

A New Way of Working

practice and process in directive commissioning

Volume 2 of 2

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Theatre, Film, Television and Interactive Media

June 2019

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An EXTRAORDINARY THEATRICAL EVENT at the NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM



IN FOG AND FALLING SNOW

THE UNTOLD STORY OF YORK'S RAILWAY KING



26 JUNE – 11 JULY 2015 7.30pm

BOX OFFICE 01904 623568
yorktheatreroyal.co.uk

By BRIDGET FOREMAN and MIKE KENNY

IN FOG AND FALLING SNOW

By Bridget Foreman & Mike Kenny

FINAL DRAFT

MAY 2015

CHARACTERS

George Stephenson

George Hudson

Elizabeth Hudson

Anne Hudson

Richard Nicholson

George Leeman

Elseley

Albert Jenkins

Martha Jenkins

George Jenkins

Jenkins children

Mr Waters

Bulmer

Jimmy Gadd

Edward Gadd

Mrs Gadd

Rose

Mr Underwood

Lady Lumley

Duke of Wellington

Lizzie

Painter

Cabbie

Policeman

Jailer

Boy

Man in black (M I B)

Sir

Madam

Woman 1,2,3,4,15

Child 1,2,3

Broker 1,2

Man 2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20

Lady 5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14

Holder1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10

Porter 1,2,3

Spectator 1,2,3,4

Voice 1,2,3

Thug 1,2

Official 1,2

William Hudson

Female 1,2

Waters' henchmen (X3)

Guides etc.

ACT 1

THE AUDIENCE ENTERS THE GREAT HALL AND GATHERS
IN SIGHT OF THE STATUE OF STEPHENSON

PROLOGUE

STEPHENSON - THE ROCKET

THIS IS VIEWED BY THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE, BEFORE
THEY SPLIT OFF FOR THEIR GROUP JOURNEYS THROUGH
THE REMAINING SCENES

STEPHENSON ENTERS STRADDLING 'THE ROCKET'.
TRIUMPHANT. THE SONG

STEPHENSON: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome, welcome, to the
National Railway Museum. Let me introduce
myself. Mr George Stephenson. You may have
heard mention of me. That's me. Up there. On my
plinth. Not much of a likeness, but... In this
magnificent hall we celebrate the railways. And
the beautiful locomotives which travelled on
them. This is the great story we tell, the
story of the railways.

We give you The Rocket!

The real start of it all. 12 miles in 53
minutes. Think of that. This was the dawning of
the age of the railway. From this humble
beginning began a network which spread over the
entire world. And it was my own son Robert
Stevenson who mastered the securing of the
tubes to the tube plates. You see, ladies and
gentlemen, the real story here is...

BEHIND THEM, OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, HAS ASSEMBLED
THE CAST, LED BY GEORGE HUDSON. HE IS KNOCKING
ON THE WINDOW

Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen. (HUDSON IS
ADMITTED) Yes?

HUDSON: Erm, what's going on?

STEPHENSON: I am Mr George Stephenson and I'm telling these good people the story of the railways.

HUDSON: Mr Stephenson?! Mr George Stephenson?!

STEPHENSON: Yes.

STEPHENSON: Well?

HUDSON: It's Hudson. George Hudson of York. Do you remember me?

STEPHENSON: George? George Hudson? George Hudson. Of course I remember you.

HUDSON: (LOOKING AT THE STATUE, WHICH IS NOW BEING CLEANED BY GEORGE) Who's that meant to be?

STEPHENSON: Me.

HUDSON: Not a very good likeness.

STEPHENSON: No.

HUDSON: Where's mine?

STEPHENSON: Your what?

HUDSON: Statue. If yours is that big, mine should be pretty sizeable.

STEPHENSON: There isn't one.

HUDSON: Really?

STEPHENSON: I'm afraid not.

HUDSON: A plaque? A commemorative plate? A tea towel? Does nobody remember me?

STEPHENSON: I do.

HUDSON: Good, because no bugger else does.

STEPHENSON: But...Look around you. What do you see?

HUDSON: Well, I see a lot of things. That's true.

STEPHENSON: Things maybe, but beautiful things.

STEPHENSON: Locomotive engines, carriages, tracks, bridges. All of it. You are here really, in every corner of this building. In every corner of the world. These are the results of your work. Our work. This led to all that. Who would have thought it, when we began?

HUDSON: Yes. Who would have thought?

STEPHENSON: You, it was who said to me, all that time ago. In Whitby wasn't it?

HUDSON: It was, yeah.

STEPHENSON: You said, 'we can change the world.'

HUDSON: And you said, 'Not us. It's the Railways will change the world.' I'll never forget it. And I so wanted to be a part of that change.

STEPHENSON: Yes, that was the dream and you helped make it reality.

HUDSON: Did I?

STEPHENSON: You did.

HUDSON: I thought I did, but where's my story?

STEPHENSON: There's hundreds of stories here.

HUDSON: Really? There's all this and a damn big statue of you, no offence. Here you are. Larger than life. It seems I've been forgotten.

STEPHENSON: No!

HUDSON: Well, they've named a street after me down town. You can get a curry there. Or catch a bus. A bus!

STEPHENSON: Well, I haven't forgotten. That first conversation in Whitby.

STEPHENSON: You were still young. You wanted me to bring the railway to York when most of my interests lay in the Midlands.

HUDSON: Aye, and I convinced you that those interests would be far more interesting if they came to York.

We had a proposal before us in York, to build a railway to Leeds. And that horse drawn wagons should pull the trains. Well it was a false economy. I told them. I persuaded the committee that steam driven locomotives are the future on the York to Leeds line.

STEPHENSON: You did that!

HUDSON: Oh aye. I can be very persuasive, I assure you.
That was just the start, Mr Stephenson. Oh, yes. It was that exciting.

STEPHENSON: Changing the world is.

A WHISTLE BLOWS. WE'RE OFF

HUDSON: Come on. We're off.

STEPHENSON: Where are we going?

HUDSON: We're going to find me in all this. Surely the world remembers George Hudson.

THE AUDIENCE DIVIDES INTO GROUPS AND MOVES BETWEEN SCENES

THE FOLLOWING SCENES CAN BE VIEWED IN ANY ORDER

BULLET (SCENE ONE)

ON THE BULLET. AN INVESTORS' MEETING

THIS CAN BE UNDERSCORED WITH NAVVIES BUILDING, PEOPLE CHEERING, ETC. THE BUILD OF EXCITEMENT SHOULD BE PALPABLE

BROKER 1: Ladies and Gentlemen, let me keep this simple for you. This is how we all get rich in this business.

We invest our money. We all buy shares in the York and Midland Railway. Mr Hudson himself has put in £10,000 of his own money.

BROKER 2: £10,000, ladies and gentlemen. £10,000. Never let it be said that George Hudson played fast and loose with other folks hard earned cash.

BROKER 1: We take that money, and in the safe hands of Messrs George and Robert Stephenson, we build a railway, from here to there, say -

BROKER 2: From York to Leeds -

BROKER 1: Or York to Newcastle. And what do we get for it, you ask?

Well, people pay money for our trains to carry their goods, their food, their iron, their coal.

BROKER 2: Their coal, ladies and gentlemen.

BROKER 1: That coal powers the fires and factories of our town, making things to sell -

BROKER 2: Chocolate, glass, whatever you fancy.

- BROKER 1: These things we make are sold all over the world. And who carries the stuff we make to that world? Our railways, and what do people do? Tell them, dear.
- BROKER 2: They pay us to do it! And who builds and works on the railways? People we employ, that's who. And where do they spend their hard-earned money? In your grocery shops, butchers, bakers, candlestick makers, inns and hostelries. And how do they come to our city?
- BROKER 1: On the train that's how, and they pay good money to come.
- BROKER 2: How can you lose?
- BROKER 1: Every one of you can share in this good fortune. There is no barrier of age, status or sex. Why even my own good lady wife, and her milliner have bought shares. Invest in railways. Invest in the future. You will have a guaranteed return. 5 6 7 8 9 10 per cent.
- BROKER 2: This is no pipe dream. This is no South Sea Bubble. Look out of your windows. You can see it. It is racing through the fields, under the mountains and over the roads and rivers, carving a way and carrying every conceivable thing. Carrying the future and carrying us all with it to fortune and riches.
- BROKER 1: Who wants in? One and all can dine at the table. You have worked hard to save a small pot. Where do you put it? Don't hide it under your bedstead. What's the good of it there? Put it to good use. Invest in the railways. Give us your money. Mr George Hudson will ensure it's well spent.
- BROKER 2: Who's in?

INVESTORS. SHOUTING, WAVING PIECES OF PAPER

LETTERS (SCENE TWO)

GETTING THE PROPOSAL TO LONDON

SOMEONE RACES THE LENGTH OF THE PLATFORM WITH A SHEAF OF PAPERS. HANDS IT TO ANOTHER

FEMALE 1: Mr Feathers. There. This is the proposal for a new rail track. Mr Hudson needs you to get it to London.

MAN 2: Right.

FEMALE 1: The deadline is midnight.

MAN 2: Tonight?

FEMALE 1: Tonight.

MAN 2: Tell Mr Hudson we'll do our best.

FEMALE 1: Keep it safe, and keep it secret. It's not the only proposal around. And it can't be considered unless it's on the table at the Board of Trade by midnight.

MAN 2: Leave it with us. We'll get it there.

FEMALE 1: Good luck.

MAN 2 SETS OFF ALONG THE PLATFORM. A COUPLE OF MEN STEP IN HIS WAY

MAN 3: Where do you think you're going?

MAN 2: Excuse me. I just need to...

FEMALE 2: Oh no I don't think so.

MAN 2: We've just got a train to catch.

FEMALE 2: Oh really?

MAN 3: Not with that.

MAN 2: Just let us through.

FEMALE 2: What's in the bag?

MAN 2: I don't see that that is any of your business.

MAN 3: Then I'll have it.

MAN 3 GRABS THE BAG AND RUNS DOWN PLATFORM

MAN 2: Stop! Thief! That's my bag. Stop him.

ANOTHER GROUP BRINGS MAN 3 DOWN AND GETS THE BAG. MAN 3 RUNS OFF

MAN 2 RACES DOWN THE PLATFORM

MAN 2: Thank you. Thank you so much. I'm so grateful.

MAN 5: (WHO NOW HAS THE BAG) You're very welcome.

MAN 2: (REACHES FOR THE BAG) Thank you.

MAN 5: (SNATCHES IT AWAY) Oh no. I don't think so, chum. (OPENS THE BAG) What have we here? Well I never! An application for a new railway line. I expect an awful lot of work and preparation went into that?

MAN 2: Just give it to me.

MAN 5: What a dreadful shame to waste all that hard work, time and money. Especially when our application is also on its way to London. (SCATTERS IT ONTO THE TRACK)

MAN 2 PILES IN, A FIGHT ENSUES. OTHERS JOIN

A MAN IN BLACK APPEARS

M I B: Gentlemen! Ladies! Show some respect, I pray you.

A FUNERAL APPEARS. A GROUP BEARING A COFFIN

Show some respect for this poor, poor soul, about to take their final journey. Clear a way. Please. Thank you.

THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN FIGHTING STEP ASIDE, HEADS BOWED. THEY LET THE COFFIN PASS. THE COFFIN IS DROPPED, A BODY ROLLS OUT.

M I B: Don't hang about, get the proposal to London

THE 'BODY' JUMPS UP AND RUNS ALONG THE PLATFORM. A FIGHT ENSUES.

Train Driver: Ugh, me apple!

JENKINS (SCENE THREE)

FRED ENTERS, PUSHING A BARROW PILED WITH BAGS & BELONGINGS. HE IS FOLLOWED BY THE JENKINS FAMILY. MARTHA JENKINS IS PREGNANT. FRED POINTS TO A HOUSE

FRED: It's that one there.

ALBERT STARTS UNLOADING THE BARROW. LIZZIE COMES OUT OF THE HOUSE, AND STARTS HANGING WASHING ON A LINE

MARTHA: Wait, Bert. It's the wrong house. There's someone living there already.

ALBERT: Divvant worry, pet.

MARTHA: Divvant worry?

SHE GRABS FRED

Are you sure this is the right house, son?

FRED: I'm sure.

WATERS ENTERS

WATERS: Jenkins?

ALBERT: Who's asking?

WATERS: John Waters. Overseer for the company.

ALBERT: Albert Jenkins.

THEY SHAKE HANDS

WATERS: Wait here.

HE BANGS ON THE DOOR. A CHILD ANSWERS

Fetch your mother.

CHILD 1: Mam! Mam! It's the Overseer!

LIZZIE: God above, what's happened? Is he dead?

WATERS: No, he's not dead.

HE STEERS HER INTO THE HOUSE

ALBERT: It's the right house, Martha.

MARTHA: Is this what I think it is?

ALBERT: It's work. And it's a roof over our heads.

MARTHA: Someone else's roof. And someone else's work. Am I right?

ALBERT: Aye, well, beggars can't be choosers.

MARTHA: We're not beggars.

ALBERT: We will be before long if you don't stop popping them out.

MARTHA: Well it might help if you stopped popping it in. There's work in York, he says. I might have known.

A GROUP OF WOMEN ENTERS

WOMAN 1: Is he in there? Waters? Is he?

ALBERT: I believe so, yes.

WOMAN 1: I knew it.

SHE BANGS ON THE DOOR

WOMAN 2: That's Thomas, too, then.

WOMAN 1: Henry, Joseph Gibbs, Tubs Newton...

WOMAN 2: William. And all the boilers. Whole sets paid off!

THE DOOR OPENS. WATERS EMERGES TO AN ANGRY CROWD OF WOMEN. THEY CLAMOUR

WATERS: It's the Directors' decision. You can take it up with Mr Hudson if you like.

WOMAN 1: Oh, aye. Nowt to do w'you, then?

WATERS: I don't want any trouble.

WOMAN 3: I'll give yer trouble...

LIZZIE COMES OUT

LIZZIE: You haven't even told me what he's done!

WATERS: Get packing, Mrs Danby.

WOMAN 2: He's done nothing, Lizzie. They're afraid of strikes - that's all. Since they cut the boilers' pay.

LIZZIE: Strikes!

WATERS: Mr Hudson's got to keep the trains running.

WOMAN 3: And how's he going to do that with no drivers and no boilers?

WOMAN 2: Sheffield Grinders. Leeds Woolly backs. They'll find 'em from somewhere.

WATERS: Come on, now, Mrs Danby.

HE BUNDLES HER BACK INSIDE

WOMAN 1: Reckon they already have, Dora. Look at this lot. (THE JENKINS FAMILY)

WOMAN 2: Take our men's jobs, would you?

WOMAN 3: Bloody scabs!

ALBERT: Say that again, pet!

WOMAN 3: Geordies! I might have known it!

WOMAN 1: Come from the mines, have you? Want to play with the big boys?

ALBERT PULLS A FIST

Go on, 'pet'! Take a swing!

HE STEPS BACK. SHE LAUGHS

Not just a scab but a coward, eh?

WOMEN: Scab! Scab! Scab! Scab!

WATERS RE-APPEARS

WATERS: That'll do - they're not scabs.

WOMAN 2: No. Because there is no strike, is there?

WATERS: There's talk.

WOMAN 2: Oh, there's talk! And that's enough is it? Talk? You watch your tongue, Mr Driver from God knows where, or you'll be the next one paid off and kicked out with no notice.

WATERS: Get off home, you lot. And be grateful you've still got one.

WATERS GOES BACK INTO THE HOUSE. ONE OF THE WOMEN KNOCKS A JUG OFF THE BARROW AS SHE LEAVES

WOMAN 1: Ahh. What a shame.

MARTHA PICKS UP THE BROKEN PIECES OF THE JUG

MARTHA: What the hell have you done, Bert? How are we supposed to live here?

ALBERT: Here is where the work is, pet. For me, and for George.

MARTHA: Huh!

ALBERT: Do you not get it? We're in clover.

MARTHA: Clover? It looks a lot like Holgate to me.

LIZZIE, WATERS, AND A COUPLE OF CHILDREN COME OUT OF THE HOUSE. LIZZIE APPROACHES MARTHA

LIZZIE: There's a pot of broth on. It might need salt. I don't know how you like it.

SHE SHOVES A JAR INTO MARTHA'S HAND, GATHERS HER CHILDREN AND EXITS. WATERS HANDS ALBERT A KEY

WATERS: Welcome to Paradise, Mr Jenkins.

HE EXITS

MARTHA: Inside and get washed, you lot - I've never seen you so clarty.

SHE ROUNDS UP THE CHILDREN AND GOES INTO THE HOUSE. ALBERT AND GEORGE REMAIN, UNLOADING THE BARROW

GEORGE: Is it really Paradise, Da?

ALBERT: It's the closest we'll get to it, George lad. Come along and get this unpacked.

THEY CARRY THE BAGS IN. THE AUDIENCE MOVES OFF

PORTERS (SCENE FIVE A)

COMPETITION. A FAMILY COMING ALONG THE PLATFORM, A PORTER IN THE LEAD

PORTER 1: Come along sir, madam. This way. Here we are.

THEY ARE USHERED ONTO THE TRAIN

ANOTHER PORTER COMES UP FROM THE OTHER SIDE. OPENS THE DOOR

PORTER 2: Sir, Madam. Good afternoon.

SIR & MADAM: Good afternoon.

PORTER 2: Can I see your tickets, please?

SIR: Certainly. (HANDS THEM OVER)

PORTER 2: Could you get out please, madam.

SIR: I beg your pardon?

PORTER 2: Out madam. Get out.

SIR & MADAM: (GETTING OUT) What is the meaning of this?

PORTER 2: These tickets aren't valid.

MADAM: Not valid?

PORTER 2: Sorry madam. Not valid.

LOUISA: Not valid?

JANE: Not valid.

SIR: Look they're from here, to there. Look.

PORTER 2: Yes, they're from here to there, but not on this train. It's not valid on our company's trains. You could purchase another ticket.

MADAM: Another ticket?

BRENDA: Another ticket?

IZZY: Another ticket.

PORTER 2: Or you could just purchase a burial plot to go with the ticket you've got.

MADAM: A burial plot?

JESSIE: A burial plot.

SIR: I beg your pardon?

ELIZABETH: A burial plot.

PORTER 2: Well, if you will choose to travel with the company with the worst safety record in the country...

MADAM: Is that true?

PORTER 1: (ARRIVING WITH ANOTHER LOT) Hang on what's going on here? What are you doing with my passengers?

PORTER 2: I'm getting them off my train. (TO THE OTHERS) You. Stay there. If you want a ticket for this train, you can get one over there.

WOMAN X: Over where?

PORTER 2: Over there.

PORTER 1: Where?

PORTER 2: At the ticket office over there.

MAN X: There's just a wall.

PORTER 2: Just a wall?

ALL: Just a wall.

PORTER 2: What? Where's it gone? Where's the ticket office gone? Somebody's gone and bricked it up. (TO PORTER) You bricked it up, you bugger! Come here.

PORTER 1: I didn't! Mr Hudson did!

PORTER AND OTHER PORTER START TO FIGHT

ANOTHER COMES ALONG. PICKS UP SOME LUGGAGE

PORTER 3: You looking for a train. Yeah? I'll get you sorted. Follow me.

OFF THEY SCURRY

LADIES (SCENE FOUR)

ELIZABETH HUDSON'S AT HOME

LADY LUMLEY: Such an invigorating colour scheme.

ELIZABETH: I'm so glad you think so. I couldn't decide you see, between green to remind my dear husband of the fields he grew up in, or pink because it flatters the skin so, and one day I was absolutely set on green and then the next... I was driving poor dear Mr Hudson mad with my indigestion -

LADY PECKETT: I'm sure not -

ELIZABETH: So in the end, I thought to myself -

LADY LUMLEY: Why not both?

ELIZABETH: Precisely. It was a moment of divine regulation.

LADY PECKETT: Indeed. And you and Mr Hudson are quite settled here now?

ELIZABETH: Oh, quite. Of course, we are having to accumulate ourselves to living in such a large residence. Sometimes we almost lose one another!

MRS FANCOURT: Well, thanks to your husband, it's a problem many of us are facing. Our new country house has to be seen to be believed.

LADY LUMLEY: Well, if the profits will keep rolling in, one must find something to do with them.

MRS FANCOURT: Is your husband investing solely in the new railways now?

LADY LUMLEY: Entirely. And not just my husband.

MRS FANCOURT: Oh?

LADY LUMLEY: Whisper it...but I've even invested myself.

ELIZABETH: (SQUEAKS) Oh! Marvellous!

LADY PECKETT: Is that possible? For a lady?

LADY LUMLEY: Of course.

MRS FANCOURT: How thrilling.

LADY PECKETT: But how do you actually...I mean...where does one buy shares?

LADY LUMLEY: I have a broker.

MRS FANCOURT: Your husband's broker?

LADY LUMLEY: Certainly not. He's all mine.

ELIZABETH SQUEAKS AGAIN. LADY 6, IN THE THROES OF A HOT FLUSH, FANS HERSELF VIGOROUSLY

LADY PECKETT: And have you...commissioned him more than once?

LADY LUMLEY: A great deal more. Almost daily, in fact.

MRS FANCOURT: Daily??!

LADY LUMLEY: He's very attentive. And highly competent. I would certainly recommend him, if you're looking for a similar arrangement.

MRS FANCOURT: Oh! No!

LADY LUMLEY: It's quite exciting.

MRS FANCOURT: No! Really...indeed... I couldn't possibly even consider...I mean...I'm sure it would be beyond my...capabilities... Daily?!...and besides...my husband would never countenance such a thing...

SHE APPEARS TO HAVE DIFFICULTY BREATHING

LADY LUMLEY: Mrs Hudson, dear, do you think you might give poor Mrs Fancourt a glass of water?

ELIZABETH: Oh, yes, of course.

SHE DOES SO

There we are. I often get a prickle in my throat.

LADY PECKETT: Perhaps a little fresh air might help?

ELIZABETH: That's a grand idea. Come with me, Mrs Fancourt, and I'll show you the garden. It goes right down to the river, you know. Such a delightful aspic.

ELIZABETH AND MRS FANCOURT EXIT. LADY LUMLEY AND LADY PECKETT BURST INTO LAUGHTER

LADY PECKETT: Sometimes, Maude, even I am shocked by your wickedness.

LADY LUMLEY: What nonsense. You love it.

LADY PECKETT: I may have to give up your acquaintance.

LADY LUMLEY: Do what you like. Dear Elizabeth Hudson is my new bosom friend.

LADY PECKETT: But you despise her!

LADY LUMLEY: Not at all. She is quite the most entertaining woman in the whole of York. And her husband is making us all as rich as sultans. I adore her.

LADY PECKETT: So...your broker. Could you give me his name?

LADY LUMLEY: Why, of course.

BRIDGE (SCENE FIVE)

EDWARD IS STANDING WITH HIS HANDS FULL OF PAPER (SHARES) LOOKING AT THEM WITH AWE AND EXCITEMENT

JIMMY: (ARRIVING) Edward. Edward! Hurry up - I promised mother we'd be home for dinner.

EDWARD DOESN'T REPLY

Edward? What's wrong with you, man? Have you turned simple? What's that you've got?

EDWARD: It's the answer, Jimmy. The answer.

JIMMY: The answer to what?

EDWARD: The answer to everything, little brother.

JIMMY: Well, I hope it's the answer to mother's 'What time do you call this?'

EDWARD: Oh, yes.

JIMMY: Because if her mutton's spoilt, we'll never hear the last of it.

EDWARD: Bugger her mutton. With these she'll never cook another meal again.

JIMMY: Just come.

EDWARD: Wait.

JIMMY: Go on then. What are they?

EDWARD: Shares.

JIMMY: Shares?

EDWARD: Shares in the railway. I've bought them.

JIMMY: You've what?

EDWARD: I've bought them.

JIMMY: You've not got that kind of money.

EDWARD: I've got enough of the right kind. Enough for shares in the future.

JIMMY: You've nicked them. Edward, take them back.

EDWARD: I've not nicked them, I've bought them fair and square.

JIMMY: Take them back. How did you pay for them? What have you done?

EDWARD: Shut up, Jimmy, and look at these. What do you see?

JIMMY: Bits of paper, fit for kindling, or for the privy.

EDWARD: See what it says there?

JIMMY: One pound. A POUND??? How many have you got there?

EDWARD: A hundred. And every one of them signed by George Hudson himself.

JIMMY: Where did you get a hundred pounds from?

EDWARD: You only pay ten per cent of the value up front.

JIMMY: A hundred pounds-worth of shares for ten pounds?

EDWARD: That's right.

JIMMY: And what about the rest?

EDWARD: The railway company can ask for it at any point.

JIMMY: Oh, Edward...

EDWARD: But they never do.

JIMMY: But they could.

EDWARD: They don't. Listen, Jimmy. Last week these were worth a pound each. Do you know how much they're worth this week?

JIMMY: How much?

EDWARD: Two pounds, each.

JIMMY: How much?

EDWARD: Two. Two pounds each.

JIMMY SAYS NOTHING

Two pounds each. I sell them at two pounds each. I repay the company one pound each, how much have I got? Go on. Say it.

JIMMY: A hundred pounds?

EDWARD: Yeah.

JIMMY: A hundred pounds?

EDWARD: YEAH!

THEY HAVE A COMPLETELY MENTAL MOMENT

It's the railways, Jimmy. It's going to make us rich. Us. Rich. That fat bugger George Hudson, he was no better than us when he started. Look at him now! I've served my time in the glassworks. I've spent my days seeing other peoples' money come in and grow and go out. I've done enough of filling ledgers with other men's profits. It's my time now. Our time. Come on.

JIMMY: Where we going?

EDWARD: Leeds stock exchange. We're going to sell. Get our hundred.

JIMMY: Wait.

EDWARD: Mother won't mind. Not when she sees the money.

JIMMY: Wait. Wait. This stock exchange, is that where you buy them as well as sell them?

EDWARD: Yeah.

JIMMY: Then why stop? Why stop now? A hundred pounds...at ten per cent a share, with a face value of two pounds, that's five hundred shares. FIVE HUNDRED!

EDWARD: Now you're sounding like a man of business.

FINALE (SCENE SIX)

HUDSON PUSHES A LADDER UP AGAINST ROYAL SCOT &
CLAMBERS UP, FOLLOWED BY STEPHENSON

STEPHENSON: What are you doing, George? You can't climb up there!

HUDSON: Worried about your precious engine, are you? Stay down there, then.

STEPHENSON: It's you I'm worried about. Stop now. We both know where this is heading. Stop it while you still can.

HUDSON: You know nothing.

STEPHENSON: History is history, Hudson.

HUDSON: No, it's not!

STEPHENSON: You can't change it!

HUDSON: You can choose what to look at. (TO CROWD)
Can't we?

CROWD: *CHEERING*

STEPHENSON: They don't know what's coming. We do.

HUDSON: Save your breath. I'm going on. (TO CROWD)
WE'RE GOING ON!

CROWD: *CHEERING*

STEPHENSON: And taking all of them with you?

HUDSON: YOU WANT TO COME, DON'T YOU?

CROWD: YES! *CHEERING ETC.*

HUDSON: They'd follow me to hell if I built the line!

CROWD: More! More! More! More!

HUDSON: Hear that?

CROWD 1: Come on George, we want our share!

HUDSON: AND YOU SHALL HAVE IT!

STEPHENSON: What are you promising?

HUDSON: The Earth, Stephenson. (TO THE CROWD) The Earth and all that's in it!

CROWD: MAKE IT FAIR, MAKE IT FAIR, COME ON GEORGE, WE WANT OUR SHARE!

THE CHANT BUILDS. STEPHENSON IS MOUTHING AT HUDSON

HUDSON: (CLEARLY NOT TRYING) I can't hear you, Stephenson.

THE CROWD CONTINUES TO CHANT. THE MONEY CANONS EXPLODE. A XXXX IS PASSED UP TO HUDSON. HE PUTS IT ON HIS HEAD.

CROWD 2: God save the King!

INTERVAL

ACT 2

THE AUDIENCE IS SEATED IN THE THEATRE TENT.
LOOK AT THE PUNCH CARTOONS. OUR PICTURE HAS
ALWAYS BEEN A RUNAWAY TRAIN. THAT'S HOW IT
SHOULD FEEL

SCENE ONE

GEORGE HUDSON IS HAVING HIS PORTRAIT PAINTED

HUDSON: Now then Stephenson, this is more like it. The statue can wait. I'm just having my picture painted as I'm the new Lord Mayor of York.

PAINTER: Could you hold still please, Mr Hudson?

HUDSON: I will do my best, Sir Francis, but get a bit of a lick on, time being money and us living in the age of speed. What do you reckon Stephenson? Not bad, eh? Not got the statue yet, but this painting is going up in the Mansion House. It will smack them in the eye as they walk through the door. They won't miss that! I'll have copies made you can hang one over your mantelpiece.

STEPHENSON: Yes, very nice, Hudson.

HUDSON: Sir Francis, let me introduce my good lady wife Elizabeth, my daughter Anne and my brother-in-law and business partner Richard Nicholson.

ELIZABETH: How do you do? Do you like my frock? You don't think it's too much? I think yellow is a particularly inclement colour for one of my complexion. I think I have seen you in our shop.....

HUDSON: What do you reckon for the mayoral robes?

ELIZABETH: Red! Make sure it's red. Proper red.

HUDSON: The red of blood and the red of danger. I want people to see me coming! And we know summat about cloth. We sold enough of it.

RICHARD: Sir Francis, could I give you my card? Though we have diversified into railways, we still keep on the drapers. By the Minster.

PAINTER: Mr Hudson, will you please stand still?

HUDSON: What do you think then, eh Elizabeth? Not bad for a farm boy from Howsham, eh? Eh? Even better for a draper?

ELIZABETH: You are the very apothecary of manhood, George. Little did I think when first I set eyes on you in my father's shop....

HUDSON: Well thinking never was your strong suit Elizabeth. Call me anything, but never call me shallow. It was your deep inner qualities I sought. Not your looks.

ELIZABETH: Well you're no oil painting yourself, George.

STEPHENSON: Yet.

HUDSON: Yes, well, nor your bon mots. Nay, nor your money neither, though it did come in handy.

ELIZABETH: Oh, George. Look at us now. You and Richard, partners in business. All our children set up. All the boys at good schools.

HUDSON: The best that money can buy. And Anne.

EIZABETH: Anne.

HUDSON: Anne will marry well. I guarantee it. We've got them queuing up for her hand.

ELIZABETH: And when the time comes, I shall make sure she chooses well.

HUDSON: Oh yes. (TO PAINTER) We have supped with nobility, Elizabeth and I.

STEPHENSON: Oh, you keep fine company right enough.

HUDSON: Yes, and the day will come, you will see, when we will welcome her Majesty, Queen Victoria herself, to dine with us in our fair city of York. She will be borne to our table, seated on one of our Railway trains, along our tracks. Everyone will be invited. To bear witness. (TO THE PORTRAITIST)

ELIZABETH: All those fine ladies who turned up their noses to look down on us will now be laughing on the other side of their faces. What now can stop us? You, The Railway King.

HUDSON: And you my queen. Right then Sir Francis. I take it you've got enough.

PAINTER: Could you hold still for just a few more minutes, Mr Hudson?

HUDSON: Hold still? No, I cannot. I am a man on the move and I plan to shift the world. We're making history here. We have business to do and parties to attend. You coming?

STEPHENSON: I'm not really one for parties. I'm not sure I...

HUDSON: 'Course you are. It's these folk put their money up for you to build your engines. You owe it to them and I'll not take no for an answer.

PAINTER: But I pride myself on working from reality, Mr Hudson.

HUDSON: Reality sir? Reality is merely what we make it. You must learn to use your imagination like me. Elizabeth. Let us attend the festivities.

ELIZABETH: Oh George, I am all sixes and thumbs.

HUDSON: Take my arm, Elizabeth. It will steady you.
Richard.

A BRASS BAND? WE'RE READY TO START

SCENE TWO

HUDSON: Welcome, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to The Mansion House in York, where we will celebrate the opening of the York to Leeds Railway. We have declared a free feast for 14000 adults and children. And for 600 of you, the great and the good, a historic journey at an average speed of 24 mph. I know. Those in third class best keep tight hold of their hats.

A PARTY OF THE POSH STARTS TO ASSEMBLE. HUDSON AND FAMILY ENTER VIA THE PEOPLE. WE SEE THE GADD BROTHERS AND THE JENKINS FAMILY. EVERYONE IS CHEERING. HE IS AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FAME

THEY SETTLE DOWN FOR A HUGE MEAL. IT BECOMES AN ORGY OF CONSUMPTION, PUNCTUATED BY TOASTS. THIS ISN'T MEANT TO BE REALISTIC. IT'S A CROSS BETWEEN THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY AND THE WOLF OF WALL STREET. ANOTHER IMAGE FOR HUDSON IS MR TOAD

MAN 6: Allow me to propose a toast to our esteemed Lord Mayor. Mr Hudson, whose energy and fortitude has brought notoriety and prosperity to this great city of ours. Mr Hudson!

ALL: Mr Hudson.

HUDSON: Thank you. Thank you. I am proud to receive your thanks on this great day, the first of many. Cheers.

ALL: Cheers.

THE TOASTS JUST CONTINUE. MAYBE OTHER THINGS THAN DRINK ARE HELD UP. WATCHES, MONEY?

A toast!

ALL: A toast.

'FOR HE'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW'. (BORNE ALOFT) A BAND?

SCENE THREE

GEORGE & ALBERT ARE RETURNING FROM WORK. ALBERT WHOOPS WITH DELIGHT AND PUNCHES THE AIR

GEORGE: Da, Da, Da!

ALBERT: Passed! I knew it!

GEORGE: Da, stop it!

ALBERT: Come here, lad.

HE PUTS HIM IN AN ARMLOCK AND RUFFLES HIS HAIR

GEORGE: Ow! Get off!

ALBERT: You. Have done me proud. PROUD! WHOOOOO!

GEORGE: Da! They'll think you're drunk.

ALBERT: Who will?

GEORGE: Ma will.

ALBERT: Well, I'll tell her I'm not. Not yet. Though I think there's a powerful argument for a latch-lifter when we get in. Not for you, mind. You're too young.

GEORGE: Old enough to be a water boiler, though, eh?

ALBERT: Too right, you beauty!

HE GIVES GEORGE A HUGE KISS

GEORGE: Uuurggh.

ALBERT: You wait 'til your Ma hears. Our lad goes out a smudger, and comes back a boiler! WHOOOOOOO!

MARTHA APPEARS AND SMACKS HIM ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD WITH AN ENAMEL PLATE. THE WHOOOO TURNS INTO A CRY OF PAIN

Aaargh!

MARTHA: Whisht, man. You want to get us thrown out?

ALBERT BURSTS INTO UNCONTROLLABLE LAUGHTER.
MARTHA BEATS HIM WITH THE PLATE

GEORGE: Ma! Stop! Stop! It's all right! It's my fault!

MARTHA: Why? What've you done?

GEORGE: I passed, Ma.

MARTHA: You passed.

GEORGE: I can fire the engines now. On the footplate. I did it. They asked me all sorts and I could name every nut and bolt and spring on that engine. I knew all the rules and regulations – every signal. Four days they've been testing me.

MARTHA: Why didn't you say anything?

ALBERT: Why do you think?

GEORGE: I wanted to show you I could do it, Ma. I wanted to –

MARTHA STARTS TO WALK AWAY

ALBERT: Martha!

GEORGE: Are you not pleased with me?

MARTHA LOOKS HARD AT ALBERT, THEN KISSES GEORGE
VERY TENDERLY

MARTHA: I am more proud of you than I can say.

SHE IS FIGHTING BACK TEARS

ALBERT: Go in, son. We'll be right behind you.

GEORGE EXITS

Well that's poured cold water on his coals. What
are you thinking?

MARTHA: No. What are you thinking? How can George be a
boiler? It can't happen!

ALBERT: It has happened. He starts tomorrow. With me.
Driver and fireman. Father and son. Like it
should be.

MARTHA: And how long do you think that'll last?

ALBERT: He can do it. He's strong. He's sharp. He's
sober, and he works hard - unlike half the
others. And he can read and write, which is
more than I could at that age. He's got the lot.

MARTHA: Oh, yes. And a whole lot more to come.

ALBERT: There's nothing showing yet.

MARTHA: It's men you work with, Bert, not fools. They'll
see it.

ALBERT: They won't, because they won't be looking for it.

MARTHA: No, pet, it's you who's blind. They'll sniff out a woman faster than a fly finds a dunghill. And then what?

ALBERT: We'll not be here that long.

MARTHA: We might be.

ALBERT: Look, we agreed - you agreed - when we came, that for a while at least, George could pass as a lad. No-one knows us here, which means he can get work -

MARTHA: George does work. As a cleaner. Even if she gets found out, she can stay as a cleaner. There's plenty of lasses do.

ALBERT: But as a lad he can do more than that. I'm not going to hold him back.

MARTHA: Hold him back? Will you listen to yourself? This is our Georgie we're talking about. Your daughter. No amount of make-believe is going to change that. It's men only on the engines. She's a lass, and that's all there is to it. We need to stop this while we still can.

ALBERT: Do you know how much he's earning now?

MARTHA: She.

ALBERT: And do you not think we might have need of it?

MARTHA: (AFTER A MOMENT) Can you not see that there is only one way this can end? It's not a game, Albert. You're heading for disaster. We all are. When they find out - and they will - they'll send the both of you packing. And then, God help us. We'll all be living on fresh air.

ALBERT: I'm not arguing with you, Martha. I need George with me, and that's an end to it.

MARTHA: **You** need her? Well, maybe **I** need her -

TWO OR THREE SMALL CHILDREN BURST OUT OF THE HOUSE IN MID-ARGUMENT, FOLLOWED BY GEORGE

LILY: Give it back!

THOMAS: I won't!

ALL CHILDREN: Ma!

MARTHA: George, can you not sort that out?

GEORGE: Sorry, Ma.

ALBERT: You'll have to sort it, Martha. George is coming with me.

MARTHA: What? Where to?

ALBERT: We've got some celebrating to do. Come on, son.

ALBERT STRIDES OFF WITH GEORGE. MARTHA THROWS THE PLATE AT HIS BACK

SCENE FOUR

WHEN WE RETURN TO THE MANSION HOUSE EVERYONE IS EXTREMELY WORSE FOR WEAR

MAN 7: I am quoting here from the London Evening Standard. Where's me specs? Two hundred thousand well-paid labourers, representing, as heads of families, nearly one million men, women and children, all feasting through the bold enterprise of one man... Let us hear what man, or class of men, ever before did so much for the population of a country. Mr George Hudson. A toast.

ALL: A toast.

MAN 8: Time was, not too long ago that every man with a watch had it set for a different time in every town he visited. Now, thanks to Mr Hudson, we have Railway time. In setting standards, and creating links from the north to the Midlands, Mr Hudson can be said to have created time.

HUDSON: Aye and speed. By coach it took five days, from London to York. Five days. Soon, within a year, by rail it will take a mere ten hours. Think on that. Ten hours. The year after, six hours.

MAN 9: A toast, to the man who has brought that precious commodity, coal, to York. And coal is power and power is money. A toast.

ALL: Money! Cheers. Your very good health ETC.

MAN 10: To the man who said to Mr Stephenson. 'Mak all t'railways come to York'.

ELIZABETH: No, no. I must stop you there. I'm afraid it is not true. George never said it.

ALL: Never?!

HUDSON: Never.

NICHOLSON: He just did it!

ELIZABETH: He did!

CHEERS

HUDSON: (VERY DRUNK) And now I should like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr Stephenson, Mr George Stephenson. He has brought us through our difficulties, and when doubts were entertained as to this railway being a profitable investment, he has said: 'I know the York and North Midland Railway will be a good concern. Buy me some shares'. Mr George Stephenson.

ALL: Mr George Stephenson!

LEEMAN: London will be the head of our railway,
Edinburgh the feet, and York the heart. I hope
that the head will never be affected with
apoplexy, nor the feet with gout, and that York
will continue sound at the heart.

HUDSON: What? What are you trying to say Leeman? Gout
is it?! Gout! You know I am a sufferer. Are
you trying to be funny? Because you're not,
I'll tell you that for nowt.

LEEMAN: If the shoe fits, Hudson. If the shoe fits.

HUDSON: I won't stand for it. I tell you.

MAN 11: Gentlemen, gentlemen. Someone must respond to
the toast.

ELSELY: Quite. And I believe, as Recorder of York that
is my responsibility, nay, right gentlemen,
right to respond on behalf of the Aldermen of
York.

HUDSON: On the contrary Elsely, I am sure, that as Lord
Mayor, and therefore Senior Alderman it falls
to me.

ELSELY: Falls? Can you actually stand?

HUDSON: I won't stand for that.

ELSELY: Only because you can't stand.

ELIZABETH: George, no. Don't give him the satisfaction.

MAN 12: Why don't we all have a toast?

ALL: A toast!

ELIZABETH: Richard. Do something.

RICHARD: George, old chap.

HUDSON: Because I dare to differ from a certain individual, was that person to forget all the kindly feelings of human nature,

RICHARD: George.

HUDSON: And wantonly attack me on all occasions. Was a gentleman to be insulted to his face as I have been? Eh? Eh? I'll have him....

GUESTS BURST INTO 'FOR HE'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW', BUILDING DRUNKENLY

FOOD FIGHT STARTING. THE MEAL BREAKS UP, MOVING OUTSIDE AND TURNING INTO A FAILING FLAILING FIST FIGHT. PASSERS-BY STOP TO WATCH, INCLUDING JIMMY AND EDWARD GADD (AND FRIENDS) ON THEIR WAY BACK FROM THE RACES AND ALBERT AND GEORGE JENKINS ON THEIR WAY BACK FROM THE PUB

CHAOS DIES DOWN

SCENE FIVE

A HORSE RACE

Matt - AND...they're off!

A HORSE RACE OCCURS ONSTAGE

"I'VE GOT SIXPENCE"

I've got sixpence, jolly, jolly sixpence

I've got sixpence to last me all my life

I've tuppence to spend, I've tuppence to lend

And tuppence to take home to my wife

I've got tuppence, jolly, jolly tuppence
I've got tuppence to last me all my life
I've a penny to spend, I've a penny to lend
And nothing to take home to my wife

No cares have I to worry me
No clock up on the wall to hurry me
I'm as happy as a King believe me
As I go rolling home

Rolling home, rolling home
As I go rolling home,
I'm happy as a King believe me
As I go rolling home

JIMMY AND EDWARD GADD AND FRIENDS COMING INTO A
SMALL HOUSE - DRUNK AFTER A DAY AT THE RACES.
MAKING A LOT OF NOISE TRYING TO BE QUIET

JIMMY: If that horse was a woman, I'd kiss it!

MAN 13: Kiss it? I'd marry it.

MAN 14: It wouldn't have you. It's got class, that animal.

EDWARD: Keep it down, lads - the mother's upstairs.

MAN 13&14: Oooh. Right. Sssshhh ETC.

JIMMY: Here we go.

HE PUTS A BOTTLE AND GLASSES ON THE TABLE. THEY ARE FILLED

EDWARD: A toast, gentleman. To Pagan.

ALL: Pagan!

EDWARD: The finest racehorse a man could hope to back.

ALL: Hear, hear!

MAN 14: And Colonel Cradock -

MAN 13: Haddock?

GENERAL DISSOLVING INTO LAUGHTER

MAN 14: For owning such a fine horse. I give you Colonel Cradock.

JIMMY: You're all right - you can keep him. I'll take the horse.

EDWARD: Right, then. Cribbage or Hazard?

ALL SHOUT OPPOSING CHOICES

SHHHH! All right, all right. Got a coin, Jimmy?

JIMMY: Nah, just five pound notes!

RAUCOUS LAUGHTER

EDWARD: SSSHHH!

MAN 14: Here. It's a farthing. That do?

EDWARD: Heads it's Cribbage, tails it's Hazard.

MAN 14: Righto.

HE TOSSES THE COIN AND FAILS TO CATCH IT.
GROVELS AROUND ON THE FLOOR WHILE THE OTHERS
LAUGH AND KICK HIM, BANGS HIS HEAD ON THE TABLE
ON THE WAY BACK UP ETC. FINALLY:

Tails!

ALL: Hazzaaaaarrrrd!! Shhhhhh!

THEY START TO PLAY. THE DICE GAME CONTINUES
UNDER THE NEXT SCENE

SCENE SIX

STEPHENSON: I don't know how you do it, Hudson. All these functions. When do you get the work done?

HUDSON: That is the work. Believe me. Nobody invests in a monk, Stephenson. All they'll get is a monastery.

STEPHENSON It wouldn't suit me. I'd rather have my engines.

HUDSON: Don't you get so high and mighty. You needed money to build them. That wasn't all your own money you were spending.

STEPHENSON: Aye but that was rich folks' money. I went for them as had plenty already.

HUDSON: Well, not all of it was well spent. You were no different from me.

STEPHENSON: You are spending the money of the little folk.

HUDSON: Investing it. Making it bigger.

STEPHENSON: Taking all they have. Are they going to forgive you if they lose it?

HUDSON: Then I'd best make sure they don't, hadn't I?

SHARE HOLDERS MEETING

HUDSON: Right, ladies and gentlemen, fellow share holders. Down to business. A West Coast line from London to Scotland is a distinct and imminent possibility. Can we have that

HOLDER 1: No!

HUDSON: It's a rhetorical question. I think it would be obvious that we cannot. We're aiming for a network connecting London to Scotland.

NICHOLSON: And the main line up our country must go up the east, specifically through our city of York.

HUDSON: Right, with the York and North Midland Railway you can travel straight to London. Via Birmingham.

HOLDER 1: What about a direct route via Doncaster?

HUDSON: Oh no, you'll not be wanting that. Trust me. We'll be fine via Birmingham and Derby, and then we only need to build track to Scotland. In the mean time we'll add branch lines to Scarborough and Whitby. You'd like to be able to visit the seaside, wouldn't you? I suggest we buy up the Leeds to Selby.

HOLDER 1: Why? We already do that route.

HUDSON: Exactly. We'll buy up the competition, then shut them down and folk will have to use ours. We'll have Hull to Selby, too.

HOLDER 2: No.

HUDSON: No? What do you mean, no?

HOLDER 2: I mean, no, they won't sell it to you.

HUDSON: Right, we'll see about that. There was a steamboat company did that route.

HOLDER 3: What about it?

HUDSON: Buy it, reopen it, make it cheaper. Then see what the Hull to Selby have got to say.

HOLDER 1: Erm, Mr Hudson?

HUDSON: What?

HOLDER 1: How much are we spending here?

HUDSON: Who wants to know?

HOLDER 3: Well, we do. The shareholders.

HUDSON: Why? Don't you trust me?

HOLDER 2: Oh there's no question of that.

HUDSON: Well then.

HOLDER 3: It's just a bit hard to tell the difference between what is coming in as to what is going out?

HUDSON: So?

HOLDER 1: I was just thinking that we might bring in some professional auditors.

HUDSON: I've never heard of such a thing. Have you Richard?

NICHOLSON: Not in all my born days.

HUDSON: Who's in charge here?

NICHOLSON: You are, Hudson.

HUDSON: And just when I was thinking about telling you all of an increase in the premium of York and Midland shares. Look we need to move fast here. We're not the only ones in the race.

HOLDER 2: I understand that, but.

HUDSON: There are no buts. We are connecting every major city, with our lines. Our lines. Think of the possibilities for the movement of goods and people. Are you seriously trying to put the brakes on that?

HOLDER 2: No, of course not.

HUDSON: Well then, now to the North Midland. The Leeds to Derby. It's costing too much. Far too much. As a member of the committee of enquiry I propose certain economies. Cuts in drivers' pay, fewer boilers. We can definitely do it cheaper.

HOLDER 4: They won't stand for that, the drivers.

HUDSON: Then we'll find others.

HOLDER 5: Mr Hudson. This will not only lower efficiency, it will endanger public safety.

HUDSON: Have I misunderstood something? Was not the company losing money? Was I not brought in here to make this work?

HOLDER 5: Inexperienced drivers are driving engines.

HUDSON: Experience is soon got. This line cannot function if it doesn't make money.

HOLDER 5: But there are children running the points.

HUDSON: Then fingers crossed they know what they're doing. I myself do not make omelettes but I am

reliably informed that they cannot be made without breaking eggs.

HOLDER 4: It's a gamble.

HUDSON: Then it's a good job you backed a winner. Good day, gentlemen, and ladies.

THE SHAREHOLDERS LEAVE

(INCLUDING THE AUDIENCE) Richard. A word. You need to take on more of the weight here. I'm thinking I shall have to become a Member of Parliament.

STEPHENSON: I'm not so sure that's a good idea, George?

HUDSON: I've got my eye on Sunderland. I think I can make it worth their while.

NICHOLSON: And why Parliament, George?

HUDSON: The government wants to interfere with us. They want to start telling us where we can and can't put our tracks. The government!? I'm not having politics in business. Where will it end? So, I'm going to London to put a stop to it. We need a few new friends in high places. There's palms want greasing and backs want scratching.

STEPHENSON: You'll be out of your depth, George.

HUDSON: Doesn't matter how deep the water if you're a strong swimmer.

STEPHENSON: It doesn't matter how big a fish you are, if you're swimming with the sharks. They're not like us down there.

HUDSON: If they're drunk they are! Time for a few more parties, I think! Cheers!

SCENE EIGHT

THE STATION SCENE EXPANDS. A RIBBON IS STRETCHED OUT IN FRONT OF THEM. OPENING OF A NEW LINE. CROWDS - INCLUDING THE JENKINS FAMILY

LADY L: And so, it is with great pleasure that on behalf of the York and North Midland Railway Company, I declare this new line from York to Market Weighton open.

APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD

HUDSON: And I trust that you will soon grace one of our trains with your presence, Lady Lumley?

LADY L: At the earliest opportunity, you may be sure, Mr Hudson.

MRS G: Hmp! Well, rather her than me.

EDWARD: (OFFERING A HIP FLASK) Will you have a tot, mother?

MRS G: Certainly not.

EDWARD: A toast. To the new line.

MRS G: I will not. I don't believe in it.

JIMMY: The drink, or the line?

MRS G: Trains. I don't believe in them.

EDWARD: It's not a matter of faith, mother. They're real. You can see them.

JIMMY: (UNDER HIS BREATH) Unlike the Holy Ghost...

MRS G: (GIVING JIMMY A SHARP LOOK) I don't know why you brought me here. You know how I feel. I'll have nothing to do with them.

EDWARD: But mother, you already do! What do you think pays the cook's wages? And the maid's?

MRS G: Well, that's your earnings from the glassworks, Edward.

PAUSE

Isn't it?

JIMMY: Just tell her, Edward.

MRS G: Tell me what?

EDWARD: I no longer work there, mother.

MRS G: What? Since when? However are we going to live? Were you dismissed? Where are my salts? Heaven preserve us...

JIMMY: Don't fret, mother, everything's fine.

MRS G: How can it be?

EDWARD: I gave up my position at the glassworks.

MRS G: Argh!

EDWARD: Because I no longer needed it! I make more money in a month from my railway shares than I was earning in a year as a clerk.

MRS G: But how -

EDWARD: Dividends. Investment. Reinvestment. More dividends. More investment. Higher dividends. It's how wealthy men are made.

JIMMY: We're speculators now, mother.

MRS G: Both of you?

EDWARD: Look.

HE HANDS HER A DOCUMENT

MRS G: What's this?

EDWARD: It's the deeds to a new house. On Lord Mayor's Walk.

MRS G: But what about our cottage?

JIMMY: We've sold it.

MRS G: Sold it from under me?

EDWARD: Oh, mother - this place is like a palace to it.

JIMMY: And you the queen.

MRS G: So you've sold the shares to buy the house?

JIMMY: Of course not. The shares are what make the money. We've got a mortgage on the house.

MRS G: A mortgage? And not a job between you?

EDWARD: Look around you, mother. This is here to stay. It's iron and stone. It's great buildings and tunnels and bridges and tracks. There's nothing to be afraid of. It's solid. It's unbreakable.

PAUSE

MRS G: You were better off with glass, Edward.

SCENE NINE

PINEAPPLE. ELIZABETH, WAITING. ON A FULLISH PLATFORM. WITH SILENT ANNE

HUDSON COMES ALONG

HUDSON: Elizabeth, what are you doing?

ELIZABETH: I am waiting for a train, George.

HUDSON: This is not like you, Elizabeth. Where are you off to?

ELIZABETH: I'm not off anywhere, George. I'm waiting for what is on it.

HUDSON: Who's on it, Elizabeth? Young George returning from Harrow?

ELIZABETH: It's not a who, George, my dear. It is a what.

HUDSON: So, what is it?

ELIZABETH: It is a pineapple, George. I took a fancy for one.

HUDSON: And all these people. Are they waiting for your pineapple too?

ELIZABETH: I very much doubt it, George. No. My assumption is that they are waiting for the train to Leeds.

HUDSON: And where is it, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH: It is delayed, my dear.

HUDSON: Oh yes, and what is the delay?

ELIZABETH: It is possibly....

HUDSON: Possibly?

ELIZABETH: Probably....

HUDSON: Probably?

ELIZABETH: Well, definitely the train bearing my pineapple. The train to Leeds is behind it, but it is not so much delayed. And were it not for you my dear, they would have had to take a horse drawn carriage to Leeds, and think how much longer it would take them, and how much more expensive it would be!

HUDSON: Quite right, dear. I have news.

ELIZABETH: What dear?

HUDSON: We have won. In Sunderland. I am to sit in parliament. I'd rather have represented York or Whitby, but needs must. It was a decisive victory. I have won by 627 votes to 497.

Richard here, shall take care of our affairs in York. Come along Elizabeth, I'm to be in parliament, we must go to London. Will you like that Anne?

ELIZABETH: London?

HUDSON: I know we must leave our beloved Yorkshire, but that is where Parliament sits, Elizabeth. It can't be helped.

ELIZABETH: But where shall we live, George?

HUDSON: In a house, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: Yes, but which one?

HUDSON: Well, the biggest, of course. As befits the Railway King. We will buy the biggest house in London, with pineapples aplenty, and we shall

entertain society, my dear. Just think of that, Anne? Just think of the opportunities for improvement and social elevation. We will be at the top of the tallest of trees.

STEPHENSON: You're getting a bit grand for me.

HUDSON: Imagine the view from such a position.

STEPHENSON: It's a long way down George.

HUDSON: Then perhaps someone will invent a way to fly.

STEPHENSON: I should like to see that.

HUDSON: Then best get a move on and do it, Mr Stephenson.

A FEW SHARES FALL

What's that?

STEPHENSON: A few falling shares.

HUDSON: A mere shower. Nothing to worry about.

SCENE TEN

LONDON SOCIETY

HUDSON AND STEPHENSON SURVEY THE SCENE

HUDSON: What do you reckon?

STEPHENSON: I reckon, you're not in Howsham now.

ELIZABETH UNCOMFORTABLE. PARTY. WOMEN LAUGHING AT HER BEHIND HER BACK

LADY 7: The world is changing indeed. Never did I think I would attend a function where the guests of honour are George Hudson and Prince Albert.

MAN 15: Who is the more royal, do you think? Prince Albert, the German prince, or Hudson, the Railway King?

MAN 16: Well they both hold court and have their fawning followers.

LADY 7: But what of the wife? The northern Queen.

LADY 8: Shocking.

LADY 9: Tasteless.

LADY 10: Ridiculous.

LADY 11: I saw them out for a drive in the park last week.

LADY 12: And?

LADY 11: Dazzling. In fact the gaudy colours could be heard from Notting Hill to Knightsbridge.

ALL: She may be in society, but she is not of it.

LADY 10: Mrs Hudson. Welcome to Town. How are you finding it?

ELIZABETH: Well, to be honest, it's hard to miss. Oh! I see what you mean.

SOMEWHERE ELSE AT THE BALL

WELLINGTON: Ah, Mr Hudson.

STEPHENSON: Who the heck is that?

HUDSON: That's the Duke of Wellington.

STEPHENSON: Does that make you Napoleon?

HUDSON: (POINTEDLY) I recognise him from his statue.

STEPHENSON: Ah, yes. Any news on yours?

HUDSON: They've got as far as the plinth.

STEPHENSON: Well, it's a start.

HUDSON GROWLS

WELLINGTON: Mr Hudson, you could do me a service.

HUDSON: I'd be more than happy to do so, your Grace. Anything, I can do, I will do.

WELLINGTON: My sister, a lady of some years and no great fortune, has invested her savings in a railway company. She hoped for fortune but, this not being one of your companies, she has only seen the value of her shares diminish almost to vanishing point.

HUDSON: Ah, your Grace. A sad, but all too familiar story. What is the name of the firm?

WELLINGTON: (GIVING HIM A PIECE OF PAPER) This is the sad company.

HUDSON: (LOOKING AT IT) Ah, yes, Give it to me. (HE CALLS SOMEONE OVER. THE GUESTS PAY RAPT ATTENTION) Take this. Go to my broker. Buy £1000 worth of shares.

MAN 17: Yes, Mr Hudson.

HUDSON: And keep it under your hat.

MAN 17: Of course, Mr Hudson.

HUDSON: Your Grace. Go to your sister. Tell her to sell her shares, in two days' time. That should be time enough.

WELLINGTON: Enough for what?

HUDSON: Enough to raise a good profit. When it leaks out that the Railway King is interested in the company, the value should rise steeply.

WELLINGTON: She will be eternally grateful. And myself too. Is there anything I could do to reciprocate?

HUDSON: No thank you your Grace. Should I ever need a military campaign waging... Oh wait a minute. There is something. You see my daughter, Anne.

WELLINGTON: She stands over there, by her mother, Mrs Hudson?

HUDSON: We have her at a fashionable finishing school in Hampstead.

WELLINGTON: They must be proud of their pupil.

HUDSON: That's as may be, but her snobbish comrades mock her and make her life a misery, because of her lowly Northern background. I'm sure a visit from you...

WELLINGTON: Well, that is easily done. I will visit her at her school. In the meantime I will introduce myself.

MAN 16: Don't look. Don't look. The fat woman in the hideous gown. Can there be anything worse?

LADY 14: I've spent the whole season trying to avoid her.

ALL: Mrs Hudson.

LADY 9: How are you?

ELIZABETH: I am most uncommonly fine, thank you.

LADY 9: Would you care for a port, or maybe a sherry?

ELIZABETH: I'll take a little of both, please.

LADY 14: Are you settling well at Albert Gate?

ELIZABETH: Well enough, I believe. I have been busy with furnishings. Do you know, I ordered two globes last week, one terrestrial and the other celestial, and do you know what?

LADY 14: What?

ELIZABETH: They didn't match.

LADY 9: Really?

ELIZABETH: Really. I told them. Take them back. That would never have happened in Yorkshire.

LADY 14: No, I am sure not.

ELIZABETH: No, definitely not. I tell you, I am not so green as I am cabbage looking. Not that green is my colour. It's a very pasty sort of shade, don't you feel?

ALL LADIES: Indeed.

SCENE ELEVEN

RAIN. ALBERT, GEORGE & A GROUP OF MEN. ENTER MR WATERS

WATERS: Right then, lads, look sharpish. Here's the weekly sheet.

HE HANDS IT OUT AS HE CONTINUES SPEAKING. WHEN ALBERT RECEIVES HIS, HE HANDS IT STRAIGHT TO GEORGE

And in addition to what's on there, there's one off the rails this morning on South Milford to Burton Salmon. Bulmer - get learning.

BULMER: What about Scott?

WATERS: Scott won't be driving again.

BULMER: Has he been laid off?

WATERS: No. He's under the engine.

BULMER: Dead?

WATERS: Just learn the road, Bulmer.

MAN 18: Poor bugger. He'll be another casualty of Mr Hudson's cuts, then.

WATERS: I won't have speculation.

MAN 19: No, not from the likes of us. Speculation's for the toffs, isn't that right? What's Hudson offering his investors now, eh? Ten per cent? Twelve per cent?

MAN 18: More like two or three, I've heard.

MAN 19: Oh, they're feeling the pinch, then.

MAN 20: Just the six bottles of port tonight, Mrs Hudson... (BELCH) We all have to tighten our belts.

MAN 19: Oh, but husband, how will you bear to look at me if you're not blind drunk?

WATERS: That'll do. If it weren't for Mr Hudson, we'd all be out of a job. You lot'd do well to remember that.

HE EXITS

MAN 20: Ach...that man is so deep in Hudson's pocket, he can't see daylight.

MAN 19: Nah...there's no room in Hudson's pockets for anything but money. If he blows his nose, it's on a five pound note.

MAN 20: And that doubles its value.

GEORGE: How's that, then?

MAN 20: He's not called the Railway King for nowt, lad. For those as makes money out of all this, the sun shines out of that man's arse.

ALBERT: Aye, well, it's this liquid sunshine I'm more worried about right now. We'll be dancing all over the tracks if we're not careful.

MAN 18: Go steady, Bert. We don't want any more men under engines.

SILENCE FOR A MOMENT

BULMER: What about Alice?

MAN 18: Waters'll be on his way there now.

MAN 19: Oh, that'll be a comfort to her. He'll have the speech off pat in any event - Scott's the fourth man dead this month.

BULMER: You know what surprises me? Not how many of us die, but how few. Cutting wages, laying off men, pushing the costs down and the speeds up all over. It's madness.

MAN 20: You know what would make it safer for everyone?

MAN 18: Oh, I don't think we've time for this.

MAN 20: No - it's very simple. It costs nothing, and it'll save hundreds of lives.

MAN 19: Go on then - let's hear it.

MAN 20: I can guarantee you that the accident rate on the railways will plummet if they strap an armchair to the front of every locomotive, and make one of the company Directors sit in it on every journey.

ALBERT: Ha! Well, that'll be at pig-shearing time.

GEORGE: Pig-shearing time?

MAN 19: Think about it, lad. Right, that's me off.

BULMER: Aye. Take it easy, lads. It's siling down, and it's not going anywhere.

MAN 18: Unlike us. (AS HE EXITS) I'm making a rounder today. Best get some gnat's blood down before I set off...

BULMER AND THE OTHER MEN EXIT, LEAVING GEORGE AND ALBERT. ALBERT CUFFS GEORGE OVER THE HEAD

GEORGE: What was that for?

ALBERT: I've told you before. Keep your trap shut around the men.

GEORGE: I was only asking -

ALBERT: Well, don't.

GEORGE: How am I supposed to learn?

ALBERT: Anything you need to learn, I'll teach you. Now come on.

GEORGE: What about the weekly?

ALBERT: What about it?

GEORGE: Shouldn't we read it before we go?

ALBERT: You read it.

GEORGE: But you're the driver. It's regulations.

SHE HOLDS IT OUT TO HIM. HE DOES NOT TAKE IT

ALBERT: I KNOW THE REGULATIONS!

HE TURNS AWAY

Where's your banjo?

GEORGE: Here.

SHE PICKS UP HER SHOVEL AND STANDS, WAITING IN HIS PERIPHERAL EYELINE. HE DOES NOT NOTICE HER

Da?

HE TURNS AND SEES HER

ALBERT: You ready now, are you?

GEORGE: You've not read this week's newspaper either.

ALBERT: Ach...politics this politics that. I've got better things to do with my time.

GEORGE: Like staring into space and chewing your lip? And shouting at our Ma?

ALBERT: That's enough.

GEORGE: It's not right, Da. You're not right. I can tell.

ALBERT: Just get on the engine, George.

GEORGE: No. I'm scared.

ALBERT: Stop your nonsense.

GEORGE: I'm scared because I don't think you can see! Not properly.

ALBERT SNATCHES AT HER SHOVEL. SHE PULLS IT AWAY, AND HE FAILS TO GRAB IT. IT PROVES HER POINT

Tell me I'm wrong. (SILENCE) Please tell me I'm wrong, Da.

ALBERT: Get to work.

SHE DOESN'T MOVE

Get to work, and I'll talk to you.

THEY SET ABOUT READYING THE ENGINE. IT ALL APPEARS NORMAL, BUT WE CAN HEAR WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

First off, I can see. Just not as well as I used to.

GEORGE: But how can you -

ALBERT: Just keep working. I know what it is, because my Da had it too. And it's not going to get any better. It's already done its worst in one eye, and the other won't be far behind.

GEORGE: What **can** you see, Da?

ALBERT: Shapes. Shadows. Enough to get by, but I canna...I canna judge distances any more.

GEORGE: Then you canna drive.

ALBERT: I have to drive - for as long as I can.

GEORGE: But you canna. Not if you canna see properly. They won't let you.

ALBERT: They won't know. I've thought it through, Georgie, and we can make it work. It's just you and me on this footplate. And you know the line as well as I do.

GEORGE: No, Da...

ALBERT: In and out of the stations, I'll be fine. We'll be moving slowly, and there's plenty of time. And when we've got a head up, you'll be my eyes. You can call the signals, you can keep a watch out, look down the line -

GEORGE: I'm already working flat out keeping the gas up!

ALBERT: Then work harder! We've no choice here, lad. If they find out, I'll be sweeping the sheds for haipeths. And how long do you think it'll take for some canny Tyke driver to realise his water boiler's a lass?

GEORGE: But Da -

ALBERT: There's the bairns to think of, and your Ma. What's the matter with you? Think like a man, George! I need you to - I need you to -

GEORGE: What?

PAUSE

ALBERT: I need you.

GEORGE: All right. It'll be all right.

A TINY GESTURE OF AFFECTION, GIVEN AND RECEIVED. THEN THE WORK CONTINUES

SCENE TWELVE

THE RAIN GETS HEAVIER. SHARES FALLING?

STEPHENSON: Looking bad, George. Very bad.

HUDSON: Nothing we can't weather.

STEPHENSON: All these lines, are they all profitable?

HUDSON: Worry not, Stephenson. Just you keep building these beautiful creatures. And let Robert make the ways on which they travel.

STEPHENSON: Can we afford it?

HUDSON: Let me worry about that.

STEPHENSON: George, stop a minute.

HUDSON: What is it?

STEPHENSON: Does it ever seem that the faster you go, the less time you have?

HUDSON: Quite the contrary, Stephenson. Now, if you will excuse me, I've got to address a Shareholders' meeting.

STEPHENSON: This can only end in disaster.

HUDSON: Don't look at me like that, Stephenson. You had your failures, too. But nobody remembers those, do they? How come, after the Rocket, the sun shone out of your posterior? It shines so bright, and it dazzles so much you can't see your errors of judgement. Nowadays, nobody's got a good word to say about me. Is there only

room for one Saint George round here? I'm having that bloody statue if it's the last thing I do. Now, I'm busy.

A MEETING WHERE HUDSON IS TRYING TO SPEAK. HE HAS A LOT OF PAPERS. HE IS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY TENTATIVE

- LEEMAN: Mr Hudson, your plan for a new bridge at Lendal, exactly whose money are you proposing to invest? Do the citizens of York even need a bridge at Lendal?
- HUDSON: It's pitiable, Mr Leeman. Your eyes always open for abominations? Nose snuffling out grievances? Have you nothing else to do?
- LEEMAN: Ladies and gentlemen. A power has risen, colossal in its proportions, all but infinite in its ramifications, before which all bend in abject and mercenary servility. The great Railway Empire on the absolute throne of which sits George Hudson.
- HUDSON: Friends, the dividends in future may be smaller, but many other firms are going bankrupt, credit is less widely available. These are hard times.
- HOLDER 6: Indeed they are, Mr Hudson.
- LEEMAN: What do you intend to do about it?
- HUDSON: Let me assure you, something will turn up.
- LEEMAN: Says the Gambler.
- HOLDER 7: What exactly? What?
- HOLDER 8: Has anyone seen the accounts?
- HOLDER 9: Where is the money coming from?
- HOLDER 10: More importantly, where is it going?

HOLDER 6: As we are kept totally in the dark are we expected to trust the man who holds the light?

LEEMAN: In whose interests are you working?

HOLDER 10: Not the shareholders'.

HOLDER 7: Your own?

LEEMAN: Where is these good people's security?

HUDSON: In my reputation, Leeman. In my reputation.

STEPHENSON HANDS HUDSON A NOTE AND LEAVES

THERE IS SUCH A CLAMOUR WE CAN'T HEAR HIM. HE MANAGES TO GET SILENCE

I'm afraid I've just had some bad news. The death of my dear friend and old comrade, Mr George Stephenson. I'd request a minute's silence in honour of a great man's memory.

A MINUTE PASSES IN SILENCE. CHECKING WATCHES (LIKE A TRAIN). TICK TICK TICK. MEANWHILE, JIMMY ENTERS A DIFFERENT PART OF THE SPACE, IN SOME AGITATION

JIMMY: Rose! Rose!!

THE MAID ENTERS

Ah, there you are.

ROSE: Sorry, sir, I was just -

JIMMY: The post.

ROSE: The post, sir?

JIMMY: Has it come?

ROSE: Yes, sir, it's in your hand.

JIMMY: But where's the rest of it?

ROSE: That's all that came, sir. Were you expecting something in particular?

JIMMY: I think you know I was. I very much hope for your sake this isn't down to your light fingers, Rose.

ROSE: No, sir!

EDWARD ENTERS

JIMMY: Because if I find out -

ROSE BURSTS INTO TEARS

EDWARD: Jimmy! You can go, Rose.

SHE EXITS

What was that about?

JIMMY: There's no dividend, Edward, and it's the first of the month. There wasn't one last month either.

EDWARD: Are you sure? Is that the post?

JIMMY: Bills, notices to pay - that's it. They used to come regular as clockwork. What are we going to do?

TICK TICK TICK. THEN A RETURN TO THE MEETING AND TO CHAOS

LEEMAN: Where have the dividends been paid from? Revenue or capital?

HOLDER 8: You are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

HOLDER 7: And lining your own pockets.

HUDSON: You're actuated by a littleness of feeling which, when exhibited in this deformed state, as it has been this sad day, is disgraceful. You're all toadies who tout for meals and invitations. You resort to backbiting and you invent conversations which never happened.

LEEMAN: This big swollen gambler....

HUDSON: Don't get personal again.

LEEMAN: Who in his insatiable greed and bottomless atrocity, has led multitudes to go in the way of human baseness, seeking temporary profit where only eternal loss was possible.....

HUDSON: I refute that. I refute that. Do we speak of infants? No, we speak of sentient adults, who, if you did not know what you were doing then you should have.

LEEMAN: You're like Mammon and Belial rolled into one....a bloated, vulgar, insolent, purse-proud, greedy, drunken blackguard.

HUDSON: Well, I'll give you that one. I do like a drink.

NO ONE LAUGHS

LEEMAN: We have need for truth, Mr Hudson. Truth and reparation. And we will not rest until we get it.

HUDSON: Truth? Here's the truth. Two hundred thousand well-paid labourers, representing, as heads of families, nearly one million men, women and children, all feasting through the bold enterprise of one man. Me. Let us hear what man, or class of men, ever before did so much for the population of a country? Eh? That's the truth. You know where you can shove it.

STEPHENSON IS THERE

HUDSON: You gave me a proper turn there, dying on me like that. Right when I needed you.

STEPHENSON: Well, nobody lives forever, do they?

HUDSON: You did, George. You did. Now bugger off and let me drown my sorrows.

STEPHENSON: You don't get shot of me that easily.

SCENE THIRTEEN

HUDSON CARRIED HOME MUCH THE WORSE FOR WEAR

BUTLER: Mr Hudson!

ELIZABETH: George. George, my dear. Come in. Where has he been?

CABBIE: To a late sitting in the house, Mrs Hudson.

HUDSON: Sorry. Sorry, Elizabeth. A late division.

CABBIE: He's a bit worse for wear, I'm sorry to say.

ELIZABETH: Come in, George. Sit down. Thank you, sir.

HUDSON: Sorry, Elizabeth. Tripped.

CABBIE: You're welcome, Mrs Hudson. (GOES)

HUDSON: A port, Elizabeth. Get me a port.

ELIZABETH: Are you quite sure, George?

HUDSON: No, you're right, Elizabeth. You are right. Bring me brandy.

ELIZABETH: Very well, George.

HUDSON: And some port.

(STRUGGLING WITH HIS BOOTS) Cheek. Bare faced cheek and disrespect. You know what he said? Elizabeth. Elizabeth. Do you know what he said to me?

ELIZABETH: The cabbie, George?

HUDSON: No, pay attention, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: What did he say, George?

HUDSON: He said,

VOICE: Order, order.

VOICE 1: Mr Hudson. You purchased the Londesborough estate, 12,000 acres in the East Riding of Yorkshire, did you not?

HUDSON: I did, yes.

ELIZABETH: Here. Let me help you with those.

HUDSON: I think there is no law against that.

ELIZABETH: Indeed no, George.

HUDSON: As if it's any business of his...

VOICE 2: I gather at some later time a railway line needed to cross your land.

HUDSON: Yes. What of it!?

VOICE 2: Entitling you to compensation as the landowner.

HUDSON: As any landowner would be entitled. I had him there, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: Yes, George.

HUDSON: And it would be my good self who turned up to present the owner with the weighty wallet of notes, as you know, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: I know, George?

ELIZABETH GOES

HUDSON: Who the hell does he think he is, questioning my integrity? I like to think I bring the personal touch.

VOICE 3: Indeed, Mr Hudson. And very personal it was.

HUDSON: It was.

VOICE 3: Using the money from the Railway company,

VOICE 1: And knowing in advance of the planned route, you purchased the land,

HUDSON: Yes, well...

VOICE 2: Then when the time came for compensation you took the cash from the bank,

VOICE 4: A bank which you personally owned,

HUDSON: And what of it? You wouldn't expect me to put the money in some other bugger's bank, would you?

VOICE 5: And presented it to yourself, and charged the Railway company accordingly.

HUDSON: So?

VOICE 3: You happened also to be the director of that company.

VOICE 6: We would struggle to find a more personal touch.

VOICE 1: And if you were not a Member of Parliament

VOICE 4: And therefore protected from prosecution

VOICE 5: The whole weight of the law would come down upon your head.

HUDSON: Are you questioning my motives sir? And you know what he said? Do you know what he said?

ELIZABETH: Don't upset yourself, George. Think of your health.

VOICE 2: No sir, I am questioning your accounting.

VOICE 3: I think we have no doubt as to your motives.

HUDSON: (COLLAPSED) Fetch Anne to me, Elizabeth. Fetch me Anne.

ELIZABETH: Not at this late hour, George.

HUDSON: Fetch Anne. I shall not rest.

STEPHENSON ARRIVES

STEPHENSON: When you began this, George, you were searching. Did you find yourself in all of this?

HUDSON: Oh, I was there, right enough. I'm wondering more whether I got a bit lost.

STEPHENSON: Lost yourself?

HUDSON: Have I left a legacy, Stephenson?

STEPHENSON: You could have done with thinking less about prosperity and more about posterity.

HUDSON: Not just prosperity for me though. Not just for me. Anyone with a few loose coins were welcome to the table. Yeah, sometimes I forgot, I was very busy...It was no different from what you were doing.

STEPHENSON: How do you work that out?

HUDSON: It's like laying track. Take the shortest and most direct route between two points. Don't hang around. Maybe I forgot to employ men to audit the accounts. My account, the company account? What's the odds. Everyone benefits. All that work. I'm entitled to my share.

ELIZABETH RETURNS WITH ANNE

Anne. Anne my dear. My dear girl. You have found a good man to marry. A solid man. A rich man. An aristocrat. An MP. It may be that your father will need you to speak to him on our behalf. You'll do that for me, won't you? You're a good girl. A good girl. (HE FALLS ASLEEP)

ELIZABETH AND ANNE CREEP OUT

SCENE FOURTEEN

JIMMY GADD, DRUNK, ON HIS WAY HOME. HE IS STOPPED BY 2 MEN

THUG 1: Can we have a word, Mr Gadd?

THUG 2: It won't take a moment.

JIMMY: Get out of my way.

THUG 2 HOLDS JIMMY'S ARMS BEHIND HIS BACK

THUG 2: Recognise this?

HE HOLDS A PIECE OF PAPER IN JIMMY'S FACE

JIMMY: Get off me.

THUG 2: It's a contract - in a manner of speaking. Between you - that, I believe, is your name, just there - and Mr. Charles Wright, Bookmaker, of Coney Street.

JIMMY: Let me go, do you hear?

THUG 1: Charlie thought you might need a copy. Just to remind you that you owe him some money.

HE STUFFS THE PAPER DOWN THE FRONT OF JIMMY'S TROUSERS, GIVING HIS PRIVATES AN EXTREMELY PAINFUL SQUEEZE AT THE SAME TIME. JIMMY COLLAPSES

Let's hope he remembers, eh?

THE THUGS EXIT. JIMMY STAGGERS OFF

SCENE FIFTEEN

A FREEZING EARLY MORNING. ALBERT IS SLUMPED IN A CHAIR IN THE GLOOM. GEORGE ENTERS, WITH A BUNDLE OF CLOTH CAREFULLY CARRIED IN ONE ARM.

ALBERT: Is that it?

GEORGE: Ma said it's a sign.

ALBERT: What of?

GEORGE: She said trouble comes in threes.

ALBERT: Well, God forgive me, but this isn't trouble. It's mercy.

GEORGE: Don't say that, Da!

ALBERT: There's too many hungry bellies round here as it is.

GEORGE: But what if she's right? First your eye, and now this. What's next?

SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. GEORGE PLACES THE BUNDLE CAREFULLY IN A BASKET.

She came too soon, Ma said.

ALBERT: She?

GEORGE: It's a girl.

BEAT

ALBERT: Aye, well, I'll talk to the minister this evening.

Best get ready, George. Time, tide and railway timetables wait for no man – whatever the circumstances.

GEORGE: I can't come, Da – not today.

ALBERT: What are you talking about?

GEORGE: Ma's done in. She's done in bad. I can't leave her.

ALBERT: You'll have to.

GEORGE: And who'll look after the little 'uns? Can't you explain to Mr Waters?

ALBERT: Explain? Explain that my son is having to stay back and mind the bairns?

GEORGE: Well...don't tell him that, then. Tell him I'm... sick. Tell him...I've got Scarlet Fever!

ALBERT: Mr Waters is the least of our problems, George. How am I going to drive without you?

GEORGE: They'll give you another boiler, won't they?

ALBERT: Oh yes, they'll give me another boiler. But not one who calls out the signals and watches the tracks. Just think about it! It's thick as a bag out there. And freezing. It'll be snowing by dinnertime. There'll be men with two good eyes praying they don't have to drive today.

GEORGE: You'll be all right, Da.

ALBERT: I'll be out there, on the blood, and not seeing six feet down the line!

GEORGE: You don't need to see it. You can feel it, and smell it. You know that line, Da. You know it in your flesh. You can hear the way the roar closes in when you go through the cutting, and then opens out again. And that blast of wind hitting your face on the bend going into the woods. You know every signal point. You've driven it a hundred times and you could do it blind - I know you could.

THE MEN ARRIVE OUTSIDE

MAN 18: (OFF) Shake a leg, Jenkins!

ALBERT AND GEORGE STARE AT ONE ANOTHER

MAN 20: (OFF) Hey! We're freezing our knackers off out here!

ALBERT: George?

GEORGE: I can't! I can't leave Ma!

ALBERT: Get in the back.

GEORGE DISAPPEARS. AS SHE DOES SO, ALBERT MOVES THE BOX OUT OF SIGHT, AND THE SMALLER CHILDREN ARRIVE, CHEWING ON BITS OF BREAD. IT APPEARS LIKE A NORMAL DOMESTIC SCENE. THE MEN ENTER. ALBERT PUTS ON HIS COAT/BOOTS

I'm with you, lads.

MAN 19: Wufff. I've not been out five minutes and I'm nithered. You coming?

ALBERT: Aye.

MAN 19: Where's young George, then?

ALBERT: George? Oh, he's um...crook.

MAN 19: Crook?

ALBERT: Aye. He's got...a fever. He'll be right as rain before long. No bloody use on a footplate today, mind.

MAN 18: Let's be off, then. We might not even find the sheds in this fog.

ALBERT: (TO THE CHILDREN) You lot be good for your Ma, today.

ALL CHILDREN: Goodbye, Da.

THEY LEAVE

THE CHILDREN CONTINUE TO PLAY, AND ARE INTERRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF WATERS

WATERS: Where's your father, lad?

THOMAS: Gone already. You've just missed him, sir.

WATERS: No matter. I'll catch up with him at the sheds.

HE TURNS TO LEAVE

And tell your Mam he'll be late home tonight –
he's driving a different line.

HE LEAVES. GEORGE APPEARS

GEORGE: Who was that?

THOMAS: The Overseer.

GEORGE: Was he asking for me?

THOMAS: No.

GEORGE: You didn't tell him I was here did you?

THOMAS: No. He wasn't after you.

GEORGE: What did he come for, then?

THOMAS: He wanted Da.

GEORGE: Da? What for?

THOMAS: He didn't say. Said he'd catch him at the sheds.

GEORGE: Right.

THOMAS: And he said to tell Ma that Da's driving a
different line and he'll be late back.

GEORGE: What? Are you sure?

JACK: That's what the man said.

GEORGE: A different line?

THOMAS: Aye. Shall I tell her?

GEORGE: No.

THOMAS: But -

GEORGE: I'll do it. Listen, do you think you can look after the bairns?

IVY: Why?

GEORGE: Because I need to find Da and -

ANOTHER CHILD RUNS IN

LILY: Georgie! Ma needs you! She's calling for you!

GEORGE IS TORN

She says she's bleeding, George.

GEORGE: (TO LILY) Take the sheets off our bed and give them to Ma. And you (TO JEANIE) ask next door for some beef tea.

LILY: She won't give us none - I know she won't!

JEANIE: I don't know what to do, Georgie!

THOMAS: You can't go!

GEORGIE: I've got to. I'm sorry - I've got to go!

ALL CHILDREN: Don't go, Georgie!

GEORGE RUNS OFF, FOLLOWING THE MEN

SCENE SIXTEEN

NICHOLSON

HUDSON: Richard, old chap. How goes it?

NICHOLSON: Not too well, George. Not too well at all.

HUDSON: It's the shareholders' meeting Richard, is it not?

NICHOLSON: It is, George. Yes.

HUDSON: Don't let it get you down, Richard.

NICHOLSON: No, George.

HUDSON: We will live to fight another day, Richard. Take a drink.

NICHOLSON: Thank you George. I think not. I think not. The shares, George. The shares were transferred into my name.

HUDSON: As is all right and proper Richard.

NICHOLSON: My name, George. My name.

HUDSON: It's progress. And it's profit. I'd say it was inadvisable to stand in its way.

NICHOLSON: I fear I may have lent myself as a tool in some sordid transactions, and that there are more lurid revelations yet to come. People are asking questions to which I have no answers. People are selling their shares.

HUDSON: Omelettes and eggs, Richard. Omelettes and eggs. Shall I call Elizabeth?

NICHOLSON: No George. No. I think not. I could do with some fresh air. I think I will take a walk.

HUDSON: Good night, Richard. Pecker up. Omelettes and eggs, Richard.

NICHOLSON: Omelettes and eggs. Indeed. Farewell George.

AS HE LEAVES THE SCENE, HE COLLIDES WITH GEORGE, RUNNING FULL PELT. SHE MANAGES A 'SORRY, SIR!' AND CARRIES ON

SCENE SEVENTEEN

STEPHENSON IS THERE

HUDSON: People panicked. They panicked George. Ten years of blissful madness, swept away by a single week of terror. There was a run on the bank of England. Now, you can't blame me for that. They should have kept their nerve.

THERE ARE TWO CRASHES, ONE FINANCIAL, THE OTHER REAL. THEY HAPPEN, IF NOT SIMULTANEOUSLY, THEN INTERLEAVED

THE LEEDS STOCK EXCHANGE. CHAOS

JIMMY: There! Over there!

EDWARD: Mr Underwood! Mr Underwood!!

MR U: Ah, Mr Gadd. I've been expecting you.

EDWARD: Thank God. We're not too late, then. Business looks brisk.

MR U: What can I do for you?

JIMMY: We need to sell.

EDWARD: As soon as we can. Here - I've brought the share certificates.

MR U: I hope you've also brought your wallet, Mr Gadd.

EDWARD: We're not buying, man, we're selling.

MR U: Well, you'd have to pay me to take these off your hands.

JIMMY: What? But you sold them to me. They're worth thousands.

MR U: Not as of this morning. They're worthless.

EDWARD: Worthless?

MR U: Worse than worthless. You'll be hearing from the company.

JIMMY: About compensation?

MR U: (LAUGHS) Mr Gadd, let me explain. You only ever paid ten per cent of the value of these shares.

EDWARD: Yes. That's how it works.

MR U: And you know that the company can call in the full value at any time?

EDWARD: Well, theoretically.

MR U: It's no longer a theory, sir. That time's come. And looking at that little handful, I'd estimate that you owe the company a substantial sum.

JIMMY STARTS HYPERVENTILLATING

EDWARD: Jimmy! Jimmy!!

MR U: I hope you and your brother had the good sense to underwrite all this. It's a sorry affair.

CHAOS

PEOPLE CLAMOUR AT DOORS WHICH ARE LOCKED. SHARES ARE TORN UP. JEWELLERY IS RIPPED FROM ARMS AND NECKS. PEOPLE CALL FOR CABS THAT DON'T COME, SERVANTS ARE DISMISSED, BEGGARS PUSHED ASIDE. WORK GRINDS TO A HALT. MACHINES STOP. THIS CHAOS CULMINATES IN RICHARD NICHOLSON THROWING HIMSELF IN THE RIVER. THIS MERGES INTO:

SCENE EIGHTEEN

IT IS EERILY QUIET AND DENSELY FOGGY. GEORGE RUNS THE LENGTH OF THE SPACE, AND JUST CATCHES THE BACK OF THE PEOPLE TRAIN AS IT EMERGES INTO THE GLOOM

THE PEOPLE TRAIN AND THE MONEY TRAIN COLLIDE. MUSIC, SFX, SMOKE. AS IT CLEARS, WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF THE AFTERMATH

A PASSENGER IS TRAPPED. OTHERS ARE WORKING TO FREE HER

BODIES LIE UNDER BLANKETS. ANOTHER IS PULLED FROM THE WRECKAGE

AN INJURED MAN IS BEING TENDED TO

WALKING WOUNDED SIT DAZED

RAILWAY OFFICIALS INSPECT THE SCENE, DISCUSSING AND MAKING NOTES

AS THE SMOKE CLEARS, WE BECOME AWARE OF HUDSON IN THE MIDST OF IT, WITH RAILWAY OFFICIALS, AND OF STEPHENSON, SILENTLY WATCHING

HUDSON: How many?

WATERS: Four confirmed dead. Maybe more.

HUDSON: It's a shame. A damned shame. What happened?

OFFICIAL 2: Hard to say, Mr Hudson.

THE OFFICIALS EXCHANGE A LOOK

HUDSON: What's that about?

SILENCE

Come on! If you've got summat to say, say it!

WATERS: Well, sir, I think the recent cuts have meant that we're working at full stretch.

HUDSON: So I should hope! And?

WATERS: And there comes a point where there's no stretch left.

HUDSON: I trust you're not trying to lay this at my door?

OFFICIAL 2: Of course not.

HUDSON: Because there are a hundred other causes I could point to. This fog for a start. You know the regs: in fog and falling snow, don't lose your nerve, keep on going. Whatever you do, don't stop or else someone will drive into your backside.

WATERS: It was head on, sir.

HUDSON: So what went wrong? Signalling?

OFFICIAL 2: It does seem that the driver didn't see the signal.

HUDSON: There you are – driver error. Make sure he's laid off.

WATERS: (GRIMLY) There's no need for that.

WE BECOME AWARE OF GEORGE, DAZED AND INJURED, SEARCHING THE CRASH SITE. SHE IS BLEEDING FROM A HEAD WOUND

HUDSON: Well, that makes it simple. Right – that's what we're putting out: the driver caused the crash. What was his name?

WATERS: Jenkins.

HUDSON: Make sure the newspapers know.

OFFICIAL 2: Yes, Mr Hudson.

GEORGE TRIPS AS SHE STUMBLES PAST, FALLING AGAINST HUDSON, WHO HELPS HER UP. FOR A MOMENT, THEY LOCK EYES

HUDSON: Steady as you go, young lady.

GEORGE: Sorry, sir.

GEORGE: (IN A DAZE – SOUNDING CONFUSED) I tried. I tried to stop it.

A WOMAN COMES UP TO GEORGE

WOMAN 15: Come on, lass.

GEORGE: But I was too late.

WOMAN 15: It's all right.

GEORGE: I couldn't get to him in time.

WOMAN 15: (TO HUDSON) Don't mind her, Sir. She's not herself.

GEORGE: You don't understand. He can't see. Not without me. I should have been here. He needed me see - to tell him what was coming.

WOMAN 15: None of us saw it coming, lass.

GEORGE: But it's my fault. I did this. Me. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

WOMAN 15: Come on, now.

AS SHE LEADS HER AWAY, A BALLAD BEGINS, QUIET AND RAW. AS IT BUILDS, HUDSON AND THE OFFICIALS CONTINUE THEIR WORK, AND THE AFTERMATH OF THE CRASH PLAYS ON

GEORGE FINDS HER FATHER UNDER ONE OF THE BLANKETS. SHE KNEELS AND TAKES HIS BODY IN HER ARMS

HUDSON AND STEPHENSON

HUDSON: Bugger off, Stephenson. It was you that inspected that line. I'm not the only one. Accidents happen. This is not of my making.

STEPHENSON: What have you made, Hudson? I made the engines. What have you ever made?

HUDSON: I made things happen. I made you rich.

STEPHENSON: I made you rich and now you care for nobody unless you can get money by them.

HUDSON: They were none of them complaining when they were getting rich.

STEPHENSON: And that's why they forgot you George. They don't want to remember. They woke up after the party and it wasn't a pretty sight and it

wasn't something they were proud of. Some things are best forgotten.

HUDSON: Best remembered or they'll do it all over again. They already have. You won't change folk, George. They're as foolish and greedy as ever. Everyone wants summat for nowt. I just took it and used it.

STEPHENSON: We have the engines. We have the carriages. They are beautiful and a boon to humanity.

HUDSON: And humanity forgot how it was done.

STEPHENSON: People want to remember the best. You can't blame them for that.

HUDSON: I think they should remember the lot of it, warts and all.

SCENE NINETEEN

THE REST OF THE ACTION IS PLAYED OUT IN THE DEVASTATED AFTERMATH OF THE CRASH

ELIZABETH IN MOURNING, PICKING HER WAY THROUGH THE DEBRIS, WITH ANNE. ENCOUNTERS SOCIETY LADIES

ELIZABETH: Oh, how do you do ladies?

THEY DON'T SPEAK

I was hoping to call, but since my brother's.... accident, and my husband's troubles...

THEY TURN AWAY

Yes...well...we will bid you farewell. Come along, Anne.

ANNE IS READING A LETTER. SHE GASPS

HUDSON: Anne, my dear, what is it? Is it Mr Dundas?

ANNE NODS

HUDSON: What has happened? Is he well?

ANNE: I am sure he is very well, father, but he is my fiancée no longer. He has broken his connection with me.

HUDSON: Because of me?

ANNE IS SILENT

HUDSON: I am sorry my dear.

ANNE: You have raised me only for marriage and now I will be an old maid. I am fit for nothing.

SHE LEAVES

SCENE TWENTY

ELIZABETH AND HUDSON ALONE ON THE DAY VICTORIA COMES TO YORK. EVERYTHING IN THE HOUSE IS BEING REMOVED. ELIZABETH IS BALANCED ON THE WRECKAGE OF THE CRASH. GEORGE IS PICKING THROUGH PAPERS AND DEBRIS. DISTANT CHEERING

HUDSON: We should have been there, Elizabeth. This should have been our day. Our queen, on a train, in York.

ELIZABETH: It doesn't matter to me, George. Not a jot. I'd rather be here, sitting quiet with you.

HUDSON: Have I ever been a one for sitting quiet! Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH: Do it now. For me. While we've still got a chair to sit on. (HE DOES)

HUDSON: It will all be gone. There will be nothing to remember me by. Who will say, 'that's the pot that George Hudson pissed in?'

ELIZABETH: George, I never liked it.

HUDSON: What?

ELIZABETH: All those parties, the teas with ladies, the calling, the being called on.

HUDSON: But I thought you loved all that!

ELIZABETH: They always laughed at me behind my back, George. I may not be bright, but even I saw that. They scared me into stupidity. I never knew what was coming out of my mouth.

HUDSON: Elizabeth? Every door in society was opened for us.

ELIZABETH: It was money that opened those doors, George. Money. They soon slammed shut when the river ran dry.

HUDSON: We had friends in high places. Good friends.

ELIZABETH: And where are those good friends now, George? Nowhere to be seen. Society has the politics of the farmyard, George.

HUDSON: Blow me down, Elizabeth. You are a miracle.

ELIZABETH: No, I'm not George. I'm just a Yorkshire woman. You're the one who changed the world.

HUDSON: Nay.

ELIZABETH: You have, George, you have.

HUDSON: But nobody knows it, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: Oh they know it all right. They just won't admit it. And soon they'll forget it. And they

have me down for the village idiot, if they have me down at all.

HUDSON: I think the happiest part of my life was when you and I stood behind counter and used the yard measure in our own shop.

ELIZABETH: I always knew we should never cross that draper's counter.

HUDSON: (LOOKING AT HIS WATCH) She'll be there by now. And Albert. It should be me. Helping her down onto the platform.

They've renamed my street, you know. They took my name down.

ELIZABETH: Don't fret, George.

HUDSON: Railway Street. As if the railways built themselves!

ELIZABETH: It is sheer jealousy.

HUDSON: And there's talk of lopping the head off my statue.

ELIZABETH: Yes, well....

HUDSON: What, Elizabeth? What is it?

ELIZABETH: It's said they'll put George Leeman's head on it.

HUDSON: What?! They what?! Leeman?!

ELIZABETH: You have made enemies.

HUDSON: Elizabeth. It's true. And now that I am no longer an MP they can do what they like. They can even arrest me and put me in jail.

ELIZABETH: Oh, George, they wouldn't!

HE DOESN'T REPLY, BUT SILENTLY TAKES HER HAND
AND KISSES IT

SCENE TWENTY-ONE

HUDSON'S DEFENCE, 1865. HE STANDS AND SPEAKS TO
THE AUDIENCE

HUDSON: Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen, much mud has
been chucked at me, and some of it has stuck.

Railways must depend upon the prosperity of the
country. If the country suffers, why the
railways must suffer too.

It has often been said, how many families have
been ruined by me; but I have made upwards of
twenty millions of property safe and secure,
and thousands of families receive their
dividend.

THERE IS A BIT OF A HULLABALOO AT THE BACK OF
THE HALL - EDWARD AND JIMMY SHOUTING

No speculation can be blessed with complete
success; and although loss may have been
sustained by a few individuals, the railways
with which I was connected have stood better
than almost any other railway property in the
Kingdom.

My object was to consolidate the railway
system. To make it whole. A man cannot always
succeed in his object and I did not succeed in
that.

However, things said about me were utter
falsehoods. It was stated that I altered
accounts. If accounts were altered I had
nothing to do with it.

In fact I lost a sum of £80,000 through the
actions of others.

POLICEMAN 1: (ENTERING WITH LEEMAN) Mr Hudson? Mr George Hudson?

ELIZABETH: George, what is happening?

POLICEMAN 1: Mr George Hudson, late of Newby Park, Thirsk in the North Riding of Yorkshire. I have a warrant here for your arrest.

ELIZABETH: What is the charge?

LEEMAN: Debt.

ELIZABETH: Go, George. Go. Now.

POLICEMAN 2: Come with us sir.

HE'S ARRESTED

HUDSON: You are behind this. Leeman. I know it! I can bear your malice, however long continued.

HE IS DRAGGED OUT TO UPROAR. LEEMAN REMAINS.
THIS IS A MIRROR OF THE EARLIER BROKERS' SCENE

LEEMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen. Let me keep this simple for you. This is how we all get poor in this business.

You've got a bit of cash. You buy shares in the railways and Mr Hudson builds Railways. He builds railways from here to there, for which we are all grateful, for we all wish to go from here to there, to sell to buy, to live. We all get rich.

But some of your money goes into building other railways. Railways that go not from here to there, but from hither to yon. The line from here to there is a great success, but the line from hither to yon...Oh dear me. Now nobody makes anything hither, and nobody lives yon. Nobody travels from hither to yon, except the occasional old granny with her chickens. And sometimes she merely sends her eggs. The railway from hither to yon does not make a

profit. Will never make a profit. Can never make a profit. Never. And what will your dividend be? 5,4,3,2,1 per cent? Less? And what will be the worth of your shares? A share in nothing is what ladies and gentleman? Your share of nothing will be nothing. Less than nothing. And a share in less than nothing is a debt.

You see, there are two kinds of investors. Which are you ladies and gentlemen? The one, who keeps an eye on the markets and moves the money when they see a better opportunity, or the other, who pays no attention to the market, but puts his or her faith in the careful administration of the company. In a Mr Hudson. You would have been better using it to kindle a fire in your grate.

STILL AMIDST THE WRECKAGE - EDWARD IN YORK CASTLE - DEBTORS' GAOL. HUDSON IS DELIVERED TO THE CELL

JAILER: There we are, sir. Make yourself at home. I'm sure the other gentleman can find some space for you. We're a bit full right now, with so many being in your...position.

HUDSON: Yes...I...I understand.

POLICEMAN LEAVES. SFX OF LOCKING UP

EDWARD: (LAUGHING BITTERLY) Well, that's a turn-up for the books, isn't it?

HUDSON: Unfortunate turn of phrase, given the circumstances.

EDWARD: It's Mr Hudson, isn't it?

HUDSON: What do you want?

EDWARD: My money, Mr Hudson.

HUDSON: I can't help you, young man.

EDWARD: Oh, but you did. You helped me make it. A whole lot of it.

HUDSON: Glad to have been of service.

EDWARD: But then I lost it. All of it. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that you lost it.

HUDSON: Well, you and me both, son.

EDWARD: But you've still got a big mansion, and a table with food on it.

HUDSON: Not any more, lad.

EDWARD: I've got nothing. The bank's repossessed my home. My mother's in the workhouse. My brother's gone on the tramp. He couldn't stand it. The shame. And I'm locked up in a debtor's prison.

HUDSON: Get a job, lad.

EDWARD: From in here? Even if I worked a lifetime - ten lifetimes - I still wouldn't pay it back.

HUDSON: And what do you want me to do about it?

EDWARD: It's your fault.

HUDSON: Is it?

EDWARD: You made me believe. You said I'd get rich.

HUDSON: I just spun the wheel lad. It were you that placed the bet. Not my fault you lost.

EDWARD: (SETTLING DOWN TO SLEEP) You never said. Nobody said. When I invested my money, everybody said credit, nobody said debt. They all talked about how much you'd win, not how much you'd lose.

HUDSON: That's the game son. That's the game.

EDWARD: Now everyone's lost.

HUDSON: Not everyone, no. Them as got out soon enough. They did pretty well.

EDWARD: (ALMOST ASLEEP) But where's it all gone? All that money? Where is it?

EDWARD FALLS ASLEEP

HUDSON: Well, it costs a pretty penny to grease a palm, or scratch a back, or to give the right person the nod. And, we did have some damn good parties, didn't we?

ENTER STEPHENSON, TUTTING & SHAKING HIS HEAD

STEPHENSON: George...

HUDSON: I might have known it'd be you. Where's your scythe?

STEPHENSON: I'm working on a mechanised version.

HUDSON: For a while I had my hands on most of the railways in Britain, and that was most of the railways in the world.

STEPHENSON: Let's face it, George. Those hands were not entirely clean.

HUDSON: It wasn't just me. I was not the only one involved in dodgy dealings. Everyone was doing it, all I did wrong was get caught. And did anything in this world ever get done in any other way?

STEPHENSON: You might only have had a bit of shit on your shoe but the stink hangs around.

ENTER THE JAILER. HUDSON IS RELEASED FROM PRISON. HE IS CLEARLY UNWELL

JAILER: Off you go, Mr Hudson.

HUDSON: What?

JAILER: They're setting you free.

HUDSON: But what about my debts?

JAILER: It seems that some kind of benefactor has paid off the last of them.

HUDSON: Was anyone informed? My sons, friends?

JAILER: Not as far as I know.

HUDSON: My wife? She lives in London.

JAILER: Is that so?

HUDSON: There is no one here to greet me? To escort me home?

JAILER: Not that I know.

HUDSON: Then how shall I go?

JAILER: Train? The station's just over the bridge. Turn right.

HUDSON: I know where it is.

JAILER EXITS

STEPHENSON: Come on, George, I'll walk with you.

HUDSON: Well, you did alright, for a pit foreman's lad who could barely read. You left your mark. I'll soon be gone.

STEPHENSON: Gone, but not entirely forgotten.

HE GESTURES TO ANOTHER PART OF THE STAGE, WHERE A COFFIN IS CARRIED ON, FOLLOWED BY ELIZABETH AND WILLIAM. IT IS PLACED ON TRESTLES. EUSTON STATION. IT IS SNOWING? MUSIC TO THE END??

WILLIAM: Are you sure you won't come, mother?

HUDSON: Elizabeth!

STEPHENSON: Sshhh.

ELIZABETH: I've said my farewells already. When does the train leave?

WILLIAM: A quarter past seven.

HUDSON: The Midland route.

WILLIAM: And then tomorrow morning from York station to Howsham, to the churchyard in Scrayingham. Wherever that might be.

ELIZABETH: I'll tell you where it is, William. It's where your father's heart is. It never left.

WILLIAM: Did you read the will?

ELIZABETH: (SHAKING HER HEAD IN DISBELIEF) Two hundred pounds.

WILLIAM: And some shares.

ELIZABETH: (WEARILY) Shares.

WILLIAM: In a railway company. In Spain.

ELIZABETH: And is this Spanish railway prosperous?

WILLIAM: It's not built yet. Time will tell.

ELIZABETH: Yes. It always does.

THEY EXIT

HUDSON: Is that it, then?

STEPHENSON: It's a lot more than most get.

HUDSON: No statue, mind. Still no statue.

STEPHENSON: True. They make statues out of the winners, George. Statues and stories.

EXIT STEPHENSON. HUDSON FINDS, WITHIN THE WRECKAGE, A PLINTH-LIKE STRUCTURE. HE STRUGGLES TO CLIMB ONTO IT. AS HE DOES SO, YOUNG GEORGE (OUT OF TIME) ENTERS AND STANDS SILENTLY WATCHING HUDSON'S ATTEMPTS

HUDSON STRIKES A POSE. IS DISSATISFIED. TRIES ANOTHER. SPOTS VARIOUS OBJECTS IN THE DEBRIS

HUDSON: Pass me that. You! Give me that lamp.

SHE DOESN'T MOVE

Did you hear me?

SHE IS SILENT. HE CLAMBERS DOWN AND GATHERS A FEW OBJECTS - E.G. SHOVEL, LAMP, FLAG, HIS OWN FOB WATCH ETC.

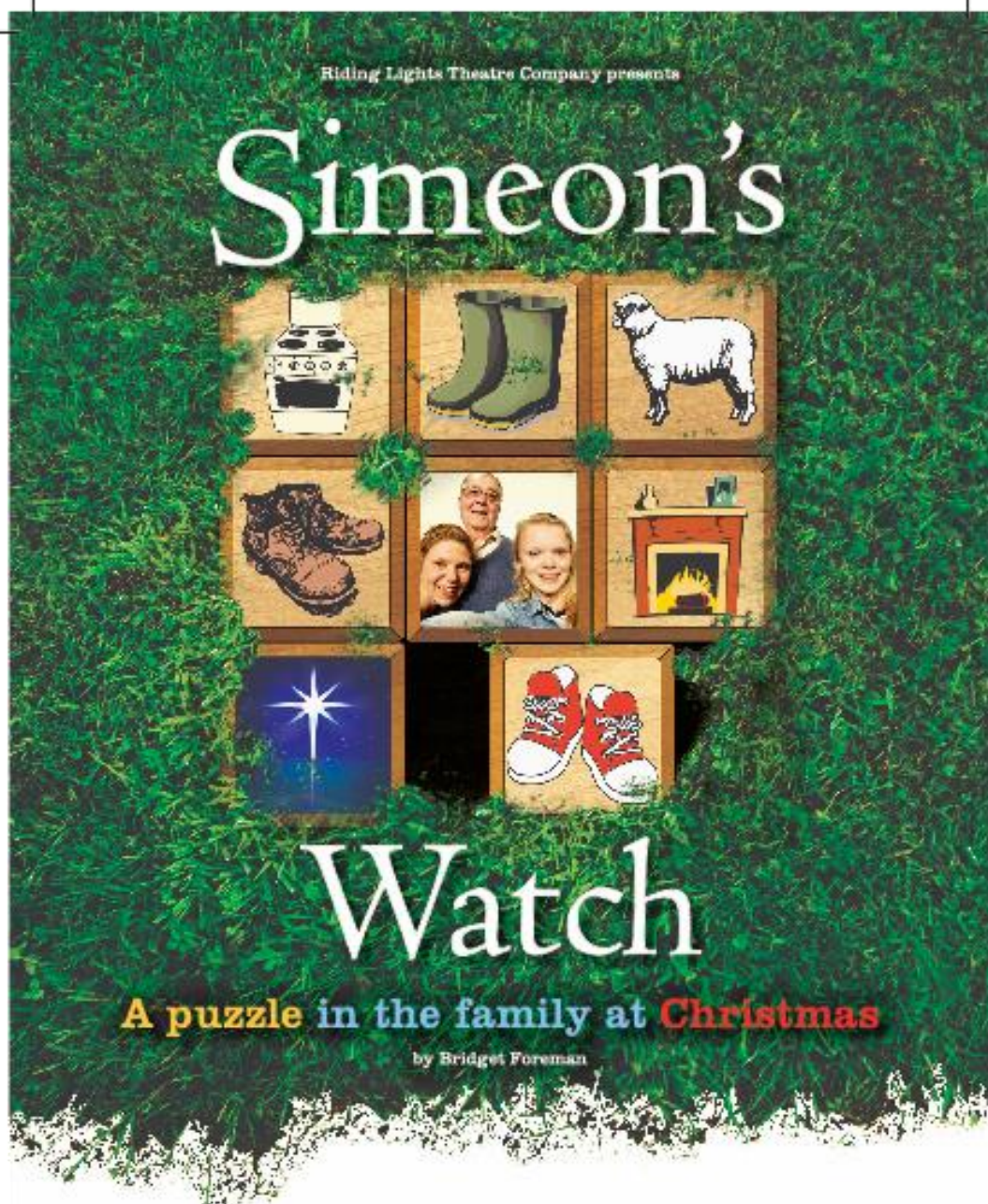
Don't you know who I am?

GEORGE: Yes. I know who you are.

HE SCRAMBLES BACK ONTO HIS PLINTH. AS HE DOES SO, THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERS ENTER AND STAND WITH YOUNG GEORGE IN SILENT, DIGNIFIED WITNESS: THE GADD BROTHERS, MRS GADD, THE JENKINS FAMILY, NICHOLSON, WATERS & OTHER RAILWAYMEN. HUDSON STRIKES UNCONVINCING POSES WITH THE OBJECTS. EVENTUALLY, HE IS DRAGGED - STILL TRYING TO ORCHESTRATE HIS OWN IMAGE FOR POSTERITY - INTO DARKNESS. THE WITNESSES REMAIN

FADE TO BLACK

END



Script



SIMEON' S WATCH

**By
Bridget Foreman**

**Final Draft
September 2016**

CHARACTERS

Leah meaning 'weary', a shepherd's widow, around 40

Rina meaning 'song;joy', her daughter, around 16

Simeon meaning 'that hears or obeys', her father,
around 65

LOCATIONS & TIMES

Act 1 - the interior of the family cottage, over about 18
 months

Act 2 - the hillside, Christmas Eve night

ACT 1

Scene one

A FUNERAL EULOGY. SIMEON STANDS WITH HIS BIBLE OPEN. WE MAY BE DIMLY AWARE OF THE STAGE AROUND HIM, THE INTERIOR OF A SMALL COTTAGE. HE IS MID-SERMON

Simeon: Time's a curious thing. Up here, on these hills, we understand how you can live in the past and the present at the same moment; how you can be wearing a groove in the same path your grandparents trod – and their grandparents before them. You sense the past in your own body as you mend a wall or cut hay. And then, something like this happens, and we're reminded that time can both stretch and stop. That there are endings, unforeseen ones, and that it is up to us to make the time we're given count for something.

Time never hung heavy for Nathan. He filled it with purpose. He used it with care. And he gave it with generosity. I think of the freezing morning before a long day's work when young Rina decided she were going to learn to walk. You won't remember it, Rina, but Nate left his hot tea and his warm porridge on the table and he walked you up and down and up and down the yard, setting you on your feet time and time again. And I look around this chapel, and I know that every one of you can think of an occasion, I'm sure, when Nate did the same for you – when he put aside his own concerns and took up yours – cheerfully, graciously, as if he had all the time in the world. Though, as it turns out, he didn't.

We won't feel time the same way, now – those of us who loved Nate. Leah, and Ben, and Rina most

of all. Without him, our time will seem to drag. We'll be waiting, and wondering. Wondering how many more dark hours we'll endure before the first glimpse of sunrise. How many more months until the pasture's ready for new grazing or the wool's thick for clipping. How many more frosts, how many springs. But what we're really waiting for is that moment when we – like Nathan – stand before Him who gives us our every hour, be they many, or all too few.

And until that time, we wait in patience. In faith. In hope. In expectation. Because that is what the Lord requires of us.

HIS BREATH JUDDERS. HE SEEMS OVERCOME BY GRIEF, MUTTERING SOFTLY. EVENTUALLY HE FALLS SILENT, STARING AT THE CONGREGATION FOR AN UNCOMFORTABLY LONG TIME. LIGHTS FADE

Time Check 1

RINA HOLDS A TATTY NOTEBOOK, FROM WHICH SHE READS

Rina: Autumn. Ewes 175, 186, 185, 173 – lambs removed and ewes recovering in lower pasture. 169, flystrike, treated with antibiotics. Ewes 168, 169 sold to Jacob Darke. Tups (including new tups 86, 81, 84) presented to ewes for breeding, and wethers separated off for fattening. Late Autumn. Wethers to slaughter.

SHE CLUTCHES THE BOOK TO HERSELF AND WEEPS

Oh, Dad...

Scene two

THE INTERIOR OF A SMALL COTTAGE, IN DARKNESS. IT IS VERY UNTIDY: TEETERING PILES OF DOMESTIC CLUTTER, LAUNDRY DRYING OVER FURNITURE ETC. CLEARLY NO-ONE HAS TIME TO LOOK AFTER THE PLACE

Leah: (OFF) Dad? Dad? Are you in there?

LEAH ENTERS, PULLING OFF FILTHY SHOES AND COAT. SHE IS DRESSED FOR THE TOWN, BUT COVERED IN MUD AND VERY DISHEVELLED. SHE PUTS ON A LIGHT

Dad? Where is he?

THE AGA HAS GONE OUT

Oh, no, the Aga's out. Great. That's just great.

SHE SINKS INTO A CHAIR AND BURSTS INTO TEARS. AT ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME MOMENT, RINA ENTERS. LEAH IMMEDIATELY STOPS HER TEARS

Rina: Oh, there you are. I was getting worried.

Leah: The Aga's gone out.

Rina: Where have you been?

Leah: Town. You knew I was going.

Rina: Why are you so dirty?

Leah: Why did you let it go out?

Rina: I didn't mean to. I just...lost track of time. I thought you'd be back by now.

Leah: You and me both.

Rina: I tried ringing you.

Leah: Well, there's no signal, is there?

Rina: In town?

Leah: No – up here. Where's your Granddad?

Rina: I don't know. What's happened?

Leah: Did he ask you to bring the flock down to the bottom pasture?

Rina: No.

Leah: Are you sure?

Rina: Of course I'm sure. Mam, why are you covered in mud?

Leah: Because I've spent the last hour and a half chasing sheep out of the gully!

Rina: What?

Leah: They'd got out of the top pasture and were all over the shop, and your Granddad nowhere to be seen.

Rina: So where is he?

Leah: If I knew that, I wouldn't be asking you, would I?

Rina: What about the sheep?

Leah: They're down now. Well, the ones we could find.

Rina: We?

Leah: Me and Sue. They'd gone through a break in the wall onto Sue's land. You can imagine how happy she was about that – and about having to help me round them up.

Rina: Was the dog no help?

Leah: It's your Dad's dog, Rina; I've no idea of the calls.

Rina: Oh.

Leah: And we're at least two down, for sure.

Rina: Lost?

Leah: Drowned. They'd tried to jump the beck. So you don't know where your Granddad might be?

Rina: (PULLING ON A HAT & COAT) I'll see if I can find him. Don't worry - I'm sure he's fine. I'll take the dog.

SHE LEAVES

Leah: Good luck with that.

Rina: (OFF) Come on, boy.

LEAH TAKES OFF HER COAT AND BOOTS. AS SHE DOES SO, THE PHONE RINGS

Leah: Hello?...Oh, hello Ben love, it's you... No - no-one. Well, I thought it might be someone about Granddad...No, he just seems to have gone off on one of his wanders... How are you?...Is it all right, being back?...You have told them, haven't you? They do know you've lost your Dad?... Well, I don't know how the army deals with this sort of thing....Right...right...well, that's good...Me? Oh, you know...soldiering on - not in quite the same way as you, of course...Oh, yes - the freezer's rammed - I'm not going to have to cook for months...I know - it is kind - it's just...oh, I don't know; sometimes it's all just a bit much, having to be grateful on top of everything else...

SHE STIFLES A SOB

I'm sorry, Ben, I'm fine - really, I am. You caught me at a bad moment, that's all - the sheep got out and I've been chasing after them - I'm sure you remember what it's like...no - I didn't mean...you know I didn't mean that... Anyway, it must be stupid o'clock for you...yeah, well, you get your head down and I'll talk to you in a few days... I love you too. Night, love.

SHE HANGS UP & SIGHS HEAVILY

Damn! Oh, Nate, what a mess. (PAUSE) And this place - look at it. Piles of...stuff everywhere - Rina's, Dad's, mine, all mixed up. It's hard to know where to start.

You wouldn't recognise it if you walked in now.

SILENCE FOR A MOMENT AS SHE FOLDS LAUNDRY

Still, you're not going to, are you?

Best get changed, I suppose.

SHE EXITS

Scene three

LIGHTS UP ON SIMEON, SITTING WITH A BLANKET AROUND HIS SHOULDERS, SHIVERING. RINA ENTERS WITH A MUG AND HOLDS IT OUT TO HIM

Rina: There you go, Granddad.

Simeon: (PUSHING IT AWAY) I don't want a fuss.

Rina: It's not a fuss. It's a cup of cocoa.

Simeon: You...screaming your head off.

Rina: We didn't know where you were.

Simeon: Frightening the sheep.

Rina: What were you doing?

Simeon: You get shot for that, you know – sheep frightening.

Rina: That's dogs, not people, Granddad.

Simeon: Scaring. That's it. That's what they call it. You're a sheep-scarer, you are.

Rina: Sheep-worrier.

Simeon: Yes.

Rina: Well, I was worried.

Simeon: I've shot my share of dogs. Bang!

Rina: About you.

Simeon: Bang! Bang!

Rina: I was worried about you. We both were – me and Mam.

Simeon: Mam?

Rina: My Mam – not your Mam. Leah.

Simeon: Oh, her. Where is she, then?

Rina: Cleaning up, I expect.

Simeon: Doesn't look like it. This place is a mess.

Rina: She got very dirty and wet. Bringing the sheep down.

Simeon: Well what was she doing that for?

Rina: Because you didn't.

Simeon: What are you talking about?

Rina: The sheep, Granddad. You didn't bring them down.

Simeon: I did!

Rina: They were all over the hillside, in the gully - all over!

Simeon: Those weren't our sheep.

Rina: What?

Simeon: They were Rough Fells.

Rina: Yes.

Simeon: We don't have Rough Fells. We have Swaledales.

Rina: We haven't had Swaledales for years, Granddad.

Simeon: Oh, don't be ridiculous.

Rina: We moved to Rough Fells twenty years ago. You sold the Swaledales and took over Joe Thewlis's flock.

Simeon: You don't know what you're talking about.

Rina: Before I was born.

Simeon: Well - there we are. So how would you know?

RINA SMILES. A PAUSE

Rina: You got me there, Granddad!

Simeon: Not so clever now, eh, little Miss Clever of Clevertown?

RINA SMILES A LITTLE SADLY

Come here, lass. There's summat I want to tell you.

RINA SITS SNUGGLED UP TO SIMEON

Now, then. Did I ever tell you about the time I met an angel?

Rina: (PLAYING ALONG – HE HAS, MANY TIMES) No!

AS SIMEON TELLS THE STORY, HE CREATES A LITTLE PUPPET PLAY, USING OBJECTS LYING AROUND (A GLOVE, HIS COCOA MUG, A BOOK ETC.) AT SOME POINT, THE STORYTELLING MOVES FROM THE PUPPETTED OBJECTS TO SIMEON AND RINA PLAYING THE PARTS

Simeon: First off, whatever you think an angel might look like, banish it from your mind.

Both: Be gone!

Simeon: And imagine your old Granddad as a young man – with a full head of hair and the strength to swing a sheep around his shoulders in one move.

Rina: (ENACTING THIS MOVEMENT WITH A SWOOSHING NOISE) Wooh!

Simeon: Of course, I'm not talking a Rough Fell. In those days, we still had Swaledales, but all the same...

RINA LOOKS AT HIM. SIMEON NOTICES AND STOPS HIS NARRATIVE

What's up?

Rina: Nothing. Sorry.

Simeon: Are you listening?

Rina: Yes. Go on.

Simeon: So, there I was, handsome young chap, sitting on a rock, all by myself in the low pasture, thinking about goodness knows what -

Rina: Girls, maybe?

Simeon: Probably. No-one around, just a hundred and sixty sheep for company, and then I hear summat.

Rina: Was it a heavenly choir, Granddad? Or a fanfare of celestial trumpets?

Simeon: It was not, little Miss Clever. It was an almighty - um - when they call. Shout. A sheep shout.

Rina: Bleat?

Simeon: That's the one - bleat. An almighty bleat. One of them flaming sheep had got its head stuck in the cleft of a tree. Now, most people think that sheep are stupid animals. Let me tell you summat. They are not stupid. They know faces. They know voices. And they can remember stuff. A sheep falls down a hole once, it won't do it again. Well, not down the same hole, anyroad.

Rina: Where are we going with this, Granddad?

Simeon: Eh? Oh, Aye. When I say they're not stupid, there are exceptions. By the time I get to this sheep, the silly beggar's bellowing like there's no tomorrow - which there might not be if I don't get her head out, so I start wrestling with her, but she's well and truly jammed. What it needs is two men: one to hold her head and the other to lift her body. But there's just me. So for a while I go from one end to the other -

lift her head, go round, lift her body, go round, lift her head, go round, lift her body. Back and forth, back and forth. Nothing. Still completely stuck. And she's getting tired now from all the kicking and wriggling. And by then -

Rina: You're exhausted too. You drop your head and you're trying to get your breath back, and wondering if you can risk leaving the sheep to go and get help, and then you raise your head -

Simeon: And he's right there. Right in my face. Tall. Strongly built. Rough hands. Just appeared from nowhere. I open my mouth, but nothing comes out. Even the sheep's gone quiet. And he says 'Come on then, if you're ready'. And he lifts up the sheep's body, and I give her head a little twist, and we've done it - she's free - goes belting off up the...grass. Going up grass...

Rina: Up the hillside?

Simeon: Aye. And then it's just me and him, looking at each other. 'Where the chuff did you come from?', I ask him. And he just laughs - a big, warm, chesty laugh. 'Appearing out of nowhere', I says, 'You were almost the death of me, you know.' And he puts his hands on my shoulders - all heavy and hot - and he says 'Don't worry about that - not for a while yet.' So I says 'Do you know summat I don't?' And he pauses for a moment, like he's deciding whether to say owt, and then he says 'I know this: you won't see death until you've held your salvation in your own two hands.' And I look down at my hands, wondering what the 'eck he could mean by that, and then, when I look up again - and it was nobbut a moment - when I look up again, he's gone. As sudden as he came. But - and this is the strangest part -

Both: I can still feel his hands on my shoulders.

Simeon: How d'you know that? Have I told you before?

Rina: Once or twice.

Simeon: Well, if you've heard all my stories, it's bedtime.

Rina: You can't send me to bed, Granddad! I'm not a child any more.

Simeon: Oh. Right.

Rina: Tell you what, why don't you go and get those wet clothes off, eh?

Simeon: That sounds like a plan, little Miss Clever.

Rina: Leave them outside your door and I'll put them in the wash for you. Off you go.

SIMEON EXITS. RINA MOVES TO THE FRONT OF THE SPACE AND TAKES OUT THE NOTEBOOK. LEAH ENTERS THE EDGE OF THE SPACE WITH HER KNITTING AND A CHURCH COFFEE CUP

Time Check 2

Rina: Winter. Flock in low pasture; hay the sheep. Ewes 186, 194 dead - pneumonia. Snow. Late winter - preparation for lambing. Ewes 177, 185, 192 miscarried - probably viral. Antibiotic injections to all carrying ewes.

Scene four

Leah: 'Knit and Natter' they call it. It's a dreadful name, don't you think? Still, I suppose it's better than the alternatives: Coffee Morning for Sad Lonely People, or Group Therapy. God, I never thought I'd be going along to anything like it. The worst bit is the coffee. Why, in over two thousand years, the church has still not succeeded in producing a decent cup of coffee is beyond me. The knitting's all right - it's mindless - just something to keep your hands busy while you do what you're really there for, which is (IN A SERIOUS VOICE) talking. Sharing. I'm not stupid - I know I need to talk. And I also know there's no-one at home I can talk to - not honestly. So, here I am. Every Wednesday morning.

And this week, Liz from the Post Office asks did I get the dog back, because it was wandering around the village for most of the day, and I feel this lump in my throat, and I can't speak. And Liz strokes my arm, which I can't bear, and says 'is it Nate?', and I think 'of course it's Nate, you stupid woman, what else would it be?', but what comes out is 'No. It's Dad.'

SIMEON WANDERS INTO THE SPACE AND SETTLES DOWN IN THE CHAIR, SNOOZING. LEAH WALKS BACK INTO THE SPACE AND OPENS A LEDGER WITH CALCULATOR ETC., WORKING ON THE ACCOUNTS. AS SHE DOES SO, RINA ENTERS THE EDGE OF THE SPACE AND TAKES OFF HER BOOTS, AS IF AT THE DOOR. SHE ENTERS AND TOUCHES LEAH ON THE SHOULDER

Oh, hello, love. Ooh! Cold hands!

Rina: Yeah. It's what Granddad would call nithering out there.

Leah: Here - sit down.

RINA SITS. LEAH KNEELS IN FRONT OF HER, RUBBING RINA'S HANDS. AS LEAH TALKS, RINA'S EYES DRIFT TO THE LEDGER

I used to do this for your Dad, you know: rub the warmth back in. It's the only way. If you stick your hands straight in front of the fire, you get chilblains and you really don't want that. Give us t'other one. There. Get the blood flowing again. You've got soft hands, lass, compared to your Dad.

Rina: Yeah, well, give me twenty years or so.

LEAH DOES NOT RESPOND

That was a joke.

LEAH OPENS RINA'S HAND AND KISSES THE PALM

Leah: I'm sorry, love.

Rina: S'alright.

Leah: If Ben were here...

Rina: Well, he's not, is he? And I am.

Leah: He can't just come back, you know that.

Rina: Yeah, he made sure he got out in time, didn't he?

Leah: He couldn't possibly have known, Rina. You sign up for a tour of duty, and you're committed - you have to be.

Rina: Hph. Funny idea of duty.

Leah: Rina...

Rina: I know, I know. But it's still not fair.

Leah: Come here.

SHE HUGS RINA, WHO SEES THE FIGURES OVER LEAH'S SHOULDER

Rina: Mam?

Leah: Yeah?

Rina: Is this right?

Leah: What?

Rina: This – these figures.

Leah: (GETTING UP AND CLOSING THE BOOK) You weren't meant to see them.

Rina: Well, I have now. You might as well tell me.

Leah: What do you want to know?

Rina: Is it as bad as that?

Leah: It's not great, love.

Rina: I don't understand.

Leah: You know when your Dad died, we sold some of the flock to Jacob Darke.

Rina: Because you and Granddad couldn't cope with so many.

Leah: Partly. But there were costs too...the funeral, unpaid bills... and now...

Rina: Now you and Granddad can't help, we've had to sell more. I know.

Leah: Yes.

Rina: But at least that means we've got the money from the sale.

SILENCE

Doesn't it?

Leah: Turns out there were debts too.

Rina: Debts?

Leah: Your Dad was still paying off the top pasture. I didn't know.

Rina: Why didn't he tell you?

Leah: Because, love, he didn't know that he wasn't going to be around to take care of it – to take care of us.

Rina: So now we've got to take care of ourselves.

Leah: We have, yeah.

Rina: But we can't, can we? Granddad can't take care of himself.

Leah: Not these days, no. So we have to try and make ends meet and keep things working, and if that means me looking after your Granddad, and you taking on the flock – well, it's not what I'd choose, but we're stuck with it.

Rina: Stuck with it? You said it was just for a few weeks, 'til we got help!

Leah: We can't afford help.

Rina: Mam!

Leah: I'm sorry.

Rina: But what about college?

Leah: What can I do? I've got no choice!

Rina: And if you did have?

Leah: Oh, Rina...

Rina: Go on!

Leah: I wouldn't choose any of this, obviously! I'd choose to have your Dad back – sitting in that chair and dropping mud all over the floor while he cleans his boots. I'd choose to be slicing an onion and wondering when you'll be home from college and then for you to burst in bringing all your chatter and news and chucking your books all over the shop, and I'd choose a field full of sheep, all warm and steamy-breathed, and I'd choose a bed that's not lonely and a good meal in my belly, and I'd choose not to be tired and worried, all the time, and –

RINA SNIFFS AND WIPES HER EYES. PAUSE

Rina: It's never going to be like that again, is it?

Leah: No, love.

Rina: We're never going to be like that again. Not you, not me, not Granddad.

Leah: Certainly not him.

Rina: Mam!

SILENCE

Leah: Well, there's no point pretending.

RINA GIVES LEAH AN APPALLED LOOK, AND LEAVES

She doesn't understand – why should she? I hope she never understands. All those years you spend teaching your child everything you know, but there are some things you pray to God they never learn. If I told her what it's like – really like, most of the time...

SIMEON WAKES SUDDENLY AND STARTS SHOUTING

Simeon: RUTH! RUTH!!

Leah: Sssh, Dad, it's all right. You've just woken up a bit fast.

SHE GOES TO SOOTHE HIM. HE PUSHES HER AWAY VIOLENTLY

Simeon: Get off me! Get off! I don't know who you are!

Leah: It's me, Dad, Leah.

Simeon: Where's Ruth?

Leah: She's not here.

Simeon: Why not? What have you done with her?

Leah: Dad! Dad, Look at me.

SHE HOLDS HIS FACE IN FRONT OF HER OWN. INITIALLY, HE IS TERRIFIED. THEN SLOWLY RECOGNITION DAWNS

Simeon: Leah!

Leah: Yes. It's me, Dad.

Simeon: Where am I?

Leah: It's all right, you're at home. You just got a bit confused. You're fine now.

Simeon: Yes...yes.

Leah: See? You just needed to wake up properly. There!

Simeon: Where's your mother? She'll know what's going on.

Leah: She's not here, Dad.

Simeon: Why not? Where is she?

Leah: Um... She's not been here for a long time.

Simeon: Did she say where she was going?

Leah: No.

Simeon: When's she coming back?

Leah: Look, why don't we go for some fresh air?

Simeon: I don't want fresh air. I want Ruth. When's she coming back?

Leah: Give me a couple of minutes to sort things out, and then we'll go.

SHE LEAVES

Simeon: Wait! Wait!!

PAUSE. HE MUTTERS TO HIMSELF

She does this. Gets things all...messed up. It's a simple enough question, isn't it? Where's your mother? But there's no straight answers with...with...that one. It's always fresh air and - and - woollen...arm-trousers, and round the houses...round and round...the garden... I had a small one once. Fat little hands.

HE PICKS UP LEAH'S KNITTING, WHICH IS LYING NEARBY. HE PULLS THE NEEDLE OUT OF THE ROW OF STITCHES, AND THEN STARTS PULLING THE LOOSE THREAD OF WOOL, MESMERISED AS HE SLOWLY UNRAVELS THE KNITTING. UNDER HIS BREATH HE IS MUTTERING:

Yan, tan, tether, methere, pip, azer, sezar, akker, conter, dick, yanadick, tanadick, tetheradick, methereadick...

Leah: (ENTERING) Here you go, Dad, I've got your cardigan. Now let's go for a walk.

SHE STOPS IN HER TRACKS, SEEING WHAT HE IS DOING

Oh, Dad...

HE LOOKS UP AT HER

LX FADE

Scene five

OPEN MIC NIGHT. BRIGHT SPOTLIGHT SUDDENLY UP ON RINA STANDING IN FRONT OF A STAND MIC. SHE IS NERVOUS. SFX FEEDBACK. SHE WAITS FOR A CUE, AND RECEIVES IT

Rina: So, I was looking for Granddad the other day, and when I found him, he was wandering around the living room. 'What you doing, Granddad?', I asked him, and he pulled out his toothbrush and said 'Someone's pinched the basin. I can't find it anywhere.' So I take him to the bathroom, and stand him in front of the basin, and he says 'After you.' So I say 'It's all right, I've already brushed mine', and he says 'Not you - him.' And he points to the mirror in front of him 'Let that poor old bloke go first. Look, he's even got his toothbrush out ready.' So I say 'He's a handsome chap, don't you think?' and Granddad says 'No. He's let himself go. And brushing his teeth's not going to make much difference, is it?'

BLACKOUT

Time Check 3

EARLY MORNING. LEAH SITS WITH A MUG OF TEA, AND READS FROM THE NOTEBOOK. AN ENVELOPE LIES ON THE TABLE

Leah: Spring. Pregnant ewes to low pasture and barns. Twin lamb disease: 187 dead; 195, 176 treated successfully. Lambing – six weeks. More gimmers than tups. 188, 192, 177 – twin lambs. 193 (shearling) – lamb's leg broken by mother. Splinted. Late snow. 4 lambs dead – frozen.

Scene six

SIMEON ENTERS

Simeon: Morning, love.

HE KISSES THE TOP OF HER HEAD

Leah: Oh, hello, Dad. Sit down. I'll get you a cup of tea.

Simeon: I can do it.

Leah: No – you've got a letter. Here. I'll sort your tea.

Simeon: Looks like it's from Matthew. Wonder why he didn't just pick up the phone.

HE OPENS IT. SILENCE FOR A WHILE AS HE READS AND LEAH BANGS ABOUT WITH TEA

Leah: Well?

Simeon: It's from the Chapel elders.

Leah: Oh?

Simeon: Thanking me for my faithful service over so many years.

SILENCE

Don't know why they've chosen now to thank me.

HE READS SOME MORE. LEAH PUTS A MUG DOWN IN FRONT OF HIM, SITS AND TAKES HIS HAND

Leah: Dad?

Simeon: I mean, I don't do it for thanks.

Leah: What else does it say?

Simeon: Oh, I don't know. Something about changes to the preaching rota. I've not got my diary on me right now.

Leah: I don't think you'll need your diary, Dad. Look again.

Simeon: It's just the same as normal.

Leah: Please look.

Simeon: All right. Well... Hold up...I can't see... There must be some kind of mistake. I'm not on here.

Leah: Dad...

Simeon: I don't understand.

Leah: I think the elders feel that maybe -

Simeon: Yes?

Leah: Well, that you might not be -

Simeon: What? Up to it any more? Is that what you're saying? Is that what this is saying?

Leah: No. Only that...you might...need a break from it.

Simeon: A break? I don't remember the prophet Isaiah taking a break!

Leah: It just seems to be getting harder for you.

Simeon: It's not supposed to be easy! Since when has listening to the Lord and speaking truth to his people been easy?

Leah: Dad, don't make this more difficult than it has to be.

Simeon: You knew about this?

Leah: Matthew spoke to me about it, yes.

Simeon: And what did you say?

Leah: I said it would break your heart. (PAUSE) But that I was sure you would accept the prayerful decision of the elders.

Simeon: So that's it, then.

Leah: I'm so sorry, Dad.

Simeon: Thirty-nine year, and it's 'Thank you for your faithful service'.

HE LOOKS AT HER. SHE CAN THINK OF NOTHING TO SAY

I think I'll go for some fresh air.

HE LEAVES

Scene seven

KNIT AND NATTER

Leah: 'I don't know, Sue. I'm not sure when it started. Maybe even before Nate died.' Were there any warning signs, she asks. 'Not that I noticed at the time. Maybe just...not being quite himself. There were moments when he seemed to go blank; as if he was switching off from things that used to make him light up. And then, after Nate died, I was too deep in my own grief to see what was really going on. And when I did notice, I just thought he was grieving too. You know what it's like, grief.' She does – Sue: her grandson died a few years back. Only eleven – I don't know how she got through it. 'It's that feeling of being stuck. You daren't look back, 'cause it's too painful. And you daren't look forward, 'cause it's terrifying. So there you are, stuck in the present. Trapped. And it's not a good place to be. Of course, nothing else stops, so eventually you get pushed on, whether you're ready for it or not. But not Dad. He's still...stuck somewhere. And I don't think it's about Nate – not any more. Not for him.' She doesn't say anything then. She just looks at me.

SHE MOVES BACK INTO THE SPACE AND PUTS DOWN HER CUP

Scene eight

RINA ENTERS, DRESSED FOR CHAPEL

Leah: Are you all set, love?

Rina: Yeah. I thought you'd be ready by now. It's ten past. Where's Granddad?

Leah: I'll go and chivvy him along. See if you can find his bible, will you?

SHE LEAVES. RINA GOES THROUGH A PILE OF BOOKS, BUT IS DISTRACTED BY A SCRAPBOOK

Rina: Granddad made me this when I was learning to read. 'The Shepherd's Alphabet'.

It's full of curious facts, folklore, animal husbandry, wisdom. It's full of him, I suppose. (SHE IMITATES HIM) 'T is for teeth. A sheep's teeth start to wear after it's about four year old. After that, it's called a...' And he'd wait. 'Broken Mouth Ewe - B!' I'd say, (HIM) 'And then? When they're all gone?' (HER) 'A Gummer! G!' He was so proud when I learned it so fast. 'We've got ourselves a shepherd here, right enough', he used to say, 'She loves sheep. Loves 'em! Just look at her with that book.' But it wasn't the sheep I loved - it was the words.

I mean - R: rigwelter. How can you not fall in love with a word like that? (HIM) 'Ah. Now that is a very serious matter. When a sheep's rigweltered, it means she's rolled onto her back, and she can't get up again. You may laugh, young 'un, but if you don't get to her sharpish, she'll get all het up, and die faster than you'd think. So you have to roll her over and calm her down and hold on to her 'til she's got her balance back.'

Anything I do know about sheep, I know because of this - and him. Dad used to take me out with him sometimes, but we never talked about sheep. We talked about books. He understood, y'see. Sometimes we didn't even talk, he'd just let me sit with my back up against a tree, reading, for hours at a time. 'Our secret', he called it.

Only now it's just my secret. And I can't ever tell, because they need me to be the shepherd they think I am.

LEAH ENTERS

Leah: You're going to have to go without us today.

Rina: What?

Leah: Your Granddad says he won't go.

Rina: Won't go to chapel?

Leah: He's still hurt about being taken off the preaching rota.

Rina: But not going at all... He's never missed chapel before.

Leah: I know.

Rina: Not once.

Leah: You don't have to tell me!

Rina: Have you tried to persuade him?

Leah: Not really, no.

Rina: Mam!

Leah: What's the point? He'll get over it.

Rina: You think?

Leah: Well, he won't remember will he?

Rina: That's a bit harsh.

Leah: I'm just being realistic.

Rina: So are you not coming either?

Leah: How can I? I can't leave your Granddad on his own.

SIMEON ENTERS. HE IS WEARING HIS UNDERPANTS OVER HIS PYJAMA BOTTOMS, A SLEEVELESS SWEATER ON BACK TO FRONT (WITH NOTHING UNDERNEATH), AND A FLOWERY SHOWER CAP

Simeon: (TO RINA) Good morning, beautiful.

Rina: Morning, Granddad. Well! You got yourself dressed, I see. Are you saving the world today?

Simeon: Might be. Thought I'd lost my...on the head...
Lid -

Leah: Cap.

Simeon: But then I found it. In the bathroom, for some reason.

Leah: Maybe you don't need it inside, eh?

SHE TAKES IT OFF HIM

Simeon: Leave it where I can see it. I'll be wanting it when I go out later. It might rain.

Leah: If it does, this'll be just the cap for it.

Rina: You sure you don't want to come to chapel?

Simeon: I'm not going there.

Rina: I'll go with you.

Simeon: No. Here.

HE OPENS A SMALL TIN AND TAKES OUT A COUPLE OF COINS

Put that in the box for me, will you?

Rina: Course I will.

SHE KISSES HIM, AND LEAVES, TURNING TO SAY

You could listen to the radio - there'll be a service on, I'm sure.

EXIT

Leah: That's an idea, isn't it?

SHE TURNS THE RADIO ON. AN EASTER HYMN PLAYS

How's that, Dad? One of your favourites. Let's get you sorted, eh? Here - I'll take these (SHE REMOVES THE UNDERPANTS), and how about a cardigan? It's a bit chilly.

SHE SETTLES HIM IN A CHAIR, AND POTTERS IN AND OUT. SIMEON SITS, JOINING IN WITH THE HYMN INTERMITTENTLY AND WORRYING THE CHAIR WITH HIS FINGERS. THEN HE SEES A BOOK, PICKS IT UP, AND CAREFULLY TEARS OUT THE PAGES ONE BY ONE, LETTING THEM DRIFT TO THE FLOOR

LEAH SEES WHAT HE HAS BEEN DOING

Leah: Oh, Dad, no...

SHE TAKES THE BOOK OUT OF HIS HAND

This is one of Nate's. One of his poetry books. (TRYING TO CONTAIN HER ANGER AND FRUSTRATION)
Dad!

SHE STARTS GATHERING UP THE PAGES, TRYING TO PUT THEM BACK IN ORDER, MUTTERING PAGE NUMBERS. THIS CONTINUES AS SIMEON GOES TO THE RADIO AND STARTS TURNING THE VOLUME ON, OFF, ON, OFF REPEATEDLY. EVENTUALLY:

Can you stop that, Dad?

ON, OFF, ON, OFF, ON

Did you hear me Dad? Stop it.

ON, OFF, ON, OFF, ON

Leave the radio alone.

ON, OFF, ON

Dad!!

ON, OFF, ON, OFF, ON

(SHOUTING) FOR GOD'S SAKE WILL YOU JUST STOP IT!

SIMEON LOOKS AT HER, WOUNDED. LEAH TURNS THE RADIO OFF

Leah: I think that's enough of that, don't you?

Simeon: Where's Rina?

Leah: She's gone to chapel.

Simeon: But where is she?

Leah: At chapel.

Simeon: Who?

Leah: Rina.

Simeon: Where is she?

Leah: Chapel.

Simeon: Is it time?

Leah: She's already gone.

Simeon: Who?

Leah: Rina. To chapel.

Simeon: By herself?

Leah: She asked if you wanted to go. You said no.

Simeon: Go where?

Leah: To chapel.

Simeon: Is that where she's gone?

Leah: Yes.

Simeon: Where is she?

Leah: She's out, Dad.

Simeon: Where's Rina?

Leah: She'll be back soon.

Simeon: Who will? Ruth?

Leah: No. Rina.

Simeon: But where's Ruth?

THE PHONE RINGS. LEAH ANSWERS IT BRUSQUELY

Leah: Yes? What? Oh, Ben - sorry - hello.

Simeon: Ruth! I want Ruth!

Leah: Yeah, it's your Granddad.

Simeon: RUTH!

Leah: Oh, he's fine. It's just not a brilliant time, Ben... No, I'm not going to Chapel today...it's a long story.

SIMEON DROPS SOMETHING

Look, Can I call you later?... No, right, I see. Well, um...

Simeon: Who's that?

Leah: It's Ben.

Simeon: Who's Ben? WHO'S BEN?

Leah: Look, I'm sorry. Call me when you can - we might get lucky...Yup...Love you too. Bye.

SHE HANGS UP AND TURNS TO SIMEON

I tell you what, shall we get the lunch on, eh? So it's ready for when Rina comes back.

SHE FETCHES A BOWL OF CARROTS AND A PEELER, AND SITS SIMEON AT THE TABLE

I've got a nice bit of shoulder from the lamb we butchered last month. And potatoes. And carrots.

SHE HANDS HIM A CARROT

There you go. What do you think of that?

Simeon: That's a biggun. Are these ours, are they?

Leah: No. I've not had time to keep up with the veg patch since... well, it's all got a bit busy. These are from the greengrocers.

SHE STARTS PEELING THEM. SIMEON IS FASCINATED BY THE PEELINGS - PICKING THEM UP, LICKING THEM, STICKING THEM TO HIS FACE

(LAUGHING) What are you doing?

Simeon: Look at me.

Leah: I can see. What are you doing?

Simeon: What am I?

Leah: What are you? Um...a snail in a compost heap?

Simeon: Nope.

Leah: Er...a man with carrot peelings on his face?

Simeon: Nope. Listen.

Leah: What?

Simeon: Grrrrr.

LEAH STARTS TO GIGGLE UNCONTROLLABLY

A tiger. I'm a tiger!

Leah: (STILL GIGGLING) A tiger. Of course you are.

Simeon: Is it all right if I say something to the teapot?

Leah: Be my guest.

Simeon: (CONFIDENTIALLY, TO THE TEAPOT) You do a very good job. Just thought you should know it's appreciated.

LEAH BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. SIMEON IS DELIGHTED

Is that funny?

Leah: Yes, it is! Very funny!

Simeon: You're laughing! (HE STARTS LAUGHING TOO. THEN ADDRESSES THE TEAPOT AGAIN) I made her laugh!

LIGHTS FADE

Scene nine

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Rina: So, I was looking for Granddad the other night, and when I found him, he was in the barn. 'What you doing, Granddad?', I asked him, and he said 'I can't get to sleep. I'm counting sheep.' So I said 'Granddad, you're meant to count the sheep in your head.' And he says 'There aren't any sheep in my head - they're in the barn, so I have to come in here to count them, don't I?' And then I notice he's got a pair of Mam's tights wrapped round his shoulders. 'What are those for?', I ask, and he says 'To keep the crocodiles away.' 'Oh, right', I say. 'Is it working?' 'Well, I haven't seen any so far,' says Granddad. And he grins.

BLACKOUT

Time Check 4

LEAH READS FROM THE NOTEBOOK

Leah: Summer. Wall-mending. Gathering for clipping. Clipping. Dipping. 193, 186 - fly strike. Treated with antibiotics. Cutting hay in the high pasture. 176 - disappeared - suspect stolen. Baling hay. 189 and 175 stale - moved to upper pasture.

Scene ten

SIMEON STARES OUT OF THE WINDOW. RINA READS A BOOK

Simeon: Come on. Come on.

Rina: He does this a lot these days – staring out of the window. Pawing at it. It drives Mam mad – she says it’s like when I was small – mucky fingerprints everywhere.

Simeon: How long? Oh Lord, how long?

Rina: Sometimes he licks his fingers, then smears them over the window. Sometimes he just licks the window. I haven’t told Mam that – need to know basis, I reckon, and that’s something she really doesn’t need to know.

Simeon: Come. Come...

Rina: He’s unraveling inside now – like the sleeve of an old sweater – stitch by stitch by stitch, and you can’t push it together again; you’re just left with a tangle of wool, the same colour and texture as the sweater, but without any kind of shape.

Simeon: When will it come?

Rina: It’s all right, Granddad.

Simeon: But when will it come?

Rina: When will what come?

Simeon: I need to find it.

HE MAKES TO LEAVE

Rina: Hey hey hey! Where do you think you’re going?

Simeon: Out.

Rina: You can't go out, Granddad, you've got your slippers on.

HE TAKES THEM OFF

Simeon: There. Now out.

Rina: No. Not out.

Simeon: Out!

Rina: What would Mam say?

Simeon: She can stuff it – silly cow.

Rina: Granddad!

Simeon: Out!

Rina: Put your slippers back on again.

Simeon: I want my boots. I don't want slippers. Boots.

Rina: It's not happening, Granddad. Just put your slippers back on, eh?

Simeon: Boots! Boots!!

Rina: Here – I'll give you a hand.

Simeon: Not slippers! Not bloody slippers!

HE THROWS THEM

Rina: All right! Steady! I 'spose you don't have to wear them if you really don't want to.

Simeon: Too bloody right.

Rina: We need a swearbox for you these days, don't we?

Simeon: Have one yourself.

Rina: Not such a bad idea! You know what, Granddad? It's just as well sheep don't tell tales. One took a run at me the other day – knocked me clean off my feet.

Simeon: (LAUGHING) Chuffing sheep...

Rina: I think I said something worse than that. It wasn't pretty.

Simeon: You are.

Rina: I am what, Granddad?

Simeon: (STROKING HER AFFECTIONATELY) Pretty. Always so pretty.

Rina: Oh, don't go all soppy on me. Here – make yourself useful. This lot needs sorting. Put the socks together – yes?

Simeon: Socks.

SHE GIVES HIM A LAUNDRY BASKET CONTAINING PATTERNED SOCKS

Rina: Put them together. In pairs.

Simeon: Apples and pears, up the stairs.

Rina: Something like that.

HE TAKES THE BASKET BACK TO THE WINDOW, AND STARES OUT AGAIN

See? He's at it again. Staring and waiting. Who knows what for? (TO SIMEON) What you waiting for, Granddad?

Simeon: Waiting.

Rina: Yes. (TO AUDIENCE) It could be anything: Mam, Grandma – nevermind that she's been dead for years, the postman, the sheep coming down, a

bus going past, the first autumn leaf, who knows?

PAUSE

At least Mam knows what she's waiting for. She won't admit it, of course, not even to herself, but when she does the accounts, I know what she's really doing.

SIMEON STARTS MAKING A SLOW PROGRESS AROUND THE ROOM, CAREFULLY PLACING SOCKS IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS

What are you up to, Granddad?

Simeon: There they are.

Rina: She's figuring out how much longer we can go on like this, and then wondering if that's going to be long enough. Blaming him for still being here...blaming herself for thinking that way. Not saying anything, of course, so she thinks I don't know. Maybe she thinks I haven't got my own share of guilt, but I have. Like when I try to keep up with my reading just in case – one day – I can get back to college. And then I realise that's just selfish, and then I feel like an awful person. You'd think Granddad just being the way he is would be the worst thing, but it's not. We might not like what he's becoming, but we don't much like what we're becoming either.

SHE GESTURES TO THE SOCKS, WHICH ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE

I thought you were putting them in pairs?

Simeon: It's not time yet.

Rina: Why not?

Simeon: Not rounding up time, yet. Look at that one – always down near the gully.

Rina: Is it?

Simeon: Never comes when I call. Right beggar.

Rina: Oh, I see! Are these sheep, are they?

Simeon: Long time ago.

Rina: (PICKING UP A SOCK) A very long time ago.
Baaaa!

SIMEON JOINS IN – THEY PLAY WITH THE SOCKS BEING SHEEP FOR A WHILE, BLEATING AND NIBBLING. THEN SIMEON SITS IN A CAREFULLY SELECTED SPOT

SUDDENLY, A SOCK SHEEP APPEARS, STUCK IN THE CLEFT OF SIMEON'S ELBOW. HE MAKES IT BLEAT PLAINATIVELY

Simeon: Baaaa! Baaaaaa!

Rina: Oh! You made me jump, Granddad. Come on – let's get these socks sorted.

Simeon: Stuck. Stuck.

Rina: It's fine. I'll get it off for you.

Simeon: No! Stuck! Head stuck!

Rina: That's your hand, not your head. Here.

SHE PULLS THE SOCK OFF SIMEON'S HAND

Simeon: No! Hold it. Hold it in my own two hands.

Rina: (HOLDING IT OUT TO HIM) There you go. You hold it.

Simeon: (WITH SUDDEN CLARITY) Not the sock, lass.

Rina: What then?

Simeon: In my own two hands. What he said.

Rina: Who?

Simeon: Him!

Rina: I don't know who you're talking about. Sorry.

SIMEON PLACES HIS HANDS ON HER SHOULDERS, IN
THE MANNER OF THE ANGEL

Oh... Is that what you're waiting for?

Simeon: 'You won't see death until you've held your -
your...'

Rina: Salvation -

Simeon: That's it. In my own two hands.

Rina: But what does it mean, Granddad? How can you
hold that?

HE SHAKES HIS HEAD - AT A LOSS

Simeon: Out there - with the sheep. Take me, Rina.

Rina: Oh, Granddad...I'm not sure. What's Mam going to
say?

Simeon: I'm a shepherd, lass. I should be on
the...where...where the sky is.

Rina: Outside?

Simeon: Yes. Out sky.

Rina: She's not going to like it.

Simeon: Please.

SIMEON HOLDS HIS HAND OUT TO HER. SHE TAKES IT

Simeon: Shall we?

Rina: Not now! I'll ask.

SIMEON PULLS HER HAND SHARPLY AND SHE IS UP AGAINST HIM, AS IF DANCING

Oooh! Granddad!

Simeon: My lovely.

RINA GIGGLES

My beautiful Ruth.

Rina: Now just a minute, Granddad, I'm not...oh, never mind.

SIMEON IS SWAYING

You want to dance?

SIMEON CARRIES ON SWAYING. RINA PUTS THE RADIO ON. THEY DANCE TOGETHER, UNTIL:

Rina: All right. If you sort these socks out – put them in pairs – I'll talk to Mam. Deal?

SIMEON KISSES HER. SHE LEAVES. THE MUSIC CONTINUES TO PLAY. SIMEON IS LEFT ALONE. THIS SHOULD NOT BE RUSHED. HE GOES TO THE WINDOW. LOOKS OUT. WANDERS AROUND A LITTLE. SPOTS A SOCK, AND REMEMBERS HE HAS A TASK. CAREFULLY SEEKS OUT ANOTHER SOCK TO MAKE A PAIR, SELECTING – WITH IMMENSE SATISFACTION – A COMPLETE MISMATCH. THIS CONTINUES UNTIL HE PICKS UP THE NOTEBOOK AND READS:

Time Check 5

Simeon: Autumn. Ewes 175... Lambs and ewes. 16..., flystrike, tret. Tups shown to ewes... Wethers. Feeding for fat. Late Autumn. Wethers to slaughter. Weather...wet weather. Get foot rot. Lambs and ewes. You...you...if you were the only girl in the world...

Winter. Hay the sheep. Ewes dead. The snow done that. Snow. Late winter - late. Nate. Nate...

HE OPENS THE FRONT OF THE BOOK

'Nathaniel Cammish. High Top Farm'

HE TURNS A PAGE BACK

'Simeon Bell. High Top Farm.'

HE FROWNS

Scene eleven

KNIT AND NATTER

Leah: I've skipped a few Wednesdays. It's harder to get away these days. So when Liz from the Post Office says 'You've missed it', I assume she means I've missed some kind of Knit and Natter...event. Whatever that might be. But no. The last posting date, she says. 'For what?'. She looks at me. Christmas. 'Christmas?' She thought I'd be sending something to Ben, but maybe he's coming home, is he? 'No. No he's not. I've missed it? Oh, I could kick myself! I've just...you know, I'm a very organised person usually, but this year... Well, last year too, obviously...' She says she understands. Sue steps in and tries to help. What are my plans? 'For

Christmas? I haven't really thought.' It's always hard, she says, Christmas, but at least it's not the first. 'Oh, it's not that. I mean, of course, it will be hard, I know, but I'm really thinking about Dad. It depends on how he's doing, you see, and it's impossible to know from one day to the next.' Then there's a tiny pause and Liz says why don't we go to hers for Christmas dinner. 'Oh, that's very kind, but really - ' And she stops me, and says it's such a pity we've not been to chapel lately, but maybe, with it being Christmas, Dad could make the effort, and then we could come on to hers. So I spill my coffee.

SHE DROPS HER CUP

Oh no! It's all right, there wasn't much left...

SHE PULLS A TISSUE OUT OF HER SLEEVE AND MOPS AT THE SPILLAGE

I just had to stop her. And I couldn't trust myself to say anything - well, nothing civil. Dropping my coffee seemed the only way to shut her up. I'm not sure the talking's helping, really.

SHE RE-ENTERS THE SPACE

Scene twelve

SIMEON DOZES IN THE CHAIR. RINA ENTERS, MID-CONVERSATION

Rina: Will you at least think about it?

Leah: (ENTERING WITH A BOX OF CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS, WHICH SHE PROCEEDS TO HANG UP) I don't need to. Why are we even talking about this yet again?

Rina: You know why.

Leah: Look, Rina, if you need me to tell you the reasons why it's a bad idea -

Rina: I don't! I do understand!

Leah: Then why are you pushing it?

Rina: Because he doesn't understand.

Leah: Exactly. And that's why he's a liability. It's a full time job just trying to keep track of him in the house. How are you going to manage out there with eighty sheep?

Rina: What are you doing, Mam?

Leah: Making an effort. Take that. Deck the halls.

SHE HANDS HER ONE END OF A TINSEL GARLAND

Rina: With strings of tinsel?

Leah: Best I can manage.

Rina: It's not right, him being cooped up here. It's like he's trapped.

Leah: I know the feeling.

Rina: He's desperate, Mam!

Leah: He's desperate? I'M DESPERATE!

SIMEON WAKES AND JOINS IN WITH THE SHOUTING,
USING A SHEEP CALL. LEAH AND RINA STOP SHORT
AND SPOT HIM

Simeon: HEY HEY HEY HAAAAAY!

Rina: Granddad!

Simeon: HEY HEY HEY HAAAAAY!

Leah: Stop shouting. We're inside. We don't need to
call the sheep.

Simeon: HEY HEY –

Leah: STOP SHOUTING!

Simeon: You're shouting.

Leah: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I've stopped.

Simeon: I want to go with Rina.

Leah: I know.

Simeon: You said you'd ask.

Rina: I have, Granddad. That's why we're talking about
it.

Simeon: She's not talking – she's shouting.

Leah: I've apologised, Dad. More than once.

Simeon: Well?

Leah: Well, what?

Simeon: When am I going?

Leah: I can't think about it right now.

Simeon: When?

Leah: I've said I haven't got time!

Simeon: You've got time. Not me. Time's up for me.

Leah: Oh, Dad...

Rina: Let him come. I'm sure it'll be all right, Mam.

Leah: Are you? Are you really sure? I sometimes think you've got no more sense than him. You don't know what might happen. Anything could happen! What if one of the sheep gets into trouble? Are you going to go off after it and just leave your Granddad? Or abandon the flock because he goes wandering off goodness knows where? You don't know what might happen!

Rina: All right, I don't. You're right. But we'll manage. You can't...you can't write the script, Mam. It doesn't work that way.

Leah: All I am doing is trying my utmost to keep everyone safe, because apparently I am the only one who thinks about these things!

SIMEON IS TRYING TO PULL HIS TROUSERS OFF

Oh, for crying out loud, Dad! Pull your trousers up!

Simeon: No. I want them off.

LEAH TAKES A FIRM HOLD OF THEM, PREVENTING THIS

Leah: Dad, no. Let go. Let go now.

Simeon: I'm too hot.

Leah: No. There are limits, Dad. I won't have you wandering around with no trousers on.

SIMEON SLAPS HER ARM. NOT TOO HARD

Ow! What do you think you're doing?

Simeon: I don't know you.

HE DOES IT AGAIN. HARDER

Leah: No. Stop.

AND AGAIN

You're hurting me, Dad.

Simeon: Don't call me that!

HE SLAPS HER FACE – HARD. SHE GASPS AND TURNS AWAY

Bitch.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM. THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE. SILENCE

Rina: Come on, Granddad. I could do with a cup of tea. How about you?

SENSING LEAH'S DISTRESS, SIMEON REACHES OUT AND STROKES HER CHEEK

Simeon: Don't be sad.

RINA AND SIMEON EXIT. LEAH SINKS INTO A CHAIR. CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS LIE FORLORNLY ALL AROUND

Leah: Sad! It's so unfair – all of this. It seems only yesterday that Nate was still alive, and Rina and Ben were bairns, and Dad was...still Dad, and everything was just normal. We had a life. And I didn't appreciate any of it. And now look at us... (PAUSE) No-one's to blame, I know that, but somehow I still end up punishing everyone. This can't be it, can it? Surely, surely, something will change. It has to. (PAUSE) Though God knows what.

Scene thirteen

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Rina: So, I was looking for Granddad the other day,
and –

LONG PAUSE

I was looking for him, and... and I couldn't find him. There was a man sitting in his chair, wearing his glasses. He had Granddad's hands and the same broken veins on his cheeks as Granddad has, and he took out his handkerchief and wiped his nose the way Granddad does. But it wasn't Granddad. Not any more. I'd lost him. I'd taken my eye off him for a moment, and he'd slipped away – just disappeared while I'd been distracted. He's gone now, because I wasn't paying attention. And I don't know if he'll be back.

SIMEON APPEARS AS IF ON THE HILLSIDE. STARS.
LOW-LEVEL SFX: NIGHT, OCCASIONAL BLEATS / OWL
CALLS ETC.

Simeon: Yan, tan, tether, mether, pip, azer, sezar,
akker, conter, dick, yanadick, tanadick,
tetheradick, metheradick...

THE LIGHTS FADE, LEAVING THE STARS AND NIGHT-
TIME SFX

INTERVAL

ACT 2

Scene one

LOW-LEVEL SFX THROUGHOUT: NIGHT, OCCASIONAL BLEATS / OWL CALLS ETC. RINA AND SIMEON ARE WRAPPED UP IN THEIR COATS & HATS, RECLINING AGAINST A ROCK ON THE HILLSIDE, COUNTING THE STARS

Simeon: Yan, tan, tether mether, pip -

Rina: Azer, sezar, akker, conter, dick -

Simeon: Yanadick, tanadick, tetheradick, metheradick, and...

Rina: I'm not saying it!

Simeon: Go on!

Rina: No!

Simeon: Why not?

Rina: You know why not!

Simeon: (RIGHT IN HER EAR) BUMFIT!

SHE SCREAMS WITH LAUGHTER

Rina: We never did get past 15, did we?

Simeon: I don't know, there was nowt funny about it when my Dad taught me. It's just the old way of counting sheep.

Rina: Well, things have changed, Granddad. These days we stick to 1,2,3.

Simeon: And where's the fun in that, eh?

THEY LOOK AT THE SKY IN SILENCE FOR A MOMENT

The longer you look, the more you see.

Rina: You think it's just one or two to start off with, and then, you keep looking and it's like there's no room for sky left – just stars.

SILENCE

Look! Shooting star! There!

Simeon: Maybe it's trying to find some space.

Rina: Are you cold, Granddad?

Simeon: No. Toasty warm.

Rina: Really?

Simeon: I'm not giving you any excuse to take me back to the... to the...behind the door.

Rina: I didn't mean that. I just wondered if you wanted some cocoa. I brought a flask.

Simeon: Maybe in a bit.

SILENCE

Ey-up. A new one.

Rina: Like you say, the longer you look, the more you see.

Simeon: Up there.

Rina: Hey, you're right. I've never seen that one before.

Simeon: Fat star.

Rina: It is a bit...like it's shoving all the others out of the way.

Simeon: (SHOVING HER PLAYFULLY) Geroff!

Rina: (SHOVING HIM BACK) No, you geroff!

Simeon: (SHOVING HER AGAIN) No, you geroff!

Rina: (SINGING) Oh-ohhh...

Both: Star of wonder, star of night

Star with royal beauty bright

Westward leading, still proceeding

Guide us to thy perfect light.

Simeon: Lovely.

Rina: Shall we have that cocoa?

Simeon: Aye.

SHE GETS OUT A FLASK AND A COUPLE OF MUGS,
POURING AS THEY TALK

You go sometimes.

Rina: I go?

Simeon: I've seen you. Out the window.

Rina: There's not much gets past you, is there,
staring out of that window all day?

Simeon: You go.

HE SLURPS HIS COCOA LOUDLY

Is it a boy?

Rina: A boy?! No.

Simeon: Where then?

Rina: I just go somewhere and...talk.

Simeon: Who to?

Rina: Um...lots of people. A room full of people,
actually.

Simeon: What room?

Rina: It's the back bar at the Crown.

Simeon: The Crown Inn?

Rina: That's right.

Simeon: What do you talk about?

Rina: You, mostly.

Simeon: Give over.

Rina: I do. There's something called Open Mic Night.

Simeon: Mike Knight? Do I know him?

Rina: No – it's mic for microphone. You can stand in front of a microphone and talk about...well...anything you like, really. And I like talking about you.

Simeon: Give over.

Rina: No, really. I call it 'Looking for Granddad'. I do it to remember.

Simeon: P'raps I should try it. What are you remembering?

Rina: Oh, you know. How brilliant you are.

Simeon: How does it go?

Rina: You want me to show you?

Simeon: Aye.

Rina: Well, (GETTING TO HER FEET) I might say something like... So, I was looking for Granddad the other day, and when I found him, he was by the front door, pushing slices of bread through the letterbox. 'What you doing, Granddad?', I asked. 'I think the toaster's broken', he said, 'I keep putting bread in but it's not popping up.'

SIMEON LAUGHS

Simeon: I didn't do that!

Rina: You did!

Simeon: No...you're making it up!

Rina: If you say so.

Simeon: Do they like it?

Rina: They seem to.

Simeon: I like it. It makes me feel like I'm still here.

Rina: You are still here.

Simeon: Sometimes I'm not so sure. So, do you think I can have a go?

Rina: Of course you can!

SIMEON GETS TO HIS FEET

Simeon: How does it go again?

Rina: So, I was looking for Granddad the other day -

Simeon: The other day -

Rina: I was looking for Granddad -

Simeon: I was looking for...him...this one -

Rina: And when I found him, he was -

Simeon: I found him, and he was... I was...

Rina: What were you doing?

Simeon: I was lambing.

Rina: Were you?

Simeon: Aye. I love lambing. Best time of the year.
Hard, mind.

Rina: Hard work?

Simeon: Lambs don't care whether it's day or night. They
come when they will. I think that ewe's got one
on the way.

Rina: Which one?

Simeon: This one here. She's wandered off by herself.
It's always a sign.

Rina: How's she doing?

Simeon: I'll have a feel.

HE REACHES INSIDE AN IMAGINARY SHEEP

Rina: Hang on a minute.

SHE OPENS THE NECK OF HER BACKPACK, AND PLACES
IT AROUND SIMEON'S HAND

Well?

Simeon: He's round the wrong way. I'll see if I can turn
him. Come on, then. Just a bit more...

Rina: Is it working?

Simeon: I think so. Aye. There we go. Are you ready?

Rina: Um...yeah.

Simeon: 'Cause he'll come quite fast.

SWIFTLY BUT CAREFULLY, SIMEON DRAWS A SWEATER
OUT OF THE BAG, AND PLACES IT IN RINA'S ARMS

There we are. The cord's already broken, that's grand. Just make sure his nose and mouth are clear.

Rina: How do I do that?

Simeon: Give his nose a little tickle with a piece of grass if he's not breathing.

Rina: Really?

Simeon: Makes 'em sneeze, then they're fine. Let's see.

SIMEON TAKES THE 'LAMB'

Oh, aye, he's doing well. Good size too.
Ah...look at that.

Rina: What am I looking at, Granddad?

Simeon: That little split in his lip – it's so, when he's older, he can pick the tastiest leaves off a bush, one leaf at a time.

Rina: Hm! Clever.

Simeon: Aye. Good design, that. Now, in a day or two, we'll dock his tail – stop him getting fly strike. But for now, I'll just tuck him in my coat to keep him warm. Don't want you getting... cold...nasty cold...hypochondria, do we?

Rina: No. And I don't want you getting hypothermia either. Do you want some more cocoa?

Simeon: Just a splash.

SHE POURS IT. THEY SETTLE DOWN TO REST, HER HEAD IN HIS LAP

Rina: Did you like being a shepherd, Granddad?

Simeon: Oh, aye.

Rina: You never wished you'd done something else?

SILENCE FOR A MOMENT

Simeon: That ewe there – the one with the broken...head stick.

Rina: Horn.

Simeon: Aye. She were born in the lea of the wall just down from the feed trough. She were a twin, but t'other one died. The first time she ran with the tup, she miscarried, but since then, she's been grand. Put her to 834 the last two year, and she's lambed well. Good stock, you see. Had staggers once, but apart from that... I shall be sad when she goes. Then again, maybe I won't be here to see it.

PAUSE

Rina: Do you know every sheep that well?

Simeon: If I didn't, I couldn't look 'em in the eye. Nor the auctioneer, or the butcher, or the bank manager. The reason I can stand tall is because of those sheep. You want to know the quality of a shepherd? Look at his flock. Or hers, lass.

Rina: Granddad, you know your angel?

Simeon: Aye.

Rina: Which tree was it?

Simeon: Oh, it's long gone. It were forty year ago.

Rina: I can't imagine waiting for something for forty years. It had better be worth it, eh?

Simeon: I've a feeling it will be, lass.

Rina: That star's still there.

Simeon: So it is.

Rina: (DROWSILY) Granddad?

Simeon: You catch a few winks, little Miss Clever. I'll keep a look out.

Rina: Tell me a story, Granddad.

Simeon: A story, eh? I'll tell you a true one, lass. My first lambing, I were about 8 year old. My Dad woke me up and wrapped me in a rug and sat me in the corner of the barn, on a hay bale. There was Mam, with a pile of old towels and a bucket of warm water, and my older brother, sleeves rolled up, breath hanging in the air. It weren't quiet, cause the sheep were making a right racket, but it were calm, concentrated, careful – like they all knew summat important were happening. I'd never seen owt being born before. I mean, I'd hidden jars of frogspawn under my bed, and I'd watched butterflies unfold themselves, but I'd never seen a creature labour and fight to make life. I'd never seen how that little floppy wet tangle of legs could find its feet and look about, and suddenly be with us, become part of our world – from nowhere, or that's how it seemed. Like magic. Magic: that's what it looked like from the corner of that barn.

But there was this one ewe in trouble. My Dad was doing his best to turn her lamb, and Mam was holding the ewe's head, and talking gently to her, but it were tough going, and in the end, the ewe fell on her side, and there was a big rush of blood, and she'd gone. And I buried my face in my knees so I didn't have to see. But a moment later, there was Mam, with a tiny lamb wrapped in a towel, and she put him in my arms, and she took my face in her hands and she said 'There will be death, son, but there will always be new life. Now, rub him gently, keep him warm, and I'll fetch him some milk.' And if it seemed like magic before, now it were like a miracle.

(TO RINA) That's sent you to sleep, eh, young 'un.

HE LOOKS AT THE SKY

Quiet now. Still. Like it's all waiting on summat. Stones and shrubs and sky - all waiting.

HE TALKS TO THE 'LAMB'

And you, eh? I know what you're waiting for: a bellyful of milk. How you doing, now, eh? Warmed up? I think so. Let's go see if we can find your mother, shall we? And we'll get young Rina out of the wind.

Come on, lass, up against the wall's better. I know just the spot.

HE HELPS RINA TO HER FEET AND LEADS HER OFF

Scene two

LEAH ENTERS, EXHAUSTED FROM RUNNING. BENDS OVER TO BREATHE. TAKES OUT HER BOTTLE OF WATER AND SWIGS

Leah: (SHOUTING) DAD! RINA?

SILENCE. SHE BURSTS INTO TEARS

This is hopeless. They could be anywhere. Oh God, Nate. I'm so tired. And frightened. And lonely. (PAUSE) And angry. And sick of coping. I don't want to cope. I don't want to manage everything brilliantly. I don't want to open up

at Knit and Natter. I don't want to take one day at a time any more. I'm fed up with smiling bravely and being hugged. I don't want people to be thoughtful. I don't want to be gentle with myself. I don't want invitations for quiet suppers. I don't want to have to be strong for Rina or Ben or Dad. I don't want to carry on. I want to stop. I want to howl. I want to scream 'where are you?' I want you.

HER CRYING OVERWHELMS HER SPEECH FOR A MOMENT

And where are you, God? Where are you right now? Where are you in the cold ashes of my life? And the cruelty of Dad's? Because if all you are is hollow promises and soapy words, then I'm done. Done!

SHE CRIES HERSELF TO SLEEP

Scene three

SIMEON WANDERS ON, STILL HOLDING THE LAMB AND SINGING SNATCHES OF O COME O COME, EMMANUEL. HE SPOTS LEAH, SITS DOWN NEXT TO HER AND STROKES HER HAIR

Simeon: Here she is. Little Miss Clever.

LEAH JERKS AWAKE

Ssshhh.

Leah: Dad?

Simeon: Who else would it be?

Leah: Oh, Dad. Thank God. Are you all right?

Simeon: Course I am.

SHE HUGS HIM

Careful.

Leah: Why? What have you got there?

Simeon: A lamb.

Leah: A lamb? Let me see. (SHE LOOKS, RELIEVED TO SEE A JUMPER) Oh, that's all right. Where's Rina?

Simeon: She's with the flock.

Leah: Come on, then.

Simeon: Not yet. He needs milk.

Leah: Dad...

Simeon: Milk.

Leah: Dad, it's not a sheep. It's -

Simeon: A lamb. I know. Now, have you got any milk?

Leah: No. Of course I haven't. Why would I have milk?

Simeon: You've got a bottle. (POINTING TO HER WATER BOTTLE)

Leah: But that's -

Simeon: Give it here.

HE TAKES THE BOTTLE AND FEEDS THE 'LAMB'

There now. How's that?

AS LEAH WATCHES HIM, A PENNY STARTS TO DROP

Leah: Is he drinking?

Simeon: Aye - look.

Leah: Hungry, eh?

Simeon: Or greedy. Do you want a go?

Leah: I'll just watch. See how it's done.

Simeon: They tug, you know - tug at the bottle. And they can be quite rough. I always say, I'm glad I'm not a sheep's tit.

LEAH SNORTS

Leah: He likes it, doesn't he?

Simeon: Oh, yes. Never yet found a lamb that doesn't like milk. Or a baby, come to that. Used to do this for you, little Miss Clever.

Leah: Did you?

Simeon: Oh, yes. Same bottle I used for the lambs. Made your Mam hopping mad.

Leah: I bet it did. I wish I could remember, Dad.

Simeon: Me too, love.

Leah: Well, you remember that!

Simeon: For now.

Leah: Dad...when you can't remember, do you know you can't?

Simeon: Sometimes. Like summat you've lost. Not coming back.

Leah: No. (PAUSE) I do miss our talks.

Simeon: Hm.

SILENCE

Put you through the sheep dip once, too.

Leah: You didn't!

Simeon: Never told your Mam. I had you under one arm, a lamb under t'other. Forgot which was which.

LEAH LAUGHS

Leah: She always said you tret people the same as sheep.

Simeon: No difference, really. Have to be to be nudged in the right direction or pulled away from what's no good for them.

Leah: Because you know best?

Simeon: Stubborn ones are the problem.

Leah: Are you talking about me?

Simeon: Rock hard, you.

Leah: I wonder where I get that from?

Simeon: There. He's finished up.

Leah: Oh, yes - that bottle's all gone.

Simeon: He's nodding off now.

SILENCE AS SIMEON IS LOST IN THE LAMB.
SUDDENLY:

Rina: (OFF) Granddad! GRANDDAD!

Leah: (SHOUTING) Over here, love!

Rina: Mam?

Leah: We're here!

RINA ENTERS

Rina: I'm sorry, Mam, I fell asleep.

Leah: It's all right.

Rina: Aren't you mad?

Leah: Apparently not. He's fine. And so are you, by the looks of things, so no harm done.

RINA HUGS LEAH GRATEFULLY

Rina: Thank you. He's still got that old sweater, then.

Leah: He thinks it's a lamb.

Rina: I know. He thinks he's still a shepherd.

Leah: Half the time he thinks I'm my mother and you're me. He thinks shoe polish is food and the butter's a bar of soap. He thinks he's 19 one day and 45 the next. Why wouldn't that sweater be a lamb?

Rina: If it makes sense to him...

Leah: Then never mind the facts? Is that what you're saying?

Rina: No. But maybe they shouldn't matter as much to us as he does. As much as that. Look at him.

Leah: (SIGHING) You're right - he looks happy. Clutching that old sweater! It's like he's been given something at last - and after losing so much.

Rina: I'm not going to tell him it's 100% acrylic. Are you?

Leah: I guess not.

Rina: Did you know that he can remember every detail of the life of every sheep in the flock?

Leah: Even now?

Rina: I know. I think there's stuff he doesn't understand in his head any more; but he knows it in his bones. As if he's found a new way of making sense of things.

Leah: And we're the ones who don't get it?

Rina: I found his bible the other day - you know he'd lost it back in the summer and was fretting about it? It was in the flowerbed by the gate.

Leah: Ohhh...

Rina: Do you know what he'd been doing? Pressing flowers between the pages. Bellflowers, columbines, daisies...

Leah: It must be completely ruined.

Rina: It is. But when I gave it to him, he was so delighted.

Leah: Just to get it back? Even in that state?

Rina: No - he didn't care about the bible. He found the flowers and he picked them up so delicately, and held them up to the light and turned them over in his hands, and it was worship - not thumping out a hymn in chapel, or

reading the lesson, just wondering at the beauty of a flower. And I thought, he doesn't need that book, those words any more. That's not where he finds life. What he used to find in there...he's got new ways now of knowing, of feeling. He's been given new ways.

Leah: (AMAZED) Ffooo, Rina.

LEAH SMILES AND SHAKES HER HEAD. RINA GOES TO SIMEON

Rina: All right, Granddad? How's the lamb?

Simeon: It's happened at last, Rina - it's come.

Rina: What has?

Simeon: He's come - like the man said.

Leah: Who's come, Dad?

Simeon: The one who comes with the tree and the lights and the singing.

Rina: The singing?

Simeon: Like we sing. The winter singing.

Rina: Carols?

Simeon: Here - you hold him.

Rina: There we are.

RINA TAKES THE SWEATER CAREFULLY, HOLDING IT LIKE A BABY

Simeon: I'm only a shepherd.

Leah: What do you mean 'only'?

Simeon: Not like her.

Leah: Rina?

Simeon: No...her.

Leah: Who?

Rina: I know. (PULLING HER HOOD UP & PLAYING MARY, TO SIMEON) You found us, then?

Simeon: Oh, aye. He told us where. In the old feed bath. All wrapped up, he said.

Rina: And he is, look.

SIMEON REACHES OUT TO TOUCH THE 'BABY'

Simeon: In the sky. Lots of...peace.

Rina: Did you come by yourself? Where are the other shepherds?

Simeon: Outside. They're a bit shy.

Rina: Are they? And who's this, then? (LEAH)

Simeon: This. This one's my, my... She's the sad one. The left behind one. He went away. I should have gone. But he went.

LEAH'S FACE CRUMPLES

Rina: Here – you hold him.

Simeon: Me?

Rina: Yes. In your own two hands. Can you help him, Mam?

Leah: Um...all right. Now then, Dad, you remember how to hold a baby, don't you?

Simeon: Oh, aye.

Leah: Like a lamb.

Simeon: All snug.

Leah: There. What do you think?

Simeon: He's a bit small.

Leah: Well, that's how they start out. He'll grow.

Rina: Is this what you've been waiting for, Granddad?

Simeon: Waiting? Why?

Rina: Do you know who this baby is?

Simeon: No.

Rina: The Christmas one?

Simeon: No. I don't know. Who is he?

Leah: It doesn't matter, Dad. He knows who you are, and that's what counts, eh?

Simeon: Does he? Know me?

Leah: Oh, yes. We all do.

Simeon: Simeon.

Leah: That's right. That's you.

Simeon: And you.

Leah: What about me?

Simeon: Does he know you?

Leah: Um...yes, I suppose he does.

Simeon: Here you are, then.

HE HOLDS OUT THE JUMPER

He wants to be with you.

Leah: Does he?

SHE TAKES IT

Simeon: Can I sleep now?

Rina: Course you can, Granddad. Let's get you tucked up.

SHE SETTLES SIMEON UNDER A BLANKET

There we are. I don't know...the struggle we have to get you into a comfortable bed in a warm house, when all you want is to curl up with a dog blanket under the stars. Am I right?

Simeon: (GRINNING) Right.

RINA TURNS BACK TO WHERE LEAH IS STILL HOLDING THE JUMPER

Rina: You still holding that, Mam? Shall I put it in my bag?

Leah: No. I mean...I might just wear it.

Rina: Really?

Leah: If you don't mind.

SHE PULLS IT ON

Rina: Are you all right, Mam?

Leah: Yes, love.

SHE GOES TO TUCK SIMEON'S BLANKET AROUND HIM, SPEAKING AS SHE DOES SO

He is still here, isn't he? Even when you think you've lost him; that he's disappeared somewhere out of reach. He's not actually gone. You just have to look more carefully. Less fearfully.

A DISTANT BELL TOLLS

Rina: That's the chapel bell. Must be midnight.

Leah: Remember you used to put the baby into the crib scene at this service when you were small?

Rina: Not willingly. I always wanted to take him home instead.

Leah: Once I found him in your anorak pocket in March.

Rina: I wonder who's doing it tonight.

Leah: I think it's still you. Making sure he was here tonight, for Granddad to hold in his own two hands. (PAUSE) For all of us. Something precious to hold on to.

Rina: It wasn't me. If anything, it was Granddad. Or maybe it just happened.

Leah: Just happened? Maybe. (PAUSE) Here – have a biscuit.

THEY STAND TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER BLANKET WRAPPED AROUND THEIR SHOULDERS, SHARING THE BISCUITS

Rina: Biscuits for Christmas dinner? You really have let things slide, Mam.

Leah: Well, at least they won't give you salmonella, unlike a half-frozen turkey.

Rina: Have you got one of those too?

Leah: Not on me. It's on the kitchen table at home.

Rina: You're amazing.

Leah: I don't know about that.

Rina: You are. How you keep things going – for all of us. The farm, the flock, looking after Granddad. And me. I do notice, you know.

Leah: Well, thank you.

Rina: It's just...

Leah: What?

Rina: Who are you doing it all for?

Leah: You have to ask that?

Rina: I've been thinking about the money, Mam, the debt.

Leah: I don't want you worrying about that.

Rina: But I do. Because I see what the worry does to you. You're worn to the bone trying to make ends meet, trying to hold onto the farm and the land and the sheep and I don't know who you're doing it for.

Leah: Isn't it obvious?

Rina: Dad's gone, Mam. He's not coming back sometime to pick up his stick and stride out of the yard and check up on how well we've looked after it all.

Leah: I know that.

Rina: And Ben doesn't want the farm. There's no point hoping he's going to change his mind. And Granddad... You saw him this evening. He's as happy with a sweater as with a lamb. He doesn't need to be on the farm any more, he just needs

us to be prepared to join him wherever he goes to in his head.

Leah: It's not for any of them, Rina. It's for you. It's your future.

Rina: It doesn't have to be.

Leah: I'm not having you give it up. I know it's come sooner than we all thought it would, and you've been thrown into it, but I also know how much you love it. It'll be all right, love: we'll make it work.

SILENCE

Rina: I don't, you know.

Leah: What?

Rina: Love it. I loved being out with Dad and the sheep, but that's because I loved him. And I know a bit about sheep because Dad and Granddad have taught me. But I don't love sheep. Not the way Granddad does. I can't...stand looking at a sheep for half an hour to figure out what's wrong with it. I get bored. And then I get careless. I'm no good at it.

Leah: Well...

Rina: I don't want to be a shepherd. I don't want the farm. (PAUSE) I'm sorry, but I want to go back to college, Mam.

Leah: Oh, don't be sorry about that, love. If you're sure.

Rina: I am. I just didn't know how to tell you. And it didn't seem like it could ever be possible. And now it does.

Leah: I know. Almost nothing seems impossible right now. Let's see, eh?

THEY EMBRACE. LEAH LOOKS UP TO THE SKY

Look.

STILL EMBRACING, THEY BOTH LOOK UP. IT IS HELD FOR A MOMENT

Come on, let's get your Granddad back home.

Rina: Yeah.

THEY PICK HIM UP. AS THEY EXIT:

You've got a turkey to stuff too.

Leah: Oh, have I? What happened to me being worn to the bone?

Rina: Changed my mind - you seem fine.

Scene four

Leah: That night was full of bright stars and vivid dreams. I was Dad's ewe, stuck in a cleft tree, and as the angel pulled me free, he said 'You mustn't be afraid, you know.' And I know he's talking about me. Who I am. What I've allowed to consume me. 'Look for the joy in life', he says. 'Look for it where you least expect it.' And he's gone. And I dreamed of what Dad had been waiting for for forty years. Of a saviour - come too late to save him, or so it seemed. Of a great joy, bursting into my life when I had no space for joy. The timing all wrong, the losses too great to be recovered, the darkness too deep. It pierced my heart - because of what could have been.

And I scramble up the hill and there's just night and stars and laughter. Laughter! I can't tell where it's coming from, and then I realise it's me. It's me, laughing.

And then I woke up. But in the weeks that followed this night, I did battle with that joy. 'Look for it where you least expect it', the angel had said. So I looked. I searched. I crawled on my hands and knees through my own grief and despair, and it was there. I did find it. And in the same way, I found love. Long after Dad will no longer be able to hug me, or stroke my hand, or know the meaning of a kiss, I can make my every act - no matter how humble, how menial - an act of love...

SHE SITS WITH A CUP AND KNITTING, BACK AT KNIT AND NATTER

'cutting his toenails, stripping a wet bed, getting up for the fourth, fifth, sixth time in a night to soothe his cries. Of course, it doesn't always feel like love, it feels messy and exhausting and hard, but love's what it is.' Liz raises her eyebrows.

'You mustn't think I'm some kind of saint.' I can't say this to Liz, or even Sue, but sometimes, yes, I think of that night and it makes it easier. No, that's not right. It doesn't make it easier, but it...makes more sense of things. That's it. But not always. But to Liz and Sue, I just say 'Sometimes I just have to do it - to love - out of...sheer bloody mindedness. Sorry, Sue. And because not doing it would be far more difficult.' Sue smiles. And Liz's eyebrows slide right off the top of her face. So we're getting through it, Rina and me.'

PAUSE

And Dad.

Scene five

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Rina: So, I was looking for Granddad the other day, and when I found him he was sitting in the driving seat of the car. 'What you doing, Granddad?', I asked. And he said 'Granddad? I'm only 23, you know.' And then he said 'I hope you're not going to arrest me, Officer.' And I realised then he had no idea who I was.

SILENCE

So I said... 'Well, that depends. Drinking and driving...it's a serious offence.' And he looks at me, and for a moment I think I shouldn't have said that - that I've confused him even more. But then he winks and says 'In that case, how about you drive?' So we go for a drive, and I show him the new house in the village, where we're all moving next week. Then we stop for petrol, so I've got plenty to get to college, and Granddad's pointing out the post office, and the Crown, and the chapel, and the corner where he got knocked off his bike once, and the phone box where he and Grandma used to meet when they were courting, and when we get back to the farm, he says, 'Thank you very much. This is my stop.' And he gets out, and shuts the car door. And he waves goodbye. Happy as you like.

END



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EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

THE YORK SUFFRAGETTES

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EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

By Bridget Foreman

**Final Draft
May 2017**

THE ACTION TAKES PLACE ALMOST ENTIRELY IN 1913 IN ANNIE'S
SITTING ROOM, 14 HEWORTH GREEN, YORK

CHARACTERS (SPEAKING, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

& AGE IN 1913

Speaker

1913 Speaker

Edith Milner

Lottie Milner

Annie Seymour-Pearson (35)

Roland S-P

Francis S-P

Alfie S-P

Elsa S-P

Clara

Alice

Mabel

Messenger Boy

Arthur Seymour-Pearson

Seller

Violet Key Jones (30)

Woman 1

Effie

Woman 2

Woman 3

Ada

Mrs Harris

Florence

Evelyn

William Key Jones

Speaker

Anti MP 1

Anti MP 2

Anti MP 3

Anti MP 4

Pro MP 1

Pro MP 2

Pro MP 3

Heckler 1

Heckler 2

Heckler 3

Heckler 4

Miss Hodge

Woman 4

Mother

Overseer

Suffragette 1

Suffragette 2

Suffragette 3

Leonora Cohen (40)

David Lloyd George, MP (50)

Arnold Rowntree, MP (41)

Keir Hardie, MP (57)

Charwoman

Fishwife

Nurse

Laundress

Pit Brow Woman

Suffragette 4

Suffragette 5

Suffragette 6

Suffragette 7

Policeman 1

Woman 5

Woman 6

Woman 7

Marj

Rev'd Seaton

Emmeline Pankhurst (55)

Lilian Lenton (22)

Doctor 1

Doctor 2

Doctor 3

Doctor 4

Force-fed Suffragette 1

Force-fed Suffragette 2

Force-fed Suffragette 3

Force-fed Suffragette 4

Warder 1

Warder 2

Warder 3

Warder 4

Warder 5

Governor

Home Secretary

Boy 1

Boy 2

Judge

Mr Hewitt

Prosecutor

Harry Johnson (19)

Policeman 2

Mary

Millicent

Woman 9

Woman 10

Woman 11

Woman 12

ADDITIONAL NON-SPEAKING PARTS TO PLAY AS REQUIRED

ACT 1

PROLOGUE

MINSTER PIAZZA

THE AUDIENCE GATHERS, GRADUALLY AND BY VARIOUS ENTRY POINTS, IN MINSTER PIAZZA. AS THEY ARRIVE AND MINGLE, THEY ARE PROTESTING ON A RANGE OF GLOBAL GENDER ISSUES (EG FGM / CHILD MARRIAGE / TRAFFICKING ETC). THEIR PLACARDS SHOULD REFERENCE WOMEN'S ISSUES AROUND THE WORLD (FROM THE ANTI-RAPE PROTESTS IN INDIA TO 'GRAB MY PUSSY' IN THE USA). PEOPLE WEAR PUSSYHATS, DONALD TRUMP MASKS ETC. PROTESTORS HAND OUT LEAFLETS TO THE AUDIENCE, WHICH BECOMES PART OF THIS CROWD. 6 BUSKERS ARE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE CROWD, PLAYING PROTEST SONGS. AT CLEARANCE, ALL 6 JOIN TOGETHER IN A SINGLE SONG

THE MOVEMENT OF THE ACTOR-CROWD THROUGHOUT THIS SECTION SHIFTS FROM NATURALISTIC TO STYLISED, ALLOWING FOR MOMENTS OF PURE CHOREOGRAPHED ACTION AS WELL AS FLASHMOB STYLE SECTIONS. IT SHOULD FEEL AS IF THE AUDIENCE IS CONSTANTLY BEING PULLED BETWEEN SOMETHING THAT FEELS 'REAL' AND SOMETHING 'PRESENTED'. IN THE SAME WAY, WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE LURCHES BETWEEN 1913 AND NOW, LANDING - FINALLY - IN 1913

THE CROWD EBBS, FLOWS AND SURGES. THE MOVEMENT FINALLY PROPELS A MODERN-DAY FEMALE SPEAKER ONTO A PLATFORM. HER SPEECH IS PUNCTUATED WITH CHEERS AND WHOOPS

Speaker: Thank you! Thank you everyone for coming! For turning up! For raising your voice to say that women are united! We're strong! And we won't be silenced! It's an honour for me to be here and to stand before you lovely lot! Just look at

you! Look at the faces around you! Notice the person standing next to you. Because we are here today to make a stand for democracy! And that person next to you is the face of true democracy! What brought them here today? What brought you? What makes you angry enough to come and stand here - shoulder to shoulder with one another? Maybe it's injustice against women around the world? Trafficking, slavery, violence, men telling us what we can and can't do with our own bodies? Maybe for some of you it's because the vote didn't go your way, this time? Maybe it's Brexit? Or Trump? Or maybe you're sick of the fact that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer? Or maybe it's something else entirely! Tell me! What are you marching for?

THERE ARE A FEW RESPONSES FROM THE CROWD

I said, what are you marching for?

THE CROWD SHOUTS IN RESPONSE

That's great! I love your anger! It's powerful! And it's powerful because we're together! We stand together and we speak together: our many human voices making one voice! United! Resisting! Protesting! Demanding change! Seeing you here today gives me hope. Hope that anything is possible, that a miracle could happen. That change WILL come -

A WOMAN HAS GRABBED ONE OF THE BUSKER'S MICS AND INTERRUPTS

Woman:

I've had enough of this... What are you talking about? Seriously - just listen to yourself! Brexit? Trafficking? The only thing that unites you lot is your anatomy. And I'm not talking about what's in your knickers - I'm talking about your liberal bleeding hearts! Change? Miracles? What is the point in all this? You've all come out to march up and down in the fresh air and have a bit of a shout, and it's like you want a medal for it! And then what? You'll go back home and hunch yourselves behind your

screens and your homepages, uploading photos 'this is me doing my bit on the Women's march', clicking, liking, putting your thumbs up, sharing, turning up the volume on your own personal echo-chambers. Well, here's the news: it won't make a blind bit of difference. You think they're listening? You think they care? In Washington? In Westminster? They haven't got a bloody clue! Have they ever gone to a foodbank? Or a loan shark? Or struggled to pay the leccy? Have you? Banging on about democracy. For most of us, the true face of democracy is someone you never voted for, making decisions they don't know the impact of, on your behalf. So what's the point of voting? They don't represent us! It's a joke! Stuff the lot of them! And if you lot are still hoping for some flaming miracle to come galloping over the horizon, good luck to you. Because you can shout all you like, but nothing's going to change.

DURING THE LAST FEW LINES, MEMBERS OF THE CROWD HAVE STARTED TO SHOUT BACK AT THE WOMAN. THIS RISES IN VOLUME, AND THE SPEAKER SHOUTS BACK, UNTIL IT'S ENDED BY A DEAFENING SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS

SUFFRAGETTE PROTESTERS HAVE APPEARED, AS IF ON A WINDOW-SMASHING SPREE, MINGLING WITH THE MODERN-DAY PROTESTORS. THE PRESENT IS MEETING THE PAST

WE HEAR A PRE-RECORDED SPEECH FROM 1913, MELDING WITH CONTEMPORARY VOICES, AS WELL AS OTHER VOICES FROM 1913, A MONTAGE / SOUNDSCAPE IN WHICH THE PAST BLEEDS INTO THE PRESENT

1913 Speaker: Because we will no longer put up with paying taxes into a system that refuses us a voice. We demand our right to education. We expect a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. We refuse to accept that our place is in the home and not in the world. We say to them that we decry the fact that they require respect from us, but afford us none. We will no longer silently accept their governance. We raise our voices to claim our right to participate in government.

Votes for Women! Votes for Women! Votes for Women!

Crowd: VOTES FOR WOMEN! VOTES FOR WOMEN! VOTES FOR WOMEN!

AS THEY CHANT, THE MODERN-DAY PROTESTORS ARE OVERWHELMED / REPLACED BY THE 1913 ONES, ALMOST IN WAVES. AS ANNIE SPEAKS, THE MOOD IN THE CROWD BECOMES INCREASINGLY UGLY. THINGS ARE THROWN AT THE SPEAKER. ON ONE SIDE OF THE PIAZZA, POLICE LINE UP

Annie: Women have been talking for years! Better and braver women than me. And no-one has listened. But we continue: talking, and planning and hoping against hope. And hope is good – it's necessary. But not the kind of hope that's just some distant wish. I want hope with dirty hands. I want hope that rolls up its sleeves and gets to work. Because that's what real hope looks like: hard work. No matter how tiring, how unrecognised, how unrewarded it may be, it is work that never gives up. That's the hope that that makes miracles! And isn't a miracle what we want? What we need? But miracles don't just happen! They happen when we work for them. If the politicians will not listen to our words, we must make them hear our deeds!

CROWD: DEEDS NOT WORDS! DEEDS NOT WORDS!

TO THE SOUND OF MODERN-DAY DRUMS / WHISTLES / PROTEST (VERY RHYTHMIC), THE POLICE ADVANCE ON THE CROWD, BREAKING IT UP VIOLENTLY, AND MOVING THE AUDIENCE TOWARDS THE THEATRE, KETTLING THEM. AS THEY DO SO, POCKETS OF VIOLENCE AND STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE PROTESTORS AND THE POLICE CONTINUE ALONG THE ROUTE

THE AUDIENCE SHOULD FEEL ALMOST PUSHED INTO THE THEATRE, WHERE THE MENACE OF WHAT THEY HAVE COME FROM MEETS THE WARMTH AND COVIVIALITY OF THE CINEMA

SCENE 1

THE THEATRE

IN THE FOYER, WOMAN 1 ACCOSTS THE AUDIENCE AS THEY ENTER (THIS CAN BE USED AS REQUIRED: FRAGMENTED, BROKEN UP, IMPROVISED AROUND ETC)

Woman 1: Those suffragettes, saying they're standing up for all of us! That they're speaking for all women! Well, let me tell you, they don't speak for me!

If they wish to lead happy and useful lives, they'll do so best by keeping to the sphere that God's appointed them to, and attending to their duties there. Where is the country established? In the home! Where is the empire built? In the home! By those women who care for and nourish their husbands, and raise their sons. That is what women are born to: to make voters rather than be one of them. If these suffragettes are given what they demand, the discord they've brought to our streets will enter every home in the land. Imagine the misery that will result!

These women, these suffragettes have forgotten their womanhood and their feminine duties. When they demand unnatural rights, they unsex themselves. And when they place themselves in equality with men, they unsex their husbands. They are nothing less than a national scandal, and a danger to the Empire! Turn your backs upon them! Defend your souls from their heresy and protect your children from their lies! Oppose women's suffrage!

AS THE AUDIENCE ENTERS THE AUDITORIUM, THERE IS A ROWDY ATMOSPHERE. AN ANTI-SUFFRAGETTE FILM (MILLING THE MILITANTS, 1913) IS BEING SCREENED, PROJECTED ONTO A GAUZE DOWNSTAGE. THE FILM IS ACCOMPANIED BY A LIVE PIANIST ON STAGE. AROUND THE AUDITORIUM ARE ANTI-SUFFRAGE BANNERS AND ACTIVISTS, PEOPLE ARE JEERING, CONTRIBUTING LINES OF DIALOGUE TO CAPTION THE ACTION IN THE FILM & HANDING OUT ANTI-SUFFRAGE POSTCARDS

SCENE 2

THE GAUZE CROSS FADES, REVEALING A SITTING ROOM ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE ONE IN THE FILM. EDITH AND LOTTIE ARE SITTING WITH TEAPCUPS. EDITH IS ADDRESSING AN EMPTY CHAIR. ANNIE STANDS TO THE SIDE, OBSERVING

Edith: So you see, dear Annie, we're depending on you to do some of the door to door canvassing. A woman like you...such a potent reminder to certain men of what they're voting to preserve. A way of life. An ideal. A vision, I might even say. So much more persuasive than the strident voices of some of our misguided sisters. I shall put you down for Thursday evening.

SHE WRITES IN A POCKET BOOK

Annie: (ADDRESSING THE AUDIENCE) It's me she's speaking to - a while ago, now. I'm sitting in that chair, nodding, smiling. To be honest, I'm not exactly agreeing, but I'm not disagreeing either. I'm doing what I've always done: I'm doing what's expected. Which reminds me - I suppose I'd better offer her more tea. (WALKING INTO THE SCENE) More tea, Edith?

Edith: No, thank you, dear. We must be getting along. The ladies of the Primrose League never rest, you know.

Annie: Well, if you must -

A GAGGLE OF 6 CHILDREN BURST INTO THE SCENE

Roland: British Bulldog 1 2 3!

Francis: No, you can't!

Roland: Can! Safe!

Alice: Unfair!

Alfie: Safe was by the tree in the park!

Elsa: You're such a cheat!

Annie: Enough, enough!

MABEL RUNS IN, EXHAUSTED

Mabel: Sorry, mum, I couldn't keep up with them.

Annie: Don't worry, Mabel. Say hello to Miss Milner, children. (TO AUDIENCE) My children were still small back then.

THEY MUMBLE HELLOS

Edith: So, Roland, who are your friends?

Roland: This is Alice and this is Clara.

Annie: They're Mabel's little sisters.

Edith: (ASSUMING THIS IS A MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE) Mabel?

Annie: Mabel.

SHE GESTURES TO MABEL. EDITH IS AGHAST

Edith: Oh! Well! That's...I mean...how...unusual. Lottie! Come! Good afternoon, Annie. You will remember Thursday?

Annie: Yes, thank you, Edith. Goodbye, Lottie.

THEY EXIT, SHOWN OUT BY MABEL

Clara: Sorry, Mrs Seymour-Pearson.

Annie: Oh, don't apologise, Clara. You rather rescued me, actually. Though you do look like a bunch of ragamuffins. What have you been up to?

THEY ALL SPEAK AT ONCE

Never mind, never mind.

MABEL RE-ENTERS

Mabel, can you ask Cook to feed this lot?

Mabel: Oh, not Alice and Clara, Mum. They can wait 'til I get them home.

Annie: Oh, why should they wait? Cook won't mind.

Mabel: Well, if you're sure...

Annie: Off you go - and wash your hands. I can't begin to imagine where they've been.

Francis: We found a dead squirrel, and there were flies all over it!

Annie: Argh! Argh! Wash hands!

THEY LEAVE

(TO AUDIENCE) See? Completely normal. Four children: Francis, Roland, Alfie and Elsa. A home -

A MESSENGER BOY CYCLES IN & STOPS

Boy: 14 Heworth Green, York!

ANNIE TAKES A NEWSPAPER FROM HIM. HE CYCLES OFF

Annie: A bit chaotic, but happy. And a husband -

Arthur: (ENTERING AS FROM WORK AND TRIPPING OVER A FOOTBALL) Aaargh! Who's left this blessed thing lying around?

Annie: Me, obviously.

SHE PICKS IT UP

Arthur: Really?

Annie: Yes, I was having a kickabout with Edith Milner. She's got quite a left foot, you know.

Arthur: Hmp.

SHE KISSES HIM AND TAKES HIS BRIEFCASE FROM HIM. HE SITS AND LOOSENS HIS TIE / SHOELACES

Annie: I have servants -

SHE HANDS MABEL THE THE BRIEFCASE & THE FOOTBALL

Thank you, Mabel - neighbours - you met Edith Milner just now, and her niece Lottie -

ARTHUR GROANS LOUDLY. SHE HANDS THE PAPER TO HIM. HE READS IT

I have - all in all - a settled, comfortable life.

Arthur: Good God!

Annie: Is everything all right, Arthur?

Arthur: Well, that'll set the cat among the pigeons.

Annie: What will?

Arthur: Mrs Pankhurst. Speaking in York next week.

Annie: Really?

Arthur: You hadn't heard?

Annie: Why would I have done?

SHE WALKS OUT OF THE ROOM, AND CONTINUES TALKING TO THE AUDIENCE

SCENE 3

Annie: Actually, I had heard. I'm not generally in the habit of lying to my husband, you understand, but -

THE STAGE FILLS AROUND HER. SHOPPERS, THE SUFFRAGETTE BEING SOLD, LEAFLETS HANDED OUT TO THE AUDIENCE ETC.

Seller: The Suffragette! The Suffragette! Latest edition - a penny!

Annie: Well, I'd been on my way to the library the day before.

AS SHE SPEAKS, SHE IS HANDED A SMALL PILE OF BOOKS AND A PURSE. A HAT IS PUT ON HER HEAD

Not that Arthur disapproves of reading - far from it - but he does disapprove of law-breaking, and I'd run up a rather large library fine, and that comes to the same thing in his mind, so I hadn't wanted to say, and -

SHE CRASHES INTO A WOMAN ON HER KNEES, CHALKING THE PAVEMENT. ANNIE'S BOOKS GO FLYING

Oh! I'm terribly sorry. Are you all right?

Violet: No - it's my fault. Please don't worry yourself. Here.

SHE HANDS ANNIE ONE OF HER DROPPED BOOKS

Annie: Violet?

Violet: Annie!

Annie: What are you doing down there? I mean, can I help you up?

Violet: No – I'm not finished yet.

Annie: Does that say 'spank'?

Violet: Spank?!

SHE MOVES ASIDE

'Mrs Pankhurst', it's going to be.

Annie: Ah. I think you need more of a gap between the S and the P.

Violet: You could be right.

ONE OF THE CHILDREN ENTERS THE SITTING ROOM WITH A SPLINTER IN HIS HAND, WHICH ARTHUR ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH – UNSUCCESSFULLY

You will come, won't you?

Annie: Um...

Violet: Just let me finish this, and I'll tell you all about it.

Annie: (TO AUDIENCE, WHILE VIOLET CONTINUES CHALKING) Of course, I knew who Mrs Pankhurst was. And I had a fair idea of what she was going to say. So while Violet finished off, I tried to think of a good excuse for why I couldn't come. (TO VIOLET, LOOKING AT THE CHALKING) Oh, Thursday? What a pity!

Violet: Almost finished!

Annie: (TO THE AUDIENCE) It wasn't that I disagreed, but I wasn't sure I agreed either. I just didn't really want to get involved.

Violet: (STANDING) Not get involved?

Annie: What?

Violet: Is that what you just said?

Annie: No! I was just remembering that I've got Primrose League business on Thursday evening. Such a shame.

Violet: (SNORTING WITH DERISION) Canvassing, I suppose?

Annie: Yes, actually.

Violet: Then you are involved – like it or not.

Annie: Um...

Violet: Whose side are you fighting on?

Annie: Oh, I'm not fighting.

Violet: That's what they want you to think.

Annie: What?

Violet: It's them or us, Annie.

SHE HANDS HER A LEAFLET

Annie: Can't it be both?

Violet: Maybe. Maybe it could. But it isn't.

A SUDDEN DISTURBANCE. A WOMAN STARTS SCRUBBING OUT THE CHALKING WHILE HER TEENAGE DAUGHTER WRESTLES WITH THE PAPER SELLER, DESTROYING THE PAPERS

Stop! Stop! What do you think you're doing?

Woman 1: My duty, missus. I know it, even if you don't. Good girl, Effie! Make sure you get them all!

Violet: Your duty? To whom?

Woman 1: God. King. Country. This is wrong. All wrong.

Violet: But don't you want the vote?

Woman 1: No. We've never had it, and we've never needed it. The country will go on perfectly well without my help, but my home and my children won't. And nor will yours. You should get back to it. There. Come on, Effie, let's go.

Violet: What about you, Effie? What do you think?

EFFIE LOOKS AT HER MOTHER

Woman 1: Go on, then.

Effie: I'm not a man. I'm never going to have to go to war, or make important decisions. Government's about men, so it should be done by men.

Violet: I see. Well -

Woman 1: Come on.

Effie: (AS THEY LEAVE) Is that right, Mam? Did I say it right?

Annie: Oh dear.

Violet: You see what we're up against? You will come on Thursday, won't you?

Annie: I don't think it really affects me, Violet.

Violet: Oh, doesn't it?

Arthur: Annie!

Annie: I'm sorry, I've got to go. I hope it goes well - I really do.

ANNIE RETURNS TO THE SITTING ROOM, AND DEALS WITH THE SPLINTER, PUTTING DOWN THE LEAFLET

SCENE 4

THE STREET SCENE BREAKS UP

Violet: (TO AUDIENCE, AS SHE RE-CHALKS) Nothing to do with her. It just hasn't happened yet. The thing you can't turn away from or ignore. The thing that gnaws at you, keeping you awake at night, angry, because you know that life isn't fair, but something tells you it should be just.

Woman 2: That's the thing. And it's a different thing for every one of us.

Woman 3: For Mrs Pankhurst, it was seeing a 13 year old girl in a workhouse infirmary, used and diseased and pregnant...and playing with a doll.

Woman 2: For me it was...well, something else.

ARTHUR TAKES THE CHILD OFF TO BED & ANNIE RINGS A BELL FOR MABEL

Violet: For Annie - who knows? But it'll be something. And probably closer than she thinks.

THE STREET SCENE DISSOLVES. MABEL APPEARS, WITH ALICE AND CLARA - ALL IN COATS

Annie: (SEEING THE GIRLS) Goodness! What are these two still doing here?

Mabel: I'm sorry - I haven't had a chance to take them home, and Mother's shifts have changed at the glassworks, so she can't collect them. I was just going now, but do you need me?

Annie: No, it's all right, Mabel.

ANNIE BUTTONS ALICE'S COAT

Mabel: (SPOTTING THE LEAFLET) Mrs Pankhurst? In York?

Annie: Yes. (OFFERING MABEL THE LEAFLET) Would you like it?

Mabel: Me?

Annie: You might like to go.

Mabel: Why on earth would I want to go to that? Sorry, mum – I didn't mean it to come out like that. It's just I hope you don't think I'm...

Annie: Think you're what?

Mabel: A troublemaker.

Annie: No – of course not. I didn't mean that at all.

SHE SCREWS UP THE LEAFLET

There. Off you go. Sleep tight, girls.

Mabel: Good night, mum.

MABEL LEADS ALICE AND CLARA OFF. ANNIE SETTLES DOWN WITH SOME SEWING

SCENE 5

VIOLET ENTERS

Violet: (TO THE AUDIENCE) Well, this is it: the York branch of the WSPU – the

2 OR 3 WOMEN JOIN IN

Women: Women's Social and Political Union.

Violet: Come on, ladies.

WOMEN MOVE INTO THE SITTING ROOM WITH
TYPEWRITERS, BOXES OF LEAFLETS, PILES OF
SUFFRAGETTE NEWSPAPERS ETC. THE YORK BRANCH OF
THE WSPU, HARD AT WORK

To start with, it was just me, really. But
these days, we're a bit squeezed into our
offices in Coney Street, as you can see. This
is Ada,

Ada: Pleased to meet you.

Violet: Mrs Harris,

Mrs Harris: It's a pleasure.

Violet: And Florence.

Florence: What? I mean yes, Miss Key Jones?

Violet: Say hello, Florence.

Florence: Oh! Hello.

Violet: Not to me - to them.

FLORENCE CLOCKS THE AUDIENCE AND GASPS

Florence: (ALMOST INAUDIBLY) Hello.

Mrs Harris: It's all right, they're harmless.

Violet: That's my brother William,

WILLIAM WAVES/BOWS SLIGHTLY TO THE AUDIENCE

Who helps out, even though he can't join the
Union.

Florence: Why can't he join, Miss Key Jones?

Violet: Because he's a man, Florence.

Florence: Oh, yes.

ARTHUR ENTERS THE ROOM AND SETTLES DOWN WITH A
BOOK / NEWSPAPER

Violet: It's (SHE PICKS A COPY OF THE SUFFRAGETTE OFF A
PILE AS A WOMAN WALKS PAST, AND CHECKS THE
DATE) March the 22nd, 1912. There's a
Parliamentary vote on women's suffrage this
coming Thursday.

THERE IS A CHEER FROM THE WOMEN, BUT IT IS FOR
A GIRL CLIMBING ONTO A CHAIR WEARING A
NEWSPAPER HAT

And that is Evelyn.

EVELYN IS GIVING A SPEECH IN A BROAD BUT VERY
POOR SCOTTISH ACCENT, TO THE GREAT AMUSEMENT OF
THE OTHERS

Evelyn: And noow, I call upon ye, to say 'noo!' Noo to
taxation withoot representation. Let me hear y
e!

All: Noo!

Evelyn: Noo to governance withoot consent!

All: Noo!

Evelyn: Noo to -

Violet: All right, Evelyn, that's enough.

Evelyn: It was just a bit of fun, Miss Key Jones.

Violet: Well, I'm not sure Flora Drummond would agree.

Ada: You knew who it was, then!

Violet: And I hope it was worth a penny.

Evelyn: What?

- Violet: I assume that's a copy of this week's edition you're wearing? And if it's on your head, it's not in someone's hand, is it?
- Evelyn: I just thought, with the vote in Parliament, that maybe...
- Violet: Maybe we wouldn't need all this any more? We could all pack up and go home?
- Evelyn: We can hope, can't we?
- Violet: (TO AUDIENCE) There have been debates in Parliament before. One last year. One the year before. Every time, the bill gets dropped for one reason or another. This time, it's been delayed, but - so far - it hasn't been dropped.
- ONE OF THE GIRLS BARGES ANOTHER PLAYFULLY, WHO DROPS A PILE OF LEAFLETS
- And this lot are (TO THE GIRLS) a load of giddy goats today, aren't you?
- Florence: You can't blame us for being excited!
- Ada: Just think, if the vote goes our way!
- Violet: Yes - if. If. If it does, I will be the first to whoop and whistle and light the bonfire we build out of all of this. But if we lose - and we may very well - we will need every leaflet, every letter, every paper, Evelyn -
- Evelyn: Sorry...
- Violet: Every shred of our dignity and every ounce of our energy to carry on. So for now, we continue. Florence, pick those up. Ada, go through the membership lists for the whole of York and make sure that everyone knows about the meeting on Wednesday. Evelyn, if you're so keen to speak in public, perhaps William could give you some instruction.

Evelyn: Oh, no, Miss Key-Jones, I couldn't possibly.

Violet: I think you could. William?

William: Right you are.

Violet: The rest of you - get back to whatever you were doing before you were distracted by Evelyn's music hall turn.

Women: Yes, Miss Key-Jones etc.

William: Right then, Evelyn...

Evelyn: If you don't mind, Mr Key-Jones, I'd rather not.

William: Rather not?

Evelyn: I mean, I can't. I absolutely can't.

William: Why can't you?

Evelyn: The very thought of standing up in the street...I'd be too scared.

William: Of what?

Evelyn: Everything! Opening my mouth and nothing coming out.

William: We can work on that.

Evelyn: People not listening. People listening. People throwing things at me. Not knowing what to say. Everything!

William: You did all right just now.

Evelyn: That was different.

William: Mrs Harris, can you spare us a moment?

MRS HARRIS JOINS THEM

Evelyn's worried about speaking on the street.

Mrs Harris: (LAUGHING) The first time I did it I was shitting bricks!

EVELYN GASPS

William: There. You see?

Mrs Harris: Oh, I'm sorry. (TO THE AUDIENCE) I'm so sorry.

William: They won't mind. Go on.

Mrs Harris: It was a Sunday afternoon, corner of Coney Street. November.

ANNIE AND ARTHUR PUT AWAY THEIR SEWING / PAPER AND LEAVE

Evelyn: Cold?

Mrs Harris: Yes, but dry.

William: Did you stand on a box?

Mrs Harris: I should have. I brought a stool from the scullery.

WILLIAM WINCES

Evelyn: What? What's wrong with that?

Mrs H/Will: Legs.

Evelyn: But...you've still got legs if you stand on a box.

Mrs Harris: Not mine - the stool's. Look.

SHE STANDS ON A CHAIR. WILLIAM GRABS THE LEGS AND PULLS IT OUT FROM UNDER HER. THE COMMOTION DISTURBS THE REST OF THE ROOM

Violet: William!

William: Sorry!

Evelyn: Someone did that to you?

Mrs Harris: Just the once. I took my coat off after that, and draped it over the stool, so it looked like a box.

THE SITTING ROOM IS BEGINNING TO FILL WITH MPs, IN MID-DEBATE. THEY INHABIT IT, AS IF IT IS THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

William: And what did you speak on?

Mrs Harris: 'A Woman's Place'.

William: Good subject.

Mrs Harris: Oh yes, and I knew it perfect in my front room, when I did it for my sister. Most appreciative, she was.

William: And Coney Street wasn't?

Mrs Harris: My mind went blank. I was sick to my stomach. Hot and cold, dry mouth, wobbly legs -

Evelyn: The stool's?

Mrs Harris: No - mine. Like I said, I was -

William: (WARNING) Steady...

THE NOISE FROM THE MPs STEADILY INCREASES. MRS HARRIS WORKS TO TOP IT

Mrs Harris: Nervous. Distinctly nervous. But the point is, lass, I got through it. I did it. And yes, people shouted at me, and yes, I wished every minute that I was safe in my own four walls, but no bugger - I mean - no body's going to hand us equality on a plate, are they?

Not without we stand there, week in week out and demand it, no matter what. You can do it! Say what you said up there. Just maybe without the Scottish accent.

SCENE 6

THE MPs' CHATTER IS OVERWHELMING MRS HARRIS'S SPEECH. SHE CAN NO LONGER BE HEARD. SUDDENLY WE ARE IN THE DEBATE – WHICH CAN BE HEARD BY THE WSPU WOMEN

Speaker: Order! Order!

Anti MP 2: There is strong scientific evidence attesting to the fact that the mental equilibrium of the female sex is not as stable as the mental equilibrium of the male sex.

All MPs: RESPONSE

Anti MP 3: I believe that the normal man and the normal woman both have the instinct that man should be the governing one of the two. There is a natural distinction of sex.

THE WOMEN CLEAR THE WSPU OFFICES AWAY, AND DISPERSE

Pro MP 2: It is true that the mentality and ordinary emotions of women are not exactly the same as those of men -

Anti MPs: There you are! Case closed! Exactly! Etc.

Pro MP 2: But men take women's advice frequently, and very often they find it better than their own judgement.

All MPs: CHEERS & JEERS

Anti MP 1: Nothing on God's earth would induce me to vote for giving women the franchise.

Anti MPs: CHEERS

Anti MP 1: I, for one, am not going to be henpecked -

Anti/Pro MPs: STRONG RESPONSES

Anti MP 1: - henpecked, I say - into a question of such importance!

Anti MPs: HEAR HEAR!

MABEL AND ANOTHER MAID ENTER THE ROOM. AS THE DEBATE CONTINUES, THEY SILENTLY CLEAN OUT THE GRATE, DUST, AND PUSH A CARPET SWEEPER AROUND. THE MPS LIFT THEIR FEET, HAND OVER ASHTRAYS ETC. WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING THE WOMEN

Pro MP 1: The fact that we have in this country over 5 million women engaged in earning their own living, over 2 million engaged in industrial pursuits, surely is sufficient argument -

Pro MPs: HEAR HEAR ETC.

Anti MP 4: The strongest reason, in my opinion, why we should not grant the vote to women is that it means the beginning of taking women away from the home into what must necessarily be the rather dirty game of politics.

All MPs: RESPONSE

Pro MP 1: The arguments my Honourable Friend proposes might have been correct two or three centuries ago, when the duties of women were restricted to weaving tapestries and looking after children -

Anti MPs: LAUGHTER

Pro MP 1: - but not in the twentieth century, when women have, for years, and by common consent, taken an active part in public affairs, in town councils, Royal commissions, political associations... Women today are interested in all the widest spheres of legislation.

Anti MP 2: But there is a considerable difference between women having votes in local government and being given a -

Pro MP 3: There is not a Bill which comes before this House which does not affect millions of women -

Anti MP 3: And in which they are well-represented by their fathers, brothers and husbands.

Pro MPs: SHAME!

Anti MP 1: The supreme will of the nation must continue to rest in the hands of men!

Pro MP 1: That is not argument; it is masculine prejudice!

Anti MPs: SHAME!

Speaker: Order! Order!

THE DIVISION BELL RINGS. THE MPs DISPERSE NOISILY, LEAVING - IN ANNIE'S SITTING ROOM - ABANDONED PAPERS, GLASSES, ASHTRAYS, CUSHIONS ON THE FLOOR: A MESS. MABEL AND THE MAID LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER

VIOLET ENTERS WITH A BOX, AND SPEAKS AS MABEL AND THE MAID TIDY UP THE MESS

Violet: (TO THE AUDIENCE) Well, we lost the vote. 208 to 222. Close, but -

AN MP RETURNS, HAVING FORGOTTEN SOMETHING

MP: Excuse me.

MABEL HANDS HIM HIS HAT

Anti MP 3: Ah, yes.

HE LEAVES

Violet: Not close enough. So we picked ourselves up, and carried on.

A CROWD STARTS TO GATHER

Come on, then. Here should do. Up you get, Evelyn. Ada, have you got the papers? ETC.

EVELYN GETS ONTO THE BOX

SCENE 7

WILLIAM & VIOLET STAND CLOSE TO HER, ENCOURAGING HER. WSPU MEMBERS SELL PAPERS AND MINGLE WITH THE CROWD. THERE IS CONSTANT AND ONGOING VOCAL RESPONSE TO EVELYN'S SPEECH

Evelyn: So, Mr Asquith says it's unconstitutional to give the vote to women.

Heckler 1: He should know: he's the bleeding Prime Minister!

LAUGHTER

Evelyn: He says that it goes against nature. That a woman is as qualified as a rabbit to vote!

Heckler 2: Speak up, Flopsy!

Evelyn: That it's dangerous, and that any country that welcomes women into its democratic process is on a slippery slope to destruction. Well, Mr Asquith, we've got news for you, and it's right here! She's right here! Please give a warm welcome to Miss Hodge!

APPLAUSE. EVELYN STEPS DOWN, AND (TO WOLF WHISTLES) MISS HODGE STEPS UP IN HER PLACE

Heckler 3: I'll give you a warm welcome, sweetcheeks!

Miss Hodge: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Or, as we say back home, G'day!

Heckler 3: Nevermind good day, we could have a good night, you and me!

A WOMAN STANDING NEXT TO HIM BIFFS HIM WITH HER HANDBAG

Miss Hodge: I bring you greetings from the women of Australia, who have been equal political partners with men since nineteen hundred and two. More than ten years of female enfranchisement, and the country doesn't seem to have gone to the dingos yet.

CHEERS. AS THEY DIE DOWN:

Male Heckler: Don't you wish you were a man?

Miss Hodge: No! Don't you?

LAUGHTER

It's a privilege to be invited to York to speak to you. Y'know, I said that a few days ago at a meeting just like this, and someone called out 'It's a greater privilege to vote, though!' And I said no. No! It's not a privilege for me to vote. It's my right! It's not some kind of concession afforded to me, or a trade-off in exchange for my silence. Because I won't be silenced!

Heckler 2: More's the pity!

Heckler 4: You need transportation!

Miss Hodge: And you need to learn some manners!

WE BECOME AWARE OF ALICE AND CLARA, PLAYING AROUND THE EDGES OF THE CROWD THROUGH THE REST OF THE SPEECH

I'll tell the world that my vote is a sign of my citizenship; of my equality with any man who stands beside me at the ballot box. My vote is the means by which we women free ourselves from unjust laws, from inhumane industrial practices, from the myriad of inequalities we continue to suffer every day. Never consider your vote - when you win it - as a privilege. It's your right. Feel it in your bones. Hear it as a battle cry and take up the charge because the future is yet to be won!

Woman 4: Votes for women!

All: Votes for women! Votes for women! Votes for women! Votes for women!

A SONG STRIKES UP. THE STAGE CLEARS, REVEALING ANNIE, IN THE SITTING ROOM, READING TO ELSA, WHO IS ON HER LAP. ALICE AND CLARA REMAIN, AND A MAN, STANDING AT A DISTANCE, WATCHING THEM. THEY LEAVE. HE FOLLOWS

SCENE 8

AS THE SONG FADES OUT, ANNIE IS READING ALOUD TO ELSA

Annie: Very soon she heard the soft rustling flight of wings again and she knew at once that the robin had come again.

MABEL RUSHES ON, PANICKED, LOOKING FOR ALICE AND CLARA

Mabel: Alice! Clara!

Annie: He was very pert and lively, and hopped about so close to her feet, and put his head on one side and looked at her so slyly that she asked Ben Weatherstaff a question.

Mabel: ALICE! CLARA!

Annie: "Do you think he remembers me?" she said.

Mabel: ALICE!!!

Elsa: Mummy, can you hear that?

Annie: Hear what, darling?

Elsa: I think it's Mabel.

ANNIE STANDS. THE LIGHTS CHANGE. ELSA EXITS.
ANNIE ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE

Annie: You choose who you want to blame. Their mother –

AS ANNIE MENTIONS EACH CHARACTER, THEY APPEAR

Mother: They've changed my hours at work, so I'll not be able to collect you. You'll have to walk yourselves home from school.

Annie: Or her overseer at the glassworks, who changed the rota –

Mother: But I can't work these hours.

Overseer: Well, if you don't like it you can lose your job and see how you like that.

Annie: You could blame Mabel –

Mabel: I'm sorry, Mam – I've got my own work to do. I can't help you.

Mother: What about Harry?

Mabel: Harry's working!

Annie: Or me, for expecting Mabel to tidy and clean, because how else will it get done?

ALL THE CHARACTERS EXCEPT ANNIE EXIT

(TO MABEL, AS MABEL EXITS) Could you wash the landing windows, Mabel? They're looking very murky.

Mabel: Yes, mum.

Annie: Or blame Alice and Clara (THEY RUN ON, PLAYING ON THEIR WAY HOME) for being foolish enough not to know that there are men who will simply...do what they want because they think it's their right.

AS ANNIE CONTINUES, SHE PUTS ON AN APRON, AND PICKS UP A GLASS

I blame the man who does that to two little girls. And I blame the world that lets him, and accepts it, and shrugs as if there's nothing to be done. Well, there is.

SHE TAKES A SWIG. ARTHUR ENTERS, HEARING ANNIE'S RAISED VOICE

Arthur: Annie?

Annie: There is.

Arthur: Hello, there. I thought you were out this evening.

Annie: I didn't go.

Arthur: Evidently.

Annie: (TO AUDIENCE) Excuse me.

SHE STARTS CLEANING, FURIOUSLY

Besides, I've had it with the Primrose League.

Arthur: Ah. Does Miss Milner know?

Annie: Not yet. I mean, why should I spend my evenings knocking on doors persuading men to vote for

John Butcher when I can't even vote for him myself? Or anyone else, for that matter.

Arthur: Well...

Annie: And I've had it with church too.

Arthur: Church?

Annie: And before you ask, no, the Vicar doesn't know but he soon will.

Arthur: Right...

Annie: And, yes, Jesus does know, and I don't think he minds. In fact, I think he's cheering.

SHE TAKES A SWIG FROM THE GLASS AND SHOOS
ARTHUR OUT OF THE WAY OF HER CARPET SWEEPER

Arthur: You're cleaning.

Annie: I see you've lost none of your acute powers of observation.

Arthur: Why can't Mabel do it?

Annie: She's met Alice and Clara out of school and taken them home.

Arthur: Can't it wait until tomorrow?

Annie: It's going to be the same tomorrow. And the day after that.

Arthur: How long is this going to go on for?

Annie: I don't know, Arthur. Until something changes.

Arthur: What?

Annie: Everything!

ARTHUR GIVES A GESTURE OF HOPELESSNESS AT THE
POSSIBILITY OF 'EVERYTHING' CHANGING

Don't do that!

Arthur: I didn't do anything.

Annie: As if it's impossible to make things...different. Do you know what I kept coming back to? What if it had been our Elsa in that lane?

Arthur: Well, it couldn't have been. We'd never allow her to go running around the lanes of Heworth by herself.

Annie: Because we have the luxury of choice, Arthur. Of all the luxuries we enjoy, that is the greatest. Mabel's mother has no choice but to work all hours in the glassworks. This wasn't her fault. It was the fault of that - . What kind of a man does that to a child?

Arthur: I don't know, Annie. Must we talk about this?

Annie: I know you'd rather not. Because it's not a man like you, is it? No - the men like you are the ones who make it possible for the men like him!

Arthur: Now just a minute...

Annie: By making the regulations and the laws and the decisions about our lives, with no regard to half of the people who are actually living them.

Arthur: What are you talking about?

Annie: About the inequality between men and women - between you and me.

Arthur: I have always regarded you as my equal.

Annie: But in the eyes of the law, I'm nothing. Elsa's nothing. And Alice and Clara are less than nothing.

Arthur: There'll be a police investigation.

Annie: Yes. And you know as well as I that if he broke into a garden shed, that man would get a longer sentence than for what he's done to Alice and Clara. They're of less value than a lawnmower!

Arthur: For pity's sake, Annie. This is deranged.

Annie: Meaning I'm deranged?

Arthur: I didn't say that. But you're not yourself.

Annie: Maybe I am, Arthur. Maybe this is who I am.

Arthur: Then you're not the woman I married.

SILENCE. ANNIE TAKES OFF THE APRON AND HANDS IT TO ARTHUR

Annie: I want a voice. I want a vote. I don't want to simply obey laws -

Arthur: Annie!

Annie: - I want to make them.

ARTHUR GASPS IN EXASPERATION

So I'm joining the WSPU.

Arthur: The suffragettes? Isn't that a little extreme?

Annie: I don't think so, and I've made up my mind, so don't try to persuade me out of it.

Arthur: Your mind. Don't you think I should have a say in this?

Annie: You?

Arthur: I've a professional reputation to maintain. Did you even consider that?

Annie: Urrgh...

Arthur: Perhaps I've given you too much freedom.

Annie: Given me?

Arthur: You can't just take decisions on my behalf!

Annie: (LAUGHING AT THE IRONY) Thank you.

Arthur: What?

Annie: I think you've just proved my point.

Arthur: Can we at least talk about it?

Annie: We just have.

SHE STARTS TO LEAVE

Arthur: Do you want to sleep on it?

Annie: (OVER HER SHOULDER) No, I don't want to sleep on it - I feel I'm only just waking up!

SHE EXITS, ALMOST KNOCKING OVER VIOLET AS SHE ENTERS

Violet: (TO THE AUDIENCE, AS SHE SETS UP FOR A MEETING) That was it. That was Annie's thing. Excuse me, Mr Seymour-Pearson, we need this room.

Arthur: Oh. Yes. Of course.

HE EXITS

SCENE 9

THE ROOM FILLS WITH WSPU MEMBERS AS VIOLET CONTINUES

Violet: (TO THE AUDIENCE) Two little girls, pushed up against the wall in a back lane in Heworth and - . If you can imagine what that might be like, then you care - you've no choice. And if you can imagine that it might happen to your daughter then you've got to do something about it. You don't need a political bone in your body - you just need an imagination. And we've all got one of those.

SHE TURNS TO THE MEETING

Sorry. Go on.

Suff 2: The only reason the system works the way it does is because women have allowed themselves to be governed by men. So how do we change that?

Suff 3: Um...by speaking out? Campaigning. Making our voices heard.

Suff 1: We've done all that and it's made no difference.

Suff 3: Petitioning parliament.

Suff 1: Huh!

ANNIE RUNS IN, A LITTLE LATE, AND JOINS THE MEETING. SHE HAS MABEL AND HARRY WITH HER. THEY LOOK UNSURE AND UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT ANNIE USHERS THEM IN. DURING THEIR EXCHANGE, THE MEETING CONTINUES WITH OTHER NON-VIOLENT SUGGESTIONS BEING MADE, E.G. SENDING LETTERS TO MPS, ARRANGING DEBATES ETC.

Suff 2: So, we become ungovernable. We break the system. It's not hard to get arrested, you know. And what are they going to do if the police stations and the courts and the prisons are full of women like us? What are they going to

do with the real criminals? Things start to fall apart, and they'll take notice.

Suff 3: We'd go to prison?

Suff 2: If we have to – yes.

A STUNNED SILENCE FOR A MOMENT

Leonora: (BREAKING THE SILENCE WITH A LAUGH) There are worse things.

Suff 1: You sound like you know.

Violet: (TO THE AUDIENCE) This is Leonora Cohen. She's from Leeds, but we won't hold it against her.

Leonora: I served 7 days for breaking a window in a Government building.

THE WOMEN ARE IMPRESSED / AMAZED

After what they did to us, I wish I'd broken them all!

Suff 1: What did you use?

Leonora: A rock. Like this one.

SHE PULLS A ROCK OUT OF HER POCKET

Harry: Well, somebody's come prepared.

Mabel: Harry! (TO THE ROOM) Sorry.

Suff 3: Were we meant to bring rocks?

Leonora: Here – see how it feels in your hand.

THE WOMEN PASS IT AROUND

But you don't need a rock to get arrested. Just stand in the wrong place or step on a

policeman's foot, or get caught up in the crowd. That's enough to get you a good thumping and a trip to the station.

Suff 3: The railway station?

Leonora: The police station.

Suff 1: Then what?

Leonora: To start with, make sure you've got no more money than you really need. No jewellery, no furs, and no umbrellas. If they arrest you, they'll take you to the station and charge you. Don't say anything. Save it for when you go to court, and remember – it's not a court of justice; it's a court of injustice. So don't answer their questions. But remember you've got an audience.

Suff 3: An audience?

Leonora: Court reporters. Prepare a speech and put on a show for them. If you get it right, when you're slopping out your cell the next morning, the nation will be opening their newspapers and reading your statement word for word. You can't buy that sort of coverage.

Suff 2: Why are you telling us this?

Violet: The Bill comes before Parliament again in a fortnight. Mrs Cohen is joining a deputation of working women who will take our cause to Mr Lloyd George the day before the vote.

Leonora: That's just a few of us. But there'll be hundreds more women in London, putting pressure on the government. Hundreds of women – one message. Please come with us.

Suff 3: To London?

Suff 2: And get arrested?

Suff 1: Surely we won't be arrested just for going to London?

LEONORA & VIOLET EXCHANGE A LOOK

Violet: You'll stay in London for the vote. And if it fails, you'll be expected to take action.

Annie: What kind of action?

Leonora: (GRABBING THE STONE BACK AND BRANDISHING IT)
Whatever's necessary.

SUFF 3 GIVES A SINGLE SOB

Violet: What is it?

Suff 3: I'm sorry, it's just...the thought of being arrested, going to prison, my name in the newspaper...it's...

Leonora: Let me guess: it's not respectable? Which do you think is more respectable? That a girl should be made to work fourteen hours a day for a quarter of what a lad gets paid for doing the same job, and have to sell herself just to eat? Or that she refuses to accept that? That she resists and protests against tyranny and injustice in any way she can, even if she gets sent to prison for doing so?

Suff 2: For being militant.

Leonora: Yes - for being militant. So, what do you say?

Annie: Well, I for one am beginning to think respectability might be over-rated. If the Bill fails, militancy may be all we've got left. In which case...count me in, Mrs Cohen.

Leonora: You'll come to London?

Annie: Oh, yes. I'll come to London!

A BLAST ON A WHISTLE AND A BURST OF STEAM. HARRY IS SHAKING LEONORA'S HAND AND EARNESTLY TALKING WITH HER, UNTIL MABEL PULLS HIM AWAY. THE STAGE SUDDENLY FILLS: PORTERS WITH TROLLEYS, PEOPLE AT A RAILWAY STATION. ANNIE IS HANDED A SMALL SUITCASE. THE STAGE CLEARS AND BIG BEN CHIMES

SCENE 10

A GAUZE FLIES IN. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, ARNOLD ROWNTREE & KEIR HARDIE APPEAR IN FRONT OF IT

Lloyd G: So this is the deputation you've organised?

Rowntree: It is, Chancellor.

Keir Hardie: Of working women.

Lloyd G: Meaning?

AS THEY ARE NAMED, THE WOMEN APPEAR BEHIND THE GAUZE, EACH A SEPARATE AND DIGNIFIED PORTRAIT, QUIETLY ENGAGED IN THEIR WORK

Keir Hardie: Fishwives, tailoresses, charwomen, nurses, laundresses, pit-brow women...

Lloyd G: Oh, really... I've every sympathy with their cause, but I can hardly have a serious debate with fishwives and charwomen, can I?

Rowntree: They've prepared statements, I believe.

Lloyd G: What exactly are they asking for? Apart from the vote, obviously.

Keir Hardie: A hearing, I should think. And if the Bill passes it will be us asking them for their vote.

LLOYD GEORGE STARES AT THE TWO MEN FOR A MOMENT

Lloyd G: Very well.

LEONORA STANDS NEXT TO A TAILORESS, WHO
STITCHES THROUGHOUT LEONORA'S SPEECH

Leonora: I wonder, Mr Lloyd George, if you have
threepence ha'penny in your pocket?

Lloyd G: Threepence ha'penny? I'm afraid not. I don't
usually carry coins with me.

Leonora: No matter. For you gentlemen, threepence
ha'penny might be the cost of sending two or
three letters. For me, it's a loaf of bread, or
a bar of soap. But for the tailoresses of
Leeds, it's what they get paid for a full day's
work.

Threepence ha'penny, from which they must find
their rent, heat their homes, feed and clothe
their children, pay for doctors and medicines,
live entirely. Let me tell you that it is an
impossible task -

Charwoman: (EAST END) - 5 o'clock in the morning, cleaning
out the grates, blacking them and re-laying the
fires. Then it's doing the steps, front and
back, washing down the windows and polishing
off with vinegar -

Fishwife: (GEORDIE) - digging for bait and priming the
hooks - all has to happen before the boats go
out, like, no matter the weather, and when they
come in, it's shifting three or four stone of
fish on your shoulders, like, to the market -
ten mile or more -

Nurse: (SCOTTISH) - required to care for my patients -
to protect them, but who does the same for me,
Mr Lloyd George? I'm suffering from a serious
disease: it's called being a woman -

Laundress: (LIVERPUDLIAN) - started at 14, when my mother
trapped her hand in the mangle and couldn't work
no more. I wanted to stay at school. I can read

and write as well as you, Mr Lloyd George, but what use is that -

Leonora: -and until she has a voice in the political life of this country, it's not in her power to alter any aspect of her circumstances.

Pit-Brow: (LANCASHIRE) - makes me weep. But one day - one day soon, I want to use this hand to post my vote in a ballot box. 'Cause this is no life, and I want better.

THE LIGHTS FADE ON THE WOMEN

SCENE 11

THE STAGE FILLS WITH MPs, TALKING TOGETHER, CHECKING PAPERS AND FOB WATCHES - PREPARING TO LEAVE THE HOUSE. ANNIE FIGHTS HER WAY THROUGH THEM TO SPEAK TO THE AUDIENCE. AS SHE SPEAKS, THEY DISPERSE

Annie: Oh yes, he saw them. He heard what they had to say, and we really thought it would make a difference.

Suff 4: He said he'd consider what they'd told him. Carefully. Carefully!

Suff 5: But within hours, it was all up: the Bill was thrown out.

ANGRY VOICES BEGIN TO RISE

Suff 4: We'd just been fobbed off like irritating children!

Annie: After that, well, we all knew what we were there for.

PROJECTION OF FILM OF BLACK FRIDAY, AGAINST WHICH POLICE AND WOMEN SCUFFLE. THERE ARE SHOUTS OF SUFFRAGETTE SLOGANS, SFX BREAKING GLASS, POLICE WHISTLES & SHOUTED ORDERS, WOMEN SCREAMING ETC.

For the first time in all of this, I was really angry.

Suff 6: We broke windows all along Whitehall -

Suff 7: And got as far as the doors to the House of Commons before they stopped us.

ANNIE DELIVERS THE NEXT LINE AS SHE IS GRAPPLING WITH TWO POLICEMEN. THE TEXT ONLY JUST TOPS THE NOISE OF THE BRAWL

Annie: The police had fists and helmets and truncheons.

Suff 4: They were more used to brawling than we were.

Suff 6: Women were being punched, kicked, beaten, dragged by their hair, their breasts grabbed.

A WOMAN SCREAMS. THE GAUZE LIFTS AND ANNIE SHOUTS THE LAST PART OF IT AS SHE IS HAULED AWAY, THROUGH HER SITTING ROOM, WHERE THE SCUFFLE OVERTURNS FURNITURE

Annie: I could taste blood in my mouth. There were women's hats and shoes everywhere. And when they pushed me into the van -

ONE OF THE POLICEMEN PUNCHES HER. SHE FALLS TO THE FLOOR OF HER SITTING ROOM, THEN PRESSES A BLOODIED HANKERCHIEF TO HER EYE AND WALKS FORWARD TO THE AUDIENCE. SHE POINTS AT HER EYE, AND SAYS TO THEM:

Obstructing a policeman.

SHE BURSTS OUT LAUGHING, WHICH QUICKLY BECOMES SOBBING. THE SCENE BUILDS AROUND HER

SCENE 12

THE SHOUTED SLOGANS OF THE PREVIOUS SCENE TAKE US INTO THIS ONE

Woman 5: Deeds not words!

Women: DEEDS NOT WORDS!

Policeman 1: (TO ANNIE) Sit down, please.

Woman 5: Votes for women!

Women: VOTES FOR WOMEN! VOTES FOR WOMEN! VOTES FOR WOMEN!

Policeman 1: Quieten down, now.

Woman 5: Through thick and thin

Women: WE NE'ER GIVE IN!

Policeman 1: I said put a sock in it!

THEY QUIETEN SLIGHTLY

Now then. Are you going to give me your name?

Annie: I'm saying nothing. I was told to say nothing.

Policeman 1: (WEARILY) First time?

Annie: Yes.

Policeman 1: Right. I'll go through it for you. You've been arrested for obstructing a police officer. First, you give me your name and address. Without that, you don't get bailed.

Annie: I don't want to be bailed.

Policeman 1: Yes, you do, take my word for it. I'm going to ask you for a statement. You're not going to give me one, then I send you to sit on that bench over there with the other ladies. You'll probably have a bit of a sing song and argue about who chucked the biggest rock through Selfridges' window. And then in a couple of hours, that nice Mr Pethick Lawrence who stumps up bail for all of you lot will turn up with his wallet and you can clear off.

Annie: Is that it?

Policeman 1: No, that is not it. You'll be charged and summonsed to appear in court tomorrow. And that's when you gets your say, like as not. And after that you'll go to prison, like as not.

HE EYEBALLS HER

So, let's go back to the bit where I ask you your name.

Annie: Mrs Seymour Pearson.

Policeman 1: Christian name?

Annie: Annie.

Policeman 1: And where do you live, Mrs Seymour Pearson?

Annie: 14 Heworth Green, York.

Policeman 1: York? Coo, you're a long way from home.

SHE DROPS HER HEAD

You know what, Annie? I hope you gets what you want. Cause I can only imagine how badly you must want it, to put yourself through all this. Good luck to you.

THE WOMEN START SINGING RISE UP WOMEN!
(TUNE:JOHN BROWN'S BODY)

Woman 6: Rise up, women, for the fight is hard and long,

Women: Rise in thousands singing loud a battle song,

Policeman 1: There we are – what'd I say?

ANNIE JOINS THE OTHER WOMEN

Women: Right is might and in its strength we shall be strong,

And the cause goes marching on.

Glory, glory hallelujah!

Glory, glory hallelujah!

Glory, glory hallelujah!

The cause goes marching on.

Woman 7: Liberty! Liberty!

Women: LIBERTY OR DEATH!

THE SONG CONTINUES, SOFTLY BUT INSISTENTLY
UNDERSCORING THE NEXT SCENE

SCENE 13

MARJ STANDS IN A TIGHT SPOT

Marj: (TO THE AUDIENCE) I didn't ask any questions. Something to throw, she said – something heavy. I should ask her, shouldn't I? I will.

LEONORA STEPS INTO HER LIGHT

Leonora: What did you get?

Marj: It's a bar from a fire grate.

Leonora: Let me see.

MARJ UNWRAPS A CLOTH

Marj: I've had a go in the yard, and if you hold it here, it right flies. You could have someone's head off. (PAUSE) You're not planning to have someone's head off, are you?

Leonora: Of course not.

Marj: 'Cause I don't mind helping with the cause, but I don't want nothing to do with folk being hurt.

Leonora: People are already being hurt, Marj. Just because it's done with unjust laws rather than iron bars doesn't mean it's not violence.

Marj: All the same.

Leonora: It's all right. I'm not going to throw it at anyone.

SCENE 14

ARTHUR LEADS ANNIE INTO THE ROOM. HE SITS HER DOWN, AND HE AND MABEL SET THE ROOM STRAIGHT AS THE SCENE PROGRESSES

Arthur: There we are, my dear, home sweet Heworth. Here are your slippers, and a rug. Settle yourself down. There's some light reading too.

ANNIE PICKS UP A COPY OF THE LADY, AND TOSSES IT AWAY

No?

Mabel, I wonder if you could fetch Annie a bowl of gruel?

Mabel: Gruel?

ANNIE THROWS A SLIPPER AT ARTHUR

Arthur: I mean, soup.

Mabel: Of course. Welcome home, mum.

Annie: Thank you, Mabel.

MABEL LEAVES

Are you terribly cross?

THEY LOCK EYES. A MOMENT'S SILENCE

Arthur: (KISSING HER HEAD) No.

THE DOORBELL RINGS

Annie: Oh, no, who's that? You didn't tell anyone, did you?

Arthur: I didn't need to. It was in the Evening Press. Heworth Lady Does Time, or somesuch.

Annie: Not about my being in prison – I don't mind that. About coming home.

Arthur: Ah. Well –

MABEL ENTERS WITH EDITH AND LOTTIE MILNER.
EDITH CARRIES A LARGE BUNCH OF FLOWERS AND
SPEAKS ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY

Mabel: Miss Milner to see you, mum.

Edith: Annie, dear...

Annie: Oh, Edith, Lottie, you shouldn't have.

Edith: We came at once.

SHE SETS A CHAIR ON ITS FEET AND SITS ON IT

Annie: Really, there's no need.

Edith: I blame myself.

Annie: Do you?

Edith: I should have seen this coming. When you left the Primrose League, it was a sign.

Annie: Yes, it was...

Edith: I should have seen then that something was deeply wrong, instead of which I blamed you – I'm so sorry – though to be fair I only blamed you in part.

Annie: You're too kind.

Edith: The real culprit in this is Mrs Pankhurst. She should be locked up!

Annie: She frequently is.

Edith: It's evil. Evil! I say so all the time, don't I, Lottie?

Lottie: You do.

Edith: But do any of these women listen? No! They're far too busy banging on about votes and equality to notice that their children are hungry and their husbands are neglected – though you mustn't worry on that account about poor dear Mr Seymour-Pearson, because I gave him every attention while you were away.

Annie: That is a relief.

Edith: I think you've been very fortunate, Annie dear.

Annie: Do you?

Edith: You've flown too close to the flame, and you're a little singed, but we are here to nurse you back to full health and soundness of mind. Lottie – go and find a vase.

Lottie: Yes, aunt.

SHE EXITS WITH THE FLOWERS

Edith: I want you to know that despite your shame, I will not turn my back on you.

Annie: Ah.

Edith: I'm giving you Lottie.

Annie: What?

Edith: I sense that the Lord has a task for her, at your side.

Annie: Oh dear.

Edith: She may appear fragile, but I assure you that Lottie is a moral giant.

Annie: She is?

Edith: Towering. At times even I am in awe of her. Lean on her. Trust her with your doubts and uncertainties. She'll need her lunch at 12.30 sharp, and she's allergic to fish.

LOTTIE RETURNS

Ah, here she is - it's all agreed, Lottie. You'll come here at eleven tomorrow.

SHE PLACES A HAND RATHER AWKWARDLY ON ANNIE'S HEAD

Rest, dear one, and be restored to true womanhood.

EDITH AND LOTTIE LEAVE. ANNIE THROWS THE OTHER SLIPPER AT ARTHUR

Arthur: What was that for?

Annie: You know what! I am not an invalid! Or a moral reprobate! Or a lunatic!

Arthur: (AMUSED BY THIS) No - you're a convict!

Annie: Do you think this is a joke?

Arthur: Of course not.

Annie: Well, you don't seem to be taking it very seriously.

Arthur: Oh, come on, you were barely in there 5 minutes.

Annie: Two days. Long enough to know what a very great ordeal and sacrifice it is for the women who are there for weeks or months at a time. And besides, I didn't come out by choice.

Arthur: You didn't really expect me to leave you in there, did you? Languishing.

Annie: That's such a ridiculous word. You read too much cheap fiction: nobody languishes in prison.

Arthur: The point is, I wasn't going to leave you there.

Annie: No - the point is, I went to a great deal of effort to get arrested in the first place!

Arthur: And you succeeded. You made a stand and you're officially a thorn in the establishment's flesh. Not to mention being York's only suffragette prisoner - you're in the Press.

Annie: And the ink's barely dry and I'm back home, thanks to you. Why did you pay the fine?

Arthur: Would you have preferred to tunnel out?

Annie: Don't be absurd.

Arthur: I paid the fine because that's what it took to get you out. And because I'm your husband.

Annie: What exactly do you mean by that?

Arthur: Oh, for heaven's sake...it's simply a statement of fact - I don't mean anything by it - not in the way you're thinking. I don't give two hoots about your wifely duties.

Annie: Not when you've got Miss Milner looking after them for you.

Arthur: I missed you, Annie. We all missed you. It's simple.

A BURST OF NOISE AND ENERGY AS THE CHILDREN (FRANCIS, ELSA, ROLAND & ALFIE) ENTER

Ah - they're back!

Francis: Mummy!

Elsa: You're home!

Francis: What happened to your eye?

Annie: Oh, I bumped it... Where have you been?

Roland: Sarah took us to the park. There's frogspawn in the pond. Look!

HE WAVES A JAR

Annie: And now there's frogspawn in our house. Lovely!

Elsa: And we saw a cat chewing a bird. It made a crunchy noise.

Francis: Then it was sick.

HE DEMONSTRATES

Annie: Thank you, Francis. What about you, Alfie? Did you see anything interesting at the park?

Alfie: No.

Elsa: Alfie got a letter.

Annie: A letter?

Elsa: From Mrs Robertson.

Arthur: Pastoral support courtesy of your fellow suffragettes.

Elsa: And she sent him a policeman's whistle!

Annie: Really? Why?

Alfie: Because when she was arrested last year she broke one.

Annie: There, see, it's quite normal to be arrested.

Arthur: I wouldn't say normal...

Elsa: Can I get arrested?

Annie: You can now Alfie's got a policeman's whistle.

Elsa: Votes for Women! Votes for Women! Votes for Women! Come on - arrest me!

Alfie: I don't feel like it.

Francis: We'll arrest you, won't we, Roland?

Roland: Yeah!

ELSA SCREAMS AND RUNS FROM THE ROOM, WITH ROLAND AND FRANCIS IN HOT PURSUIT

Annie: Well, I think you did rather well out of my being away, Alfie. A whistle!

Alfie: I don't like it.

Annie: Oh.

Alfie: You're not going back, are you? To prison?

Annie: I'm not sure yet. But probably not.

ALFIE LOOKS AT HER GLUMLY AND LEAVES

Arthur: Probably not?

Annie: Oh, do be quiet, Arthur.

Arthur: Well, next time, I might try releasing someone who's going to be less fed up about it.

Annie: Oh, I'm not fed up with you. I'm disappointed in myself.

Arthur: Why?

Annie: Because, if I'm honest, I'm rather glad you paid the fine; it was a relief to get out.

ARTHUR OPENS HIS MOUTH

Please don't! Don't say a word!

HE CLOSES IT AGAIN

I was scared, Arthur. I'm not up to it - not like some of the others. Sylvia Pankhurst was there with us, and she's...almost superhuman. I don't think I could ever be like her.

Arthur: Well, it's not required, is it? I'm sure there are things other than being imprisoned that you could do to make yourself useful to 'the cause'.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM. VIOLET AND THE WSPU WOMEN ENTER, CARRYING BOARDS, BROOM HANDLES ETC, AND STAND AT A LITTLE DISTANCE, OBSERVING

Annie: Thank you.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN SILENCE FOR A MOMENT

I did miss you too, you know.

Arthur: Really?

Annie: I even wrote to you.

Arthur: I didn't receive anything.

Annie: I never got a chance to send it. It's here.

SHE TAKES A WAD OF TOILET PAPER OUT OF HER BAG

Arthur: Is that what I think it is?

Annie: It's all there was to write on. I was rather pleased with my resourcefulness, actually.

Arthur: I feel even more sorry for the women still in there now I know you've stolen all the lavatory paper.

THE WOMEN LAUGH

Annie: Oh...I didn't think of that.

Violet: Have you two finished?

Arthur: What?

Annie: Yes, we have.

Violet: 'Cause we need to get on.

Annie: Yes, of course. Off you go, Arthur.

HE OPENS HIS MOUTH TO SAY SOMETHING, THINKS THE BETTER OF IT, AND LEAVES

SCENE 15

ANNIE'S SITTING ROOM. ANNIE, LOTTIE, MABEL, ADA, FLORENCE, EVELYN, MRS HARRIS, & VIOLET ARE PREPARING PLACARDS AND SANDWICH BOARDS - PAINTING ON SLOGANS, ATTACHING BROOM HANDLES ETC. THE DIALOGUE IS PUNCTUATED BY SAWING AND HAMMERING. ADA IS READING ALOUD FROM A NEWSPAPER. AS SHE READS, A SILENT & MELODRAMATIC FILM OF LEONORA'S ATTACK ON THE TOWER OF LONDON PLAYS ON THE GAUZE

Ada: Woman's Outrage at the Tower of London!

THE SCREEN SHOWS THIS HEADING. LEONORA LOOKS AT IT, TIES THE METAL BAR TO HER WAIST UNDER HER

COAT & PUTS ON HER HAT. SHE THEN 'WALKS INTO'
THE FILM

Alarming Development in Suffragette War!

A fashionably dressed, well-spoken woman gained
admission to the Tower by ticket.

FILM: LEONORA HANDING HER TICKET TO A GUARD
WITH A SMILE

Caption: 'WHICH WAY TO THE JEWEL HOUSE?'

Ada: She was seen to be gazing intently at the Crown
Regalia,

SHE LOOKS AT JEWELS BEHIND BARS, FROWNING

and then turned her attention to the glass
cases which are ranged round the room.

HER EYES LIGHT UP SEEING GLASS CASES

Concealing herself in the midst of a party of
schoolchildren, she suddenly produced what
looked like a short bar of iron,

SHE PULLS THE BAR OUT FROM UNDER HER COAT AND
RAISES IT ABOVE HER HEAD

Caption: THANK HEAVENS FOR ALL THOSE TENNIS LESSONS!

Ada: and the -

SHE THROWS IT. AN EAR-SPLITTING SFX OF BREAKING
GLASS

The crash of glass startled the few people in
the room.

A WOMAN FAINTS AND A MAN CLUTCHES HIS CHEST

Yeoman Warder Ellis made a dash for the spot,
seized the woman and gave her into custody.

LEONORA IS WRESTLED TO THE GROUND BY A BEEFEATER. HE PULLS HER TO HER FEET. THE CAMERA CLOSES IN ON HER AS SHE LAUGHS MANIACALLY

Caption: THAT'S WHAT I CALL A SMASHING DAY OUT!

THE WSPU WOMEN WHOOP AND CHEER

Violet: Well, good for Mrs Cohen. I could tell she meant business when she came to our meeting with a rock.

William: I wonder if she might be available for the next test series?

Florence: Is that how you spell 'Women'? It doesn't look right.

Mrs Harris: It's only 'cause it's big.

Annie: I'm so pathetically grateful you were all willing to come here. I'm virtually under house arrest while Lottie sees to my moral instruction.

Violet: How's she coming along, Lottie?

Lottie: (IN THE MIDDLE OF PAINTING A PLACARD) Don't ask!

Annie: Lottie, on the other hand, is progressing most encouragingly!

Lottie: (HOLDING UP HER PLACARD) Votes for Women!

CHEERS

Mabel: Go on then - give us a bit more from the newspaper.

Annie: I think there's something in this one. Oh yes - Suffragette Outrage at Kew!

Lottie: Ooh!

Annie: Two women have been charged with setting fire to the tea pavilion at Kew Gardens in the early hours of yesterday morning.

THERE IS A GASP / MURMURS OF ADMIRATION FROM ALL, WITH RESPONSES CONTINUING AS THE READING GOES ON

The whole building and contents were destroyed.

Violet: Yes!

Annie: At the police station the women gave their names as Olive Wharry and Lilian Lenton. They stated it was not Mrs Pankhurst who incited them, it was the Cabinet Ministers.

Lottie: Oh, excellent!

Annie: And that since they were at war, they were morally innocent and did not deserve to be punished.

CLAPPING AND WHOOPING / LAUGHING FROM ALL, CRIES OF 'VOTES FOR WOMEN!' ETC, IN THE MIDST OF WHICH THE DOORBELL RINGS. THEY ALL STOP, LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT, AND, AS MABEL EXITS, THE ROOM IS TRANSFORMED IN A MOMENT: PLACARDS AND SANDWICH BOARDS ARE FLIPPED OVER, PENCILS ARE PRODUCED, WILLIAM PULLS ON A CAPE AND LADY'S HAT AND A QUIET SKETCHING CLASS IS MIRACULOUSLY UNDERWAY, AS MABEL RE-ENTERS WITH EDITH AND REV'D SEATON

Edith: (ENTERING) I do hope we're not disturbing them.

Mabel: You'll be most welcome, I'm sure, Miss Milner. It's just the monthly Fine Arts tea.

MRS HARRIS MAKES AN UNLIKELY MODEL, WITH A FLOWER UNDER HER CHIN. LOTTIE READS TO ANNIE

Lottie: Oh woman, cease to fight and brawl,

The profit from such ways is small.

With every scene like this, the less

Become your chances of success.

ANNIE DABS HER EYES

Annie: Thank you, dear Lottie. Oh, Miss Milner!
Reverend Seaton! I was so transported, I didn't
see you come in.

Edith: Dear Annie, I hope you will forgive our little
intrusion. The Vicar was very keen to see you
and to encourage you and Lottie in your holy
undertaking.

Rev'd Seaton: The reform of souls is the work of the angels,
Mrs Seymour-Pearson. We battle against unknown
forces.

Edith: And known ones, I would venture to suggest,
Vicar. I'm afraid that the cause and conduct of
the suffragettes have become a deadly peril to
our national life.

Rev'd Seaton: Indeed. And in the face of such peril, we must
resist most powerfully. In fact, may I suggest,
given that we have such a decorous gathering of
virtuous womanhood here before us, that we join
together in exhorting one another to march
against the foe!

HE SINGS LUSTILY:

Onward, Christian Soldiers,

HE IS JOINED, FIRST BY MRS MILNER, THEN ANNIE
AND LOTTIE AND (MORE UNCERTAINLY) THE REST OF
THE WOMEN

Marching as to war,

With the cross of Jesus

Going on before!

Christ the royal Master

Leads against the foe;

Forward into battle

See His banner go!

Onward, Christian soldiers,

Marching as to war,

With the cross of Jesus

Going on before!

AT SOME POINT, THE WORDS BEING SUNG BY THE WOMEN CHANGE TO THOSE OF THE WOMEN'S BATTLE SONG, OVERWHELMING MRS MILNER & REV'D SEATON

Edith: Oh, Lottie!

THE SONG SWELLS AS THE WOMEN FLIP OVER THEIR SANDWICH BOARDS, AND RAISE THEIR PLACARDS; SUDDENLY THE QUIET DOMESTIC SCENE HAS TRANSFORMED TO A WAR RALLY. THE STAGE FILLS WITH OTHER WOMEN, AND A BAND. MRS MILNER AND REV'D SEATON FLEE

Women: Forward, sister women!

Onward ever more.

Bondage is behind you,

Freedom is before,

Raise the standard boldly,

In the morning sun;

'Gainst a great injustice,

See the fight begun!

Forward, forward sisters!

Onward ever more!

Bondage is behind you,

Freedom is before!

SCENE 16

WOMEN ON BICYCLES CYCLE ON AND FORM A SQUARE. A SEA OF PURPLE, WHITE AND GREEN. BANNERS, PLACARDS ETC. FROM WITHIN THE CROWD, AND TO HUGE APPLAUSE, MRS PANKHURST SEEMS TO RISE UP AT THE CENTRE OF THE SQUARE. THE MUSIC DROPS TO A QUIET BUT INSISTENT UNDERSCORE AS SHE SPEAKS

Mrs P: I stand before you today as a soldier in a war that is not of our choosing.

We have a legitimate grievance. And we have been dismissed and ignored. Our only resort is to rise up and fight. Not for destruction and devastation, but for an honourable peace for all.

We will be met with force: we know that. But good government does not rest upon force; it rests upon consent. And we do not consent to be governed! They will fight us. They may even kill us, but they will not govern us so long as we withhold our consent.

I call on you - the women of York - to help us to win this fight. And if we win it, this

hardest of all fights, then, to be sure, in the future it will be easier for women all over the world to win their fight when their time comes!

CHEERING. THE UNDERSCORE BECOMES THE MARCH OF THE WOMEN. THEY SING:

Shout, shout, up with your song!
Cry with the wind, for the dawn is breaking;
March, march, swing you along,
Wide blows our banner, and hope is waking.
Song with its story, dreams with their glory;
Lo! they call, and glad is their word!
Loud and louder it swells,
Thunder of freedom, the voice of the Lord!

Life, strife—those two are one,
Naught can ye win but by faith and daring.
On, on—that ye have done
But for the work of today preparing.
Firm in reliance, laugh a defiance,
Laugh in hope, for sure is the end.
March, march—many as one,

Shoulder to shoulder and friend to friend.

INTERVAL

ACT 2

SCENE 1

IN FRONT OF ANNIE'S SITTING ROOM, A PILLAR BOX,
BELCHING SMOKE. IT EXPLODES. SMOKE FILLS THE
STAGE

AS IT CLEARS, IT REVEALS A FRAGILE LOOKING GIRL
- LILIAN - HOLDING A SUITCASE. SHE SWAYS
SLIGHTLY, THEN COLLAPSES

SCENE 2

ANNIE CARRIES A PILE OF BEDDING AND A SMALL
VASE OF FLOWERS. SHE SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE

Annie: So, what's happened to my settled, comfortable
life? Well, I've still got a husband -

ARTHUR TAKES THE FLOWERS FROM HER

Thank you dear -

HE TIDIES THE ROOM AND PUTS THE FLOWERS ON A
TABLE

And children -

THEY ARE SILENTLY LINING UP, WATCHING HIM

I've also got a criminal record, neighbours who
cross the street to avoid me, and servants who
spend more time campaigning than cleaning -

MABEL PASSES WITH A PILE OF THE SUFFRAGETTE AND
A BANNER, BOTH PICKED UP FROM THE SITTING ROOM

Mabel: See you later, mum!

Annie: But that's fine by me. And I've stopped nodding and smiling and doing what's expected.

WOMEN RUSH ON AND PICK UP LILIAN

Arthur: Annie!

Annie: Coming! (TO AUDIENCE) I must get on: I've got someone arriving any minute.

SHE MOVES INTO THE SITTING ROOM, AND STARTS TO MAKE UP A BED ON THE SOFA WITH ARTHUR'S HELP

Because I've still got a house.

Lilian: (WEAKLY INFORMING THE WOMEN WHERE SHE SHOULD BE TAKEN) 14 Heworth Green.

Annie: Except now, it's a safehouse.

LILIAN IS PUT INTO A MAKESHIFT BED IN ANNIE'S SITTING ROOM. SHOES REMOVED, COVERS DRAWN OVER ETC, WITH IMMENSE TENDERNESS. AT THE SAME TIME, 4 OTHER WOMEN, INCLUDING LILIAN 2, ARE STRAPPED TO CHAIRS. THEY STRUGGLE

MALE DOCTORS WHEELING TROLLEYS ENTER THE CHAIR SPACES, ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL FEMALE WARDERS. LOTTIE, CARRYING A BOWL OF PORRIDGE, ENTERS THE SITTING ROOM AND SITS BY THE BED. ANNIE SHOOS OUT THE CHILDREN, AND LEAVES

Lottie: How are you feeling? Could you manage to eat a little?

Lilian 1: I'll give it a go - thank you.

Doctor 1: Alright, Miss Lenton, I'm going to ask you one more time. Will you consent to eat?

LILIAN 2 DOES NOT RESPOND

Very well.

HE PULLS ON HIS GLOVES AND STARTS PREPARING THE TUBE ETC., WHILE THE WARDERS START TO RESTRAIN LILIAN 2

Lottie: It's as soft as I could make it for your poor throat.

Lilian 1: My throat will be fine. I'm just looking forward to something other than porridge.

Lottie: One day at a time, Miss Lenton.

Lilian 1: Lilian.

Lottie: Lilian.

Doctor 2: All right. Tip her back.

THE FORCE-FED SUFFRAGETTES ARE TIPPED BACK IN THE CHAIRS. LILIAN 1 GAGS ON A SPOONFUL OF PORRIDGE

Lilian 1: Excuse me.

Lottie: Please don't worry. Can you continue?

Lilian 1: Yes - just give me a moment.

SHE BREATHES DEEPLY

You know, when they do that to you -

FF Suff 1: One of the worst things was feeling you couldn't breathe.

Lottie: I can't imagine what it must be like.

AS LILIAN 1 SPEAKS, THE ACTION IN THE CHAIR AREAS DEPICTS WHAT IS BEING DESCRIBED

Lilian 1: Well, I began by fighting it - fighting them -

Warder 1: She's already out of breath before we've started.

FF Suff 2: And then, the effort of clamping my mouth shut and -

Lilian 1: Clenching my teeth to try and stop the gag.

FF Suff 3: That makes it hard to breathe.

FF Suff 4: And when they forced it in - sharp metal it is -

Warder 2: It's sliced her gums and cracked her teeth -

FF Suff 1: And all I could do was try to tighten the muscles in my throat to make it close up so they can't get the tube down.

Lilian 1: But it was impossible.

Warder 3: She's fighting us with all her strength -

Lilian 1: But fighting my own body - that was harder.

Doctor 3: They can choose not to eat, not to drink, but they can't choose not to breathe -

Warder 4: And that's when we get the tube down.

Doctor 4: Right. That's in. Pass me the jug.

Lottie: Shall we try again?

LOTTIE GENTLY SPOONS PORRIDGE INTO LILIAN 1'S MOUTH. THE DOCTOR POURS THE CONTENTS OF THE JUG DOWN THE FUNNEL / TUBE INTO LILIAN 2'S STOMACH

Doctor 2: Keep her steady - we don't want to lose it all now.

Warder 5: It's not really the same as food. But it stops them dying, if we get it right.

Lilian 1: If they get it wrong, it can kill you.

LILIAN 2 STARTS MAKING CHOKING / GASPING
NOISES. THE DOCTOR IS IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED

Doctor 1: All right. Stop.

HE PUTS DOWN THE JUG AND WHIPS THE TUBE OUT

Get her upright - fast.

SHE IS STILL CHOKING

You - go and get the Governor - and fetch some
brandy. Get those straps off her.

SHE IS RELEASED. THE DOCTOR LIES HER ON THE
FLOOR AND TURNS HER OVER, TRYING TO DRAIN THE
LIQUID FROM HER LUNG

THE PRISON GOVERNOR ENTERS

Governor: What is it?

Doctor 1: Send for an ambulance. We've filled her lung not
her stomach.

HE TAKES HER PULSE

And call the Home Office.

TWO SPOTLIGHTS: THE PRISON GOVERNOR IN ONE, THE
HOME SECRETARY IN ANOTHER, BOTH ON THE PHONE.
AS THEY SPEAK, LILIAN 2 IS REMOVED & ANNIE,
VIOLET, MABEL & LOTTIE ENTER THE SITTING ROOM

Home Sec: How the hell did that happen?

Governor: I'm not entirely sure, Home Secretary.

Home Sec: You assured me that it's a safe procedure.

Governor: Under normal circumstances – medical circumstances, that is – I believe it is. But these women fight it. It's resistance that creates the danger.

Home Sec: Isn't it always? (PAUSE) So, I've got a suffragette prisoner with critically inflamed lungs as a result of a botched forcible feeding.

Governor: That's what it looks like.

Home Sec: It's certainly going to be what it looks like to the newspapers. Is she going to die?

Governor: Hard to tell.

Home Sec: For God's sake, let her out.

Governor: She's still awaiting trial.

Home Sec: What for?

Governor: Arson.

Home Sec: Oh, not the Kew Gardens woman?

Governor: That's the one.

Home Sec: I don't care. Let her out. The last thing we need is a suffragette martyr.

Governor: But if we let one out –

Home Sec: (SHOUTING) She's in imminent danger of death! Let her out! NOW! If she dies, she doesn't do it on Government property!

Governor: Yes, Home Secretary.

AN OFFICE BOY HANDS THE HOME SECRETARY A
NEWSPAPER

Boy 1: Evening paper, Mr McKenna.

Home Sec: And let me know what happens to her.

HE HANGS UP. LOOKS AT THE HEADLINE

What the blazes?

SCENE 3

LEONORA ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE

Leonora: He didn't see that coming. I got off, you see – acquitted by a jury.

A COURTROOM ASSEMBLES: JUDGE, PROSECUTION, JURY, SUFFRAGETTE SUPPORTERS, PRESS

It was a big do, the Tower of London job. The newspapers were all over it.

A SMALL BOY HOLDS UP A PAPER AND SHOUTS THE HEADLINE

Boy 2: Outrage at the Tower! Is the King's Crown Safe?

Leonora: And the charge looked pretty undeniable.

Judge: Causing unlawful and malicious damage to an amount exceeding £5.

Leonora: (TO AUDIENCE) But I did deny it.

Judge: How do you plead?

Leonora: Not Guilty, Your Honour, and I'm defending myself.

Judge: (ALMOST UNDER HIS BREATH) Oh, for pity's sake...

Leonora: (TO THE AUDIENCE) You look for the weak spots, you see. You don't throw your weapon at metal bars – you throw it at glass. And the weak spot in that charge? Watch and learn.

(IN COURT) I'd like to summon Mr Hewitt, Your Honour. Mr Hewitt is a supplier of glass cases to the jewellery trade.

MR HEWITT STEPS FORWARD

Mr Hewitt, have you made an inspection of the damage to the case at the Tower?

Mr Hewitt: I have.

Prosecutor: Aha! So she doesn't deny the damage!

Judge: Order!

Leonora: And what – in your professional opinion – would be the cost of replacing the glass?

Mr Hewitt: In the region of £3. I've submitted an estimate for repair for £4 ten shillings, but that would leave a good profit.

Leonora: So, not, therefore, in excess of £5?

Mr Hewitt: No. Not even at the outside.

Leonora: Thank you, Mr Hewitt. No more questions, Your Honour.

Prosecutor: I protest in the strongest terms!

Judge: Can you offer any proof to the contrary?

Prosecutor: The damage is the proof!

Leonora: But there is not £5-worth of damage. And that is what I am charged with.

Prosecutor: But -

Jury: Not guilty.

Leonora: (TO AUDIENCE) So I was acquitted.

Judge: Not guilty!

THE SUFFRAGETTE SUPPORTERS CELEBRATE

Prosecutor: This is a travesty!

Leonora: But it wasn't my last time in court.

Prosecutor: (TRIUMPHANTLY) Ha!

Leonora: Because years later, they made me a magistrate.

Prosecutor: Good God!

Leonora: And gave me an OBE.

Prosecutor: (WEAKLY) Aaaargh.....

THE PROSECUTOR FALLS INTO A CHAIR, PULLS A
HIPFLASK OUT OF HIS JACKET AND SWIGS. LEONORA'S
HUSBAND, HENRY, KISSES HER

Henry: Back to Leeds?

Leonora: Back to Leeds. I think I've done enough damage
here.

THE COURT DISPERSES NOISILY, THE CHATTER
MERGING WITH THE DISCUSSION OF:

SCENE 4

THE WOMEN ARE GATHERED IN ANNIE'S SITTING ROOM. IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLUTTERED WITH THE STUFF OF PROTEST: FOLDED UP BANNERS, BOXES OF LEAFLETS, ETC. LILIAN IS SITTING UP IN BED. THEY ARE MID-ARGUMENT

- Lottie: Are you saying we should stop writing letters and signing petitions?
- Lilian: I can't see as it's made no difference, can you? We're no closer to having a vote than we was five years ago. Or fifty years ago, come to that.
- Mabel: So it's all been a waste of time?
- Violet: No – but if women are outside the constitution, then constitutional work is pointless.
- Annie: I am not going on any more marches to the House of Commons only to be met with violence and abuse.
- Violet: Deeds not words...
- Mabel: What about the window smashing? Cutting telephone wires? Those are deeds. What about what Leonora did at the tower?
- Lilian: They're not enough.
- Lottie: What, then?
- Lilian: Well, they're calling us outlaws...
- Lottie: So we should behave like outlaws?
- Lilian: If you ask me, it's too easy for them politicians. Things need to be made a bit harder for them. A bit less comfortable.
- Mabel: And how do we do that?

Lilian: You can do more with a threepennyworth of paraffin and firelighters than a year of meetings and fundraising collections.

Annie: Setting fires?

Lilian: I've made a start. We just need more of them.

Lottie: What would we burn?

Lilian: Their clubhouses. Their hunting lodges. Their country mansions. Anything that shakes 'em up...

Mabel: I'm sorry, but this is madness. You've worked for years to prove that we deserve a place and a voice in government because women have as much reason and cleverness as men. And now you want to throw all that over and start burning down their homes?

Lilian: Yeah. Why not?

Mabel: Where is that going to get us? And what if someone gets hurt? Or killed?

Lilian: Someone most likely will!

Mabel: What?

Lilian: Only it won't be one of them, it'll be one of us! Have you not noticed? They're fighting a war and we're pissing about knitting suffragette stockings and selling marmalade! Sweet Jesus, sometimes even I think we don't deserve the vote!

Mabel: GASPS

Lilian: If we're fighting, we should fight to win – by whatever means.

THE FOLLOWING HAPPENS EXPLOSIVELY AND ALL AT ONCE:

Mabel: I'm not staying for this.

SHE STARTS TO LEAVE

Violet: Lilian...

Annie: Please don't go, Mabel.

Mabel: I'm sorry, mum, but I want nowt to do with it.

Annie: We're just talking, Mabel. That's all.

Violet: I'm sure Lilian didn't mean anything by it.

Mabel: Are you? I'm not. I'm not sure at all.

Violet: (POINTEDLY - TO LILIAN) She knows as well as I do that the WSPU is calling for the destruction of property. Not people.

Annie: Well, Lilian?

Lilian: I'm sorry. That was out of order. I just... Sometimes I run out of patience with all this, you know? I'm not made for talking and meetings and committees. I know they have to happen, but I just can't do it. I have to be...doing things. Making stuff happen. It's just how I am.

Annie: Can we get back to what we were discussing?

THERE IS A TENSE PAUSE

Lilian: If we burn stuff, it's property only.

Annie: Empty property.

Mabel: For now. But where's it going to end?

Violet: Where it has to end. In a polling station with a queue of women making their mark on a ballot paper. That's all we're asking for. And there's no alternative. Listen - whatever it is that

brought you into this – whatever injustice, whatever oppression, whatever desire for change – your vote is the key to unlocking that prison.

A HAND BELL RINGS. THE STAGE FILLS WITH WOMEN, WALKING AROUND A PRISON YARD

Lilian: All I'm saying is, I think it's time to stop asking the jailer, nice and polite, to let us out, and to seize the key! Do you want to be free, or not?

Mabel: (TO THE AUDIENCE) Well, when she put it like that... My little sisters – nice and polite as could be, and that didn't stop that man doing what he did. And the mistress, just getting in the way of a policeman and being knocked down and punched and sent to prison for it. And Miss Lenton, saying she'd rather not eat, and they almost killed her. You don't have to be a trouble-maker: sometimes you just have to stand up for what's right, and trouble will come and find you.

SCENE 5

THE WOMEN ARE VIEWED FROM A WINDOW (BOX?) BY THE HOME SECRETARY, THE GOVERNOR & PRISON DOCTOR. A PHOTOGRAPHER SHOOTS FROM A BOX OPPOSITE. THE PHOTOGRAPHS HE TAKES ARE PROJECTED (GENUINE PRISON YARD SURVEILLANCE SHOTS)

Home Sec: There'll be no more forcible feeding.

Governor: If we don't feed them, they'll die. And I thought you were keen to avoid martyrs.

Home Sec: From what I can see we're lucky none of them have died already as a result of the practice: I had a letter yesterday about a woman who's been subjected to it over 200 times. Even the doctors are calling it torture. It has to end, or we're simply playing into their hands.

Doctor: And what's the alternative?

Home Sec: Let them refuse food. Let them refuse drink too if they insist.

Governor: Let them starve, like the Evening Standard thinks we should?

Home Sec: No. At the point when your doctor expresses serious concern for their health, release them - on licence.

Governor: They'll simply disappear.

Home Sec: But we'll have a photographic record of each prisoner.

Governor: How? They all refuse to be photographed.

Home Sec: Look over there. That camera is fitted with a long-range lens. They'll never even know.

Governor: So we photograph them, then we release them?

Home Sec: Yes. And we watch them - police surveillance on every woman, day and night.

Governor: Have you any idea how many officers that will require? To tail every suffragette in the country?

Home Sec: It won't just be us watching. We circulate the photographs to galleries, museums, anywhere they might strike. They try anything, we get them. The hunger strikers get strong enough to leave the house, we get them, and we put them back in jail to finish their sentence. How long would a woman need, Doctor Richardson?

Doctor: To return to full health? After a hunger strike?

Home Sec: Not to full health, no. Just to recover enough strength to start it all again.

Doctor: A few days. Maybe a week or two.

Home Sec: And then back in. And out. And In. And Out. And in again. Until she's done her time.

Governor: That could take years.

Home Sec: It could.

Doctor: And break her spirit.

Home Sec: Quite possibly.

Governor: Won't this require an Act of Parliament?

Home Sec: Yes. It'll pass tomorrow. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

HE LEAVES. THE PHOTOGRAPHS CONTINUE FOR A FEW MOMENTS

SCENE 6

LILIAN SITS. LOTTIE TIDIES AROUND HER, THEN SITS BY HER

Lottie: Was it you?

Lilian: What?

Lottie: Who fire-bombed the pillar box on Wigginton Road?

Lilian: (LAUGHING) Nah. There must be another arsonist on the loose in York.

Lottie: And the tea pavilion at Kew?

Lilian: Now that was me.

Lottie: What else?

Lilian: Oh, I can't remember. If I'm not in prison, I aim to set fire to two buildings a week. There – that's shocked you, hasn't it?

Lottie: There's an empty house behind the lanes. I tried throwing a stone at a window – just to practice. It didn't even crack.

Lilian: Stones are no good. You need a hammer. Here.

LILIAN TAKES OUT A SMALL HAMMER OUT OF HER BAG

This was my 21st birthday present.

Lottie: A hammer?

Lilian: You take it.

Lottie: I couldn't possibly.

Lilian: Go on. I knew, you see. I knew I wanted to volunteer from when I was 18.

Lottie: You wanted a vote?

Lilian: I didn't know what a vote was. I went with my mother to hear Mrs Pankhurst speak. All the women I'd grown up with, they were workers, and worn out before their time. Too many children. No education to speak of. Nowhere to go if their husband beat them, and no way of living if he left them. And there was this woman talking about how women should go to university, and how they could be doctors and lawyers and own their own homes and run their own businesses and not be beholden to men, and I thought 'why shouldn't I have that? Why shouldn't I?' After that I was just waiting to turn 21, then...bam! You know?

Lottie: I'm not sure I've ever bammed anything in my life.

Lilian: You should try it: you might like it. I did a few windows, and then I said 'I don't want no more of that. I want to burn some buildings.'
(PAUSE) Here - can you dance?

Lottie: Dance? No - I'm terrible at it.

Lilian: Nobody's terrible at it.

Lottie: I am. I really am. I break men's toes.

Lilian: Well, you have bammed something then - and furthered the cause. Militant waltzing: I don't know why no-one's thought of it before. If we broke the toes of every man in the country, there's no limit to what we could achieve.

SHE GETS OUT OF BED

Come on, then.

Lottie: What?

Lilian: I'm going to teach you - teach you proper.

Lottie: You?

Lilian: Yeah. I'm a dancer by profession. Arson's just a hobby.

Lottie: I've never met anyone like you.

Lilian: No. I don't 'spose you have.

THEY DANCE

SCENE 7

MABEL RUNS ON AT FULL TILT, PURSUED BY HARRY.
HE CATCHES HER. SHE SQUEALS

Harry: How did you get so fast, young lady? Running away from coppers, were it?

Mabel: Wouldn't you like to know?

HE KISSES HER

Harry: I've heard about you suffragettes.

Mabel: Oh yes, what've you heard, then?

Harry: You like being tied up.

Mabel: That's right - to railings outside the Houses of Parliament. Not what you're thinking.

Harry: How do you know what I'm thinking?

Mabel: Because I'm a woman. Why do you think men are so scared of us?

Harry: Fair point.

Mabel: Harry...

Harry: Oh, this sounds serious.

Mabel: It is.

Harry: You're not...?

Mabel: What?

Harry: You know.

Mabel: No! I've got something to ask you.

Harry: Go on.

Mabel: There's a job needs doing.

Harry: Right.

Mabel: Lilian's running it. But she needs help.

Harry: An accomplice?

Mabel: If you like.

Harry: I'll do it.

Mabel: You don't know what it is yet.

Harry: It don't matter. Whatever it is, if it helps, I'll do it. You know how I feel.

Mabel: You might get caught.

Harry: Every good and wise and true thing in my life - it's been a woman that's given it to me. I'm doing it, whatever.

Mabel: Right. Well, you'll be hearing from Miss Key-Jones.

Harry: Hang on a minute.

HE PULLS A FOLDED NEWSPAPER OUT OF HIS POCKET

Mabel: What are you doing?

Harry: I'm a reporter: I write everything down. What was her name again?

Mabel: Violet Key-Jones.

HE WRITES ON THE PAPER

Harry: Got it.

SCENE 8

IN A SPOTLIGHT, AN ELDERLY WOMAN GIVES A STATEMENT TO A POLICEMAN. WHEN THE ACTION CUTS AWAY FROM THEM, HE WRITES, CHECKING DETAILS WITH HER

Mary: It was the window being smashed as woke me up.

Policeman 2: Which window was that, Mrs Beecroft?

Mary: The scullery – round the back of the house.

ANNIE'S SITTING ROOM. ANNIE, VIOLET, LOTTIE, LILIAN & MABEL. THEY HAVE THE MAKINGS OF AN ARSON ATTACK LAID OUT

Annie: Paraffin. There's two gallons there – is that enough?

Lilian: It don't take much, as long as you build the fire right. Have you got some newspapers?

Mabel: Yes – and firelighters.

Lilian: You didn't buy them did you? I mean, buying firelighters in the middle of summer...

Annie: No, they're from the cellar, aren't they Mabel?

Mabel: That's right, mum.

Lilian: Good. And cotton wool?

Lottie: Yes – here.

Lilian: I'll take all of that. I don't know 'til I get there how long the fuse will have to be.

CUT TO:

Policeman 2: And what happened then?

Mary: Well, I lit a candle, and I went to the top of the stairs and I shouted down 'who's there?', thinking they'd scarper before they had time to take owt.

Policeman 2: But they didn't?

Mary: No. Well, they weren't burglars, as it turns out. Suffragettes, would you believe?

Policeman 2: I'm afraid I would.

CUT TO:

Annie: So is that everything you need?

Lilian: It'll do the job.

Violet: You take the 3 o'clock train from York. There'll be a taxi waiting for you at Doncaster. The driver will have a moustache and a brown bowler. He'll ask you if the train was delayed. He knows where to take you. This is the address of the target.

LILIAN LOOKS AT IT

Got it?

Lilian: Yes.

SHE HANDS THE PAPER BACK. VIOLET TEARS IT UP

And the timing?

Violet: Monday night.

Lilian: I'll be ready. Who am I working with?

Violet: Harry Johnson.

Lilian: Has he done much?

Violet: This is his first action – he’s only 19 – but he’s very keen. And he’s bright.

Mabel: He’s a reporter on the Doncaster Chronicle.

Lilian: A reporter? Are you sure he’s not just after a story?

Violet: No – he’s been with us long enough for us to be sure of him.

Annie: And he’s...well...

Mabel: He’s my young man, Miss.

Lilian: Oh. I see.

Mabel: You can trust him.

Lilian: All right. And this house, is it empty?

Annie: Yes, that’s what we’ve been told. But you will check?

Lilian: We’ll do our best.

CUT TO:

Mary: There were two of them – a man and a woman. Said sorry for disturbing me, they meant no harm, and they thought the house was empty. So I showed them the door and went back to bed. And then when I went out this morning to fetch the milk, I found this lot.

SHE LIFTS LILIAN’S BAG OF FIRE-MAKING EQUIPMENT

In the shrubbery.

THE POLICEMAN OPENS THE BAG AND LOOKS THROUGH
IT

CUT TO:

Lilian: And afterwards?

Violet: You'll come to my house in Doncaster; Harry goes
back to his parents.

Lilian: Right. I best get packing, then.

Annie: Good luck. Fortune favours the brave.

Violet: See you soon, Lilian.

MABEL, ANNIE & VIOLET LEAVE

CUT TO:

Policeman 2: Looks like you were lucky to wake up when you
did, or we might be investigating your murder.
Would you know them again, do you think?

Mary: I never forget a face. And there's this.

SHE HANDS A NEWSPAPER TO THE POLICEMAN

Policeman 2: An old copy of the Chronicle? That doesn't give
us much to go on.

Mary: Look here. Someone's made a note of a name. Miss
Violet Key-Jones.

Policeman 2: Well, well, well. You've been a great help, Mrs
Beecroft.

CUT TO:

Lilian: You ever made a fuse before, Lottie?

Lottie: No.

Lilian: It didn't look like it. Here - I'll show you. You take the cotton wool, you tease it out, and you twist it. Not too tight, or the paraffin don't soak in proper.

Lottie: So you're staying in Doncaster after tonight?

Lilian: Looks like it. For a while at least. It's best to wait 'til things die down before moving on.

Lottie: And then where?

Lilian: Who knows? Depends where the jobs need doing.

Lottie: But you might come back here?

Lilian: I don't know. (PAUSE) Would you like me to?

Lottie: Yes. I mean, it's been fun having you here.

Lilian: Fun?

Lottie: Not for you, I know, when you were so poorly to start with, but since then, it's been... exciting. Hasn't it?

LILIAN KISSES HER

Lilian: How was that?

Lottie: What did you do that for?

Lilian: I thought it might be...exciting. And I wanted to do it.

Lottie: Do you always just do what you want?

Lilian: Pretty much, yeah.

Lottie: You should have asked, Lilian. You can't just -

Lilian: Why? What would you have said?

Lottie: No. I'd have said no.

Lilian: Your head would say no, wouldn't it? What about the rest of you?

Lottie: I've got to go. Sorry about the fuse. Good luck with it.

SHE LEAVES

Lilian: Shit.

MABEL ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE

Mabel: Lilian and my Harry, they both went to prison for what they did that night - or didn't do. They say there's no smoke without fire, don't they? But there was in this case. Harry was in court within the week, and straight off to Wakefield Gaol for twelve months hard labour. I couldn't see him, 'cause we weren't married. But I knew he weren't eating, and her neither. Under the new act, when he got too weak, they had to let him out. He was in a bad way. And that's when they started the game: Cat and Mouse.

AS SHE CONTINUES, WE SEE HARRY BEING DISCHARGED FROM PRISON, AND TAILED BY TWO POLICEMEN. THIS IS PLAYED 'FOR REAL' IN CONTRAST TO THE SILENT MOVIE STYLE THAT IT IS ABOUT TO BECOME

That's what we call it. If you've ever seen a cat playing with a mouse, you'll know why. As soon as he walked out of the prison gates, Harry had police following him, watching him, just waiting for him to get strong enough to be taken back to gaol. Her too. Cat and Mouse. It's cruel. But it's also risky. I mean, you don't

always know how it's going to turn out, do you?
Once in a while, the mouse gets clean away.

SCENE 9

THIS SCENE IS PLAYED AS SILENT MOVIE, USING
EITHER SIDE OF THE GAUZE AS A MEANS TO MOVE
BETWEEN LOCATIONS (LEEDS/YORK; INSIDE/OUTSIDE
HOUSES). THERE IS LIVE PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT AND
PROJECTED TEXT PLATES

Screen: CAT AND MOUSE!

Screen: HARRY AND HIS FRIENDS ARRIVE IN YORK. 'TAXI FOR
HEWORTH, PLEASE!'

HARRY & A NUMBER OF POLICEMEN SQUEEZE INTO A
TAXI. SEVERAL ATTEMPTS AT GETTING EVERYONE IN;
SITTING ON LAPS ETC. ON THE JOURNEY, ONE SMOKES
A PIPE, ANOTHER EATS A LARGE SAUSAGE

THEY ARRIVE AT ANNIE'S HOUSE. THERE ARE ALREADY
POLICEMEN OUTSIDE IT

Screen: DONCASTER POLICE ARE AWED BY THE GRANDEUR OF
HEWORTH!

DONCASTER POLICEMEN HOLD BACK AWKWARDLY / PUSH
EACH OTHER FORWARD WHEN ANNIE OPENS THE DOOR.
THEY DOFF THEIR CAPS AND SALUTE HER. FINALLY
THE ONE AT THE BACK GIVES A SHOVE AND HARRY AND
'HIS' POLICEMEN ALL FILE IN. THE DOOR CLOSES.
THE DOOR OPENS AGAIN, AND THE POLICEMEN FILE
OUT, THE LAST ONE WITH ANNIE'S BOOT UP HIS
BACKSIDE. THEY TAKE UP POSITIONS OUTSIDE THE
HOUSE. FOCUS MOVES TO LEEDS

Screen: MEANWHILE, IN LEEDS, POLICE ARE KEEPING A
CAREFUL EYE ON MISS LENTON!

LILIAN STEPS OUT OF THE HOUSE. SHE EYES THE POLICEMEN, WHO ARE ALL ASLEEP. THEN SHE WAKES THEM WITH A FINGER WHISTLE, AND IMMEDIATELY STARTS SIMPERING AND FLIRTING WITH THEM, ACCEPTING FLOWERS, PLAYING WITH THEIR WHISTLES (!) AND EVEN KISSING ONE ON THE CHEEK – CONVINCING THEM THAT SHE IS COMPLETELY HARMLESS. SHE BLOWS THEM A FINAL KISS, AND GOES BACK INTO THE HOUSE. FOCUS MOVES TO YORK

Screen: HOW WILL HARRY AVOID DETECTION? THE SEARCH FOR A DISGUISE...

HARRY, VIOLET, ANNIE & ARTHUR SIT ON 4 CHAIRS, ALL WEARING HATS. THE MEN SWAP HATS. FUNNY. THE WOMEN SWAP HATS. ALSO FUNNY. THE MEN AND THE WOMEN SWAP HATS. HILARIOUS. MOMENT OF REALISATION. HARRY TAKES OFF HIS OUTER CLOTHES AND PUTS ON ANNIE'S (SHE IS LEFT IN UNDERWEAR). FOCUS MOVES TO LEEDS

Screen: ESCAPE SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE FOR LILIAN!

LEONORA AND LILIAN PEER OUT OF THE WINDOW AT THE POLICEMEN ON GUARD, WAVING FLIRTATIVELY IF CAUGHT AT IT. LEONORA HAS AN IDEA. PICKS UP THE PHONE. FOCUS MOVES TO YORK

Screen: EVERY PRETTY GIRL NEEDS A BEAU!

UNDER GREAT DURESS, ARTHUR IS BEING RELIEVED OF HIS CLOTHES, WHICH ARE PUT ON BY VIOLET. ARTHUR IS NOW ALSO IN HIS UNDERWEAR. OUTSIDE, THE POLICEMEN PLAY CARDS. FOCUS MOVES TO LEEDS

Screen: THE GUESTS ARRIVE FOR MRS COHEN'S 'AT HOME'

A SUCCESSION OF HEAVILY VEILED WOMEN MAKE THEIR WAY TO LEONORA'S DOOR. AS EACH ONE ARRIVES, THE POLICEMEN STAND UP, BOW SLIGHTLY, OPEN THE DOOR, ACT POLITELY ETC. COMICALLY, THEY GO THROUGH THIS FOR ABOUT 30 WOMEN. FOCUS MOVES TO YORK

Screen: WHAT A HANDSOME COUPLE!

ARTHUR & ANNIE ARE NOW DRESSED IN VIOLET & HARRY'S CLOTHES. THEY PAIR UP, LINKING ARMS IN EVERY POSSIBLE CONFIGURATION OF PAIRINGS, UNTIL THEY FINALLY RESOLVE ON ARTHUR & HARRY (DRESSED AS A WOMAN) AND ANNIE & VIOLET (DRESSED AS A MAN). FOCUS MOVES TO LEEDS

Screen: DRAWING A VEIL OVER PROCEEDINGS...

LEONORA AND LILIAN ALSO PUT ON VEILS. THE CROWD OF WOMEN CELEBRATE WITH A LITTLE DANCE. FOCUS MOVES TO YORK

Screen: A TWILIGHT STROLL, MY DEAR?

THE TWO COUPLES EMERGE FROM THE HOUSE. THE POLICEMEN, RECOGNISING NONE OF THEM, TIP THEIR HATS AS THEY GO PAST. AS THE COUPLES WALK OFF IN OPPOSING DIRECTIONS, THE POLICEMEN RETURN TO SMOKING PIPES, SNOOZING & PLAYING CARDS. FOCUS MOVES TO LEEDS

Screen: IT'S A WAITING GAME!

THE WOMEN - INCLUDING LEONORA AND LILIAN CHARGE OUT OF THE HOUSE AND SCATTER IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THE POLICEMEN ARE IN DISARRAY, CHECKING INSIDE THE HOUSE, NOT KNOWING WHICH WOMEN TO CHASE ETC ETC. THEY END UP RUNNING INTO EACH OTHER, FALLING OVER - THE FULL KEYSTONE COPS

Screen: OUTNUMBERED AND OUTWITTED!

THOSE CLEVER MICE IN YORK AND LEEDS

CONFOUND THE CATS WITH CUNNING DEEDS!

MUSIC? IN FRONT OF THE GAUZE, TWO POLICEMEN LIE ENTANGLED ON THE GROUND. EDITH MILNER ENTERS, VEILED, CARRYING A BASKET OF SHOPPING. SHE STEPS OVER/AROUND THEM, PUTS DOWN HER BASKET, AND PULLS HER HOUSE KEYS OUT OF HER POCKET. THE POLICEMEN POUNCE ON HER. ONE OF THEM BLOWS HIS WHISTLE

P'man 3: Not so fast, sweetheart!

Edith: Sweetheart? Unhand me this instant!

OTHER POLICE RETURN

P'man 4: We got one, Sarge!

Edith: This is an outrage! Release me immediately, constable! Do you know who I am?

P'man 3: Well, you may not be Mrs Pankhurst herself, but you're sure as hell one of her cronies.

Edith: I beg your pardon!

Sergeant: Let's see, shall we?

THEY PULL BACK HER VEIL, REVEALING A THUNDEROUS
EXPRESSION

Miss Milner!

P'man 4: D'you know her, Sarge?

Edith: He most certainly does. I sit on the board of Police Commissioners for Yorkshire.

P'man 3: Cripes!

POLICEMAN 4 THUMPS POLICEMAN 3'S ARM

P'man 4: Sorry, Ma'am.

P'man 3: We thought you were -

Edith: I know what you thought I was, and I have never been so insulted in my life!

P'man 4: Please accept our apologies.

Edith: Accept this, you brutes! And this! ETC...

EDITH STARTS THROWING FRUIT / VEG AT THEM, FROM HER BASKET. THEY FLEE

SCENE 10

LILIAN STANDS WITH A SUITCASE, READING A LETTER. LOTTIE SITS IN THE SITTING ROOM. SHE HAS JUST WRITTEN THE LETTER

Lottie: Dear Lilian

I have no idea of whether this letter will find you, but I feel I must write it nonetheless. We parted on bad terms, and I am sorry for that. I owe a great deal to Mrs Seymour-Pearson for showing me what the world is, and how we might change it. And the reason I left so abruptly is that I was afraid of disgracing both her and myself. I was afraid of what you were showing me, and I ran; not from you - but from myself.

Lilian: Maybe one day I will stop running. And if I do, I hope very much that we will meet again.

With fondest regards, Lottie.

Well!

SHE SMILES, FOLDS THE LETTER CAREFULLY AND PUTS IT IN HER POCKET

SCENE 11

THE HOUSE LIGHTS COME UP SLIGHTLY. PATHE NEWS FOOTAGE OF THE 1913 DERBY, INCLUDING NEWS OF THE DEATH AND FUNERAL OF EMILY WILDING DAVISON (THOUGH PROBABLY OMITTING THE DREADFUL MOMENT ITSELF). AS IT IS STARTING, NEWSPAPER SELLERS

ENTER THE AUDITORIUM, SELLING PAPERS COVERING THE STORY. THE AUDIENCE, JOINED BY THE PUBLIC OF 1913, IS AGAIN THE AUDIENCE AT AN EARLY CINEMA. ON STAGE, WOMEN DRESSED IN WHITE WITH PURPLE SASHERS FORM A CROWD, AS IF LINING THE STREET AS E W-D'S CORTEGE PASSED THROUGH LONDON. ANNIE ENTERS WEARILY, IN MOURNING, AND REMOVES HER HAT AND GLOVES

Annie: (TO THE AUDIENCE) Emily Wilding Davison. She was from Morpeth, you know. And everyone thinks it was all about London. That's what history does, sometimes: gives things a false perspective. But when you're really there, living it... And I was. I was at the funeral. Not that I knew her - it just... Well, Morpeth's not that far from York, is it? And it seemed like...the least I could do. (PAUSE) After what she did.

HER FACE CRUMPLES. THE FILM IS STILL RUNNING. ARTHUR ENTERS

Arthur: How was it?

Annie: I don't know. Sad. Shocking. Thrilling. Is that terrible?

Arthur: I don't think so.

Annie: It's such a waste. I mean, she was brave and brilliant and educated and imaginative, and it counted for nothing. The very fact of her being a woman wiped all of that out. If she'd been a man, she wouldn't just have had a vote, she'd have been in the cabinet! Instead of which, the way she died, those few seconds of - what, courage? Madness? That's all she'll be remembered for.

Arthur: Martyrs only become martyrs when they die. Until then, they're just fanatics.

Annie: Martyrdom? Is that what you think it was?

Arthur: I've no idea - but it's what it's become.

HE KISSES HER FOREHEAD

Don't brood.

HE LEAVES

Annie: (TO THE AUDIENCE) Lilian always said there'd be a death at some point.

Millicent: We all thought it would come through brutality or hunger striking -

Woman 9: Or an accident with a fire.

Woman 10: Not a woman standing in the path of a horse at full gallop - as if she could stop it just with principle and determination.

Millicent: It was lunacy!

Woman 11: Maybe not. Maybe she believed she could succeed, the same way we all do.

Woman 10: What's several hundredweight of horse compared to the weight of history, eh?

Woman 9: Yeah. And we keep on standing up to that, don't we?

ANNIE TAKES A SWIG OF HER PORT, AND TURNS TO LOOK AT THE SCREEN. ON A LOOP, THE FILM IS AGAIN OF THE RACE

Annie: Turn it off. I can't bear any more.

IT CLICKS OFF ABRUPTLY. THE WOMEN EXIT. VIOLET & LOTTIE ENTER. THEY START TO PACK AWAY THE PILES OF PROTEST MATERIAL, BANNERS ETC IN ANNIE'S SITTING ROOM

1913, that was. You know what's coming, don't you?

Better than we did.

SCENE 12

THE FAMOUS KITCHENER POSTER (YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU!) IS PROJECTED ONTO THE GAUZE

Annie: The thing is, you can't fight two wars at once.

LILIAN & LEONORA ENTER, CARRYING A CHAIR AND TABLE, WHICH THEY USE TO TURN THE SPACE INTO A RECRUITING OFFICE

Lilian: We couldn't, and nor could the government. By the time they caught up with me, I was working as a medical orderly in Serbia. What were they going to do? Send me back to prison?

Leonora: Most of us weren't the sort of women who stand back when there's something needs doing.

YOUNG MEN ENTER TO SIGN UP, ACCOMPANIED BY MOTHERS, WIVES, CHILDREN ETC. VIOLET ENTERS WITH WILLIAM

Violet: So there was a kind of uneasy truce. We hadn't finished our fight, but we had to hold our fire, and join theirs.

Annie: And we were never just fighting for us.

MABEL IS WATCHING AS HARRY SIGNS UP

If you can make the world a fairer place, it's fairer for everyone.

Mabel: There was nothing fair about this war, mum.

Annie: No. I didn't mean that.

Mabel: (TO THE AUDIENCE) I lost him – my Harry. First day of the Somme. And you know what? That funeral – Emily Davison’s funeral. All of that, for one woman. And when I think of the thousands of boys, buried face down in mud, and no flowers, or hymns, or eulogies, or crowds on the street...

Annie: (TRYING TO DRAW HER GENTLY AWAY FROM THE AUDIENCE) Come on, Mabel.

Mabel: No. I’ve not done. Because if you’re thinking that it just made me give up, well – you’re wrong.

Eliza: Every sweetheart, every wife, every mother, every sister, when we gave our boys – didn’t we prove our patriotism?

Mabel: Didn’t Lilian, binding up those broken bodies? Didn’t Leonora, working day and night in a munitions factory? I’m not giving up. Not now. Not ever.

Annie: (TO AUDIENCE) They did come to an end, both wars. And we won them both, I suppose, though neither of them were exactly victories. More messy than that – more partial. The men that came home – they all got given the vote – not just those with money and property. Because the German guns don’t care about your class or whether you own your home, do they? So why should the ballot box? All those farm-boys and miners and dockers, and us too – well, some of us. In 1918, it did come – for some of us – votes for women.

A GROUP IN MODERN DRESS ENTERS WITH A TRESTLE TABLE, BALLOT BOXES, VOTING BOOTHS ETC & SETS THEM UP. A POLLING STATION SIGN. IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE OUR COMPANY AS THEMSELVES, IN YORK, TODAY. MABEL, VIOLET & LEONORA REMOVE THEIR 1918 CLOTHES, REVEALING MODERN DRESS. THE ACTORS REVERT TO THEMSELVES

But not with the cheering and banner waving we might have once imagined.

Just a quiet determination to make it count.

SHE STEPS UP TO THE TABLE

After all that noise – shouting and screaming to make ourselves heard –

SHE IS HANDED HER BALLOT PAPER BY A MAN

(TO MAN) Thank you (TO THE AUDIENCE AGAIN) – it came down to the scratch of pencil on paper.

SHE MARKS HER PAPER

It was only the first step. But it was an important one.

SHE PLACES HER VOTING SLIP IN THE BALLOT BOX, AN EDWARDIAN ANOMALY AMONG MODERN VOTERS. A BOY HANDS HER A NEWSPAPER (FROM THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, 11 FEB 1918)

(READING) A great victory, and the stepping stone, it may be, to greater.

Modern woman: For the vote, in itself is nothing; it is valuable only for what it symbolises and may bring: a recognition of human equality.

Modern YP 1: From that everything follows:

Modern YP 2: dignity,

Modern YP3: usefulness,

Effie: self-development,

Modern YP 4: achievement.

A MODERN WOMAN IS APPROACHING THE POLLING STATION, WITH 2 DAUGHTERS (ALICE & CLARA IN MODERN DRESS). AS SHE LOOKS FOR HER POLLING CARD IN HER BAG, SHE BUMPS INTO ANNIE. THEY AUTOMATICALLY APOLOGISE, THEN NOTICE ONE

ANOTHER. THE WOMAN LOOKS BEMUSED AT THE
APPEARANCE OF THIS ANOMOLOUS WOMAN. ANNIE
REACHES OUT AND STROKES THE CHEEK OF ONE OF THE
GIRLS. THE WOMAN GENTLY LEADS HER DAUGHTERS
AWAY

ANNIE WATCHES THE WOMAN STEP INTO THE BOOTH,
THEN LEAVES, WATCHED BY THE DAUGHTERS

SONG

Somewhere there's a place where I stood,
Where the rocks and hammers flew
And the coppers' whistles blew
But we held the ground as firm as we could,
And the woman at my elbow
Pressed her lips against my ear:
Everything is possible.

Somewhere there's a place where I lay,
As the boots and the fists
Bruised the face my mother kissed
And my broken lips parted to say
To my daughter at my elbow
As she clung to me in fear:

Everything is possible.

Somewhere there's a place where I'll lie,

Where the battles that I fought

And the freedoms we all bought

Are forgotten underneath a quiet sky.

And all of these places

Are spaces we carved out for you.

And we pass on the justice

We fought for and won for you too.

So lift up your eyes,

Raise up your voice,

Let your spirit rise,

Let your spirit rise!

And down the years let it ring

Let it shout, let it sing

Everything is possible!

But I'll still be at your elbow

And I'll whisper in your ear

Everything...

END