a short stay. It's not the room or the view or anything like that—

MRS. CORCORAN: Oh.

CARYS: And I'm not Mrs. Juffs. I'm not going to *be* Mrs. Juffs either. He's a pig.

MRS. CORCORAN: Mr. Juffs, is this? The pig.

CARYS: I'd rather not talk about it if you don't mind.

MRS. CORCORAN: Fine.

A BEAT.

CARYS: We were going to get married tomorrow. They're all waiting in Manchester—

MRS. CORCORAN: (Shocked) You mean you didn't cancel it before you came here?

CARYS: The reception was for a hundred and thirty people. We were going to Malta for two and a half weeks.

MRS. CORCORAN: Mr. Foss said Malta's very hot.

CARYS: It doesn't matter anyway, not now. It's all wrecked. I had a lovely dress, cream silk satin, lace on the bodice and the cuffs, tiers of lace on the skirt. It cost a small fortune. Daddy always called me Princess, you see. Wanted to look that way on my wedding day. (Furious) It's all that bloody Rob's fault.

MRS. CORCORAN: Who's Rob?

CARYS: I'm not sure I should be telling you all this. (A beat) He's the best man. I can't bear him. When he's with Dexter they never stop laughing, like a couple of school kids. It's pathetic. They laugh at such stupid things.

MRS. CORCORAN: I think maybe men have got a different sense of humor. Edwin, my husband, never laughed at the same things I did.

CARYS: Does he run the hotel with you?

MRS. CORCORAN: He's dead. Cancer of the lung. He was fifty-three. We never really found the same things funny, right from the wedding-night. I suppose we were compatible in everything but that.

CARYS: And was it important?

MRS. CORCORAN: We managed. He'd tell his silly stories, and I suppose I'd pretend to laugh.

CARYS: I do the same. With sex.

MRS. CORCORAN: Pretend to laugh.

CARYS: Pretend. Just pretend. Sex is so important to him. It's like work.

MRS. CORCORAN: With Mr. Corcoran it was more of a hobby. On the whole I think he preferred telling jokes. I still hear his laugh you know. All the time. Of all the things to remember. After the funeral I got panicky. I couldn't bring his face to mind. You know? I thought: I've forgotten what he looks like. A few days gone and I can't even remember his face. And then the laugh came back. I just heard it in my head.

CARYS HAS CLOSED HER EYES.

MRS. CORCORAN: Are you all right?

CARYS: I'm trying to think what Dexter looks like. Oh God. You know, I can't picture him.

MRS. CORCORAN: Well, he hasn't died, has he?

CARYS SMILES.

CARYS: No.

MRS. CORCORAN: Of course he hasn't. He hasn't died.

MRS. CORCORAN SMILES. CARYS SEEMS TO SEE THE HUMOR OF IT. THEY LAUGH TOGETHER.

MRS. CORCORAN: You should wait at least to tell him you're going.

CARYS: (*Warming to this idea*) Maybe spend the night.

MRS. CORCORAN: That's right.

CARYS: It could be all right here without his bloody self-righteous family.

MRS. CORCORAN: A little sea air.

CARYS: He's such a child.

MRS. CORCORAN: They all are.

MR. FOSS APPEARS, CIGAR IN HAND.

MR. FOSS: A call for me, perhaps? I heard the telephone ring a while ago.

MRS. CORCORAN: No. This is Carys—

CARYS: Skinner.

MRS. CORCORAN: Carys Skinner. Mr. Foss.

MR. FOSS: How do you do?

MRS. CORCORAN: I must start dinner. Excuse me.

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS.

MR. FOSS: Leaving?

CARYS: . . . no. Tomorrow maybe.

MR. FOSS: The beds are terrible.

CARYS: Are you leaving, then?

MR. FOSS: Oh no. I love it. Reminds me of the Holy Land. Sand in the bed. In the food. I miss the company of an occasional scorpion, otherwise it's home away from home.

CARYS: You've lived in the Holy Land?

MR. FOSS: Lived all over.

CARYS: May I ask . . . what do you do? Only, the face . . .

MR. FOSS: I'm a minor poet. I have a small income from rhymes. For children.

CARYS: Oh. You're not on the television.

MR. FOSS: Thank the Lord, no. There's been nothing, while you've been down here, in the way of a message for me?

CARYS: Not that I saw.

MR. FOSS: Only the widow Corcoran forgets.

CARYS: Are you expecting good news?

MR. FOSS: Good or bad. I'm open to suggestions. Anything at all, really. I'd just like some news. I feel . . .

CARYS: Lost.

MR. FOSS: Well now, there's a word.

CARYS: Not lost.

MR. FOSS: No, you're right. Lost.

CARYS: Are you really a poet?

MR. FOSS: After my peculiar fashion.

CARYS: Go on then.

MR. FOSS: Go on what?

CARYS: Recite something.

MR. FOSS: My memory's a sieve, I'm afraid. I have holes in my past large enough to drive a life through.

CARYS: Make something up.

MR. FOSS: I can't. Not remotely.

CARYS: You're not much of a poet if you can't—

MR. FOSS: Wait. Your name is . . . ?

CARYS: Carys . . . Skinner.

MR. FOSS: (*He concentrates and produces a limerick with evident difficulty*) There was a young person called Skinner

Who ate two small dogs for her dinner

Once inside . . . Once inside, at a pace—

The dogs had a race, And the one that got out was the winner.

CARYS: That's stupid.

MR. FOSS: (*Pleased*) Yes, it was, wasn't it? Well, it's been perfectly splendidous chatting with you. I'll wish you a good afternoon and make myself scarce.

HE EXITS. CARYS STANDS STILL, TRYING TO THINK WHERE SHE'S SEEN HIS FACE BEFORE. DEXTER COMES IN. HE'S WALKED A FAIR DISTANCE.

DEXTER: Are you staying or going?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM, EXPRESSIONLESS.

CARYS: We're waiting for news.

DEXTER: What?

CARYS: Oh. Staying.

DEXTER: Good.

ULYSSES APPEARS, DRESSED NEATLY NOW; HAIR COMBED, FACE WASHED. HE STILL WEARS HIS BOOTS, SAND ENCRUSTED. HE HAS A TRAY, A CLOTH OVER HIS ARM: AN IMPERFECT COPY OF A WAITER. HE ALSO HAS A GONG, WHICH HE STRIKES WITH UNNECESSARY VIGOR.

ULYSSES: Dinner will be served in half an hour.

DEXTER: I'll go and wash.

HE KISSES CARYS AND EXITS.

DEXTER: *(As he leaves)* White tie and tails, I presume.

SEAN COMES IN AS CARYS PICKS UP HER BAG AND FOLLOWS DEXTER UPSTAIRS.

SEAN: You look a sight!

ULYSSES: And you don't?

SEAN: You're the maitre d'. I'm the dogsbody.

ULYSSES: If I'd had a dog with a body like yours, I'd have shot it.

SEAN: *(Taking aim with two fingers)* Bang!

ULYSSES: Missed.

SEAN: Who's the stripper?

ULYSSES: I'm not telling you.

SEAN: Come on. Someone taking a swim, was it?

ULYSSES: It's my secret.

SEAN: You're too old for secrets.

ULYSSES: Foss said that to me once. I'd watch the old bugger you know. He's got his eye on you.

SEAN: Never.

ULYSSES: Gawps at your bum all the time. God knows why.

SEAN: *(Faintly embarrassed)* Lay off, will you?

ULYSSES: You like it, don't you?

SEAN: You think he's a pederast?

ULYSSES: No, pederasts are obsessed with feet.

SEAN: They are not. Pederasts like boys. I read it.

ULYSSES: Get off. Pederasts like feet. Same as pedestrian: that's feet. Or pedicure.

SEAN: Bet you.

ULYSSES: You're on.

SEAN: Two quid.

ULYSSES: All right.

SEAN: Much you know.

SEAN PUTS ON HIS T-SHIRT.

SEAN: Getting a bit breezy.

ENTER MRS. CORCORAN.

MRS. CORCORAN: Ulysses.

ULYSSES: His mistress' voice.

MRS. CORCORAN: Finish the hall will you, Sean?

EXIT MRS. CORCORAN. ULYSSES FOLLOWS.

ULYSSES: Feet.

SEAN: Boys.

ULYSSES EXITS. SEAN RELUCTANTLY GOES TO FETCH THE BROOM. LIGHT CHANGES, SLOWLY. AMBER LIGHT, ALL FROM ONE DIRECTION, FAR ON THE HORIZON, POURS THROUGH THE HOTEL. IT'S SUNSET. SOMEWHERE, MUSIC IS PLAYING. SEAN FINISHES BRUSHING. ON THE BALCONY, MR. FOSS.

MR. FOSS: How the sun sets. Treacle clouds and a syllabub sea. Too picturesque for a man of refined tastes. It's shameful to be moved by such a crass display. But I watch the pelicans skim, and my heart wants to burst.

THE AMBER LIGHT BEGINS TO FADE.

MR. FOSS: It's going, see? Entirely jellified, down in slumbers. At one stride comes the dark. Not mine, that. Coleridge.

THE SUN HAS GONE. A WIND HAS STARTED. WE ARE MOVING INTO A DREAM-SPACE NOW.

MR. FOSS: Another wind tonight, oh yes. That'll breeze its way into a few dreams.

A YELLOW LIGHT WASHES THE STAGE NOW; THE WIND IS HOWLING. APES CHATTER IN THE DISTANCE. MR. FOSS HAS GONE. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE THERE IS NOW A MULTI-COLORED BEACH UMBRELLA, LOOKING SINGULARLY OUT OF PLACE. A YOUNG MAN ENTERS, ALMOST NAKED, HIS BODY PAINTED. HE CARRIES A BOW AND ARROW. THE WIND IS WHISTLING LIKE A SAND STORM, DEAFENINGLY LOUD. THE YOUNG MAN WHOOPS, DELIGHTED BY THE STORM.

YOUNG MAN: Come on out! Come on—

HE SEARCHES AROUND THE STAGE, FAILS TO FIND WHOEVER HE'S SEARCHING FOR, AND EXITS; AS A BEACH BALL ROLLS ON TO THE SAND, FOLLOWED BY TWO LAUGHING PEOPLE, DRESSED FOR THE BEACH, WHO CHASE IT OFF.

ENTER DEXTER. HE IS IN EVENING DRESS TO HIS WAIST, BUT HE WEARS NEITHER TROUSERS NOR SHOES.

DEXTER: Oh God, God, someone help me!

HE IS YELLING AGAINST THE WIND, WHICH MORE OR LESS DROWNS OUT HIS WORDS.

THE YOUNG MAN ENTERS.

YOUNG MAN: Ah!

DEXTER: Oh Christ, no!

YOUNG MAN: Come to Daddy.

DEXTER: You can't do this. I haven't any trousers. You can't!

THE YOUNG MAN POINTS THE BOW AT HIM. HE SCREAMS. IN THE STORM, CARYS ENTERS, TOWEL AND BOOK IN HAND. SHE WEARS SUNGLASSES.

DEXTER: Carys.

SHE DOESN'T SEE OR HEAR HIM. THE YOUNG MAN STILL HAS THE BOW POINTED AT HIM. CARYS LAYS THE TOWEL UNDER THE BEACH UMBRELLA.

DEXTER: Carys! It's me! Dexter! It's Dexter!

SHE IGNORES HIM.

DEXTER: Help me, Carys!

SHE LIES ON THE TOWEL, FACE DOWN, AND SLEEPS. THE YOUNG MAN ADVANCES ON DEXTER, WHO RUNS OFF. THE YOUNG MAN FIRES.

THE STAGE IS SUDDENLY FULL OF PEOPLE, ALL DRESSED (OR UNDRESSED) FOR THE BEACH; BALLS, BOOKS, TOWELS, GLASSES, SUNSHADES. THEY ARE ALL TALKING, BUT WE CAN HEAR NOTHING OF WHAT THEY'RE SAYING. THEY SIT DOWN IN GROUPS, FILLING THE STAGE; AN EXPANSE OF OILED FLESH AND GRINNING FACES. SOME EAT; SOME DRINK.

THE STORM DIES, ABRUPTLY, AND WE HEAR THEM ALL TALKING, VERY LOUDLY, TO EACH OTHER, GOSSIPING, SHOUTING, ARGUING, MAKING LOVE. SEVERAL RADIOS ARE PLAYING SIMULTANEOUSLY; DOGS ARE BARKING, BABIES CRYING. INTO THIS CROWD COMES DEXTER FROM BACK CENTER-STAGE. HE PICKS HIS WAY THROUGH THE MORASS, STAGGERING A LITTLE.

DEXTER: Carys . . . Carys!

HE COLLAPSES, AN ARROW IN HIS BACK. SOMEONE SCREAMS. CHAOS. EVERYONE STANDS UP, AND LOOKS AT THIS DEAD MAN.

THEY ALL START TO DRIFT AWAY, PICKING UP THEIR BELONGINGS. CARYS IS STILL SUNNING HERSELF

NO WIND NOW; JUST A DISTANT RADIO, PERHAPS.

DEXTER: (Dying) Carys . . .

THE YOUNG MAN COMES BACK CARRYING HIS EMPTY BOW.

DEXTER: Oh God . . . Carys . . .

THE YOUNG MAN STANDS A LITTLE WAY OFF; SCRATCHES HIS CROTCH; INSOLENT. CARYS GETS UP. SEES HIM.

CARYS: What are you doing, Dexter?

SHE PUTS ON A DRESSING GOWN SHE'S BROUGHT WITH HER.

DEXTER: Help me. He's killed me.

TECHNICIANS TAKE THE UMBRELLA AND OTHER PROPS AWAY.

CARYS: Do you know what you look like?

DEXTER: I'm dying, Carys.

THE YOUNG MAN CROSSES IN FRONT OF DEXTER, AND THEN PULLS OFF HIS JACKET. THE ARROW COMES OFF, TOO.

CARYS: No, you're not. You're dreaming.

THE YOUNG MAN EXITS. NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT ON STAGE IS DEXTER IN A SHIRT AND TIE, AND CARYS, LOOKING DOWN AT HIM, IN HER DRESSING GOWN.

THE LIGHTING HAS CHANGED SUBTLY SO THAT NOW IT IS MOONLIGHT IN THE HALLWAY OF THE ATLANTIC HOTEL.

CARYS: You're dreaming, Dexter. Wake up.

DEXTER OPENS HIS EYES.

DEXTER: Oh! Oh God . . . (Sits up) I was in a desert; full of people: all families.

CARYS: Never mind.

DEXTER: When did I put my shirt on?

CARYS: In your sleep, presumably. Come back to bed.

HE IS HELPED TO HIS FEET BY CARYS AND GOES WILLINGLY; LIKE A LAMB. THE YOUNG MAN WANDERS BACK ON AND WATCHES HIM GO. AS HE CROSSES, OTHER FIGURES EMERGE FROM THE SHADOWS, WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN WATCHING THE SPECTACLE OF DEXTER'S DREAM. ONE WE RECOGNIZE: MR. FOSS. THE OTHER TWO ARE STRANGERS. AN IMPERIOUS WOMAN IN PURPLE AND BLACK: MRS. MOCATTA; AND FURTHER IN THE SHADOWS THE DIMINUTIVE MR. TREADAWAY, A BOWLER-HATTED, MIDDLE-AGED MAN WITH WHITE GLOVES. HE HAS THE PEDANTIC MANNER OF A FICTIONAL DETECTIVE. HE CARRIES A BRIEFCASE.

MRS. MOCATTA: What are you doing, Edward?

MR. FOSS: So you arrived. At last.

MRS. MOCATTA: Of course I arrived.

MR. FOSS: No telegram; no telephone call. I've been on tenterhooks.

MRS. MOCATTA: I've been busy. I'm not staying, Edward. So please say your piece and have done with it.

MR. FOSS: It's all in my letter of jellification. I thought it would be a fine thing, once I was dead, to join the Bureau and work in the sleep of men. And women. But I can't . . . do it . . . any longer.

MRS. MOCATTA: Your request to be relieved was duly noted and filed.

MR. FOSS: So I'm discharged?

MRS. MOCATTA: Good God no.

MR. FOSS: My resignation wasn't accepted?

MRS. MOCATTA: It was looked on sympathetically, but—

MR. FOSS: (*Mournfully*) Not accepted.

MRS. MOCATTA: The Dream Bureau is overworked, pressed to the limits. We need reliable agents in the field. If we lose you, we need to find somebody to replace you.

MR. FOSS: But I'm incompetent. That dream that Dexter just created?

MRS. MOCATTA: What about it?

MR. FOSS: I couldn't have choreographed a Freudian spectacle like that. I haven't got the wit left. I'm reduced to stealing ideas from juveniles.

MRS. MOCATTA: I'm sympathetic. Really I—

MR. FOSS: (*Furious now*) You are not! You don't give a damn for me. As long as you have your agents burrowing in the dream life of the nation, you're quite content. Bugger me! I'm just a cog! Well I won't do it! I won't!

MRS. MOCATTA: (*Unmoved*) You will, Edward. You signed a contract.

MR. FOSS: I've got a good mind to spill the beans.

MRS. MOCATTA: Now you're being silly.

MR. FOSS: Tell the world about this conspiracy.

MRS. MOCATTA: It's not a conspiracy, it's a science. What would your so-called dream-life of the nation be like without our nurturing it, shaping it? Once upon a time you thought it would be a fine sport to paddle in the collective unconscious.

MR. FOSS: Well, I've got my feet wet and it wasn't as advertised. Most of the minds I peer into are awash with trivia.

MRS. MOCATTA: Not everyone can dream the *Iliad*.

MR. FOSS: They make up shopping lists, and re-run soap operas. Its banality grinds me down.

MRS. MOCATTA: I'm truly sorry. But there's nothing I can do.

MR. FOSS: (*A warning*) I'll abscond. I will.

MRS. MOCATTA: I don't doubt you're perfectly capable of doing so. That's why Mr. Treadaway here—

TREADAWAY GETS UP AND COMES FORWARD TO SHAKE FOSS' HAND. FOSS IGNORES HIM.

MRS. MOCATTA: —will be staying to keep you company.

MR. FOSS: Prisoner, you mean. Why can't you release me, let him take over?

MRS. MOCATTA: He's not adequately qualified.

MR. TREADAWAY: I'd like to learn, Mr. Lear. From a genius such as yourself.

MR. FOSS: Don't call me Mr. Lear. I live here under the assumed name of my deceased and much missed cat, Foss. Mister. Foss.

MRS. MOCATTA: (*Taking Mr. Foss aside*) Edward. In the long run it's in everybody's interest that you be replaced. You're passé.

MR. FOSS: Mildly, she crushes me.

MRS. MOCATTA: On your own admission. The archetypes are constants, but the forms obviously leave you confused. At your age, I don't wonder.

MR. FOSS: Gently, she hammers me into the ground.

MRS. MOCATTA: Be assured, I'll do my best to hurry the bureaucrats up. Find someone to relieve you. In the meanwhile . . .

MR. FOSS: In the meanwhile?

MRS. MOCATTA: Sweet dreams.

SHE TURNS HER BACK ON MR. FOSS, WHO CLOSES HIS EYES, AND THE GORILLA ENTERS, CHARGING IN WITH AN AXE TO KILL HER.

WHEN THE WEAPON IS POISED ABOVE HER HEAD, SHE TURNS AROUND AND FREEZES THE GORILLA IN ITS TRACKS.

MRS. MOCATTA: (*As to an errant child*) Really, Edward.

MR. FOSS: It was worth a try.

THE GORILLA DROPS ITS AGGRESSIVE POSE AND STANDS, HANDS AT ITS SIDE, WATCHING MRS. MOCATTA EXIT. TREADAWAY CONFISCATES THE AXE AND ESCORTS MRS. MOCATTA OUT.

MR. FOSS: (*Pretending as if nothing has happened*)
Mrs. Jaypher said it's safer

If you've lemons in your head
First to eat a pound of meat
And then to go at once to bed.

MR. TREADAWAY RETURNS. THE GORILLA GROWLS AT HIM.

MR. FOSS: (To Treadaway) I'll be a sensible prisoner, Treadaway.

MR. TREADAWAY DOESN'T ANSWER.

MR. FOSS: (Needling him politely) This is my Gorilla, by the way. But I'm embarrassed to admit I don't even know what sex it is. You haven't had any Gorilla-sexing experiences I suppose? No. Why should you? It's not much of a hobby. Can't get rid of it. The Gorilla. It lingers around like a discarded lover, even when I'm wide awake. Do you have those dreams? The ones you can't shake off? You do speak?

MR. TREADAWAY: On occasion.

MR. FOSS: Well, that's something. Shall we be friends?

MR. TREADAWAY: I have my orders. To keep you in my little eye.

MR. FOSS: Yes, it is a little eye. Positively piggy, in fact. What shall I call you? The Pobblesquat? The Pumpkibble? (With sudden vehemence) Or maybe just plain PIG?

MR. TREADAWAY: Where are you going?

MR. FOSS: To bed.

MR. TREADAWAY: Aren't you going to see how the house is dreaming?

MR. FOSS: I'm on holiday.

THE YOUNG MAN IS STILL WANDERING AROUND. MR. FOSS SEES HIM.

MR. FOSS: One indulgence, perhaps.

MR. FOSS WHISPERS IN THE YOUNG MAN'S EAR. THE YOUNG MAN CROSSES TO THE GORILLA AND KISSES IT. THE GORILLA PICKS HIM UP AND CARRIES HIM OFF. MR. FOSS GRINS.

MR. FOSS: (Sighing) Ah. Love.

MR. TREADAWAY IS ALREADY MAKING NOTES IN HIS BLACK BOOK ABOUT THIS OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOR, SHAKING HIS HEAD. FOSS BEGINS TO LAUGH, AS THE LIGHTS GO DOWN, SLOWLY.

END OF ACT ONE.

Act 2

Act 2:

SLOWLY, LIGHTS UP ON THE HOTEL. IT IS NOW MIDDAY, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD. THE HOTEL IS QUIET, EXCEPT FOR ULYSSES BRUSHING UP THE SAND.

THE GORILLA SITS OUT ON THE PATIO, SMOKING A CIGARETTE. SUDDENLY THE SOUND OF: A MUSICAL CAR HORN; THREE CARS DRIVING UP OUTSIDE; SLAMMING CAR DOORS; SHOUTING; LAUGHTER; VOICES NOW, ABRA-SIVE. THE WEDDING PARTY ERUPTS ONTO THE STAGE.

FIRSTLY THE SKINNER FAMILY. PHOEBE SKINNER: OVER-DRESSED, A NATURAL ORGANIZER AND BULLY. LINDBERG SKINNER, A SELF-MADE MAN WHO MADE HIS FORTUNE IN PAPER BAGS, BOMBASTIC, OVER-HEARTY, UNTRUSTWORTHY. DONNA-MARIE SKINNER, CARYS' YOUNGER SISTER, A MENTALLY DISTURBED GIRL WHOSE DISTURBANCE IS NOT HELPED BY THE AGGRESSION OF HER PARENTS.

THE JUFFS PARTY. MELBA JUFFS, A SHARP, CLEVER WOMEN WHO'S NOT THE EQUAL OF PHOEBE IN VOLUME, BUT MAKES UP FOR THAT IN VITRIOL. FRANK, HER HUSBAND, A QUIET, GOD-LOVING LIFE-HATER, WHO IS WEARING A NECK BRACE THAT SWELLS HIS NECK OUT TO THREE TIMES ITS REAL SIZE, INHIBITING MOVEMENT.

THERE ARE THREE OTHER GUESTS. ROSE GIDDY, WHO

ASPIRES TO BE ANOTHER PHOEBE, BUT SUCCEEDS ONLY IN BEING IN HER SHADOW; VINCE BURROUGHS, ALREADY THE WORSE FOR SEVERAL BEERS, HANDS THRUST INTO HIS POCKETS TO PLAY WITH HIS BALLS: A SLOB OF THE FIRST RANK; ROB KIDD, THE BEST MAN, HIS HANDSOME, BESPECTACLED FACE BETRAYING THE IRRITATION OF HAVING TRAVELED WITH THESE PEOPLE ALL MORNING. DONNA-MARIE HAS LATCHED ON TO HIM TODAY, LOOKING CONSTANTLY FOR HIS APPROVAL.

ULYSSES WITHDRAWS IN HORROR AS THEY DUMP THEIR HAND-LUGGAGE AND FEW CASES DOWN. SUDDENLY THE STAGE, WHICH WAS ALMOST EMPTY, IS CRAWLING WITH PRIMARY COLORS AND BUZZING PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY DETAILS ABOUND. WHY IS PHOEBE WEARING A FUR COAT? WHAT IS FRANK'S INJURY? WHY SO MANY BAGS, PAPER AND PLASTIC?

THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATIONS, NUMBERED I, II, III, ARE GOING ON MORE OR LESS SIMULTANEOUSLY.

I.

MELBA: How's your neck, Frank?

FRANK: I'm fine. Really.

MELBA: Only Vince can take the bags—(*Frank is loaded down*)—can't you Vince?

VINCE, EMPTY-HANDED, WALKS AWAY.

VINCE: Laden, love, laden.

MELBA: I'll swing for that man, I swear it.

FRANK: Just ignore him.

II.

LINDBERG: Bit of a dive for the Princess to have chosen, isn't it?

PHOEBE: Donna-Marie—

DONNA-MARIE: Yes?

PHOEBE: Leave Rob alone. (*To Lindberg*) She didn't choose it, he did.

ROB: (*Re: Donna-Marie*) She's all right.

PHOEBE: *Leave Rob alone*, Donna-Marie.

LINDBERG: Oh for Christ's sake, leave the girl be. How about the booze, Vince?

VINCE: I'm game. Past opening time.

III.

DONNA-MARIE: I've never been to sea before. Have you been to sea?

ROB: Not for a long time, no.

DONNA-MARIE: Will we go swimming? I hope we can go swimming. Do you think we can?

I.

MELBA: Please put the bags down, Frank, before you do yourself some damage. We'll get somebody to take them upstairs.

FRANK: Is it really sixteen years? Seems longer, doesn't it?

MELBA: I think it's flown by.

FRANK: Oh.

MELBA: It's rather sweet bringing her here. Not like Dexter to be sweet.

II.

LINDBERG: Vince is going out for the drinks. Coming, Rob?

MELBA: And the sandwiches, if you will, Mr. Juffs.

LINDBERG: Oh Christ. The ever open door.

PHOEBE: Humor her.

LINDBERG: Rob?

ROB: Huh?

PHOEBE: Donna-Marie, will you *please* not bother Rob.

VINCE: She's quite taken to you, hasn't she?

PHOEBE: (*To Donna-Marie*) And I'm not going to tell you again.

III.

DONNA-MARIE: Go swimming with wimmin. Swimming with wimmin.

ROSE: Picture, everybody!

ROSE IS NEVER WITHOUT HER CAMERA. THE CONVERSATION HALTS. THERE IS SOME MOVEMENT TOWARDS ROSE FOR A PHOTOGRAPH TO BE TAKEN.

PHOEBE: *(With absolute authority)* Not now, Rose.

ROSE WITHERS. CONVERSATION STARTS AGAIN, BUT NOW IN A MORE ORDERLY FASHION, WITHOUT THE SAME OVERLAPPING.

LINDBERG: Are you coming Vince? Get the stuff unloaded or we'll be standing around all day.

VINCE: Good thinking, chief.

VINCE DOESN'T MOVE.

PHOEBE: They may not even be here.

MELBA: Oh but he said on the phone. Mr. and Mrs. Juffs.

PHOEBE: They could have gone back by now. Could be a different Juffs.

MELBA: It's not a common name.

PHOEBE: Meaning Skinner is?

MELBA: Meaning it's not a common name, Mrs. Skinner. We came here when Dexter was a boy: he obviously thought we wouldn't remember.

DONNA-MARIE: Swimming with wimmin.

LINDBERG: Shush Donna. Rob?

ROB: Yes. I'm coming.

MELBA: He thought he'd hide away for a while. He was always a hider.

LINDBERG: I don't blame him. Phoebe, sort that bloody child out before she drives us to drink.

VINCE: Too late.

VINCE EXITS, PATTING ROSE ON THE BACKSIDE AS HE GOES BY. ROB IS DISENGAGING HIMSELF FROM DONNA-MARIE.

ROSE: She's very clingy today, isn't she?

PHOEBE: She always gets like this on long journeys.

ROB: I'll be back in a moment.

ROB EXITS. MELBA JUFFS HAS SEEN ULYSSES.

MELBA: Excuse me. Where's the manager?

PHOEBE: Ah!

ULYSSES: I don't know anything.

PHOEBE: We're booked in. Two doubles, four singles.

ULYSSES: I don't know anything about it. Sorry.

MELBA: Wasn't it you I spoke to?

ULYSSES: No.

PHOEBE: There must be *somebody* in authority.

MELBA: We've got our reservations.

ULYSSES: That makes two of us.

ULYSSES EXITS.

PHOEBE: What a place to come to.

FRANK: It's changed hands since we were here.

MELBA: We don't know that.

PHOEBE: Running away.

ROSE: It's rather romantic.

PHOEBE: *(Forbidding)* Rose.

ROSE: Well, I think so.

FRANK: I'm sure they had their reasons.

PHOEBE: The boy doesn't know his own mind half the time.

MELBA: How would you know?

PHOEBE: I would have left them to it, but Lindberg's always let Carys run over him. Especially since Donna-Marie.

DONNA-MARIE IS SITTING OPEN-MOUTHED, OPEN-LEGGED, ON A CHAIR, STARING INTO MIDDLE-DISTANCE.

PHOEBE: It broke my heart. I didn't want to see that happen

again. But I'm not going to find it easy to forgive this little drama. All the cancellations, it's humiliating. And expensive.

FRANK: Don't you see a little of yourself in them? Far from the maddening crowd?

PHOEBE: They've thrown it all back in our faces. That's all I can see.

ROB RETURNS WITH THE FIRST CRATE OF DRINK.

PHOEBE: I can't bear ingratitude.

ROSE: Hold it!

SHE SNAPS ROB IN THE DOORWAY. VINCE FOLLOWS WITH TWO CANS OF BEER, ONE OPENED AND BEING DRUNK.

VINCE: What about me?

HE POSES. ROSE IGNORES HIM. ROB GOES OUT FOR SOME MORE. DONNA-MARIE FOLLOWS.

PHOEBE: Donna.

ROB: It's all right, I'll watch her.

ROSE: Sandwiches! Mrs. Juffs wanted sandwiches.

MELBA: It doesn't matter if you can't—

ROSE FOLLOWS ROB OUT TO FETCH SOME FOOD. LINDBERG ENTERS, BOTTLES IN ARMS.

LINDBERG: Anyone turned up yet?

ENTER MRS. CORCORAN, FACING A SPRAWLING MASS OF PEOPLE, CASES, HANDBAGS, BOOZE, ETC.

MRS. CORCORAN: Oh my God.

LINDBERG: Ah! We are in the land of the living.

MRS. CORCORAN: Can I help you?

MELBA: I rang last night. Juffs—

LINDBERG: We've been waiting here—

PHOEBE: We're the Wedding Party.

MELBA: We rang last night; booked the rooms.

PHOEBE: Skinner.

MELBA: Juffs.

MRS. CORCORAN: Juffs? Are you sure you booked?

LINDBERG: 'Course we're bloody sure. We've driven sixty miles this morning—

PHOEBE: We're the Wedding Party.

MELBA: They are here, aren't they? The children?

FRANK: Our son Dexter.

MRS. CORCORAN: Yes, they're both here.

LINDBERG: So there you are. The mountain has come to Mohammed.

PHOEBE: We're the Wedding Party.

MRS. CORCORAN: So I see.

LINDBERG: She's a willful little so-and-so. But if she wants to have her wedding in the middle of nowhere, so be it.

PHOEBE: The point is, we've booked.

MELBA: Yes. Quite definitely. No doubt about that.

MRS. CORCORAN: Well, there must be some error.

PHOEBE: We need six rooms.

MELBA: Two doubles and four singles.

LINDBERG: I assume you've got the space?

MRS. CORCORAN: Well, yes.

LINDBERG: Good enough. Right: we'll get the rest of the stuff. If we get cracking we can have the afternoon on the beach.

LINDBERG GOES OUT WITH ROB. VINCE STAYS PUT, MAKING EYES AT ROSE. THE CONVERSATION BREAKS DOWN AGAIN, THE THREE PARTS OVERLAPPING.

I.

MELBA: I knew they'd be here.

FRANK: Of course.

MELBA: Stands to reason. Why don't you put the bags down, Frank? You look uncomfortable.

FRANK: I am uncomfortable.

MELBA: I think you enjoy it sometimes.

II.

VINCE: Nice camera.

ROSE: Mm.

VINCE: You're the official photographer, are you?

ROSE: I suppose I am. I hadn't thought.

VINCE: Ever do nudes, do you?

ROSE IS STONY-FACED.

VINCE: Take pictures of yourself in the bathroom mirror?

ROSE: No, I don't.

VINCE: Lovely woman like you. You ought.

ROSE: No.

III.

PHOEBE: We'll need one of the singles adjacent to our room for Donna-Marie.

MRS. CORCORAN: Oh. Yes.

PHOEBE: She'll probably be all right. But you know. And you want a double, don't you?

FRANK: I'm sorry?

PHOEBE: You want a double room?

MELBA: Oh yes. Of course.

MRS. CORCORAN: I'll have to put one of the singles in a double bed, I'm afraid.

PHOEBE: Rose. You'll have to go in a double bed.

ROSE: Oh.

VINCE: Never mind.

PHOEBE: That's all right, isn't it?

VINCE: We'll work something out.

ROSE: Where's Rob gone?

TO SHAKE OFF VINCE, SHE GOES TO THE DOOR, AS ROB COMES IN WITH MORE LUGGAGE. SHE RELIEVES HIM OF SOME OF IT, A DESPERATE SMILE PLASTERED ON HER FACE.

VINCE: We're not going on a bloody world cruise, are we? *(To*

Lindberg, who comes in with more luggage) I just said: we're not going on a bloody world cruise, are we? Anyone found the kitchen sink?

LINDBERG SMILES THINLY.

VINCE: Mine used to pack for a cruise every time she left the house.

PHOEBE: *(Acid)* But of course, eventually she went on one, didn't she, Vince? Permanently.

THIS SHUTS HIM UP.

ROSE: Is there a beach? Safe for swimming, I mean?

MRS. CORCORAN: Oh yes.

ROSE: *(To Rob)* Can you swim?

DONNA-MARIE: *(To herself)* Swim.

ROB: A little.

MRS. CORCORAN: *(Sorting out the keys)* Well, one double is Number 7; that's for Mr. and Mrs. Juffs; 6 is for you, Mrs. Skinner, with your daughter in Number 5. All right? Would you like to sign the register? The other double is on the middle floor: Room 2. And there's 12 and 13, the other singles.

ROSE: *(To Rob)* I'm having the double bed.

MRS. CORCORAN: I'll get someone to help with the bags.

FRANK: I can manage.

MRS. CORCORAN: There's a lot.

MELBA: Anyone want a sandwich?

SHE HAS UNVEILED A PLATE OF SMALL TRIANGULAR SANDWICHES, PRESUMABLY CUT FOR THE RECEPTION. SHE IS ALREADY PLOWING THROUGH THEM.

MELBA: They're salmon and water-cress on this side, and ham on the other.

MRS. CORCORAN: Ulysses. The bags. And then a word.

ULYSSES: I don't know anything about it.

MELBA: Sandwich? *(To Rob. He takes one)* Take one of each. There's plenty.

FRANK: Any chance of lunch?

MRS. CORCORAN: Lunch. Well . . . we might run to a light buffet. Only we weren't anticipating—

VINCE: *(To Melba)* You missed me. *(She offers him a sandwich)* To

ULYSSES: *(To Rose)* Is this your case?

ROSE: No, that one.

MELBA: *(To Ulysses)* Want a sandwich? They're salmon and watercress on this side and ham on the other.

MRS. CORCORAN: I'll see what I can sort out.

LINDBERG: Much appreciated.

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS. ULYSSES LOADS HIMSELF UP WITH BAGS.

MELBA: We may as well go up. *(To Frank)* You're late for your tablets.

ULYSSES: I'll lead off, eh?

ULYSSES LEADS MELBA JUFFS, FRANK JUFFS AND ROSE UPSTAIRS.

PHOEBE: What a pair of killjoys.

LINDBERG: Now, now.

PHOEBE: How could Carys marry into a family like that?

LINDBERG: As I remember, your family weren't too keen on me 'til the business flourished.

PHOEBE: It makes me boil. They haven't paid for a penny. Not a bloody penny! Not even the cars.

LINDBERG: Don't make such a song and dance.

SHE DESPAIRS OF HIM.

PHOEBE: Vince.

VINCE: Um?

PHOEBE: Bring up my bag, will you? Donna-Marie.

DONNA-MARIE: What?

PHOEBE: Not "what," "pardon."

DONNA-MARIE: Pardon.

PHOEBE: Come with me. And wipe your mouth. *(To Lindberg)* She's getting worse.

DONNA-MARIE: Mam.

PHOEBE: What?

DONNA-MARIE: *(By rote, no insolence)* Not "what," "pardon."

PHOEBE: Come on!

DONNA-MARIE: Can't I stay with Rob?

PHOEBE: No you can't.

UNWILLINGLY DONNA-MARIE JOINS HER MOTHER, STARTING TO CRY AS THEY EXIT TOGETHER. VINCE OPENS ANOTHER BEER.

VINCE: *(Picks up a mock leopard-skin bag)* This hers?

LINDBERG: It looks tasteless enough.

VINCE: I'm in with Rose, eh? No trouble. No trouble.

LINDBERG: *(Suddenly weary of all this, he sighs heavily)* Never have kids, Rob.

ROB: No?

LINDBERG: More bloody trouble than they're worth. You wait and see.

ROB: It's not . . . very likely.

LINDBERG: That's what I used to say. Never catch me married, not in a month of Sundays. You know, these few days, I've watched you. You don't get ruffled, do you? Stay out of things unless you've got something worth saying. I like that. Ever thought about working for Skinners?

ROB: A career in paper bags?

LINDBERG: If I had a penny for every time I've heard that joke, I'd be even richer than I am.

ROB: I'm happy where I am, thank you. Really. I like research.

LINDBERG: That's a bad sign at your age. Being happy. Doesn't leave you much room for ambition, does it?

ROB: Oh, I've got my ambitions. They're just not . . . fiscal. Thanks for the offer anyway.

LINDBERG: Bit of a balls-up this, isn't it? I'm only doing it for Phoebe, she worships the girl. Especially since Donna-Marie. Personally—I know he's a friend of yours, but better out than in—I've never taken to Dexter. Or the family. The father's a bit of an odd-ball, don't you think? Too much religion. It buggers you up.

ROB: Dexter's his own man.

LINDBERG: I'm sure he is, I'm sure he is, and the sooner he's out

from under those two the better all around. Anyway, it's what Carys wants. You'll see. You do anything for them. Even give them away. That's the pity of it.

SEAN ENTERS AND CROSSES THE STAGE, EXCHANGING A GLANCE WITH ROB.

LINDBERG: Eh! Eh! Eh!

SEAN STOPS, STARING AT LINDBERG.

LINDBERG: There's bags here. For upstairs. It's about time we got a little service.

SEAN LOOKS PUZZLED.

LINDBERG: (*As to an idiot*) Bags. Upstairs. Up. Stairs.

SEAN SHRUGS AS THOUGH HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

LINDBERG: Oh for Christ's sake, can't you understand plain pigging English? (*To Rob*) Is he foreign, is that it? (*Slowly*) I want the bags taken upstairs.

SEAN MAKES A SIGN TO SIGNIFY HE CAN NEITHER HEAR NOR SPEAK.

LINDBERG: What? Speak up.

ROB: I think he's telling you he's deaf and dumb.

LINDBERG: Oh Christ.

LINDBERG NOW STARTS AN ABSURD MIME ROUTINE TO ACCOMPANY HIS INSTRUCTIONS.

LINDBERG: I want the bags taken upstairs. Up. Stairs. Bloody imbecile.

ROB: I don't think you're getting through.

LINDBERG: What is this, a hotel or a home for the bloody disabled? Where's the manager?

ROB: I'll take the bags. It's no problem.

LINDBERG: Will you hell as like. We're paying for the bloody service.

HE EXITS TO FIND MRS. CORCORAN. SEAN AND ROB EXCHANGE LOOKS.

SEAN: There's nothing like playing hard to get.

ROB: I see.

SEAN: Was that in poor taste?

ROB: Yes.

SEAN: I'm Sean.

ROB: I'm Rob.

SEAN: Are you with him?

ROB: In a manner of speaking.

SEAN: My commiserations.

ROSE ENTERS.

ROSE: Could you bring up Phoebe's other case, Robert? It's the blue one. Only Vince left it down here.

ROB: Surely. (*To Sean*) Maybe see you around.

ROB PICKS UP THE CASE, WHICH IS VERY HEAVY.

SEAN: Watch it. You'll strain your groin.

ROB: Wouldn't want that.

ROB EXITS WITH ROSE.

SEAN: (*To himself*) Queer.

HE IS ABOUT TO EXIT WHEN MR. FOSS ENTERS. HE HAS BEEN LINGERING ON THE PATIO UNTIL THE CROWD DISPERSES.

MR. FOSS: Sean. Sweetness. A moment.

SEAN: Mr. Foss.

MR. FOSS: I wondered—

SEAN: You always come up from behind. Why d'you do that?

MR. FOSS: No reason.

SEAN: Well, I'm watching you. How can I help?

MR. FOSS: We had a small transaction planned. The dreams?

SEAN: Oh yeah. Yeah. I've got one.

MR. FOSS: Erotic?

SEAN: No, the other one. The long one.

MR. FOSS: Apocalyptic? Tell me.

SEAN STARTS AN ELABORATE LIE.

SEAN: Well, I don't know what brought it on. I had this dream about the sea—

MR. FOSS: What about it?

SEAN: I dreamt a wave came. A hundred feet high. At least. Frigging huge, it was. Roaring like a herd of lions.

MR. FOSS: Pride of lions.

SEAN: Who's telling the story, you or me? It came, right? Everyone was running around with their hair on end; and I was just standing on your balcony, watching.

MR. FOSS: Just watching.

SEAN: I wasn't afraid. There were ships on its crest, and huge fish, and islands, it had islands on it, swept up. White foam, spitting everywhere, Christ, and it kept coming and coming—

MR. FOSS: And?

SEAN: And nothing.

MR. FOSS: That's it?

SEAN: Suppose I woke up.

MR. FOSS: My God. And I dream gorillas.

SEAN: Well, you would. Is that worth something, then?

MR. FOSS: Oh indeed. *(He takes out his wallet)* Shall we say five pounds?

SEAN: *(Incredulously)* For that?

MR. FOSS: Ten then.

MR. FOSS APPROACHES HIM. GIVES HIM THE MONEY. THEN HE CAN'T RESIST IT, HE TOUCHES SEAN'S FACE.

MR. FOSS: You. Shame. Me.

HE WANTS TO KISS SEAN; THE CONFUSION ON HIS FACE IS AGONIZING.

MR. FOSS: Shame. Me.

SEAN: It's all right.

MR. FOSS: No, it isn't all right. Not at all.

HE DROPS HIS HAND.

MR. FOSS: Thank you for the flight.

MR. FOSS EXITS.

SEAN: All my own work.

ENTER MR. TREADAWAY.

MR. TREADAWAY: Where's he gone now?

SEAN: Mr. Foss? He went out.

MR. TREADAWAY: As soon as I close my eyes, he's off.

ROB HAS COME BACK FOR MORE CASES. SEAN FOLLOWS TREADAWAY TO THE FRONT DOOR TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON. ROB WATCHES HIM GO. AS HE PICKS UP A CASE OF BOOZE, DEXTER AND CARYS ENTER FROM THE PATIO.

ROB: Hello.

DEXTER: Christ.

CARYS: What are you doing here?

ROB: *(Unenthusiastically)* Surprise, surprise.

DEXTER: *(Looking at the remaining cases)* You're not alone?

ROB: No.

CARYS: Who's here?

ROB: Your mother and father; his mother and father; Donna-Marie, Rose, Vince, Uncle Tom Cobbly and all.

CARYS: Oh Jesus.

ROB: Don't look at me, it wasn't my idea.

CARYS: *(To Dexter)* It was your mother. *(To Rob)* Wasn't it? She guessed.

ROB: Yes. But it was Phoebe who led the expedition.

CARYS: I knew we weren't safe here.

DEXTER: We'll pack our bags; get out before they find us.

ROB: You'll have to face them sooner or later.

DEXTER: I vote later.

CARYS: I'll pack. You pay Mrs. Whatzit.

ROB: You can't run out on them again.

CARYS: Listen, Rob. We're just beginning to sort something out here. Don't interfere. *(To Dexter)* Five minutes.

CARYS EXITS.

ROB: Nothing's this bad.

DEXTER: Want to bet?

ROB: It's absurd. Hiding away.

DEXTER: Don't talk to me about hiding away. Not you.

ROB: Oh listen, I'm ready to announce my bed-manners to the assembled company anytime you like. I've had it up to here with "And when are you going to get married, Rob?" and fending off innuendos from Cousin Vince and come-ons from Rose. You took the easy way out, Dex. I've had twenty-four hours of hysterics, mutual recriminations and family cannibalism and it's been an illuminating experience. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to tell them I do it with men. I would happily provide diagrams at this point.

DEXTER: Cool down.

ROB: You ask a lot in the name of friendship, Dexie.

DEXTER: Look, I came here to sort this mess out. To tell Carys that you and I had . . . had . . .

ROB: It was so good it leaves you speechless.

DEXTER: Slept together. *(A qualification)* On occasion. *(Another)* When I was drunk.

ROB: The first time, you were drunk.

DEXTER: I couldn't marry her without explaining.

ROB: What's to explain, Dex? You're not gay. You just sleep with men.

DEXTER: It's all right for you. You know what you want.

ROB: Whereas you go where the wind blows.

DEXTER: That's not fair.

ROB: You want her. You want me. Maybe both. Maybe neither. Probably neither. If you're not careful, Dex, you're going to end up on your own, and oh boy, are you going to be sorry.

DEXTER CROSSES TO ROB.

DEXTER: Don't say that, Rob. About being on my own.

DEXTER SUDDENLY WRAPS HIS ARMS AROUND ROB.

DEXTER: Please.

ROSE HAS COME IN. SHE WATCHES.

ROB: *(Disentangling himself)* No you don't.

DEXTER: I was going to drown myself yesterday, but I couldn't even find the bloody sea.

ROB STARTS TO LAUGH. DEXTER BEGINS TO LAUGH. THEY HUG EACH OTHER.

DEXTER: I love you.

ROSE MAKES A SMALL NOISE.

DEXTER: *(Unhanding Rob)* Oh! Rose!

ROSE: Dexter.

DEXTER: Just saying hello to Rob.

ROSE: *(Coldly)* I saw.

SHE'S WATCHING ROB, NOT DEXTER. HER EMOTIONS ARE ONLY JUST HELD IN CHECK.

DEXTER: It's wonderful, wasn't I just saying, Rob, I was just saying to Rob it's wonderful everybody being here. It's like home away from home.

ROSE JUST STARES AT ROB. ENTER CARYS, AT A RUSH, WITH CASE.

CARYS: Dexter. Quickly! Have you paid—

SEES ROSE.

CARYS: Rose.
ROSE: Hello.

ENTER LINDBERG AND PHOEBE WITH DONNA-MARIE.

LINDBERG: Princess.
PHOEBE: It was her.
LINDBERG: We called after you!
CARYS: *(Face forward)* Oh God. *(Turns, smiling)* Daddy!
PHOEBE: You ran straight past us in the corridor.
ROB: Excuse me. I get sentimental.

*DEXTER POINTS TO THE CASE CARYS BROUGHT DOWN,
ROB PICKS IT UP AND TAKES IT UPSTAIRS AGAIN.*

THE CONVERSATION SPLITS INTO TWO.

I.

PHOEBE: What's the meaning of this?
CARYS: It's good to see you. No, it really is.
PHOEBE: Answer me, please.
CARYS: We thought it was for the best.
PHOEBE: This has been the worst two days of my life, Carys.
Your father might be forgiving, but I'm not. After all the
preparations. The expense.
CARYS: I didn't want to. It was Dexter.
PHOEBE: I'll have words with him later.

II.

LINDBERG: Not an ideal place to elope to, Dexter.
DEXTER: No.
LINDBERG: Stealing her away, were you?
DEXTER: In a manner of speaking.
LINDBERG: I had this same thing when I married your mother-
in-law; couldn't face it all. We ran away too; but we were a
little better at hiding ourselves. It was your mother who
remembered this place. You used to talk about it, she said.

*ENTER VINCE, AND THE JUFFS. FURTHER GREETINGS;
KISSES, HANDSHAKES. VINCE TAKES NO NOTICE OF
DEXTER OR CARYS. HE'S SEEN ROSE, WHO IS SITTING BY
HERSELF TRYING TO HOLD BACK TEARS. THE CONVER-
SATION SPLITS AGAIN.*

LINDBERG HAS CROSSED TO CARYS.

I.

LINDBERG: Take no notice, Princess.
PHOEBE: Don't interfere.
LINDBERG: I understand, baby.
CARYS: *(Suddenly starts to cry)* Oh Daddy!
LINDBERG: And now—
PHOEBE: *(Despairing)* Butter wouldn't melt.
LINDBERG: It's all right. It's all right, Princess. We'll have the
wedding another day. As long as you're all right. I don't want
my Princess crying.

II.

MELBA: Are you well?
DEXTER: Of course.
FRANK: We've had to take a lot of flak about this, Dexter. I hope
you've got an explanation.
DEXTER: It all just happened.
FRANK: Nothing just happens. There's always reasons.
MELBA: Has she been difficult? She's like her mother. Highly strung.
DEXTER: It's not her.

III.

VINCE: You all right?
ROSE: Fine.
VINCE: Want a drink?
ROSE: No. Yes.

*VINCE GRINS. HE'S WINNING HER OVER, HE THINKS. HE
OPENS A CAN OF BEER FOR HER.*

VINCE: There. That'll put hairs on your chest.

ROSE: Thank you. Very much.

SHE DRINKS, VINCE WATCHING HER LIKE AN OVERSEXED HAWK.

LINDBERG: I think we should have a photograph, now we're all back together again.

CARYS: No, Daddy, I look a sight.

LINDBERG: Rose! Everybody! Photograph.

PHOEBE: Rose.

ROSE: Yes?

PHOEBE: Photograph.

ROSE LOOKS UNWILLING.

PHOEBE: Come on.

EVERYBODY STARTS TO ORGANIZE FOR A PHOTO.

DONNA-MARIE: Rob!

PHOEBE: Ssh!

DONNA-MARIE: Where's Rob?

DEXTER: He went upstairs.

PHOEBE: Dexter, you slot in beside Carys.

DEXTER: What about Rob?

DONNA-MARIE: I'll go.

PHOEBE: Donna!

SHE IGNORES HER MOTHER AND EXITS.

PHOEBE: Rose. Snap out of it.

ROSE: I'm sorry. I've got a headache.

PHOEBE: It's that beer. She's not used to drink. *(Accusingly, to Vince)* You should know better.

VINCE SHRUGS.

VINCE: We thought it was a celebration.

PHOEBE: We can celebrate sober.

THE GROUP STARTS TO ARRANGE ITSELF AND IS DULY REARRANGED, BY PHOEBE. ROSE IS A LITTLE DIZZY FROM THE BEER, AND STILL THREATENING TEARS. THE SCENE IS AD-LIBBED AS THE PHOTOGRAPH IS ORGANIZED.

PHOEBE: All right; are we ready?

VINCE: Where's the best man?

DONNA-MARIE ENTERS WITH ROB.

DONNA-MARIE: *(Triumphantly dragging Rob)* I've brought him! I've brought him!

THE TWO NEWCOMERS ARE FITTED INTO THE PICTURE. ROSE, WHO HAS SET HER CAMERA ON A TRIPOD, VIEWS THE ASSEMBLED COMPANY.

ROSE: Everybody squeeze up a bit. More. Phoebe, you're obscuring Carys. Mr. Juffs, in a bit. A bit more. All right. Smile everybody. Smile!

SHE SETS THE TIME-RELEASE, AND STEPS INTO THE PICTURE BESIDE DONNA-MARIE.

ROSE: Say cheese!

ALL: Cheese!

VINCE: Danish Blue.

PHOEBE: *(Volcanic)* Vince.

THE CAMERA FLASHES, THE LIGHTS CHANGE. FIXED IN THE GLARE OF THE FLASH BULB, DESPERATION, FEAR AND LOSS REGISTER BEHIND THE FROZEN SMILES. HELD IN THIS FUGUE STATE, THEY SPEAK THEIR MINDS, UNFREEZING TO SAY THEIR PIECE, THEN FREEZING AGAIN.

MELBA: I hate smiling.

FRANK: I'm in torment. Absolute torment.

MELBA: It shows my gums.

FRANK: My spine is simply going to dust.

MELBA: And my nose casts a shadow; it'll look as though I've got a moustache.

PHOEBE: She looks like Hitler in this light.

MELBA: I'll look like Hitler.

PHOEBE: Carys must be out of her mind.

DONNA-MARIE: Swimmin with wimmin! Swimmin with wimmin!

PHOEBE: Still, who are we to pick and choose?

DONNA-MARIE: Swimmin with wimmin!

PHOEBE: We'll have Donna-Marie hanging round our necks all our lives. We should be grateful to have got rid of one.

ROB: Poor child.

DONNA-MARIE: Swimmin with wimmin!

ROB: Doesn't stand a chance. Nobody stands a chance in this mob.

VINCE: She was trembling when I touched her. I've never had a girl tremble before.

ROSE: They were going to kiss one another. On the mouth. Animals! Animals!

VINCE: She likes the animal in me. That's what it is.

DEXTER: If she says a word, I'm finished.

CARYS: Secrets. Everybody's got secrets. God, I'm unhappy.

LINDBERG: As long as she's happy.

DEXTER: I don't want this.

CARYS: I don't want this.

LINDBERG: This is what she wants.

ROSE: They were going to kiss.

CARYS: I'm going to scream.

DEXTER: I'm going to scream.

ROB: Sooner or later—

LINDBERG: Everybody's happy. Look at them smiling.

DEXTER: Hate it!

CARYS: God!

ROB: Bang!

MELBA: Gums!

PHOEBE: Bitch!

FRANK: Ah!

DONNA-MARIE: Oh!

CARYS: I am going to—

ROSE: Smile!

THE SMILES BROADEN, THE FLASH BRIGHTENS AND

GOES OUT. DARKNESS FOR AN INSTANT, THEN EVERYBODY IS TALKING AT ONCE, VERY LOUDLY, AS THE GROUP BREAKS UP. SEAN ENTERS WITH A MEGAPHONE. HE COUGHS THROUGH IT. THEY ALL FALL DEAD SILENT AND LOOK AT HIM.

SEAN: Ladies and gentlemen, luncheon is served.

EXPECTANT BUZZ FROM THE GROUP, BAGS ARE PICKED UP, PEOPLE START TO MAKE THEIR WAY TOWARDS THE EXIT.

LINDBERG: Wait a minute ! *(Points to Sean)* You were a deaf mute ten minutes ago!

SEAN: *(A revelation)* Hallelujah! It's a miracle!

LIGHTS OUT. MUSIC. THE SCENE CHANGES. FOUR TABLES ARE PUT ON THE STAGE; THREE OF THEM HAVE NOTHING ON THEM, AND THE CHAIRS ARE PLACED CHAOTICALLY AROUND THEM. ONE, AT WHICH MR. FOSS SITS (IN EVENING DRESS), IS SET FOR TWO, BUT THE OTHER PERSON HAS OBVIOUSLY NOT BOTHERED TO COME DOWN FOR DINNER.

IT IS EVENING NOW. THE LIGHTS COME UP SLOWLY. DISTANT MUSIC.

MR. FOSS HAS SCARCELY EATEN ANY OF HIS DINNER, BUT HE DRINKS HIS TURKISH COFFEE.

A CANDLE BURNS AT HIS TABLE.

ULYSSES, DRESSED AS A WAITER BUT STILL WEARING HIS WELLINGTON BOOTS, RUNS AROUND WIPING DOWN THE TABLES AND TAKING THE CHAIRS OFF-STAGE, AS THE SCENE GOES ON.

MR. FOSS: I see you traipsing down to the beach with a shovel and wearing those boots of yours. Why?

ULYSSES: Been spying on me?

MR. FOSS: It's difficult to miss you, going dressed as you do.
 ULYSSES: I've got a woman.
 MR. FOSS: On the beach?
 ULYSSES: That's right.
 MR. FOSS: And you go in boots carrying a spade? She must have strange tastes.
 ULYSSES: Can you keep a secret?
 MR. FOSS: I'm a bearded clam. Trust me.
 ULYSSES: The dunes . . . are moving in the night. The wind shifts them and when the sand moves, it uncovers things.
 MR. FOSS: Such as?
 ULYSSES: Wrecks.
 MR. FOSS: A dog?
 ULYSSES: Ship wrecks.
 MR. FOSS: Oh. Your woman is a ship.
 ULYSSES: My ship is a woman. She's called *Providence*. Went down in 1866. All hands lost. Now the sea's withdrawn, and the sand's shifting, and she's uncovering herself, inch by inch. It makes me want to weep to look at her.
 MR. FOSS: Well then, it must be love. A ship, eh?
 ULYSSES: A frigate.
 MR. FOSS: (*An idea is flickering into life in his head*) Suppose a ship . . .

A BURST OF LAUGHTER; ENTER VINCE, VERY DRUNK, WITH LINDBERG, NOT QUITE AS FAR GONE, BUT STILL CLEARLY WELL LUBRICATED.

VINCE: (*Shouting*) Bring me meatballs, mother!

THIS REMARK STARTS LINDBERG AND VINCE LAUGHING AGAIN. LINDBERG SEES MR. FOSS.

LINDBERG: Hey. You.
 ULYSSES: What?
 LINDBERG: I'm talking to the organ-grinder, not the monkey.

VINCE GIGGLES.

LINDBERG: Come and join the party, eh? Celebration.

MR. FOSS: Thank you for the invitation, but no.
 LINDBERG: You've got to. It's a bloody wedding.

VINCE FILLS ONE OF MR. FOSS' WINE GLASSES UP WITH BEER. IT FOAMS AND SPILLS OVER.

VINCE: Come on, come on, you don't want to insult the bride, do you?

LINDBERG: Drink up. Health to the happy couple.

MR. FOSS: Thank you, no.

ULYSSES: Now listen, you. If Mr. Foss doesn't want to drink—

VINCE: You stay out of this, fairy boots.

ULYSSES EXITS.

LINDBERG: Come on, Vince; we don't want to bicker with the old fart.

MR. FOSS: That's right, you leave the old fart be, eh? Because he's already had a bellyful of your celebrations.

VINCE: Oh yeah?

MR. FOSS: To my ear it verges on a civil disturbance. Your crass songs and your dirty jokes bawled down the corridors. Is that really a way to celebrate?

VINCE: What the hell's he talking about?

LINDBERG: Leave him be.

VINCE: (*Insistent*) What are you talking about? Are you a fucking lunatic? What do you know about enjoying yourself, eh? You keep your fat nose out of it.

MR. FOSS: Don't insult my nose.

VINCE: Fat nose. (*To Lindberg*) Isn't it?

MR. FOSS IS VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT HIS NOSE. HE IS FURIOUS.

MR. FOSS: May I warn you—

VINCE: Fat, ridiculous, frigging nose.

MR. FOSS: You cretin!

VINCE GETS HOLD OF MR. FOSS AND PULLS HIM OUT OF HIS SEAT.

VINCE: What did you call me?

LINDBERG: Hey, whoa there, Vince.

MR. FOSS: Cretin.

VINCE: I'm going to sort out your nose once and for all, pal.

MR. TREADAWAY APPEARS, JUST AS VINCE PREPARES TO
BEAT MR. FOSS UP.

MR. TREADAWAY: Unhand him.

VINCE: Eh?

MR. TREADAWAY HAS TAKEN UP A BOXING STANCE,
WHICH LOOKS FOOLISH IN HIS MAGRITTE-LIKE OUTFIT.
VINCE LETS FOSS GO, AND AIMS A BLOW AT TREAD-
AWAY.

MR. FOSS: Oh I beg you, no.

A FIGHT BEGINS AMONGST THE TABLE.

MR. FOSS: Please! Stop it! Mr. Treadaway!

MR. TREADAWAY TURNS TO LOOK AT FOSS AND VINCE
CATCHES TREADAWAY A HEAVY BLOW. TREADAWAY
FALLS OVER GROANING. MR. FOSS GOES TO HELP HIM.
AS HE DOES SO A RIOTOUS CONGA LINE ENTERS, MADE
UP OF PHOEBE, MELBA, FRANK, DEXTER, DONNA-MARIE,
ROB, ROSE, SEAN AND CARYS. THEY WEAVE IN AND OUT
OF THE TABLES, SINGING THE CONGA SONG AT THE
TOPS OF THEIR VOICES, OBLIVIOUS OF THE SPRAWLING
FIGURE OF MR. TREADAWAY. VINCE, FLUSHED WITH
GLORY, DRAGS ROSE FROM THE LINE AND KISSES HER,
GRAPPLING WITH HER TO DO SO. SHE PUSHES HIM OFF
AND FOLLOWS THE DISAPPEARING CONGA LINE.

LINDBERG: Vince!

VINCE CHASES ROSE OFF, BOTH IN PURSUIT OF THE
CONGA, WHICH CAN STILL BE HEARD OFF-STAGE,
WEAVING ITS WAY AROUND.

LINDBERG: (Re: Treadaway) Is he all right?

MR. FOSS: Go to hell!

MRS. CORCORAN ENTERS WITH ULYSSES. LINDBERG
EXITS, MUTTERING TO HIMSELF TREADAWAY IS NOW
SITTING UP AT THE TABLE: HIS NOSE IS MASHED, FOSS'
BLOODY HANDKERCHIEF PRESSED TO HIS FACE.

MRS. CORCORAN: Fighting?

MR. TREADAWAY: It's nothing.

MRS. CORCORAN: Let me see. (Looks at Mr. Treadaway's nose)

ULYSSES: Is it broken?

MRS. CORCORAN: No.

MR. FOSS: I must protest, Mrs. Corcoran. These people are sav-
ages. I couldn't eat a mouthful of dinner for their riotous
ways.

MRS. CORCORAN: Are you feeling dizzy at all?

MR. FOSS: No, luckily I had a good lunch.

MRS. CORCORAN: Not you, him!

MR. TREADAWAY: I'm all right. Thank you. You're most kind.

THE SINGING IS GOING ON AS LOUDLY AS EVER, OFF-
STAGE.

MRS. CORCORAN: I'll try and calm them down.

MR. FOSS: Much obliged, Mrs. Corcoran. Much obliged.

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS.

MR. TREADAWAY: Some fresh air, maybe . . .

MR. FOSS: Yes. Yes. Of course. One more hour of this, I'll go
mad.

MR. FOSS WAVES AWAY ULYSSES' HELP, AND TAKES MR.
TREADAWAY ONTO THE PATIO. ULYSSES BUSIES HIMSELF
WITH CLEARING THE TABLE; FIRST DRINKING THE BEER
VINCE POURED. ENTER ROSE, WITH MELBA JUFFS AND
CARYS. ROSE HAS DRUNK A GREAT DEAL, AND WANTS
TO BE SICK.

ROSE: Leave me alone. Just let me lie down. I want to lie down.
 MELBA: It's best if you make yourself sick.
 ROSE: No! I hate being sick.
 MELBA: Get it out of your system. You'll feel much better.
 ROSE: I told you, no.
 CARYS: Melba's right, Rose. It'll only take a minute.
 MELBA: Just put your fingers down your throat. I'll do it if you like.
 ULYSSES: Not in here you don't.

ULYSSES EXITS WITH TRAY OF STUFF FROM MR. FOSS' TABLE.

ENTER LINDBERG WITH ROB.

LINDBERG: How's she doing?
 ROSE: *(On the verge of tears)* No, no. Go away. I don't want you to see me.
 CARYS: Go on.
 ROSE: Leave me alone. Everybody. Leave me alone!
 LINDBERG: Come on, love. I brought a bag. For you to be sick in. It's one of my double-lined specials.

THE VERY PROXIMITY OF LINDBERG SEEMS TO MAKE IT WORSE.

MELBA: There? *(As to a child)* Isn't that kind?

ROSE SNATCHES THE PLASTIC BAG AND EXITS.

LINDBERG: Come on, Melba, back to the party. Rob—
 ROB: Yes. Coming.

EXIT MELBA WITH LINDBERG; ULYSSES RE-ENTERS.

ROB: Any chance of some coffee?
 ULYSSES: Help yourself.

ULYSSES EXITS.

ROB POURS A CUP OF COFFEE, AND DRINKS IT. IT'S BITTER, BUT GOOD. DEXTER ENTERS; HE TOO IS THE WORSE FOR WEAR.

DEXTER: How about a kiss from the best man?
 ROB: Drunk?
 DEXTER: Yeah.
 ROB: That makes it all right, huh?
 DEXTER: We can go up to your room. Nobody'll notice. Few minutes.
 ROB: This is your wedding night, Dex.
 DEXTER: All the more reason to celebrate.
 ROB: No.
 DEXTER: No?
 ROB: Not tonight, not tomorrow night.
 DEXTER: You fucking queens are too much, you know. You really are.

VINCE ENTERS.

VINCE: I wondered where the boys had gone. *(He's conspiratorial)*
 Can I ask a favor? I'm in with a chance with Rose, you know. I don't have any . . . you know, protection on me. Wouldn't like to get the girl in trouble. Rob? You packed anything? I'll pay for it. Or I'll wash it out, give it you back. Whatever suits.
 ROB: Christ.

ROB TURNS AWAY FROM VINCE AND GOES TOWARDS THE FRONT DOOR.

VINCE: What did I say?

ROSE ENTERS CRYING; SHE CONFRONTS ROB, LOOKS UP AT HIM FROZEN FOR A MOMENT, THEN EXITS UPSTAIRS, SOBBING.

CARYS FOLLOWS ON IN WITH A WEIGHED-DOWN PLASTIC BAG.

ROB EXITS.

CARYS: *(To Vince)* Present from Rose.

VINCE: For me?

VINCE PLUNGES HIS HAND IN THE BAG. HIS FACE REGISTERS DISGUST; HE LOOKS INTO THE BAG, WITHDRAWS A DRIPPING HAND.

VINCE: Oh Jesus Christ.

HE EXITS WITH BAG. DEXTER IS LAUGHING. ULYSSES COMES BACK, FINISHES THE TIDYING.

DEXTER: Good one.

CARYS: Enjoying yourself?

DEXTER: As much as can be expected.

CARYS: Don't get too drunk. Tonight . . . tonight we're going to be all right, Dex. We are. We're going . . . *(Whispers in his ear)*

AS SHE WHISPERS, THE CONGA LINE REAPPEARS, DRUNKER AND SMALLER THAN BEFORE, BUT MORE BOISTEROUS THAN EVER.

CARYS: *(Hisses to him, demanding)* Kiss me.

DEXTER KISSES HER, AWARE THAT THIS IS A PERFORMANCE FOR THE WEDDING PARTY. THE CONGA LINE WINDS ITS WAY ON WHILE DEXTER AND CARYS KISS PASSIONATELY CENTER-STAGE. THE GORILLA HAS TAGGED ALONG AT THE END OF THE CONGA. PHOEBE SEES THE KISS; THE CONGA BREAKS. WHOOPS, WHISTLES, APPLAUSE. DEXTER AND CARYS ARE SHOWING OFF NOW; THE WHOLE PARTY IS TAKING A DIFFERENT TONE. MUSIC PLAYS FROM SOMEWHERE. VINCE CLIMBS ONTO A TABLE AND STARTS TO DO A STRIPEASE, INEPTLY. MELBA, PISSED OUT OF HER HEAD, APPLAUDS. SO DOES THE GORILLA. ENTER MR. FOSS, WITH TREADAWAY, WHOSE FACE IS A BLOODY MESS. HE TAKES A

DRINK FROM MELBA.

MR. FOSS: Is there no end to this?

LINDBERG: Have a drink and shut up.

MR. FOSS: I don't want a drink, damn you.

PHOEBE: Snooty little prick. Where's Rose? Has anyone seen Rose?

CARYS: She went upstairs.

MELBA: She was sick.

CARYS: And she went upstairs.

PHOEBE: We should have a photograph! Somebody fetch Rose.

FRANK: I'll go.

EXIT FRANK. VINCE HAS STRIPPED DOWN TO HIS UNDERWEAR NOW, AND IS GIVING HIMSELF A BEER SHOWER. ROB COMES BACK IN. MR. FOSS WATCHES THE PERFORMANCE, DISGUST ON HIS FACE. TREADAWAY HAS TAKEN TO DRINKING, HEAVILY, HAVING ACCEPTED LINDBERG'S APOLOGIES, UNHEARD OVER THE BABBLE AND MUSIC. ENTER FRANK.

FRANK: Quickly! Somebody! Quickly!

LINDBERG: What is it?

FRANK: Rose! It's Rose! You, boy! Quickly!

HE GRABS SEAN AND THEY EXIT.

PHOEBE: What's she done now? Damn woman.

CARYS: She could have had an accident.

CARYS EXITS TOO. VINCE, PAST NOTICING, STILL PERFORMS, COVERING AND UNCOVERING HIS NIPPLES WITH HIS FINGERS, MOCK-TEASING. THE MUSIC GRINDS TO A HALT. THE CROWD PARTS AS FRANK AND SEAN BRING ROSE IN, SOAKING WET, AND LAY HER DOWN. HER EYES ARE CLOSED.

FRANK: There was water coming from under the bathroom door.

SEAN: We had to kick it in.

ULYSSES HAS COME IN TOO. THEY ALL GATHER AROUND HER. SHE IS MOANING SLIGHTLY.

CARYS: She tried to drown herself.

PHOEBE: Rose! How dare you!

FRANK: Can anyone give the kiss of life?

VINCE: I'll do it!

ROSE SITS UP QUICKLY, HEARING VINCE'S OFFER.

ROSE: No! Keep away from me! All of you, keep away from me!

LINDBERG: For a minute there—

CARYS: Thank God.

ROSE: You stopped me! Why did you stop me?

PHOEBE: All right, have you had all the attention you need now?

LINDBERG: Phoebe.

ROSE: I want to die!

CARYS: Ssh! It's all right; really.

MELBA: Everybody throws up once in a while.

CARYS: Can somebody fetch a towel? She's shivering.

ROSE: I'll die of pneumonia. I'm not fussy.

PHOEBE: What have you got to die about?

CARYS: Leave her be, mother.

PHOEBE: She's spoilt the whole atmosphere.

VINCE: Silly bitch. *(To himself)* I wouldn't have touched her.

LINDBERG: Come on, Rose, what's all this about?

DEXTER: *(He's guessed)* Don't bully her. She was just feeling sick.

Isn't that it, Rose? You were just feeling sick.

PHOEBE: Rose? I want an answer.

ROSE: *(Teeth chattering now)* I can't tell you.

LINDBERG: Come on, love.

CARYS: It's all right, Rose. Whatever it is. Tell us. We'll understand.

ROSE: *(Glowering at Dexter)* He knows.

CARYS: Dexter?

ROSE: Ask him. Ask them both. Him and Rob.

FRANK: Rob?

DEXTER: Oh Christ.

ROSE: Ask both of them. They'll tell you.

DEXTER LOOKS GLASSY-EYED.

ROSE: I saw them. My Rob, my lovely Rob—

PHOEBE: He's not your Rob.

ROSE: They were kissing.

PHOEBE: Who were— *(Looks up)* kissing?

CARYS: Dexter?

MELBA: I don't understand.

DEXTER: What do you care?

LINDBERG: I do. I bloody understand.

CARYS: She's mistaken.

LINDBERG: I bloody understand right enough.

ROSE: My Robert—

CARYS: She's mistaken, right?

DEXTER: No.

VINCE: Fuck a duck.

PHOEBE: She's a lying bitch.

ROB: She's got eyes in her head.

LINDBERG: You! Shut up!

FRANK: Does that mean—?

MELBA: Oh God, Frank.

PHOEBE: *(To Carys)* What did I tell you? From the beginning.

Don't get involved, I said.

LINDBERG: You're a homosexual; is that it, Dexter?

CARYS: Is it?

DEXTER: I don't know.

PHOEBE: *(White with fury)* Well, isn't it about time you made up your fucking mind?

LINDBERG: Oh Princess.

CARYS: Don't Princess me. I'm not your Princess.

LINDBERG: Ssh! Ssh! Don't cry.

CARYS: I'm not going to cry.

ROSE: I'm sorry.

CARYS: *(Calmly)* It's all right, Rose. It's perfectly all right.

THE PARTY BEGINS TO BREAK UP

DEXTER: I'm sorry.

LINDBERG: It's not your fault, is it? I mean, you've been messed about with, that's all. It happens—

PHOEBE: Why didn't you tell me, Rose? There was no need to make a public display of it, was there?

ROSE: Tell you? You're so . . . you're so . . . carnivorous.

PHOEBE: Well, there's thanks.

LINDBERG: The bloody best man. That's a laugh. I'm just appalled I didn't see it earlier.

ROB: See what?

LINDBERG: Your nancy ways, son, your bloody nancy ways.

ROB: What would you know?

DEXTER: Don't.

LINDBERG: I've seen a damn sight more than you'll ever see. Oh, I daresay you think you're a bit of a wit, eh?

ROB: No—

LINDBERG: Coming in here, spoiling a young couple's chances together.

CARYS: Dad.

ROB: No, let him rant a bit.

LINDBERG: You don't care; your type never does. Lower form of bloody humanity! And it's about time the rest of us stood up and got counted.

ROSE STARTS TO CRY AGAIN. DONNA-MARIE IS CRYING IN SYMPATHY.

LINDBERG: You make me want to puke.

ROSE: I'm going to be sick.

SHE GETS UP, IGNORED, HANDS CLAMPED TO HER MOUTH.

LINDBERG: Better we found out what was going on. You've done us a service here, Rose, and I'm grateful. Rose?

ROSE IS EXITING.

LINDBERG: *(To Phoebe)* Go with her, love.

PHOEBE EXITS. VINCE IS PUTTING ON HIS CLOTHES, DRUNKENLY TRYING TO GET BOTH LEGS INTO ONE TROUSER-LEG.

MELBA: Dexter.

DEXTER: Carys—

HE MAKES A MOVE TOWARD HER. LINDBERG CUTS HIM OFF

LINDBERG: No. *(A beat)* Not now.

MELBA: Dexter. How could you do this to us?

MELBA JUFFS EXITS.

FRANK: I suppose . . . it's some kind of judgment, or other. God moves in mysterious ways.

DEXTER: Spare me the heavenly details, Dad.

FRANK JUFFS EXITS.

ROB: *(To Carys)* Nothing was going on. Nothing was going to go on. It was in the past.

CARYS: I don't want to know.

LINDBERG: *(Quietly, to Rob)* You are shit.

ULYSSES FADES AWAY; SEAN TOO. TREADAWAY, NOW DRUNK, IS ASLEEP ON A CHAIR. VINCE EXITS, STILL HALF-DRESSED.

VINCE: Has anyone seen the other leg of my trousers?

FOSS DOESN'T MOVE.

LINDBERG: You are still my Princess.

LINDBERG TAKES CARYS OFF

ROB: Go with her. Stop him making it worse.

DEXTER: Why?

ROB: She's in agony.

DEXTER: I don't have anything reassuring to say.

ROB: You were going to marry her.

DEXTER: Well, I'm well out of that then, aren't I?

DEXTER EXITS. THE LIGHTS CHANGE; A DEEP GLOOM NOW, PIERCED BY FRAGMENTS OF LIGHT. SEAN HAS RE-ENTERED. HE IS STANDING, DRINKING MILK FROM A BOTTLE.

SEAN: Are you really queer?

ROB: Really.

SEAN: You never did it with a woman?

ROB: (*Very quietly*) Once or twice. Not very successfully.

SEAN: I think it's really . . . dirty. What you do. It's really dirty.

ROB: You've tried it?

SEAN: Me? . . . no. I just heard.

ROB: They why don't you stop flirting and go to bed; or I might just show you the real thing.

SEAN EXITS, EMBARRASSED, HIS BLUFF CALLED.

ROB: (*To himself*) You stupid bastard.

MR. FOSS EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS.

MR. FOSS: So much for rage.

ROB: (*Drained*) So much for rage.

MR. FOSS: The error, you think, is yours?

ROB: In part.

MR. FOSS: More convenient.

ROB: Huh?

MR. FOSS: Than to take them on.

ROB: There's no way to do that. You'd have to turn them inside out. Get beyond their performances.

MR. FOSS: Is my nose, would you say, abnormally large?

ROB: I beg your pardon?

MR. FOSS: My nose was a bone of contention. I ask for your opinion.

ROB: It's an average nose.

MR. FOSS: Sir, you're a gentleman. (*Beat*) And do they have secrets?

ROB: What do you think? Goodnight, Mister . . .

MR. FOSS: Lear. Edward Lear.

ROB: Like the poet?

MR. FOSS: Like the poet. Goodnight, Mr. Kidd.

ROB EXITS. FOSS SITS AT THE TABLE AGAIN. TREADAWAY IS ASLEEP IN THE CHAIR OPPOSITE HIM.

MR. FOSS: One last dream. You and I, Treadaway; the Wedding Party, perhaps the boy, all sharing one . . . apocalyptic . . . dream.

MR. TREADAWAY: (*Eyes still closed*) No.

MR. FOSS: You're listening.

MR. TREADAWAY: I'm always listening.

MR. FOSS: What a way to go.

MR. TREADAWAY: It's out of the question. The rules forbid collective dreams. They're dangerous.

MR. FOSS: (*Innocently*) Are they?

MR. TREADAWAY: They encourage fascism and hysteria.

MR. FOSS: I'll do it anyway, with or without you. Hugo. Where's your spirit of adventure?

MR. TREADAWAY: I told you: *no*.

MR. FOSS: Should I report you as a drunkard? That would stymie your hopes for advancement.

TREADAWAY TRIES TO HIDE THE BOTTLE HE'S NURSING.

TREADAWAY: Are you blackmailing me?

MR. FOSS: Suppose a ship—

MR. TREADAWAY: A ship. Oh Lord. (*Sighs*) Yes?

MR. FOSS: And the sea. The way Sean dreamed it. Foamy and vast.

MR. TREADAWAY: What sort of ship?

MR. FOSS: We'll need dream technicians. Not the usual herd. Iconoclasts, who want to do something a little off-beat. Real illusionists, ready to conjure some sights.

MR. TREADAWAY: You can't mean tonight.

MR. FOSS: Of course tonight. While this mob are sweating in their beds, we'll pick them up and dress them for a voyage. Take off your hat, Hugo. Let your head breathe a bit.

MR. TREADAWAY: (*Takes his hat off*) Oh.

MR. FOSS: Better?

MR. TREADAWAY: Not much.

MR. FOSS: Think of it. All of us on one final cruise into frenzical waters.

THE SOUND OF WAVES, DISTANTLY.

MR. TREADAWAY: It could be a disaster.

MR. FOSS: (*Smiling*) Yes, I believe it could.

THE NOISE OF THE SEA GROWS.

MR. FOSS: I can already hear the sea. The wind is with us.

MR. TREADAWAY: Oh God.

MR. FOSS: (*Fired with an almost visionary zeal*) The sea, Treadaway,
do you hear it? Do you hear it?

MR. TREADAWAY: I'm afraid I do, I'm afraid I do—

THE NOISE OF THE SEA BLOTS OUT TREADAWAY'S
VOICE. AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

END OF ACT TWO.

Act 3

Act 3:

BLACKNESS.

THE DOUBLE BOOM OF THE FOG-HORN OF THE GREAT SHIP BEAR OF AMSTERDAM PIERCES THE BLACKNESS, FOLLOWED BY THE RHYTHMICAL CHURNING OF ITS ENGINES IN THE BOWELS OF THE VESSEL. THE SEA CAN ALSO BE HEARD; AS CAN DISTANT MUSIC. A SINGER; PIANO. THE LIGHTS COME UP ON THE INTERIOR OF THE HOTEL, TRANSFORMED. IT IS NOW THE MAIN DECK OF A LUXURY LINER. A RAILING HAS BEEN PUT UP IN FRONT OF THE ACTING AREA; LIFE PRESERVERS, ALL WITH THE "BEAR OF AMSTERDAM" NAME ON THEM, HANG AT INTERVALS. THE BALCONY, UPON WHICH THE CAPTAIN OF THIS SUBTLE SHIP STANDS, IS ALSO EQUIPPED WITH A LIFE PRESERVER, AS WELL AS A WHEEL AND SPEAKING TUBE. THE CAPTAIN IS DRESSED IN A LARGE OVERCOAT, LEATHER GLOVES, A PEAKED HAT. IT IS STILL QUITE DISTINCTLY MR. FOSS. HIS FEATURES SUIT THIS TRANSFORMATION.

ON THE LOWER DECK, WHICH IS AT PRESENT NOT AS WELL ILLUMINATED AS THE BRIDGE, THERE ARE SIGNS OF PARTYING. STREAMERS FESTOON THE RAILING, BALLOONS LITTER THE DECK. THE COLORED LIGHTS BURN BRIGHTLY. THE SCENES WHICH FOLLOW ARE ALL "STAGE-MANAGED" IN QUITE OBVIOUS MANNER BY THE DREAM TECHNICIANS FOSS SUMMONED AT THE END OF ACT TWO.

IT IS THEY WHO OPERATE THE MECHANISM OF THE DREAM: THEY WHO CHOREOGRAPH THE PANIC AND THE CHAOS OF THE SINKING SHIP; THEY WHO GIVE US A BRIEF POIGNANT IMAGE OF THE BEAR OF AMSTERDAM DISAPPEARING INTO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN; THEY WHO ROCK THE LIFE-BOAT, THEY WHO SPIRIT AWAY THE DROWNED, ETC. THEIR PRESENCE, NEEDLESS TO SAY, IS NOT ONCE NOTICED BY THE PROTAGONISTS; TO THEM, THE SCENES OF TERROR THAT WILL DEVELOP LATER IN THE ACT HAVE ALL THE FORCE OF REALITY; AS INDEED DO THE EVENTS WHICH ARE EVEN NOW UNFOLDING ON THE SHIP

MR. FOSS: *(Binoculars to eyes)* Mr. Treadaway.

TREADAWAY CLIMBS UP TO THE BRIDGE. HE HAS A BANDAGE ON HIS NOSE AND HE STILL WEARS HIS BOWLER HAT.

MR. TREADAWAY: This is terribly wrong.

MR. FOSS: I'm in charge of this vessel, Mr. Treadaway. Should you wish to question my sanity, you may do so to the proper authorities when we're safely docked at dawn. But for tonight, Mr. Treadaway, for tonight—the ship is mine; and God help all who sail in her!

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Defeated)* Yes.

MR. FOSS: Yes sir!

MR. TREADAWAY: Yes sir!

MR. FOSS: Don't fret so much. We have a fine night for a cruise. A little fog maybe, a few icebergs—

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Terror-stricken)* Icebergs?

MR. FOSS: We are sailing the Arctic Ocean, didn't I tell you? This promises to be a positively Titanic experience for us all.

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Very quietly)* Oh Christ.

MR. FOSS: Take the wheel, I'm going below to join the Captain's table. *(Kindly, as he exits)* Keep a stiff upper lip, Mr. Treadaway, worse things happen at sea.

MR. TREADAWAY: *(A desperate plea)* But we are at sea!

FOSS DISAPPEARS.

MR. TREADAWAY: Sir!? Sir . . .

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN ON TREADAWAY IN PANIC, AND COME UP ON THE DECK. PEOPLE STROLL TO AND FRO, ARM IN ARM, CARRYING DRINKS. SOME, AS WILL BE DESCRIBED, ARE IN ELABORATE FANCY-DRESS. ROB, IN A TUXEDO, IS LEANING ON THE RAILING; THE WATER THROWS PATTERNS ONTO HIS FACE. A DOOR OPENS, MUSIC FROM DISTANT ROOMS, THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER. ENTER DEXTER. HE STANDS WATCHING ROB.

DEXTER: I wondered where you'd got to.

ROB: Oh?

DEXTER: They're going to judge the fancy-dress competition in a few minutes. Should be a riot. Do you have any idea where we're going, by the way?

ROB: What?

DEXTER: Only I can't even . . . I know this sounds daft, but I can't even remember getting on this bloody ship. I mean, I know I must have done it. I just don't remember. And my pockets are full of sand. Have you seen Carys?

ROB: What's she dressed as?

DEXTER: The Bride of Dracula.

ROB: No I haven't.

DEXTER: I've decided . . . I'm going to use the voyage to propose to her. Then I'll marry her when we cross the Equator. How's that? I'm a groom, see? The shirt's painted on.

DEXTER UNBUTTONS HIS JACKET. A SHIRT AND TIE ARE PAINTED ON HIS BARE TORSO.

DEXTER: The waiter did it.

ROB: Did he paint on underwear too?

DEXTER: Wouldn't you like to know?

ENTER ROSE, AS A MERMAID.

ROSE: Yoohoo!

SHE WADDLES ACROSS THE DECK.

ROSE: You're here.
 DEXTER: What the hell are you dressed as? Half a haddock?
 ROSE: Guess. Rob?
 ROB: You're a mermaid.
 ROSE: That's right. What are you dressed as?
 ROB: An escapologist.
 ROSE: Oo. What do you escape from?
 ROB: Fancy-dress parties.

DEXTER GIGGLES.

ROSE: Was that a joke?
 ROB: Not so's you'd notice.
 DEXTER: (*Backing off*) Well, I feel a bit of a gooseberry right now.
 ROB: Don't go, Dex.
 DEXTER: (*Maliciously*) The moonlight, the sea. Love's young dream. See you around.

DEXTER EXITS.

ROSE: Why are you watching the sea?
 ROB: I saw lights.
 ROSE: In the sea?
 ROB: That's what I thought.
 ROSE: Do you want to kiss me?
 ROB: Would you take it personally if I said no?
 ROSE: Actually, yes. (*She touches his face*)

A DOOR OPENS. OUT TUMBLES CARYS, DRESSED AS THE BRIDE OF DRACULA; MELBA, DRESSED AS A FLOWER; AND DONNA-MARIE, DRESSED AS A FROG.

CARYS: Break it up! Break it up!
 MELBA: It's quite chilly.
 CARYS: Rose isn't cold; are you Rose?
 DONNA-MARIE: I'm a frog.
 CARYS: So you keep saying.
 DONNA-MARIE: A green frog! Look at me.
 CARYS: Look at her, Rob.
 DONNA-MARIE: I'm a green frog.

ROB: I can see.
 CARYS: And I'm the Bride of Dracula, and Melba's a hardy perennial. Only she's out of season.
 ROB: Dexter was looking for you.
 CARYS: So, let him look. I don't care.

ENTER LINDBERG AND PHOEBE. THE FORMER AS NAPOLEON, THE LATTER IN A SUMPTUOUS EVENING DRESS, AND MASK.

PHOEBE: Rose?
 ROSE: (*Without turning*) Phoebe.
 PHOEBE: Should you be out here dressed like that? You'll catch a chill.
 ROSE: Well, that's my business, isn't it?
 PHOEBE: We're the ones who have to put up with you when you're sniveling.
 DONNA-MARIE: I'm a green frog.
 PHOEBE: Just remember that. Lindberg and I are going on a tour of the deck. Will you watch Donna-Marie? Make sure she doesn't fall overboard.
 MELBA: What are you dressed as?
 PHOEBE: Josephine. Lindberg is Napoleon.

PHOEBE STARTS TO GO OFF

LINDBERG: I came, I saw, I conquered.
 PHOEBE: No you didn't. That was Julius Caesar.
 LINDBERG: Well, what did I do?
 ROB: You were a pain in the arse to all of Europe.
 LINDBERG: (*Brightly*) That sounds right.

LINDBERG EXITS WITH PHOEBE. ROB IS WANDERING AWAY.

ROSE: Maybe later we could dance. Do you think?
 ROB: I don't see why not.
 ROSE: You've got secrets, haven't you?
 ROB: Have I?
 ROSE: You're a man of mystery. It's very sexy.
 ROB: Oh hell.

ROB EXITS.

ROSE: We're going to dance.

CARYS: Grow up, Rose.

ROSE: He said he saw lights in the sea.

DONNA-MARIE: We could go swimming.

CARYS: You are such a wet. Why don't you stand up to my mother?

ROSE: She's been very good to me.

CARYS: Only when it suits her.

MELBA: I saw an iceberg. In the mist, I'm sure.

CARYS: (*Bored*) Fascinating.

SEAN ENTERS, WITH A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE IN
EITHER HAND. HE IS DRESSED AS A STEWARD.

CARYS: Oh, we wondered where the drink had got to.

SEAN: Champagne for the lady?

CARYS: Champagne and more champagne.

HE POURS CHAMPAGNE INTO HER GLASS.

CARYS: You've got your hands full, haven't you?

SHE REACHES FOR HIS FLY. HE BENDS OUT OF THE WAY.

MELBA: Carys.

CARYS: What's the problem?

SEAN: Anyone else for a glass of bubbly?

ROSE: Me.

DONNA-MARIE: Me too.

CARYS: None for the frog.

SEAN MOVES OFF.

MELBA: He's got a nice bottom.

CARYS: He's a fruit.

ROSE: What sort of fruit?

CARYS: He's gay.

MELBA: How can you tell?

CARYS: Bet you he can't whistle.

VINCE HAS COME ON, UNSEEN. HE HAS A MONSTER
MASK ON.

ROSE: What does that mean?

CARYS: If a man can't whistle he's a fairy. Don't you know anything, Rose?

SEAN EXITS, WHISTLING.

MELBA: Oh God. Rose. Watch it. It's that man again. The sex
maniac.

VINCE: (*Pulls off mask*) Hello, ladies.

DONNA-MARIE SHRIEKS.

CARYS: Oh that's horrible . . . horrible . . .

VINCE: Wait, ladies! Ladies!

THEY EXIT SHRIEKING AND LAUGHING.

VINCE: Damn you then. Damn you all to hell.

HE SEES ROB ENTERING, AND TURNS AWAY, TO GO BACK
THE WAY HE CAME.

SEAN CROSSES TO ROB.

SEAN: Drink, sir?

ROB: No thank you. Question though.

SEAN: Yes sir?

ROB: I keep seeing lights in the sea. Look.

THEY GO TO THE SIDE OF THE SHIP.

SEAN: They're fish, sir. Luminous fish. They live at the very bot-
tom of the ocean, see, where there's no sun. So they make
their own light.

ROB: Why can I see them if they live so deep?

SEAN: Maybe they come up to see the ship. Maybe they think it's
a big fish.

ENTER MR. FOSS, NOW TOTALLY DISGUISED AS THE
INVISIBLE MAN: BANDAGES, GLOVES, DARK GLASSES.

SEAN: Evening.

THE INVISIBLE MAN NODS.

SEAN: (To Rob) He's been following me round all night. Do you
know who's in it?

ROB: Can't say I do.

THE INVISIBLE MAN CROSSES TO SEAN.

SEAN: I think he's got designs on my body.

SEAN EXITS, THRUSTING A BOTTLE INTO THE INVISIBLE
MAN'S HANDS.

SEAN: Don't drink it all at once.

THE INVISIBLE MAN WATCHES SEAN GO, AND LEANS ON
THE RAILING NEXT TO ROB.

ROB: Nice boy.

THE INVISIBLE MAN LOOKS AT ROB. PHOEBE ENTERS, AT
A RUSH.

PHOEBE: Have you seen Lindberg? He went off to get some
drinks and he didn't come back.

ROB: No he hasn't come past here—

PHOEBE: I have this terror of him falling overboard. The sea
looks so . . . (She puts her fear out of her mind) Who's he?

SHE APPROACHES THE INVISIBLE MAN AND PEERS AT
HIM.

PHOEBE: Lindberg? Is that you in there? (To Rob) Do you know
who this is?

ROB: No.

PHOEBE: Lindberg? It is you, isn't it?

SHE GETS HOLD OF THE INVISIBLE MAN'S HEAD, AND
TRIES TO PULL OFF THE MASK. THE MAN FIGHTS
BACK.

PHOEBE: Take that off! Lindberg! Take that off this minute!

ROB: I think you might be making a mistake.

PHOEBE AND THE INVISIBLE MAN WRESTLE.

PHOEBE: Take that off, I said!

THE INVISIBLE MAN PICKS HER UP, MORE TO STOP HER
THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

PHOEBE: Oh!

THROWS HER OVER HIS SHOULDER.

PHOEBE: (The tone changes) Oh Lindberg! Yes! Yes! I'm ready.

THE INVISIBLE MAN STARTS TO CARRY HER OFF.

PHOEBE: Hurry up, Lindberg. Anywhere! Anywhere!

ENTER LINDBERG, WITH VINCE.

PHOEBE: Ravish me.

LINDBERG: Here?

PHOEBE: Lindberg!

SHE REALIZES HER MISTAKE.

PHOEBE: Oh God!

LINDBERG: Put my wife down!

ROB: She thought it was you.

LINDBERG: She has this effect on the blind! Put her down!

THE INVISIBLE MAN EXITS WITH HER.

LINDBERG: The bloody nerve! *(To Vince)* Fetch my gun!

ROB: Wait a minute. It's just a simple mistake.

LINDBERG: What would you know? Fetch my bloody gun, Vince. It's in my cabin.

ROSE ENTERS.

ROSE: Donna-Marie's been sick. Where's Phoebe?

LINDBERG: She's been abducted!

ROSE: Who by?

LINDBERG: The Invisible Man.

ROSE: I didn't see him—

ENTER CARYS AND MELBA JUFFS WITH FRANK, DRESSED AS THE POPE.

LINDBERG: *(To Frank)* Christ, what do you look like? Everybody, spread out. We'll find him, if we're systematic.

FRANK: What are we looking for?

LINDBERG: My wife, you bloody fool. We've got to find her before he does something terrible to her.

FRANK: Like what?

ROB: Like giving her some pleasure.

LINDBERG: *Shut up!*

LINDBERG STARTS TO ORGANIZE THE SEARCH, AD-LIBBING THE DIVIDING UP OF THE SHIP, WHILE LIGHTS COME UP ON THE BRIDGE, WHERE SEAN STANDS WITH MR. TREADAWAY. THE HORN SOUNDS.

MR. TREADAWAY: I don't like the look of the weather up ahead. The fog's closing in. Where's the captain?

SEAN: I looked for him, but I can't find him.

MR. TREADAWAY: I don't know what to do. If we stop all engines, we'll drift, maybe strike an iceberg. If we go on, we'll sail straight into that. Look again. Search high and low, but find him. We haven't got much time. *(He starts to pray)* Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

THE PRAYER IS LOST IN BABBLE FROM THE LOWER DECK. PEOPLE TO AND FRO; THE ACTION IS ACCELERATING. EVERYBODY SPREADS OUT TO LOOK FOR THE KIDNAPPER, LEAVING ROB AND LINDBERG ALONE.

LINDBERG: I blame you for this.

ROB: Why me?

LINDBERG: You just watched her snatched away.

ROB: She seemed to be enjoying herself.

LINDBERG: What would you know? You've never loved a woman. Have you? You don't know what it's like. Having to watch over them, protect their virginity, their bodies, their teeth. A man has to be a tower of strength.

ROB: Bollocks!

SEAN APPEARS ON THE LOWER DECK. HE STARES OUT OVER THE RAILING.

SEAN: *(Shouts up)* Sir! Mr. Treadaway!

LINDBERG: Bollocks?

MR. TREADAWAY: Found him?

SEAN: No. He's disappeared. But sir—

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Through a megaphone)* Will Captain Foss please return to the Bridge immediately? Captain Foss. To the Bridge. Immediately.

ROB: You talk rubbish most of the time, Lindberg. You open your mouth and shit spews out.

VINCE ENTERS WITH GUN.

VINCE: Here.

LINDBERG: About time.

HE TAKES THE GUN AND POINTS IT AT ROB.

ENTER DEXTER.

DEXTER: Where's Carys?

LINDBERG: Not now, son; I'm shooting the sodomite.

SEAN: (*At the railing*) There's something in the fog! Mr. Treadaway! *There's something in the fog!*

DEXTER: You can't.

LINDBERG: Just watch me. On your knees, son. I'll make it quick.

ROB: Fuck off.

SEAN: Dead ahead!

ENTER MELBA.

MELBA: We've found them!

LINDBERG: What?

ENTER CARYS.

CARYS: Quickly!

SEAN CROSSES THE STAGE AND CLIMBS ONTO THE BRIDGE.

SEAN: Do you see? Do you see? It's a wave. A hundred feet high. Do you see?

MR. TREADAWAY: That's no wave. It's an iceberg, boy!

LINDBERG: (*Rob is forgotten*) Where are they?

MELBA: We cornered them on the second-class deck.

DEXTER: Carys!

CARYS: Not now, Dexter.

LINDBERG: My wife? In second class? The bastard!

HE EXITS WITH VINCE.

DEXTER: I want to propose to you.

CARYS: Later! Later!

DEXTER: The captain can marry us. When we dock at Mozambique.

ALL: Mozambique??

DEXTER: Say yes.

CARYS: Yes! Now let me go. I have to go with Dad.

DEXTER: No you don't.

CARYS: Yes! I do!

CARYS EXITS.

ROB: Well?

DEXTER: Well what?

ROB: What are you looking at me for?

DEXTER: She's going to marry me.

ROB: So?

DEXTER: So aren't you . . . jealous? Be *something* at least.

ROB: Would that make you feel better?

DEXTER: Yeah.

ROB: Poor Dex. Poor bloody Dex. (*He kisses Dex, lightly*) There.

ENTER PHOEBE, STILL BEING CARRIED BY THE INVISIBLE MAN.

PHOEBE: Oh Christ! Put me down! Put me down!

HE PUTS HER DOWN.

PHOEBE: (*Disappointed*) I didn't mean actually put me down!

SEAN: What's going on down there?

MR. TREADAWAY: Never mind the guests. Watch the fog!

DONNA-MARIE ENTERS.

DONNA-MARIE: Mamma.

PHOEBE: Oh little one, don't look.

DONNA-MARIE: What's happening?

DEXTER COVERS DONNA-MARIE'S EYES.

PHOEBE: Mamma's going to be ravished. Fore and aft.

VOICES OFF LINDBERG SHOUTING. THE INVISIBLE MAN EXITS WITH PHOEBE, PURSUED BY VINCE, MELBA, FRANK, CARYS, ETC. THE SHIP'S HORN BLOWS.

DEXTER: Listen! Something's happening to the engines. Oh Christ! What's going on?

DONNA-MARIE: (*Breaking away from Dexter*) Ice-cream! Ice-cream!

DEXTER: Ice-berg! Oh God! Ice-berg!

THE LIGHTS CHANGE AS THE SHADOW OF THE ICEBERG PASSES BY. A TERRIBLE GRATING SOUND.

DEXTER: Christ! That was a near thing. What's going on? *(He yells up at the Bridge)* I'm going to complain to the Captain.
MR. TREADAWAY: We can't find the Captain.

THE SHIP'S HORN BLOWS AGAIN.

DONNA-MARIE: I see fishes. *(To Rob)* Look! Fishes.

ULYSSES ENTERS. GUESTS COME BACK ON, AS THE HORN CONTINUES TO BLOW. CARYS ENTERS.

DEXTER: Carys darling—

CARYS: Have you seen my Dad?

DEXTER: Never mind your Dad. Let's get to the life-boats.

GUESTS HEAR THE WORD "LIFE-BOATS." CONSTERNATION. EVERYONE STARTS YELLING "LIFE-BOATS! LIFE-BOATS!"

ULYSSES: It's all right. It's all right. No need for panic. Ladies and gentlemen; please return to the celebrations.

DONNA-MARIE: Fishes! Fishes!

ULYSSES: *(Through gritted teeth)* Never mind the fishes, little girl. Frogs get eaten by fishes.

NOW EVERYBODY HAS GATHERED ON STAGE EXCEPT PHOEBE, VINCE, LINDBERG AND THE INVISIBLE MAN. PEOPLE ARE MILLING AROUND WHILE ULYSSES TRIES TO GET THEM BACK INTO THE BALLROOM FOR THE PARTY. HE HASN'T A HOPE IN HELL. THERE IS AN AIR OF PANIC GROWING BY THE MINUTE. PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO SHOUT; PRAY; CURSE.

ULYSSES: Please!! There's nothing to worry about. Go back to the ballroom. *(To Rob)* And you, sir, all of you—

ENTER THE INVISIBLE MAN WITH PHOEBE.

PHOEBE: Either do it or don't do it. But make up your mind.

THE INVISIBLE MAN GETS HALFWAY ACROSS THE STAGE WHEN LINDBERG ENTERS WITH VINCE. HE POINTS THE GUN AT THE INVISIBLE MAN.

LINDBERG: Stop!

THE OCCUPANTS OF THE STAGE ALL FREEZE.

VINCE: Shoot the bugger!

PHOEBE: Don't you dare! Lindberg? You hear me? *(To the Invisible Man)* For God's sake, run! He's blind with jealousy.

THE INVISIBLE MAN STARTS TO EXIT.

EVERYBODY DUCKS AS LINDBERG FIRES. ABSOLUTE SILENCE. THE INVISIBLE MAN STAGGERS; DROPS PHOEBE'S HAND, STAGGERS SOME MORE, AND FALLS DOWN. THE CROWD STARTS TO GET UP AGAIN; A CHAOS OF COMMENTS.

VINCE: You got him!

LINDBERG: Damn thug!

CARYS: Mother!

PHOEBE: You shot him, Lindberg!

MR. TREADAWAY: What's going on? What's going on?

FRANK: You shot him. He was defenseless, and you shot him.

LINDBERG: He had hold of my wife.

FRANK: You don't even know who it is.

TREADAWAY HAS COME DOWN FROM THE BRIDGE, LEAVING SEAN UP THERE WITH THE BINOCULARS.

MR. TREADAWAY: Clear out of the way. Are you all animals?

ULYSSES: *(Officious)* Clear the way for the officer!

MELBA: He shot that man!

MR. TREADAWAY: This is murder—

LINDBERG: I was provoked.

SEAN: *(Looking up)* Oh God . . . Sir! Look!

MR. TREADAWAY: *(To Sean)* Shut up! *(To the crowd)* Who is he?

SEAN: Sir! It's another iceberg! Twice as big!

LINDBERG: I was protecting my wife.

MR. TREADAWAY: You! *(To Dexter)* Take off his mask.

THE MASK COMES OFF A SHOCKED RESPONSE FROM THE CROWD AS MR. FOSS' FACE IS REVEALED.

MR. TREADAWAY: Oh no. You shot the Captain! Oh no, no, no, no, no . . .

PHOEBE: Well, who's steering the ship?

MR. TREADAWAY: I am not by nature an hysterical man. *(Hysterically)* YOU SHOT THE CAPTAIN!!

LINDBERG: Are you sure?

MR. TREADAWAY: I'd know that nose anywhere.

SEAN: Iceberg dead ahead! Just . . . telling anybody who's . . . interested.

NOBODY IS.

MR. TREADAWAY: He was in charge! What do I do now?

FRANK: *(Brightly)* Photo, everyone.

OH, SAYS EVERYONE, ENCHANTED BY THE IDEA OF A PHOTOGRAPH. THEY GATHER AROUND THE DEAD MAN. LINDBERG PUTS HIS FOOT ON THE CAPTAIN'S CHEST: THE TRIUMPHANT HUNTER. THE REST GATHER AROUND ADMIRINGLY.

ROSE: Smile, everyone.

SEAN: Twenty yards!

FRANK: We're all going to die.

SEAN: Ten yards!

ROSE: Closer in, everyone.

SEAN: Five! Four! Three! Two!—

ROSE: Freeze!

THEY FREEZE.

CRASH!

THE STAGE IS SUDDENLY PANDEMONIUM AS THE BEAR OF AMSTERDAM PLOWS, BOW FIRST, INTO AN ICEBERG. THE SOUND EFFECTS TELL ALL: THE CRUNCH OF IMPACT, THE SCREECH OF TORTURED METAL AS THE 'BERG TEARS A GASH IN THE SIDE OF THE VESSEL; THE RUSH OF WATER INTO THE HOLD; THE THUNDER OF ICE ON THE DECK.

SCREAMS. THE LIGHTS FLICKER OUT; EMERGENCY LIGHTS, BRIGHT YELLOW(?) FLICKER ON. THE PASSENGERS FALL OVER AS THE SHIP LURCHES.

TREADAWAY CLIMBS BACK UP TO THE BRIDGE, YELLING. "HE SHOT THE CAPTAIN! HE SHOT THE CAPTAIN!"

OTHER VOICES—THE DREAM TECHNICIANS—CALL IN THE DARKNESS, OVERLAPPING, LOST, HEARD AGAIN, WASHED AWAY IN SCREAMS AND THUNDER.

FIRST VOICE: We're sinking!

MR. TREADAWAY: Damage report?

SECOND VOICE: Front compartment's gone. The bulk-heads won't hold.

FIRST VOICE: She's going down by the bow.

MR. TREADAWAY: How long?

FIRST VOICE: Help! Help!

MR. TREADAWAY: How long, Mr. Melville?

SECOND VOICE: Minutes! Minutes!

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Through megaphone)* Ladies and gentlemen, I've some bad news and some very bad news. The Captain is dead. In addition, the ship has hit an iceberg and will sink in approximately three and a half minutes. Give or take three minutes. Please do not panic. Instead, proceed in an orderly fashion to the life-boats on the upper decks, as you were instructed in the Boat Drill.

MELBA: What Boat Drill? I don't remember a Boat Drill!

CARYS: This is like some bad dream.

ROB: *(Looks at her)* That's the first intelligent thing you've said in the last . . . how long have I known you?

DONNA-MARIE: Fishes! Fishes!

LINDBERG: Oh shut up!

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Through megaphone)* Do not, repeat, do not attempt to return to your cabins for belongings. The lower decks are already flooding, and you will most assuredly drown.

THE TECHNICIANS HAVE APPEARED AND ARE HELPING TO CHOREOGRAPH THE CONFUSION.

MR. TREADAWAY: Simply make your way, in an orderly fashion, to your allotted life-boat. *DO NOT PANIC.* There is no need to panic. Women and children first! Women and children first!

TREADAWAY CONTINUES TO GIVE AD-LIBBED ORDERS THROUGHOUT THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGES.

VINCE: Why women and children first? That's not fair.

ULYSSES: You'll have to take your turn with the rest of the men. Women and children always go first.

VINCE: I paid my money. I've got as much right to a life-boat as any of them.

ULYSSES: I'm sorry. Don't make me hit you very hard across the face.

VINCE: Bugger!

VINCE EXITS.

LINDBERG: Are you all right, sweetheart? Do you know which life-boat you're going to?

PHOEBE: You damn fool! This is all your fault!

SHE GOES TO EXIT.

LINDBERG: Where are you going?

PHOEBE: To get my fur coat.

LINDBERG: He said we shouldn't go below.

PHOEBE: I want my coat!

LINDBERG: Phoebe. We can buy another coat. Come back here.

(He catches hold of her)

PHOEBE: Oh Lindberg. I don't want to die—

THEY EMBRACE.

ULYSSES: *(To Technicians)* Get this useless body out of the way.

TECHNICIANS REMOVE THE BODY OF MR. FOSS.

CARYS: Where's Dexter?

ROB: I haven't seen him.

CARYS: He was here! He was going to marry me when we got to Mozambique. Dexter!

SHE GOES OFF LOOKING FOR HIM.

ROB: *(Calling after her)* Don't waste your time!

ULYSSES: You. Lend a hand with the boat.

ROSE: Rob . . .

ROB: Go and find your boat, Rose.

ROSE: But I want to stay with you. If I drown, I drown.

FIRST TECHNICIAN: Stand back, please. Everyone stand back.

THE TECHNICIANS BRING ON A LIFE-BOAT, AIDED BY ROB. THERE IS A GREAT RUSH FOR THE BOAT. THE TECHNICIANS FIGHT THE GUESTS BACK. TRUNCHEONS ARE WIELDED. HYSTERIA IS HIGH.

FIRST TECHNICIAN: Not yet! Not yet!

MR. TREADAWAY: Do not rush the life-boat! *(Through megaphone)*

Repeat: do not rush the bloody life-boat! Wait your turn!

Wait your turn! Mr. Skinner—

LINDBERG: Yes.

MR. TREADAWAY: Use your gun.

LINDBERG: *(Delighted)* Yes?

MR. TREADAWAY: Yes!

LINDBERG POINTS HIS GUN AT THE PANICKING PASSENGERS.

LINDBERG: Stay back! You morons!

MR. TREADAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Skinner.

FRANK: Everybody pray to the Lord! He alone will protect us! On your knees, sinners!

SOME OF THE GUESTS FALL TO THEIR KNEES.

FRANK: Our Father, we are unworthy sinners who don't deserve to lick the mud off your tap-shoes—

LINDBERG: Did he say tap-shoes?

MR. TREADAWAY: Try the Lord's prayer, Mr. Juffs. Or else shut up!

FRANK CONTINUES TO LEAD THE LORD'S PRAYER, WHILE IN THE BACKGROUND, A STRING QUARTET PLAYS ON. DISTANT SHOTS.

SCREAMS. THE CONTINUING SOUND OF CHURNING ENGINES, OF STEAM ERUPTING IN THE ENGINE ROOM, OF WATER CLAIMING THE LOWER DECKS; THE TERRIBLE CREAKING OF THE SHIP'S PLATES AS THEY ARE WRENCHED APART. DEXTER ENTERS. HE HAS LOST HIS JACKET, HIS "SHIRT" IS SMEARED, HIS HEAD IS BLOODY.

CARYS: Dexter! I thought you were dead.

DEXTER: I got lost in the dark.

ULYSSES: I'm sorry, sir, you'll have to stand back, this boat is for women and children only.

CARYS: Oh Dexter—

ULYSSES: *(Hitting him)* I said: stand back!

ULYSSES PARTS THE LOVERS BEFORE THEY CAN KISS.

ULYSSES: You'll see each other again. In some dimension or other.

PEOPLE ARE SAYING GOODBYE EVERYWHERE. TEARS; EXCHANGES OF KEEP-SAKES. DONNA-MARIE AND PHOEBE GET INTO THE LIFE-BOAT; SO DOES CARYS.

MELBA: Come on, Frank.

FRANK: You go! The Lord will protect me!

MELBA: You're a damn fool, Frank. You're wearing a skirt! Get in!

FRANK: I'd rather drown than deny my masculinity.

MELBA: It's not much to deny, Frank. Get in!

FRANK: No!

MELBA GETS INTO BOAT.

ROB: Go on, Rose.

ROSE: I'm frightened.

ROB: We're all frightened.

ROSE KISSES ROB, AND GETS INTO THE LIFE-BOAT. ULYSSES BRINGS ANOTHER WOMAN FORWARD, IN A HEAVY FUR COAT, DARK GLASSES, AND A HAT WITH A VEIL. IT IS VINCE, HEAVILY DISGUISED.

ULYSSES: Gangway! Gangway!

VINCE: *(High-pitched voice)* Thank you, my man.

VINCE GETS INTO THE BOAT. THERE IS A TERRIBLE CRASH. DISTANT SCREAMS.

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Through megaphone)* Ladies and gentlemen, the ship is going down. Repeat: the ship is going down. Boy, find yourself a life-boat.

SEAN: Yes, sir.

SEAN EXITS, TREADAWAY COMES DOWN FROM THE BRIDGE. THE SOUND OF RUSHING WATER IS MOUNTING.

ULYSSES: Any more for any more?

LINDBERG: Look. Here's a donation for the Old Sailor's Home. *(Thrusts money at Ulysses)* Let me go in the boat. My wife's in there.

ULYSSES: I'm sorry, I never accept small bribes.

LINDBERG: It's all I've got.

ULYSSES: No exceptions.

LINDBERG HITS ULYSSES, WHO FALLS BACK.

LINDBERG: (To Dexter) Come on, boy, what are you waiting for?

MORE CRASHES. LINDBERG GRABS DEXTER AND TOGETHER THEY GET INTO THE LIFE-BOAT.

MELBA: Frank! Frank!

FRANK JUFFS IS THE ONLY ONE PRAYING NOW; THE REST HAVE GIVEN UP.

MELBA: Frank!

DEXTER: It's too late, Mother. He wants to die.

MR. TREADAWAY: (To Rob) Come on! The ship's going!

ROB: I don't want to get in there.

MR. TREADAWAY: Ever drowned, sir? I don't recommend it. I've drowned three times. It's horrible, let me tell you. Horrible!

ROB: Shit!

TREADAWAY DRAGS ROB AND THEY CLING TO THE BOAT AS THE ROAR INCREASES.

UTTER, TERRIFYING CONFUSION, WHICH IS REACHING A HIGHER AND HIGHER PITCH. THE LIFE-BOAT, NOW CRAMMED WITH SURVIVORS, IS ROCKED BY THE TECHNICIANS AS THE DARKNESS CLOSES IN. WE CAN HEAR THE STRING QUARTET PLAYING "ABIDE WITH ME"; SEVERAL PEOPLE ON THE SHIP SINGING "SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW." SOMEBODY ELSE IS MAKING CONFESSION, ANOTHER PERSON YELLS: "THE VORTEX! THE VORTEX!"

TREADAWAY, HANGING ONTO THE BOAT, IS TRYING TO ORGANIZE OARSMEN.

THE CACOPHONY RISES, DEAFENING, BUT THE NOISE OF THE WATER, THE TERRIFYING ROAR OF THE DEEPS CLAIMING THE SHIP, IS INCREASINGLY DOMINANT. THE SCENE IS JUST LIT BY LIGHTNING NOW. THEN EVEN THAT STOPS.

JUST THE ROAR NOW, AND THE DARK. THE ROAR DIES DOWN. IN THE DARKNESS WE CAN HEAR, VERY SOFTLY, GENTLE SOBBING, THE MURMURS OF PRAYERS, AND THE SOFT SLOPPING OF WATER AGAINST THE SIDE OF THE LIFE-BOAT.

IN SUMMARY, THE SURVIVORS ARE: MR. TREADAWAY, DEXTER AND MELBA JUFFS, THE SKINNERS (INCLUDING CARYS AND DONNA-MARIE), VINCE (IN DRAG STILL), ROB AND ROSE. LOST ARE: ULYSSES, MR. FOSS, FRANK JUFFS AND SEAN, PLUS SEVERAL UNNAMED PASSENGERS. WE CAN SEE NOBODY AT THE MOMENT; ALL IS IN DARKNESS.

ROB: Send up a distress rocket, Treadaway.

MR. TREADAWAY: Wait a moment; stand clear.

THERE IS A NOISE OF SPATTERING FIRE, AND THEN THE SOUND OF A ROCKET TAKING OFF AND THE "WHOO" OF IT RUSHING OVERHEAD. A PALE LILAC-PINK BLOOMS OVER THE BOAT, AND BY ITS FITFUL LIGHT WE SEE THE SURVIVORS PROPERLY. IN THE BLACKOUT THE ACTORS HAVE PARTIALLY UNDRESSED; THEY LOOK DIRTIED, RUINED. SOME HUDDLE IN BLANKETS. SOME HOLD ITEMS OF SENTIMENTAL VALUE; SHOES, A DOLL, WHAT-EVER. THESE OBJECTS, THE APPEARANCE OF THE SURVIVORS, AND THE IMPOSSIBLE WAY THEY ARE CRAMMED INTO THE TINY, PITCHING BOAT, EVOKES THE FINE LINE BETWEEN FARCE AND TRAGEDY WHICH ALL GOOD NIGHTMARES WALK. UNDER COVER OF THE ROCKET-LIGHT, A BLUE, SHIFTING LIGHT COMES UP TO ILLUMINATE THE BOAT. WHEN THE ROCKET DIES, THE BLUE REMAINS.

ROB AND MELBA HAVE THE OARS.

MR. TREADAWAY: (Calling over the water) Hello! Hello! There must be other boats. Somebody else must have survived.

There can't just be us. There can't!

LINDBERG: The whirlpool must have pulled them all down.

MR. TREADAWAY: (*Still calling over the water*) Is there anybody out there?

MELBA: Try another rocket . . .

MR. TREADAWAY: That was the only one that was dry.

PHOEBE: What if a plane comes over? How will we attract attention?

CARYS: I can hear voices. Hush, everyone. I can hear voices!

THE BOAT HUSHES. VERY DISTANTLY, A VOICE.

FRANK: (*Off*) Yea, though I walk through the vale of the shadow of death—

MELBA: Frank! It's Frank!

FRANK: (*Off*) I shall fear no evil.

MELBA: Oh Frank. Over here!

VINCE: There's no more room.

MELBA: But that's my husband! Swim, Frank. Follow my voice!

VINCE: There's no room, dammit!

VINCE STANDS UP.

MR. TREADAWAY: That woman is a man!

VINCE: What if I am?

LINDBERG: Vince!

ALL THROUGH THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE MELBA IS COAXING FRANK TOWARDS THE BOAT.

VINCE: All right, it's me. Big deal!

ROSE: He's here under false pretenses.

LINDBERG: Of all the tricks.

VINCE: You bought your way on board. Or you tried to! The rest of us have to use the wits God gave us.

FRANK: (*Clambering aboard*) Hallelujah! The Lord has saved the righteous from the flood.

VINCE: Oh shut up.

THE BOAT LURCHES AS FRANK CLAMBERS IN.

MR. TREADAWAY: We have to distribute the weight more evenly; move slowly, or we'll roll over.

FRANK: I don't want to worry anybody, but I kept feeling things moving around my legs in the water.

MR. TREADAWAY: You! Skinner. Move down the boat. Slowly; slowly does it.

ROSE: Sharks? Was it sharks?

DEXTER: Not in the Arctic Sea.

VINCE: Polar bears. Oh fuck.

FRANK: God made them all, let's remember that.

PHOEBE: I'm not thanking God for sharks, it's in bad taste.

ROB: What happened to the steward? Anyone see him?

CARYS: He was on the Bridge.

MR. TREADAWAY: I sent him for a life-jacket. I didn't see him after that.

LINDBERG: I intend to sue.

DEXTER: Oh shut up. If it weren't for you we'd still have a Captain.

LINDBERG: I was protecting my wife. That queer was willing to watch her raped. I wasn't.

THEY'RE ALL LOOKING AT HIM.

CARYS: So now it's Rob's fault.

LINDBERG: Eying up the children. I saw him! He's the one! Not me! He's the one!

FRANK: This was a judgment. No doubt.

MR. TREADAWAY: Sit down! Will you *please all sit down!*

LINDBERG: What are you staring at, fairy?

ROB: Why don't you just sit down like he says?

LINDBERG: I'll sue. I will.

PHOEBE: Ssh! Ssh!

FRANK: It's a judgment. For our jealousy, our avarice—

DEXTER: Balls!

FRANK: When the children turn on their parents, it's the short road to Sodom.

ROSE: We'll probably all end up going mad. Drinking sea water and going mad. Eating each other.

VINCE: (*To Rose*) You can eat me anytime.

PHOEBE: She'd have to be very desperate, Vincent.

FRANK: I think we should all commend ourselves into the hands of the Lord.

DEXTER: I hope He's washed them.

FRANK: You Godless soul—
 MELBA: Frank!
 FRANK: How were you ever the fruit of my loins?
 VINCE: (*Points at Rob*) No; he's the fruit.
 DEXTER: You can talk. Dressed like that.
 PHOEBE: Wait a minute; I recognize that coat—
 LINDBERG: Not now, Phoebe.
 PHOEBE: That's my coat! That's my favorite fur coat. Give it here!
 FRANK: Oh Lord, whose only son walked on the sea, and calmed
 the raging storms, hear us now in the hour of our need—
 DONNA-MARIE: (*Points into the water*) Fishes! Look! Fishes!
 PHOEBE: You stole my coat!
 VINCE: What if I did?
 DONNA-MARIE: Oo. Big fishes.
 LINDBERG: Never mind the coat.
 PHOEBE: I'm cold, and *I want my coat*.
 VINCE: I've got nothing on underneath.
 FRANK: —keep us, oh Lord, in your love and mercy—
 PHOEBE: I don't care! Lindberg!
 LINDBERG: Shut up!
 DONNA-MARIE: Little black eyes. Big smiles. They're coming up
 to see us, aren't they?
 ROB: Maybe they're coming to have their photograph taken.
 MELBA: Sharks?
 ROB: I wouldn't be at all surprised.
 CARYS: God.

*PHOEBE HAS GOTTEN UP AND IS FIGHTING HER WAY
 ALONG THE BOAT TO VINCE. THE BOAT ROCKS AT HER
 PASSAGE.*

MR. TREADAWAY: Sit down!
 PHOEBE: I want my coat.
 LINDBERG: Phoebe!
 PHOEBE: Give it to me!

*SHE WRESTLES WITH VINCE, AND PULLS OFF THE COAT;
 HE IS INDEED NAKED UNDERNEATH. HE STANDS IN THE
 BOAT, COVERING HIMSELF. SHE STEPS BACK WITH THE
 COAT, TRIUMPHANT.*

PHOEBE: Got it!
 DONNA-MARIE: (*Sing-song*) Fishies! Fishies!
 PHOEBE: (*Losing her balance*) Oh!

SHE FALLS OUT OF THE BOAT. ROSE SCREAMS.

LINDBERG: Phoebe!
 CARYS: Mother!
 DONNA-MARIE: Big fishies!
 CARYS: Oh Dexter! Help her!
 DEXTER: (*Leaning over the side of the boat, arm outstretched*) Let go
 of the coat, Mother.
 PHOEBE: I will not!

ROSE IS STILL SCREAMING.

DEXTER: It's too heavy. Let go of it, you stupid bitch.
 LINDBERG: Don't talk to my wife like that. Let go of it, you daft
 cow!

*TREADAWAY SLAPS ROSE. SHE STOPS SCREAMING AND
 SLAPS HIM BACK.*

PHOEBE: I won't! I won't!
 LINDBERG: I'll buy you another fucking coat.
 MELBA: Sharks! Sharks!
 FRANK: For what they are about to receive, may the Lord make
 them truly thankful.
 ROSE: I can't live if you die, Phoebe.

*SHE HAS STOOD UP; IS TOTTERING ON THE SIDE OF THE
 BOAT.*

DEXTER: No, Rose!
 ROSE: I'm coming to join you.

ROSE DIVES IN THE SEA.

DONNA-MARIE: Happy fishes! All smiling.
 MR. TREADAWAY: They're not smiling. They're biting.

MELBA: There can't be sharks in the Arctic Ocean. They must be penguins.

ROSE: I can't swim. Oh God, I can't swim!

MELBA: *(To herself)* Oh yes. That's it. They're penguins for certain.

DEXTER: Let go of the coat!

MELBA: Penguins can't mean any harm.

PHOEBE: *(Voice fading)* Never! Ever . . .

SILENCE.

LINDBERG: Oh God. She's gone.

DONNA-MARIE: *(Merrily)* Bye! Bye!

ROSE: Phoebe . . . Phoebe . . .

DEXTER: Rose.

ROB: She's gone.

LINDBERG: Didn't they look beautiful? The bodies.

DONNA-MARIE: Yes.

LINDBERG: Floating away.

CARYS: Oh Mamma.

LINDBERG: Phoebe was always careful about her appearance.

DONNA-MARIE: *(To Lindberg)* Did you see the fishes?

MELBA: Penguins.

LINDBERG: Come on, darling.

LINDBERG GETS HOLD OF DONNA-MARIE, WRAPPING HER IN HIS ARMS.

LINDBERG: We're going swimming.

DONNA-MARIE: Swimming with the fishes. Swimming with the fishes!

LINDBERG PULLS DONNA-MARIE TO THE SIDE OF THE BOAT.

DEXTER: *(He tries to stop Lindberg. Carys holds him back)* Oh Jesus . . .

LINDBERG: *(A crazed fatalism has seized him)* It's all right. Life doesn't mean much without her. If that's love . . . then I loved her.

CARYS: Let him go.

LINDBERG: *(To Treadaway)* I shall still sue, of course. From the grave.

CARYS: He's gone mad. Dexter. Listen to me. Let. Him. Go.

DEXTER LETS LINDBERG GO.

FRANK: It's the Lord's will.

LINDBERG AND DONNA-MARIE DISAPPEAR OVERBOARD.

FRANK: Amen.

DEXTER: *(To Frank)* You bloody stupid man.

HE GRABS HOLD OF FRANK.

MELBA: Dexter. You're speaking to your father.

DEXTER: He doesn't feel anything, except a sense of moral superiority.

FRANK: And what do you feel? Is your soul deep and wide? No. It's a mean, narrow, passionless thing, like mine. That's my revenge.

MELBA: There's no need for this, Frank . . .

DEXTER: You're right. You couldn't even put your arms around me—

FRANK: Flesh? Is that all you can think about? You're as corrupt as your mother.

MELBA: Don't bring me into this.

VINCE: Why don't you hit him?

MR. TREADAWAY: Shut up! Sit down and shut up!

CARYS: Dex, let him alone.

FRANK: Corrupt from the womb.

DEXTER: Give it a rest.

FRANK: Rotten, like her stock.

MELBA: *(Outraged)* My family? Rotten?

VINCE: *(To Melba)* Go on; hit him.

FRANK: Syphilitic!

MELBA HITS FRANK.

FRANK: Cankorous. To the marrow! To the soul!

FRANK HITS HER BACK.

DEXTER: Stop that!

FRANK: *(Turning to Dexter, incensed with hatred)* You may well have been born blind, deaf and dumb. That would have been a judgment. Oh yes! *(Frank crosses the boat to Dexter)* And what would you have lost? Only seeing this dirty flesh, this dirty world. Better you were never born!

DEXTER: Oh fuck off.

DEXTER PUSHES HIM OVERBOARD.

MELBA: Dexter! That was your father.

DEXTER: So it was.

MELBA: Tell him you're sorry.

DEXTER: *(Calling)* Sorry, Dad.

FRANK: Oh God! They're eating me.

DEXTER: Who are?

FRANK: The fishes! The bloody fishes!

DEXTER: It's a judgment, Dad.

FRANK: They're between my legs! Ah! Oh! That's my balls you've got there!

HE SINKS.

MELBA: Now look what you've done. Your father's been unmanned by penguins.

FRANK REAPPEARS SUDDENLY AND GRABS MELBA.

FRANK: Not quite!

MELBA: Oh!

FRANK: Jesus wants you for a sunbeam, light of my life!

MELBA: Oh Christ!

FRANK PULLS HER OVERBOARD. DEXTER GOES TO THE SIDE OF THE BOAT.

DEXTER: Gone.

CARYS: This can't be happening. It can't.

DEXTER: Well, I'm glad.

CARYS: Don't say that.

DEXTER: I am. They got on my tits.

VINCE: Good on you. That's it, feed them to the fishes. There's more room for the rest of us then.

ROB: You really are a rat, Vince.

VINCE: All this women and children first crap. Makes me sick. It's survival of the fittest. Always has been, always will be.

DEXTER: So it's you next, is it?

VINCE: What?

DEXTER STANDS UP.

DEXTER: I meant you're not fit for anything, 'cept fish food—

VINCE: You wouldn't hit a man with no clothes on?

DEXTER: Try me.

THEY START TO FIGHT, VIOLENTLY. THE BOAT ROCKS.

CARYS: Dexter! Behave yourself!

ROB: Let them have their fun. Boys'll be boys.

CARYS: How can you be so calm about this?

ROB: *(Gazing out)* Because it's not . . . quite . . . real.

CARYS: Not real? We just saw them drown; I can still see the blood in the water. There's Mr. Juff's leg . . . floating by. Rose knew. We'll all go mad.

ROB: It's all right, Carys.

CARYS: Don't tell me it's all right! All my life people have been patting me on the head and telling me, "It's all right, Carys!" Well, it isn't. Look at those two: my father's best friend and my husband to be, fighting like mad dogs; us lost at sea, surrounded by sharks, and not even a star in the sky to steer by— *(At this observation, Rob looks up. Indeed there are no stars.)* —and you say it's all right? It isn't! It's never been all right! The lullabies are wrong!

VINCE: Will you please keep your sobs down?

ROB: You're upsetting her. Stop fighting.

DEXTER: Now, you sit down and stay out of this, Robert. Fighting's work for hard men. Not your style at all.

ROB: I hope you remember this. God, I hope we *all* remember

this . . . *(He goes to the side of the boat, and peers over)*
 . . . when it's over.

VINCE: Where were we?

DEXTER: I had you by the nuts.

VINCE: That's right; and I had your hair. Like that.

DEXTER: Okay?

VINCE: Fine!

THEY START TO FIGHT AGAIN.

ROB: Which direction are we drifting in?

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Consults his compass)* South south-west.

ROB: Any idea where we are?

MR. TREADAWAY: No.

ROB: So we just sail on until morning.

MR. TREADAWAY: Maybe for weeks.

ROB: *(With calm certainty)* No. Just until morning.

CARYS: I don't follow.

ROB: You were right; they forgot the stars. Silly little oversight. I suppose they thought we'd be too occupied with ourselves to look up. And the sharks. They don't belong in this scenario.

MR. TREADAWAY: Spice things up a bit though, don't they?

CARYS: What?

MR. TREADAWAY: I'm humoring him. The poor man's lost his wits.

CARYS: *(Sorrowful)* Oh Rob. I thought you'd be the last to crack.

ROB: *(To Treadaway)* Why play on?

MR. TREADAWAY: This isn't a game, Mr. Kidd.

ROB: You can admit it. The illusion's almost perfect . . . but not perfect enough.

MR. TREADAWAY: You're too cynical, Mr. Kidd.

ROB: A minute ago I was insane.

CARYS: If you're mad, I can tell you. I never really liked you. I told Dexter you were a conniver. But you're not. I see that now. I'm sorry we didn't get on when you were sane.

ROB: Don't worry.

DEXTER HAS WON THE FIGHT. HE DRAGS A BLOODIED
 VINCE TO HIS FEET.

VINCE: I swallowed one of my teeth.

DEXTER: I won, didn't I?

VINCE: You did.

DEXTER: So I've a perfect right to drown you.

VINCE: Absolutely. Fair's fair.

DEXTER PUSHES VINCE OVERBOARD.

CARYS: What did you do that for?

DEXTER: He said I won.

VINCE: *(Calling up out of the water)* I was lying!

DEXTER: What?

VINCE: You couldn't fight your way out of a paper bag—

DEXTER: Come here and say that.

VINCE: You come down here. The water's lovely—

CARYS: No, Dex!

VINCE: And the sharks nibble your toes!

DEXTER: I'm coming!

CARYS: Dexter. Don't you dare!

DEXTER: Oh . . . I dare . . .

DEXTER JUMPS OVER.

DEXTER: Chilly!

VINCE: Come here, you little bastard!

CARYS: They're pulling each other down.

DISTANT CRIES OF DEXTER AND VINCE.

CARYS: Oh God . . . Rob.

ROB COMFORTS HER.

ROB: This has gone far enough, Mr. Treadaway.

MR. TREADAWAY: There's a storm coming up.

CARYS: We're going to die.

ROB: Sooner or later. But not here. Not in this fabrication.

CARYS: We are! The boat'll be swamped!

THE WIND HAS GOT UP. THUNDER ROARS.

ROB: Nothing can kill us.
 CARYS: Sharks! Sea!
 ROB: We'll live forever; in dreams.
 CARYS: I don't think I believe you.
 MR. TREADAWAY: He's out of his tiny mind.
 ROB: No. That's precisely where I am. I'm in my mind.

HE STANDS UP

ROB: I could step out of this boat now. Couldn't I?
 MR. TREADAWAY: I wouldn't advise it.
 ROB: There's solid ground under here, somewhere. Just over the edge of my bed. I wouldn't sink. Not if I didn't believe it.
 MR. TREADAWAY: It's suicide.
 ROB: Who's your master, Treadaway?
 CARYS: Foss. He's Foss' man.
 ROB: Of course, our dead Captain. I'm going to have a few words with him.
 MR. TREADAWAY: Don't—
 CARYS: If you're wrong—
 ROB: I drown. But I'm not.

ROB STEPS OFF THE BOAT, ONTO SOLID GROUND. CARYS STARES DOWN INTO THE "WATER" THAT SHE STILL SEES.

CARYS: Oh Rob! He's going down!
 MR. TREADAWAY: There; didn't I tell you?

SHE REACHES OUT.

CARYS: He's sinking.
 ROB: No I'm not.
 CARYS: Look at his face; here come the fish!

SHE LOOKS AWAY.

CARYS: I can't bear it. He was the last of them.
 MR. TREADAWAY: Forget he ever lived. Sit back. We'll ride out the storm. I'll tell you a rhyme. Yes?

THE LIGHTS START TO GO DOWN ON THE LIFE-BOAT.

CARYS: Yes.
 MR. TREADAWAY: The owl and the pussycat went to sea
 In a beautiful pea-green boat, They took some honey,
 and plenty of money,
 Wrapped up in a five-pound note;
 The owl looked up to the stars above,
 And sang to a small guitar . . .

TREADAWAY'S VOICE IS FADING. THE LIFE-BOAT HAS DISAPPEARED. A LIGHT HAS COME UP ON SEAN, STANDING IN THE HALLWAY, SMOKING.

SEAN: . . . O Lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
 What a beautiful Pussy you are,
 You are,
 You are!
 What a beautiful Pussy you are!
 ROB: You woke too.
 SEAN: I recognized the dream. I sold it to him.
 ROB: But you went along with it.
 SEAN: I like playing games.
 ROB: There's a limit.
 SEAN: I'm sorry. I've been stupid. Wasting time.

ROB APPROACHES SEAN, AND KISSES HIM.

MR. FOSS APPEARS. HE WEARS A WHITE SHIRT, BLOODIED BY THE SHOT THAT KILLED HIM. THE LIFE-BOAT HAS BEEN VACATED.

MR. FOSS: They all drowned, of course.
 ROB: Of course.
 MR. FOSS: A storm came; it overturned the life-boat. Mr. Treadaway was eaten by a spermacious whale, like Jonah. Carys was carried along the Gulf Stream, and sank somewhere off the coast of Nova Scotia. Nobody's ever defied me before, Mr. Kidd.
 ROB: You were being cruel.

MR. FOSS: Why? They're having a fine time now, wandering the bottom of the sea, where the sun never goes. Only drowned cities down there, and maybe their forgotten selves; sunk without a trace.

ROB: Oh, I see. It was me who asked for this. Is that what you're saying?

MR. FOSS: You wanted to turn them inside out. And so they are

THE TECHNICIANS HAVE COME ON. THEY START TO REMOVE THE PROPS OF THE DREAM; THE BEAR OF AMSTERDAM IS DISMANTLED, REVEALING THE HOTEL UNDERNEATH. THE LIFE-BOAT IS REMOVED.

MR. FOSS: *(To Technicians)* Thank you all. You did a miraculous job. *(He gives them money)* Didn't they, though? The sinking was pobbelus. The great wastes of ocean; meticulously evoked.

SEAN: There aren't any sharks in the Arctic.

MR. FOSS: Maybe they lost their way. We all do, once in a while. The general effect was overwhelming. *(Re: Rob)* Even he believed it, didn't you? At least for a little time.

ROB: It was beautifully done. I'll say that.

MR. FOSS: It was my swanish song, gentlemen. After tonight I am a legendary poet and nothing more.

TREADAWAY HAS APPEARED, DRESSED AS HE WAS AT HIS FIRST ENTRANCE.

MR. FOSS: There's no stopping me, Treadaway, so don't even try. After tomorrow, I shall be a different man.

MR. TREADAWAY: How's that?

MR. FOSS: I have an offer of marriage.

SEAN: Ulysses thought you were a pederast.

MR. FOSS: Only by inclination.

MR. TREADAWAY: Mrs. Mocatta will have to be informed.

MR. FOSS: So. Inform her. Tell her my replacement is here for the hiring. *(Treadaway looks puzzled)* I speak of Mr. Kidd. He beat us at our own game, Treadaway, tell her that.

BIRDS HAVE STARTED TO SING.

ROB: That must be the dawn chorus.

SEAN: We'd better get to bed.

MR. FOSS: *(To Rob)* You won't get a better offer than that tonight, Mr. Kidd. I've seen his bed; I spied on him in a moment of blind lust. It's cramped, but you'll find a way to fit the two of you in there somehow or other.

THE BIRDS ARE GETTING LOUDER.

MR. FOSS: Go on. No good lover prevaricates.

HE EXITS.

SEAN: Don't you want to?

ROB: I'm coming.

SEAN: So's Christmas.

ROB: Who's he marrying, for God's sake?

SEAN: We'll find out tomorrow.

THEY EXIT TOGETHER.

MR. TREADAWAY: Tomorrow. What a day it was.

THE SOUND OF BIRDS RISE.

END OF ACT THREE.

Act 4

Act 4:

ACT FOUR IS A CONTINUATION FROM THE END OF ACT THREE. THE MORNING LIGHT CONTINUES TO INTENSIFY AS THE TECHNICIANS EXIT, ILLUMINATING A SOLITARY LIFE PRESERVER THAT HAS BEEN LEFT, FORLORN, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE.

ONE OF THE TECHNICIANS COMES IN, AND STARES AT IT FOR A MOMENT.

TECHNICIAN: Untidy.

THE TECHNICIAN PICKS UP THE LIFE PRESERVER AND EXITS WITH IT AS ROSE COMES DOWNSTAIRS, DRESSED TO LEAVE. SHE CARRIES HER SUITCASE. ULYSSES ENTERS.

ROSE: Excuse me.

HE IGNORES HER; WALKS PAST WITH SPADE.

ROSE: Excuse me.

HE STOPS.

ULYSSES: She was buried.

ROSE: Who was?

ULYSSES: In the night.
 ROSE: Has somebody died?
 ULYSSES: Just her ribs, poking up over the sand.
 ROSE: Oh my God.
 ULYSSES: Can't dig her out now. And by tomorrow morning she'll
 be covered up completely. The wind's changing.
 ROSE: Have you reported this to the police?
 ULYSSES: They are not interested. I'm sure there are thousands of
 them buried out there. What do they care? They're just left
 to rot. It's a bloody tragedy, if you ask me.

HE STARTS TO EXIT.

ROSE: Wait.
 ULYSSES: What?
 ROSE: I want my bill. I'm leaving.
 ULYSSES: (*Consults his watch*) Now? There's only me that's up.
 ROSE: Now.
 ULYSSES: Well, you'll have to wait until I've served breakfast.
 ROSE: I won't be treated like this. You can't get snifty with me just
 because my mother called me Rose. I want my bill. Now.
 ULYSSES: All right, don't get your knickers in a twist.

ULYSSES EXITS. ROSE MAKES A SMALL NOISE OF SATISFACTION TO HERSELF SHE GOES TO THE MIRROR IN THE HALL TO ADJUST HER HAIR. ENTER ONE OF THE TECHNICIANS, VIA THE FRONT DOOR. HE/SHE'S DRESSING FOR THE WEDDING.

TECHNICIAN: Have you seen the groom?
 ROSE: You mean Dexter?
 TECHNICIAN: I mean Mr. Lear.
 ROSE: I'm sorry. I don't know anybody called Lear.
 TECHNICIAN: But the carriage is waiting—

THE TECHNICIAN EXITS TO LOOK FOR LEAR. ROSE GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR.

ROSE: Carriage?

SHE LOOKS AT THE CARRIAGE WAITING FOR FOSS, AMAZED. VINCE COMES DOWN. HE LOOKS TERRIBLE.

ROSE: A camel-drawn carriage? Well I never.
 VINCE: Christ . . .

HIS VOICE IS HUSHED. HE HAS A TERRIBLE HANGOVER.

ROSE: (*Turns*) Oh.
 VINCE: (*Without enthusiasm*) Rose.
 ROSE: Vince.
 VINCE: I don't remember last night at all. What did I do?
 ROSE: Well, you danced on the table, you stripped off your
 clothes. And you stole Phoebe's coat.
 VINCE: I did what?
 ROSE: (*To herself*) No you didn't.
 VINCE: I don't remember a coat.
 ROSE: I don't know why I said that. It just sort of came to mind.
 You in Phoebe's coat.
 VINCE: A slob I am. A thief I'm not.
 ROSE: No. Of course not. I'm sorry.
 VINCE: (*Brightening*) All in all, it's been a good weekend. We
 should do it again sometime. Maybe just the two of us.
 ROSE: I'm sure my photographs won't come out. I feel it in my
 bones.

SHE GOES OUTSIDE, LEAVING VINCE ON HIS OWN. VINCE BURPS; SITS DOWN. THE TECHNICIAN COMES IN AGAIN. LOOKS AT WATCH. THE PANIC IS GROWING.

TECHNICIAN: He's going to be late. Hell! Where in God's name—?

MRS. CORCORAN ENTERS WITH ROSE'S BILL.

MRS. CORCORAN: Ulysses said—oh.
 VINCE: You looking for me?
 TECHNICIAN AND MRS. CORCORAN: No!
 VINCE: Don't mind me.
 MRS. CORCORAN: I'm after Ms. Giddy.
 VINCE: She's outside.

MRS. CORCORAN: (*To the Technician*) Who are you, exactly?
 TECHNICIAN: Have you seen Mr. Lear?
 MRS. CORCORAN: There's nobody here of that name.
 TECHNICIAN: Oh. Foss, then. Mr. Foss.
 MRS. CORCORAN: Oh yes, Mr. Foss is eating his breakfast. In the dining room. Do you have a telegram for him?
 TECHNICIAN: He's getting married in sixteen minutes.
 MRS. CORCORAN: Does he know?
 TECHNICIAN: (*As he exits*) This way, is it?
 MRS. CORCORAN: (*Calling after the Technician*) Turn right. Straight ahead. (*To Vince*) You look really awful, by the way. What did you get up to last night?
 VINCE: I'm beginning to wonder.
 MRS. CORCORAN: A good breakfast'll help to settle your stomach. I've got some nice fish—
 VINCE: Fish?
 MRS. CORCORAN: Halibut.
 VINCE: (*Bothered by this*) No fish.
 MRS. CORCORAN: Tell Ms. Giddy I've got her bill, will you? There's no hurry. (*As she exits*) Did you sleep all right, by the way?
 VINCE: I sank like a stone. (*After thought*) . . . log. I slept like a log.

VINCE GETS UP AND GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR, WATCHES THE CARRIAGE. ULYSSES ENTERS; CHANGED TO SERVE BREAKFAST.

ULYSSES: I can smell camel shit.
 VINCE: Blame me. Go on. I've been blamed for just about everything else this morning.
 ULYSSES: (*At front door*) What's that?
 VINCE: Someone's getting married, apparently. Lucky sod.

ENTER SEAN, WITH LADDER.

ULYSSES: You're late up.

ULYSSES GOES TO EXIT AS TECHNICIAN ENTERS DRAGGING MR. FOSS, WHO HAS A CUP OF COFFEE IN ONE HAND AND A LETTER IN THE OTHER.

THEY BUMP INTO ULYSSES.

ULYSSES: Watch it!
 TECHNICIAN: You're going to be late.
 MR. FOSS: There's oodles of time.
 TECHNICIAN: Thirteen minutes. I count. Thirteen.
 SEAN: A question.
 TECHNICIAN: Not now.
 SEAN: No, now.
 MR. FOSS: What?
 SEAN: What's a pederast?
 MR. FOSS: As if you didn't know. (*Gives Sean a letter*) This is for Mr. Kidd, when next you see him.
 TECHNICIAN: Come on.
 MR. FOSS: The coffee's a little weak this morning, Ulysses—

THE TECHNICIAN DRAGS MR. FOSS OFF.

ULYSSES: What did he mean: "as if you didn't know?"
 SEAN: Two quid you owe me.
 ULYSSES: (*Exiting*) The place has gone bananas.

SEAN PUTS THE LADDER ON THE PATIO AND STARTS TO TAKE DOWN THE LIGHTS, REMOVING THE BULBS ONE BY ONE AND WRAPPING THEM IN NEWSPAPER.

ENTER DEXTER. HE HAS A CRICK IN HIS NECK, FROM SLEEPING IN THE BATH. HE HAS HIS LUGGAGE. HE SEES VINCE, TURNS HIS BACK ON HIM, AND GOES ON TO THE PATIO.

DEXTER: Excuse me.
 SEAN: Yes?
 DEXTER: Any chance of a taxi?
 SEAN: Not on a Sunday morning.
 DEXTER: Shit.
 SEAN: Yeah, I can smell it too.

HE GOES BACK INTO THE HALL, PUTS DOWN HIS BAG, AND GOES TO FIND MRS. CORCORAN, AS ROB ENTERS. HE STOPS.

ROB: Carys was looking for you earlier.
 DEXTER: I can't face her.
 ROB: I thought you slept together.
 DEXTER: She was in the bed; I was in the bath. It's like I've been thrown out of the human race.
 ROB: We shouldn't have come, any of us. I didn't protest at the time and I should have. I think there was some malice there; just wanting to see you cornered.
 DEXTER: Well, you've seen. Now I just want to get out before Big Daddy Skinner gets down.
 ROB: He'll catch up with you sooner or later.
 DEXTER: I want us friends, Rob. Whatever happens. Please.
 ROB: We'll be friends. Later. Did you dream?
 DEXTER: No. *(A beat)* Yes. Something about trains.
 PHOEBE: *(Off-stage)* Come along, for Christ's sake—
 DEXTER: See you later.

DEXTER EXITS. ROB GOES INTO THE PATIO. SEAN HAS COME DOWN THE LADDER.

SEAN: Want to go swimming?
 ROB: Swimming?
 SEAN: You know, in the sea.
 ROB: They'll be going soon.
 SEAN: Oh. And you're going too?
 ROB: Dexter may need help.
 SEAN: *(Cool)* No problem.
 ROB: Doesn't seem fair.
 SEAN: And we've got to be fair haven't we? At all fucking costs.

HE PICKS UP THE BOX OF LIGHTS AND CARRIES IT THROUGH. PHOEBE APPEARS WITH DONNA-MARIE.

PHOEBE: Boy!

SEAN STOPS. LOOKS AT PHOEBE.

PHOEBE: Our bags are on the first landing. Bring them down.
 SEAN: Say "please."
 PHOEBE: Please.

SEAN: No.

HE EXITS. PHOEBE LOOKS AT ROB AND CHOOSES TO SAY NOTHING.

PHOEBE: Where's Rose?

SHE SEES VINCE, WHO HAS GONE TO SLEEP AT THE FRONT DOOR.

PHOEBE: Vince!

SHE CROSSES TO HIM. THE CONVERSATION SPLITS.

I.

PHOEBE: *(Shakes him)* Vince.
 VINCE: What?
 PHOEBE: Have you seen Rose?
 VINCE: She went out to look at the Wedding Carriage.
 PHOEBE: What Wedding Carriage?
 VINCE: She said there were camels.
 PHOEBE: Find her for me, will you?
 VINCE: Jesus. She's a grown woman.
 PHOEBE: We don't want a repeat of last night's performance.

UNWILLINGLY, VINCE GOES TO FIND ROSE.

II.

DONNA-MARIE: You didn't go swimming, did you?
 ROB: No.
 DONNA-MARIE: I did.
 ROB: No. Donna. We didn't go.
 DONNA-MARIE: I did. Last night.
 ROB: When?
 DONNA-MARIE: Last night, with the fishes.
 ROB: Did you?
 DONNA-MARIE: All of us went. Don't you remember?
 ROB: *(Remembering)* Oh my Lord.

PHOEBE: (*Having dispatched Vince*) This bloody place. (*To Donna Marie*) Come here. (*She obeys. Then to Rob*) You know, Lindberg and I have never really liked you. It was an instinctive thing. I daresay you're fairly harmless amongst your own, but you've got no place with ordinary people. Watching us. Oh, yes. That's what I didn't like. The way you watch. As if you're learning how to be normal.

ROB: You're lots of things, Phoebe, but normal isn't one of them.

PHOEBE: Oh yes I am. I'm normal. A simple woman, with simple tastes. The thought of your perversions leaves me cold. Physically cold. To think of it. I need my coat. Donna, get my coat. It's with the cases.

DONNA-MARIE EXITS FOR THE COAT.

PHOEBE: I suppose you're proud.

ROB: What of?

PHOEBE: I suppose you are. Upsetting the apple-cart. (*We realize slowly that she is very close to tears*) I wanted so much for Carys. I can tell you. It doesn't do to want too much. I married a rock. Lindberg is a rock. It's terrible.

ROB: No wonder you love Rose so much.

PHOEBE: Love her?

ROB: She's gentle.

PHOEBE: I don't love her. Not in the way you're implying.

ROB: You're right, I watch. I'm sorry if it distresses you. It distresses me too sometimes.

PHOEBE: You like other people's pain.

ENTER ROSE, WITH VINCE.

VINCE: I found her.

PHOEBE: Rose.

ROSE: Phoebe. What did you want?

PHOEBE: Want?

ROSE: Vince said you wanted something . . .

PHOEBE: Well . . . I just . . . I thought we should have some breakfast.

ENTER DONNA-MARIE, WITH THE COAT. PHOEBE PUTS IT ON.

VINCE: Cold?

PHOEBE: It's my coat.

VINCE: I didn't say it wasn't.

PHOEBE: No?

VINCE: No.

PHOEBE: Rose . . . I'm sorry.

ROSE: It's all right.

PHOEBE: I'm sure you didn't mean it.

ROSE: Mean what?

PHOEBE: What you called me. Carnivorous.

ROSE: Did I?

PHOEBE NODS; FROM APOLOGY TO MARTYRDOM IN TWO MOVES.

ROSE: Oh, Phoebe.

PHOEBE: Never mind. We'll pretend it never happened. Come to breakfast.

ROSE: Yes.

ROSE KISSES PHOEBE. PHOEBE GET EMBARRASSED IN THE LIGHT OF ROB'S REMARKS, AND HURRIES DONNA-MARIE AND ROSE OUT.

PHOEBE: Are you coming, Vince?

VINCE: No, it's just the way I walk. (*Laughs, the joke is now on Phoebe, who exits*) Make 'em laugh, I say. (*To Rob*) You don't know what you're missing.

ROB IS ALONE ON THE STAGE: BELLS START TO RING, DISTANTLY. HE GOES OUT ON THE PATIO AS MR. TREADAWAY COMES ON, DRESSED FOR THE WEDDING, FOLLOWED BY CARYS.

MR. TREADAWAY: I'm sorry, I don't know what you're talking about.

CARYS: Where's Mr. Foss? Let me speak to him.

MR. TREADAWAY: Hear those bells? The old fool's getting married! And I'm the best man!

CARYS: Married? At nine o'clock on a Sunday morning?

MR. TREADAWAY: He's not an easy man to love, but I can't help thinking he's one of God's finest. Despite his poems. Did you ever hear—Ring? Ring? *(He checks his pockets)* Where's the ring?

CARYS: Am I mad, Mr. Treadaway? Just tell me that. Am I?

MR. TREADAWAY: No. You're worth more than the rest of them put together, that's my honest opinion. I've lost the ring!

CARYS: And the dream?

MR. TREADAWAY: Was a dream; and I was flattered I was in it. *(To himself)* There's a hole in my pocket. That'll teach me to play with myself. *(To Carys)* I've lost the ring, damn it!

ENTER THE JUFFS WITH THEIR CASES. MELBA JUFFS IS WEARING LARGE EARRINGS.

MELBA: If we're quick—

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Panicking now)* I've lost it!

CARYS: Here. Have my engagement ring.

MELBA: What are you doing?

CARYS: Giving away my ring; what does it look like?

MR. TREADAWAY: No, that's much too small.

CARYS: My fingers are quite thick.

MR. TREADAWAY: The bride's fingers are three times yours.

CARYS: What?

TREADAWAY SEES THE RINGS IN MELBA'S EARS.

MR. TREADAWAY: Ah-ha!

MELBA: What are you staring at?

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Advancing on Melba, reciting under his breath)*
Dear Pig, are you willing—

MELBA: Keep away from me.

MR. TREADAWAY: *—to sell for one shilling—*

MELBA: Frank!

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Snatches at Melba's ear)—your ring?*

MELBA: Ah!

MR. TREADAWAY: *(Triumphant)* Said the Piggy, "I will." *(Holds up the ring)* Just the job. *(To Carys)* Excuse me.

FRANK: You! You!

FRANK PURSUES TREADAWAY.

MELBA: My ear's bleeding.

CARYS: Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring? said the Piggy,
"I will."

So they took it away, and were married next day,
By the turkey who lived on the hill.

MELBA: What are you reciting?

CARYS: "The Owl and the Pussycat." It's a nonsense poem. By Edward Lear. I remember it from childhood.

MELBA: I want to go home.

CARYS: We will. It'll be all right. Have you seen Dexter?

MELBA: We shan't be seeing him again. This has been a terrible grief for us both.

CARYS: He's not dead.

MELBA: I don't expect you to understand.

CARYS: Did you dream last night?

MELBA: I never dream.

ENTER FRANK, BREATHLESS.

FRANK: He was sprinting like a goat. I lost him.

MELBA: I want to go home.

FRANK: Not on an empty stomach.

MELBA: Tell Dexter goodbye, will you?

THEY EXIT INTO THE DINING ROOM. ROB STANDS AT THE PATIO DOOR.

ROB: None of them will admit to it, except your little sister.

CARYS: They're afraid, that's why.

ROB: They remember though. I'm sure of that.

CARYS: Poor Dexter.

ENTER SEAN.

ROB: Why poor Dexter?

CARYS: I love him, you know.

EXIT CARYS INTO THE DINING ROOM.

SEAN: Oh, there's a note here for you. From Mr. Foss. I forgot.

ROB: Uh. *(He opens it, reads)* "Mr. Kidd, I meant what I said. Wait a while. Edward."

SEAN: Do you want to leave a reply?

ROB: Maybe I should wait. Enjoy the day.

SEAN: Don't do me any favors.

ROB: You still game for a swim?

SEAN: Now?

ROB: Whenever suits you.

SEAN: You're on.

ENTER LINDBERG, WITH A SMALL CASE.

LINDBERG: Boy!

SEAN: Oh Christ.

LINDBERG: Bags!

MRS. CORCORAN ENTERS, CROSSING THE STAGE.

MRS. CORCORAN: Nobody seems to want the fish this morning.

LINDBERG: Fish?

MRS. CORCORAN: Your wife's in the dining room, Mr. Skinner.

DEXTER ENTERS.

LINDBERG: *(To Sean)* Boy!

DEXTER: *(Sees Lindberg)* Shit.

LINDBERG: Bags!

MRS. CORCORAN: Sean. You heard Mr. Skinner.

MRS. CORCORAN EXITS. DEXTER HAS TRIED TO SLIP AWAY.

LINDBERG: Dexter!

DEXTER: I—

ROB: Quickly.

ROB AND SEAN DUCK OUT.

LINDBERG: Boy!

LINDBERG TURNS TO CATCH SEAN, BUT HE'S TOO LATE. ROB AND SEAN HAVE GONE. DEXTER NOW TRIES TO SLIP AWAY.

LINDBERG: Wait!

DEXTER TURNS TO FACE LINDBERG.

DEXTER: Listen, before you start on me—

LINDBERG: No, no.

MRS. CORCORAN COMES BACK IN.

MRS. CORCORAN: Did you hear the bells?

LINDBERG: No.

DEXTER: I did.

MRS. CORCORAN: Strange.

SHE EXITS AGAIN.

LINDBERG: I'm not in the mood for recriminations. It's too late anyway. I just wanted a word with you. This is strictly between you and I, see, and if I ever hear that this conversation got any further—

DEXTER: It won't.

LINDBERG: *(A confessional; difficult for Lindberg, but he warms to it)* See, before I took over the firm I was a salesman, a damn good one. I used to travel all over the world, selling paper bags. I had money, I was young, about your age, and believe it or not, I was quite good looking. Well. One time I was in a bar in Bangkok and I picked up the most mouth-watering female on God's earth. I had to pay through the nose for her, but I tell you, she was incredible. Ever been with a whore?

DEXTER: No.

LINDBERG: Sex and commerce, it's a very arousing combination. I took her back to my hotel and we started to get down to

business. I remember she was deliciously coy: we even undressed in the dark because she said she was shy. I slung off my clothes in two seconds flat and got into bed. Next thing she was slipping in beside me, smelling of something familiar, like I'd known her all my life, and I ran my hands down over her titties, like a fourteen-year-old's, and over her flat belly down to her pussy. And you know what? She had more between her legs than I did, a right handful, and it was raring to go.

DEXTER: She was a man?

LINDBERG: She was a man.

DEXTER: So what did you do?

LINDBERG: (*A beat*) I'd paid my money. I screwed him rigid.

DEXTER: Jesus Christ.

LINDBERG: It doesn't mean I'm bent, Dexter. See what I'm saying? You're not the first man who's tasted forbidden fruit and you won't be the last. And if you find you can't live without it, then arrangements can be made. It's not do or die in this life. It's compromise, it's making it work.

DEXTER: That's very enlightened.

LINDBERG: Don't give me that crap. I'm the most benighted son of a bitch in Christendom, and I'm going to stay that way. And if I ever find out, through Carys or anybody else, that your perversions are at all visible, your feet won't touch the ground. Do we understand each other?

DEXTER: Of course.

DEXTER IS PUZZLED.

LINDBERG: Spit it out.

DEXTER: I was wondering. Do you still . . .

LINDBERG: Still . . . ?

DEXTER: Make arrangements for yourself?

LINDBERG: Don't push it, son.

DEXTER: Only asking.

ENTER CARYS.

LINDBERG: Princess.

CARYS: Mother wants to know are you going to breakfast?

LINDBERG: Why not?

LINDBERG GOES TO EXIT; CARYS WITH HIM.

LINDBERG: (*To Carys*) No. Stay. Dexter wants a word.

LINDBERG EXITS.

DEXTER: I've been thinking.

CARYS: He's given you a pep-talk.

DEXTER: In a way.

CARYS: Financial inducements?

DEXTER: God no.

CARYS: I don't want to marry you, Dexter.

DEXTER: Oh.

CARYS: Not because of Rob. Like I said, sex isn't everything.

DEXTER: What then?

CARYS: Your parents are going to disown you, you know that?

DEXTER: I can live without them. I don't think I can live without you.

CARYS: I won't marry, Dex.

DEXTER: All right.

CARYS: I like you too much.

DEXTER: God, you're strange.

CARYS: Last night, drifting along, I thought, it's all right. If I drown, I drown. It's my life.

DEXTER: I don't know what you're talking about.

CARYS: Don't fret about it.

SHE KISSES HIM. HE KISSES HER BACK. ENTER ROSE. SHE WATCHES FOR A MOMENT. SOMEONE APPLAUDS. IT'S LINDBERG. SUDDENLY, THE WEDDING PARTY COMES BACK ON. VINCE, LINDBERG, PHOEBE, DONNA-MARIE; THEN, AFTER A SPACE, MELBA AND FRANK.

LINDBERG: Congratulations!

CARYS: This doesn't mean a thing.

LINDBERG: All the time in the world.

DEXTER: (*To Melba*) Your ear's bleeding.

FRANK: (*To Melba*) I'm going to get the bill. Get somebody to bring the luggage down.

DEXTER: Wait.

FRANK: No.

LINDBERG: Frank—

FRANK: There's nothing to say.

LINDBERG: A moment. Suffer the children.

FRANK: Don't quote the Scriptures to me.

LINDBERG: We came to celebrate a wedding. We end up daggers drawn. There's no need.

MELBA: He's right, Frank.

LINDBERG: We've had our share of revelations, but the Bible's full of them, Frank, you should be used to them.

FRANK: There's been error on every side.

LINDBERG: My own feelings precisely.

FRANK: I just want to forget this weekend ever happened.

LINDBERG: On that, we also agree.

LINDBERG OFFERS HIS HAND, FRANK TAKES IT.

LINDBERG: To forgetting.

THEY SHAKE.

VINCE: What about a photograph?

ROSE: No . . .

LINDBERG: It's a good idea.

MELBA: Not with my bleeding ear.

VINCE: Language.

LINDBERG: Reconciliations are always uncomfortable. But they should be recorded for posterity.

MRS. CORCORAN ENTERS WITH SOMETHING IN A BROWN PAPER PARCEL.

MRS. CORCORAN: Everybody enjoy their breakfast?

MELBA: Yes, it was lovely.

MRS. CORCORAN: I brought something . . . for Donna. Some child left it at the hotel, oh, a long while back.

DONNA-MARIE: For me?

MRS. CORCORAN: They must have had it for the beach. So you have it now.

SHE UNDOES THE PARCEL. IT'S A BOAT. DONNA TAKES

IT. EVERYBODY LOOKS, THE MEMORIES BEGINNING TO FLOOD BACK.

DONNA-MARIE: Oh.

LINDBERG: A boat.

PHOEBE: Say . . . "thank you."

DONNA-MARIE: Thank you.

MRS. CORCORAN: I suppose it's really a boy's toy.

DONNA-MARIE: For me?

MRS. CORCORAN: Well. I'll fetch your bills.

ROSE IS SETTING UP THE CAMERA ON A TRIPOD, DOWN CENTER. VINCE SETS UP SOME CHAIRS, A ROW OF THEM, VERY FORMAL. PHOEBE ORGANIZES. DONNA-MARIE STARES AT THE BOAT. YOU COULD CUT THE ATMOSPHERE WITH A KNIFE. EVERYONE TREMBLES ON THE EDGE OF SPEAKING.

DONNA-MARIE: All of us.

PHOEBE: Hurry up, Rose.

DONNA-MARIE: We were in a boat.

EVERYONE FREEZES.

ROSE: *(Quietly)* Oh my God.

PHOEBE: Now, shut up, Donna. Or I'll give the boat back to the nice lady.

DONNA-MARIE: No!

CARYS: Don't bully her.

ROSE: I dreamt . . . I drowned. Oh God, it was horrible.

PHOEBE: Now look, you've upset Auntie Rose.

ROSE: . . . we were in this life-boat together.

DONNA-MARIE: Fishes in the water.

ROSE: That's right. There were fishes in the water.

PHOEBE: Just hush, Rose. Nobody wants to hear what you dreamed about.

VINCE: It's no use pretending. We all know.

LINDBERG: What the hell are you rabbiting on about?

MELBA: You know damn well. Vince is right, for once. We all know.

FRANK: No, I don't.

MELBA: Yes, you do. All of us were in the same boat last night.
 LINDBERG: Bollocks!
 CARYS: Don't you remember?
 LINDBERG: No. I do not remember.
 DONNA-MARIE: All in a big boat. Then in a little boat.
 PHOEBE: Right! That's it, my girl!

*SHE TRIES TO SNATCH THE BOAT FROM DONNA-MARIE,
 WHO STARTS TO CRY.*

LINDBERG: Phoebe. Let her alone.
 PHOEBE: Such a lot of nonsense.
 VINCE: I admit it. I drowned.
 CARYS: We all drowned.
 FRANK: No. I did not drown.
 MELBA: You're lying. The girl's right.
 DEXTER: We all dreamt the same dream? Everybody?
 CARYS: Everybody. It was stage-managed.
 MELBA: *(To Lindberg)* You went overboard with Carys.
 DEXTER: After Phoebe went down.
 LINDBERG: *(Breaking)* Couldn't face living; not without you. I
 need you in spite of myself.
 PHOEBE: What's happened to us?
 FRANK: It's not possible. Not the same dream.
 DEXTER: *The Bear of Amsterdam. (A pause)* Am I right? *(Murmurs
 of assent)* That was the ship. And he— *(Points at Lindberg)* —
 shot the Captain.

AN ERUPTION OF REMARKS.

LINDBERG: I had my reasons!
 DONNA-MARIE: Fishes! Fishes!
 FRANK: I was eaten up. I remember it distinctly.
 PHOEBE: This place. This bloody place.
 ROSE: Oh God, it was terrible.

A SILENCE.

MELBA: Once I was drowned, I went walking. Walking on the
 bottom of the ocean.

CARYS: I chatted with a dead sailor. He was quite flirty.
 FRANK: It's too much.
 LINDBERG: They're just dreams. Let's keep it in proportion.
 PHOEBE: Where did you go, Rose?
 ROSE: Oh . . . looking for shells.
 PHOEBE: I lost you.
 DEXTER: There were cities.
 LINDBERG: I saw none.
 DEXTER: You don't know what you missed. Streets full of fish.
 VINCE: Crabs ate my balls.
 MELBA: I found an octopus. It made love to me. And you know
 what? I enjoyed it.
 PHOEBE: I lost everybody. I was alone. The sea was empty.
 LINDBERG: So we all slept in separate rooms and we dreamt the
 same dream. Is that so unusual? We're staying by the sea; we
 hear the waves in our sleep . . . it happens.
 VINCE: Coincidence?
 LINDBERG: Of course, coincidence.
 DEXTER: Oh, come on—
 LINDBERG: *(To Dexter, suddenly ferocious)* Compromise with the
 truth. Whatever happened—
 ROSE: Dreams should be private. I mean, they're very personal.
 LINDBERG: —we don't want to remember it.
 FRANK: That's right.
 PHOEBE: I wouldn't have remembered. *(Re: Donna-Marie)* Except
 for her.
 CARYS: You are a cow, you really are.
 LINDBERG: No arguments now. Not about this. We have to stick
 together. We have to . . . agree to forget.
 CARYS: Wait. For a while we were in each other's heads. One
 mind; all of us. Isn't that a wonderful thought?
 FRANK: No. It makes me feel dirty.
 DEXTER: So much for brotherhood.
 LINDBERG: Frank's right. It's invasive. I am who I am.
 CARYS: Maybe it doesn't have to be that way.
 PHOEBE: I wasn't asked. It was forced on me. If I'd been asked,
 well, that's a different thing. But this was totally unwarranted.
 MELBA: It's probably illegal.
 CARYS: Oh Mum, for God's sake.
 PHOEBE: *(A beat)* We all have our little secrets. We have to

respect that in each other. That's how we get on in the world, isn't it? I don't go meddling in your mind and you stay out of mine.

BELLS HAVE STARTED TO RING, DISTANTLY.

PHOEBE: (*Continuing*) That's how we keep control.

CARYS: Of what?

LINDBERG: Of the world.

CARYS: Is that what you think?

LINDBERG: You'll learn.

FRANK: I suggest we pack the cars and start home.

PHOEBE: Now, that's a good idea.

MELBA: Yes.

ROSE: Where's Rob?

LINDBERG: Let him find his own way back. Dexter, bring the bags down from the landing.

ROSE: What about the photograph?

LINDBERG: Let's just pay the bloody bill, and go—

FRANK: (*At the front door*) Good God.

MELBA: What?

FRANK: It's a wedding procession!

NOISE OUTSIDE. THE BELLS ARE GETTING LOUDER.

CARYS: It's Mr. Foss!

LINDBERG: That old bugger? Getting married?

THE WEDDING PARTY GOES TO THE DOOR, AS THE TECHNICIANS ENTER, UNROLLING A CARPET. SEAN FOLLOWS, IN HIS BRIEFS, A TOWEL AROUND HIS NECK. HE SPREADS ROSE PETALS.

SEAN: Out of the way! Out of the way!

PHOEBE: Quickly, before they arrive. Let's get out of here.

THE NOISE IS LOUDER BY THE MOMENT.

LINDBERG: It's only a wedding. What's to be afraid of?

FRANK: There's always something.

MRS. CORCORAN HAS COME ON. ULYSSES FOLLOWS.

MRS. CORCORAN: What on earth is going on?

SEAN: It's Mr. Lear, formerly known as Mr. Foss. He's just got married.

MRS. CORCORAN: Oh my Lord. How exciting.

THE BELLS ARE SUDDENLY VERY LOUD, AND THE SECOND WEDDING PARTY OF THE PLAY ENTERS. TECHNICIANS AS GUESTS, ALL WEARING FALSE NOSES OF VARIOUS SHAPES AND SIZES. EVERYBODY IS TALKING NOW. THE TECHNICIANS LAUGHING. ROB ENTERS, IN HIS JEANS, SHIRT ROUND HIS NECK. TREADAWAY FOLLOWS.

MR. TREADAWAY: Over the threshold! Over the threshold!

MR. FOSS ENTERS, CARRIED BY HIS BRIDE, WHO IS ENTIRELY SWATHED IN GLORIOUS LACE, A VEIL OVER HER FACE.

THE TECHNICIANS BRING UP THE REAR, CARRYING THE TRAIN.

CONFETTI FILLS THE AIR. MAYBE THE WEDDING MARCH; MAYBE SOME PUCCINI.

DONNA-MARIE LAUGHS AND LAUGHS. CARYS HAS TAKEN TO DANCING WITH DEXTER. THE BRIDE PUTS MR. FOSS DOWN, TO A GREAT DEAL OF APPLAUSE. EVEN THE JUFFS AND THE SKINNERS ARE CAUGHT UP IN THE EUPHORIA.

THE BRIDE THROWS HER BOUQUET INTO THE AIR. ROB CATCHES IT. SMILES AT SEAN. TOSSES IT TO ROSE.

ROB: Kiss the bride! Kiss the bride!

EVERYBODY JOINS IN THIS NOW. MORE APPLAUSE!

MR. FOSS PLAYS IT OUT A LITTLE; BUT HE EVENTUALLY UNVEILS THE BRIDE.

IT IS, OF COURSE, THE GORILLA. ON ITS OVERSIZED, CALLOUSED FINGER, MELBA JUFFS' EARRING.

CHAOS ENSUES AT THE SIGHT OF IT. ROSE ALMOST FAINTS. LINDBERG SHOUTS, PHOEBE STARTS TO CRY. FRANK IS DISGUSTED.

CARYS LAUGHS, LEARNING FROM DONNA THE EASE OF THAT RESPONSE.

THE FOLLOWING REMARKS OVERLAP

LINDBERG: This is an outrage! I shall sue!
MRS. CORCORAN: Is this some sort of joke?
VINCE: I don't think so.
MRS. CORCORAN: Isn't it illegal?
LINDBERG: Out! Out! Everybody follow me!
PHOEBE: Pick yourself up, Rose. Rose!
DONNA-MARIE: Here come the fishes! Here come the fishes!

NOW THE LINES FOLLOW MORE AUDIBLY.

MRS. CORCORAN: What about the bill?
PHOEBE: Donna-Marie! Come here!

DONNA-MARIE IGNORES HER.

FRANK: *(To Dexter)* Quickly, the cases.
DEXTER: You get them.
FRANK: Vince!
VINCE: Huh?
FRANK: Cases.
VINCE: *(Empty-handed)* I'm laden, chief.

FRANK EXITS.

LINDBERG: *(Taking out money, and giving it to Vince)* There! Take it all!
VINCE: I never accept small bribes.
LINDBERG: *(Throwing the money at him)* Are you mocking me?
VINCE: Perish the thought.

LINDBERG PICKS UP THE CASES HE BROUGHT DOWN.

LINDBERG: Come on, Phoebe!
PHOEBE: Rose!

LINDBERG EXITS.

ROSE: I'm coming.
PHOEBE: We're not waiting, Rose.
DONNA-MARIE: I'm a frog.
PHOEBE: No, you're not.

SHE HAULS DONNA-MARIE TO THE DOOR.

DONNA-MARIE: Bye bye! Bye bye!

PHOEBE AND DONNA-MARIE EXIT.

MR. FOSS: *(Sees cameras and chairs)* I propose a photograph, as a remembrance of this perfect day!

HE STARTS TO ARRANGE HIS PARTY IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA ON THE SEATS SET OUT FOR THE JUFFS AND THE SKINNERS.

ROSE: Oh, I've left my camera in there!
LINDBERG: Forget your bloody camera!
SEAN: It's starting to rain.
MR. FOSS: Just got in in time.
ULYSSES: I'd better get the chairs off the patio.

FRANK HAS COME DOWNSTAIRS WITH THE REST OF THE CASES. HE AND MELBA MAKE FOR THE DOOR.

MR. FOSS: Oh, are you leaving us? We were just arranging a photograph.
MELBA: I'm afraid we've got an appointment.
MR. FOSS: On a Sunday morning?
FRANK: This is an abomination!
MELBA: Now, Frank . . .

FRANK: Sodom!

MR. FOSS: My sentiments exactly, sir. You're a man after my own heart.

FRANK: I'm not after anybody's heart.

MR. FOSS: Then I pity you, sir. I truly do.

EXIT MELBA AND FRANK.

CARYS: Keep safe, Rob. *(Kisses him)*

MRS. CORCORAN: *(To Sean)* You should put a shirt on, you'll catch your death.

DEXTER: *(To Rob)* Likewise. *(Hugs him)* I'm sorry I didn't break your heart.

ROB: You'll get over it.

DEXTER: Bye, then.

MRS. CORCORAN: I knew the weather would break sooner or later.

TECHNICIAN: Look at the color of that sky.

DEXTER AND CARYS EXIT TOGETHER.

OUTSIDE THE JUFFS AND THE SKINNERS ARE STILL SHOUTING AS THEY PILE INTO THEIR CARS. A FEW LINES CARRY.

ROSE: That was an expensive camera!

LINDBERG: I'll buy you another one! Now will you get in the car?

DONNA-MARIE: Here come the fishes!

PHOEBE: If you mention fishes once more—

AND SO ON. CAR DOORS ARE SLAMMED. ENGINES START.

MR. FOSS' WEDDING PARTY IS NOW GATHERING IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA.

MR. FOSS: *(To Rob)* I told you I'd marry, didn't I?

ROB: What sex is . . . your . . . significant other?

MR. FOSS: I didn't ask. It seemed impertinent. It loves my nose. That's all that matters. For that I could love it, whatever it was.

THE LIGHT IS FADING, TURNING A DUSKY PINK, AS IF BEFORE A MAJOR THUNDERSTORM.

MR. FOSS: Significance does seem to lie in insignificant places, doesn't it? In an arrangement of clouds, in the ink stain on my thumb.

ROB: In dreams.

MR. FOSS: Of course in dreams. There most of all.

TREADAWAY, WHO HAS TAKEN OVER AS PHOTOGRAPHER, COMES TO FETCH MR. FOSS AND ROB.

MR. TREADAWAY: Please take your seats, or we'll never get to the Wedding Breakfast.

MR. FOSS: I hope everyone's in the mood for nuts and bananas.

MR. FOSS GOES TO STAND IN THE CENTER OF THE PICTURE, BESIDE HIS GORILLA. SOME OF THE GUESTS ARE SITTING, OTHERS STANDING. MRS. CORCORAN IS THERE, AS IS ULYSSES. SEAN, OF COURSE. NOW ROB JOINS THE GROUP TOO.

MR. FOSS: Well, here we are. Finally.

MRS. CORCORAN: You have to say a few words.

MR. FOSS: Must I?

MRS. CORCORAN: It's traditional.

MR. FOSS: Well, I'm a great believer in tradition.

THE REST OF THE GUESTS APPLAUD. MR. FOSS QUIETENS THEM DOWN.

MR. FOSS: Of course, it's all a complete mystery to me. I freely admit it. Who proposed to who. What God can possibly mean, joining us in Roly-Poly Paddle Me. But isn't that the sweetest thing, mystery? To have that is, I think, to have everything. Everything.

TECHNICIAN: Poem!

MR. FOSS: No . . .

ALL: Yes! *(They chant)* Po! Em! Po! Em!

MR. FOSS: I have nothing prepared.

ROB: Make it up.

MR. FOSS: Then you'll have to help me.

ROB: I'll do my best.

MR. FOSS: So . . . *There once was a fellow called Lear . . .*

ROB: *Whose life was . . . exceedingly queer.*

MR. FOSS: *One day, for a jape,*

He married an ape . . .

ROB: *And . . .*

EVERYBODY WAITS, BREATHLESS, FOR THE NEXT LINE.

ROB: *And swung from a tree for a year.*

MR. FOSS: Yes! Yes! *(Applauds)*

HE KISSES THE BRIDE.

MR. FOSS: Yes. Oh yes. Oh yes . . . *(Quietly, to Rob)* It's all non-sense of course. But it brings a tear to my eye nevertheless.

ROB: Ah, love!

MR. FOSS: Ah. Love.

A FLASH. THE IMAGE FREEZES, AS HANDS ARE ABOUT TO CLAP AND TONGUES ABOUT TO MAKE WORDS. NOT THE DEAD SMILES OF PREVIOUS PHOTOGRAPHS. THIS IS AN INSTANT CAUGHT; FULL OF GENUINE PLEASURE.

THUNDER RUMBLES.

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN ON THE FROZEN MOMENT, THROUGH ROSE PINK TO DARKNESS.

THE PLAY ENDS.