

Scene Twenty-One

(👁👁 HR, JW set in front of mirrors)

LX 193

(Val and Frank.)

(👁👁 HR, JW sit down, butts hit heels)

LX 195

SO P1

VAL

I've got it all worked out.

(Val pulls up her shirt.)

Look. I marked the place with a biro. That's where the knife has to go in. I can't do it to myself.

FRANK

I can't even kill a dog.

VAL

I've been feeling happy all day because I decided.

FRANK

You marked the place with a biro.

VAL

I know it's funny but I want it to work.

FRANK

It's ridiculous.

VAL

Just say you love me and put the knife in and hold me till it's over.

(Val gives Frank the knife.)

FRANK

We don't have to do this.

(silence)

VAL

Say you love me.

FRANK

You know that.

VAL
But say it.

FRANK
I nearly did it. I nearly killed you.

(He throws the knife down.)

VAL
Do it. Do it.

FRANK
How can I?

VAL
Just do it.

(silence)

FRANK
Are you cold? I'm shivering. Let's have a fire and some tea. Eh, Val?

(Frank picks up an axe and is about to go out.)

Remember-

VAL
What?

FRANK
Early on. It wasn't going to be like this.

(silence)

Why do you-?

VAL
What?

FRANK
All right then. All right.

(👁👁 JW Second hand on Axe)

LX 198
SO R1

(He kills her with the axe. He puts her body in the wardrobe. He sits on the floor with his back against the wardrobe door. She comes in from the other side.)

VAL

It's dark. I can see through you. No, you're better now.

LX 205

SO R_{I,I}

FRANK. Does it go on?

VAL

SB WALLS OUT

There's so much happening. There's all those people and I know about them. There's a girl who died. I saw you put me in the wardrobe, I was up by the ceiling, I watched. I could have gone but I wanted to stay with you and I found myself coming back in.

SO S_I

There's so many of them all at once. He drowned in the river carrying his torch and they saw the light shining up through the water. There's the girl again, a long time ago when they believed in boggarts. The boy died of measles in the first war. The girl, I'll try and

(HR stand Up)

LX 206

tell you about her and keep the others out. A lot of children died that winter and she's still white and weak though it's nearly time to wake the spring- stand at the door at dawn and

WALLS OUT

when you see a green mist rise from the fields you throw out bread and salt, and that gets the boggarts to make everything grow again. She's getting whiter and sillier and she

LX 208

wants the spring. She says maybe the green mist will make her strong. So every day they're waiting for the green mist. I can't keep them out. Her baby died starving. She died

SO T_I

starving. Who? She says if the green mist don't come tomorrow she can't wait. 'If I could see spring again I wouldn't ask to live longer than one of the cowslips, at the gate.' The

mother says, 'Hush, the boggarts'll hear you.' Next day, the green mist. It's sweet, can you smell it? Her mother carries her to the door. She throws out bread and salt. The earth is

SO U_I

awake, Every day she's stronger, the cowslips are budding, she's running everywhere.

She's so strange and beautiful they can hardly look. Is that all? A boy talks to her at the

gate. He picks a cowslip without much noticing. 'Did you pick that?' She's a wrinkled

white dead thing like the cowslip. There's so many, I can't keep them out. They're not all

dead. There's someone crying in her sleep. It's Becky.

FRANK

I can hear her.

SO V_I

VAL

She's having a nightmare. She's running downstairs away from Angela. She's out on the road but she can't run fast enough. She's running on her hands and feet to go faster, she's swimming up the road, she's trying to fly but she can't get up because Angela's after her, and she gets to school and sits down at her desk. But the teacher's Angela. She comes nearer. But she knows how to wake herself up, she's done it before, she doesn't run away, she must hurl herself at Angela- jump! jump! and she's falling- but it's wrong, instead of waking up in bed she's falling into another dream and she's here.

LX 210

(Becky is there.)

BECKY

I want to wake up.

VAL

It's my fault.

BECKY

I want to wake up. Angela beats me. She shuts me in the dark. She put a cigarette on my arm. She's here.

(Angela is there.)

(EN stands UP)

LX 213

ANGELA

Becky, do you feel it? I don't, not yet. There's a pain somewhere. I can see so far and nothing's coming. I stand in a field and I'm not there. I have to make something happen. I can hurt you, can't I? You feel it, don't you? Let me burn you. I have to hurt you worse. I think I can feel something. It's my own pain. I must be here if it hurts.

SO W_I

BECKY

You can't, I won't, I'm not playing. You're not here.

(Nell crosses on stilts.)

(CD Crosses)

LX 216

SO X_I

NELL

I was walking out on the fen. The sun spoke to me. It said, 'Turn back, turn back.' I said, 'I won't turn back for you or anyone.'

(Nell goes. Shirley is ironing the field.)

(EC stands UP)

LX 219

SHIRLEY

My grandmother told me her grandmother said when times were bad they'd mutilate the cattle. Go out in the night and cut a sheep's throat or hamstring a horse or stab a cow with a fork. They didn't take the sheep, they didn't want the meat. She stabbed a lamb. She slashed a foal. 'What for?' I said. They felt quieter after that. I cried for the hurt animals. I'd forgotten that. I'd forgotten what it was like to be unhappy. I don't want to.

FRANK

I've killed the only person I love.

VAL

It's what I wanted.

FRANK. You should have wanted something different.

VAL

My mother wanted to be a singer. That's why she'd never sing.

(Into Opera)

LX 222

(May is there. She sings. That is, we hear, as if she were singing, a fragment of opera.)

SO Z_I**END OF PLAY**

(High Note)

LX 225

(Crescendo of Opera)

LX 228

(BOWS)

LX 230

SO AA