

A CRITICAL ESSAY AND ORIGINAL PLAY ENTITLED 'THE CANARY AND
THE PIANO'

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contains two parts. Part A is a critical analysis of an original work. Part A explores the process employed in writing, beginning with the initial ideas and inspiration for the play through developing the characters, a theme, plotting a story and redrafting. Part A is segmented into the writing process of each of the five drafts.

Part B is the original work of the play entitled *The Canary and the Piano*. The play is set in a new flat on the redevelopment of a former Victorian asylum in Menston, West Yorkshire. The play follows the character of Ruth, a seventeen year old, sent to do community service on a memorial garden for the hospital's patients as a consequence for breaking into the derelict asylum. While working on the garden Ruth stays with Maud, a retired psychiatric nurse. Ruth's visit forces Maud to face the guilt and regret with which she is plagued as her past returns to haunt her.

PART A
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. THE ORIGINAL IDEA

Inspiration for *The Canary and the Piano* struck in the summer of 2007 when watching an episode of the BBC's *How We Built Britain*. An element of the episode focussed on High Royds hospital (the former West Yorkshire Pauper Lunatic Asylum). The asylum immediately captured my attention and fired my imagination. Presenter David Dimbleby described the Victorian building from afar: "It looks like, a sort of fairytale town. It is a town but no fairytale. It is a town for the insane" (BBC 2007). I became fascinated that such a small, seemingly benign Yorkshire village like Menston had on the outskirts, a vast, imposing Victorian asylum. As shots of the beautifully ornate building flashed across the screen, the incongruity of the beauty of the building and its function as an asylum began to resonate in my mind. I began to imagine life behind those stained glass windows; the hopes, dreams, fears and secrets of those who had lived there began to emerge. Aware of the stigma still attached to mental health sufferers today, coupled with my interest in the keen debate about closing asylums in favour of Care in the Community, I felt there was potential for an interesting and topical drama to unfold. Edgar, quoting critic Adam Muller's belief wrote: " 'Drama should stand between the market place and the church' serving as a link between the concerns of everyday life and those of eternity." (qtd. in Edgar, 82)

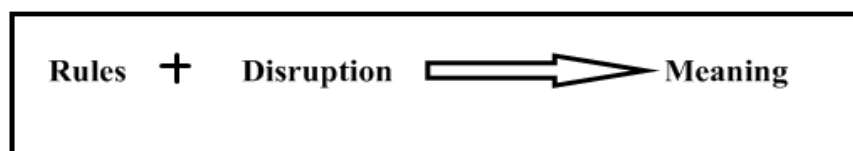
Images provided the starting point for my play just as images provided Arthur Miller a starting point for writing *All My Sons*: "The play grew from a series of simple images. From a little frame house on a street of little frame houses, which had once been loud with the noise of growing boys and then was empty and silent and finally

occupied with strangers” (Miller 12). The image of High Royds, an empty, solitary, echoing building, having once been home to the thousands of patients, being redeveloped into houses and flats, shares a connection with the image which inspired Miller. A place may change to the point where it appears unrecognisable, yet by scratching the surface traces of the history surrounding the lives of former occupants are still very much present. The image of a field on the High Royds site which has a small plaque on the gate informing the reader that the open space is not a field, but a final resting place for 2,858 pauper patients of the asylum is an example of the past still being present. I intended the redevelopment of High Royds to be connected to the characterisation of old Maud who holds myriad dark secrets and deep regrets beneath her steely exterior.

In stark contrast to the foreboding image of the mass graveyard, the breathtaking full sized ballroom in the heart of the asylum shown on *How We Built Britain* introduced me to an unexpected dimension of the history of Britain’s asylums. The weekly balls, in which the segregated male and female patients escaped the confinement of their wards and came together to dance, provided an evocative, enchanting image. Katharine Drake’s nineteenth century painting entitled ‘A Lunatics’ Ball’ “Depicted a group of patients whirling around in glee whilst others are roused from their apathetic state as they gaze with a slight smile upon the scene” (Gilman 149). Although perhaps fleeting, such rare moments of happiness for the patients were an early sign that despite the patchy progress in diagnosing and treating patients afflicted with mental illness, there has always been the intention at least on the part of some to better the lives of the afflicted souls. Through research I discovered that at High Royds in the 1960s, a canary and a piano were placed in every

ward to cheer the patients. In the midst of reading awful accounts of abuse that taken place, the canary and the piano shone like a beacon of hope. I intended from the outset to embody the positive images of hope; the ball, canary and the piano provided at the heart of the play. The character of a young passionate nurse who rages against the Dickensian style the nursing Matron promotes is a representative emblem of hope. In a lecture on *Shaping a Scene*, David Edgar explained that when rules are counteracted with disruption, meaning is found (7 Oct 08).

A formula for creating meaning in a play



In the young nurse's case, by disrupting the draconian rules, hope for change in attitudes and caring for the mentally ill is established.

From the three prominent images of High Royds I began work on expanding ideas to create a story. I brain-stormed ideas about characters, events and possible scenes, not wanting to be restricted by Aristotle's view that: "This event should follow that by necessary or probable sequence." (Aristotle 28). I, too, as playwright Anthony Weigh explained about his writing process, began to develop a sequence of fractured scenes which were intended to be connected together and create an interesting rhythm of plot (27 Oct 08). I initially chose this method, preferring it to focussing on structuring a plot because I believed an interesting unconventional story could gradually emerge through the writing process. The resultant episodic structure,

as a product of this process I felt would aptly reflect the subject matter of lives connected to the asylum. I have learnt through the writing process and subsequent drafts that this approach was not as effective as first anticipated. This will be discussed further throughout the course of the thesis.

2. THE FIRST DRAFT

Incorporating dialect and a splattering of thoughts.

Mark Edward's website about High Royds hospital has proven to be a wonderful resource to refer to throughout the writing process. The site has been particularly useful during the early stages of writing when it was necessary to broaden my own understanding of life inside the asylum. The time lines, accounts from staff and patients and the extensive range of photographs ranging from 1888 to the present day have been invaluable. Sifting through the extensive range of information, I began searching for fragments of history which could be connected to the three prominent images I intended to incorporate into a play. It was important to have knowledge of the fragments of history ranging from the first treatments of Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT) through to accounts of the daily routines in the wards, in order give the events and characters I wrote about credibility. It was however, incredibly easy to become lost in the vast array of information available. Appreciating Brook's belief that, "Life in theatre is more readable and intense because it is more concentrated" (qtd. in Edgar 9) I knew a focussed approach to research and representation for the stage was necessary. I began to ask myself what it was I wanted to achieve from the play. With a plethora of information readily available on public websites about asylums, I began to closely consider what I could offer to an audience? What could I theatricalise and bring a fresh dimension to?

One detailed account of former nurse, Barbara Green's time as a trainee mental health nurse during the early 1960s, inspired an outline for the character of Maud:

When I entered psychiatric nursing in 1963 I was a shy awkward seventeen year old girl who knew very little about anything. I had answered a local advertisement recruiting girls to become student nurses at High Royds Hospital and (sic), for no better reason than I wanted to leave home (Green 1975).

The potential for telling a young nurse's story, the challenges and shocking experiences had, I felt, dramatic potential. Taking the outline for Maud's character, I began to visualise her in two different time periods. One in which a young, naive Maud in the 1960s learns how to treat, know and, perhaps more importantly, understand the patients in her care whilst training in the 1960s; the other being a hardened, retired Maud in the present day, still living in Menston weighed down by the burden of her painful experiences. In terms of Emplotment the past would be coming to life in the present and creating the drama (Edgar 09). Having a protagonist deeply scarred by experiences but feeling unable to articulate and make sense of her past, I thought could be contrasted well by having a young woman, eager for the truth of what really happened to patients in the asylum as the antagonist. Thinking about Maud and Ruth and their initial objectives in this way enabled me to decipher a loose train of plot.

In addition to inspiring Maud's character, Green's account helped me understanding how trainee nurses lived and breathed in such a challenging job. Green's memories of the female patients were heart wrenching but a wonderful window into the mysteries of High Royd's past:

There were women of high intelligence, talent and grace, teachers and dancers, war heroines and courtesans, women whose beauty, wit and initiative had once been applauded and feted (Green 1975).

Although I endeavoured to be concise and focussed when incorporating information about the asylum, the first draft of the play was brimming with weedy characters such as Ruth's friend Abbie and sub plots such as Nan's Alzheimer's disease which deviated from my initial intention and had no relevance or connection to the main story. Although the characters of Maud and Ruth were to change for the better in subsequent drafts, they were the flowers of the first draft, struggling to flourish as they were being stifled. This became apparent in the group readings after Christmas when I realised how confused members were. Constructive criticism was also provided when it was suggested that my play lacked drama and was more like a story than a play. I realised my thoughts had splattered onto the page. When explaining the methodology of playwriting, Lin Coghlan described two processes. The first entitled 'Chaos' which is the digging of the subconscious. The second process is 'Ordering' crafting the ideas from the first process into order (18 Nov 08). With my first draft, I had given far greater emphasis to the 'Chaos' process and realised I had a lot of 'ordering' to do in the next draft.

Despite the prominent problems of the first draft, authentic dialogue and a strong dialect were successful elements which were retained in subsequent drafts:

Maud: A big shock that's all. We w're only bairns when y' think 'bout it.

(“The Canary and the Piano”, First Draft, Jan. 09)

Writing in dialect was a must, especially for Maud as she is grounded by place and a strong West Yorkshire dialect helps convey place: “Strange as it may seem, the fact that characters reveal their birthplace, job and bank balance by the way they speak.” (Wright 94). Although not wanting to portray a stereotype, I wanted to portray an authentic stoic Yorkshire woman. As fellow writer on the course Rowena Wilson observed, “it is frustrating that there is a lack of adequate and realistic portrayals of Yorkshire women in the theatre (June, 2009). With older Maud in particular, I wanted to convey a hardened briskness through speech that although delivered in short abrupt lines, is cutting and to the point. By drawing upon strong northern females within my own family to depict Maud’s character, I hope, that as Pirandello believed, that by incorporating a strong dialect “art as a mirror: or rather, life as already formed material” (qtd. In Edgar 42) creating their own region, dialect writers are not defected but live for the richness of their literature (Bassnett, Lorch 44).

3. THE SECOND DRAFT

Plotting through character and creating tension

Feedback from the group in January motivated me to explore more scenes within the 1960s asylum, particularly those in the ward, where in the first draft I had merely described events from the past in scenes set in the present.

Lexie, wheeling on the piano and the caged canary into a ward scene provides a good example of how I sought to show rather than describe a significant event in the play:

Lexie: It's there t' be enjoyed!

Maud: That's not enjoying it Lex. Look!

Lucy grabs Julie's head and begins banging it on the keys.

Maud: Pack in Lucy. That'll hurt/

Lucy: Ge' 'r off. My tea is ready/ Pick me up and pour me out.

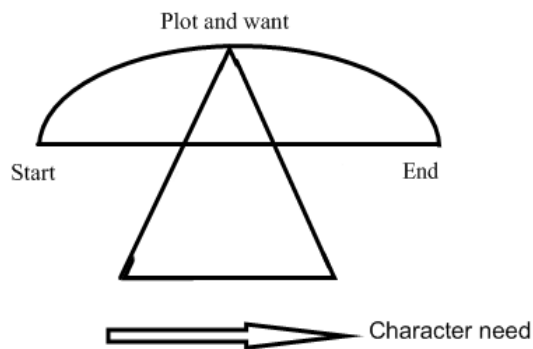
Maud slips in the urine. Lucy and Julie stand close to Maud pointing right in her face and laugh loudly.

("The Canary and the Piano", Draft 2, mar 09)

I discovered such scenes to be more effective because the audience are able to make its own judgement as a result of witnessing for themselves the excitement and buzz created by the actions of the patients on the ward or, Maud's resistance and concern set against Lexie's excitement for something new being introduced to stimulate the patients. This enabled me to delve deeper than the spoken word and express plot through the use of visual image. "In a scene where a relationship is breaking down, what can the characters be doing to show that the relationship is breaking down?" (10 Mar 09). Inspired by Coghlan's film lecture, I have grown in confidence to create opportunities for the visual to do the storytelling. Although theatre is a different medium to that of film, visual storytelling is an element which has a place in both media. In the theatre, story is not limited to being progressed through dialogue, visual images and action can also be powerful conveyors of story.

Having begun to explore the scenes in the past, I began to consider how I could enhance the scenes in the present because I felt there was a worthwhile story to be told but that story however, was unclear. Instead of meticulously planning the plot of the story in the present I hoped that through deepening Maud's character (as she is the glue between the past and present) a more succinct level of story would emerge. As John Galsorth believed: "a human being is the best plot there is" (qtd. In Edgar 43). In order to be a character-driven play, Maud's needs and subsequent change within her character needed to be profound and strong enough to propel the plot from the beginning to the end of the play.

A diagram to show how the need of a character can provide the plot to in a play.



(Coghlan, 11 Nov 08)

I chose to heighten Maud's feelings of guilt for the mistakes she felt she made in her nursing career in order to add weight and depth to the character. The guilt and regret I hoped would provide a stronger link between the two time periods of the play.

In addition to Maud having a place within both time periods, I felt there was also potential for a group of patients from the ward to be developed. Peppering the play with the presence of The Women as a ghostly chorus would I hoped, on one level personify Maud's guilt promoting the past being strongly linked to the present. On a second level presenting The Women allows such true stories of ex-High Royds' patients to be poignantly revealed:

Lexie: *(Flicking through a thick wad of papers)* This is all about one person?

Maud: Theresa.

Doctor: Facts observed by Dr E Rose:

Theresa: No less than six persons should enter her room should she become violent and confinement will be necessary.

Maud: Violent? She's no more violent than my Ros.

Lexie: She's being rehabilitated.

Maud: Here?

Lexie: *(Pointing to the paper)* Look. She was at Broadmoor for years.

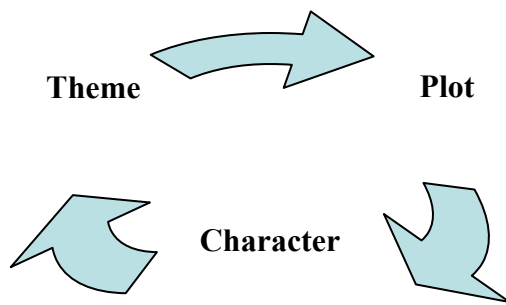
Maud: *(Reading)* "Murdered her children with a hammer."

Silence.

("The Canary and the Piano", Draft 2, mar 09)

Through exploring Maud's guilt in the second draft, I discovered the iterative nature of theme, character and plot in playwriting and how each element is closely linked.

A diagram to show the iterative nature of theme, character and plot.



Any change, even one that would be considered minor, to one of the three elements affects the others too. Changing character for example, will result in the pieces of plot not fitting together as they initially did. By altering the characters of Maud and Ruth, I discovered the whole story of the play changed. Thus my second draft of the play was indeed very different from that of the first.

One of those important themes which began to surface in the second draft was the realisation that you can never truly know a person. As director Stephen Poliakoff said there will always be intrigue in the skeletons in the cupboard. In his television film *Perfect Strangers*, Poliakoff uncovers the surprising stories people carry with them. Thinking about the secrets within and sometimes narrow perspectives people can hold of others, related well to the characters of Maud and Ruth.

Son: I've found out something very surprising, about the old sisters.
Two jolly ones and the silent spooky one.-

Father: Oh for goodness sake. There's nothing you could tell me about those sisters that could be possibly of interest.-

Son: No. This is good.

(Poliakoff 2001).

This sample of the script exemplifies the contrast of objectives between the two characters. The Father's dismissive attitude to the Son possibly having discovered something interesting about the old ladies is set against the Son's eagerness to engage his Father in the story. I find the dissonance of objectives powerfully dramatic and this influenced my portrayal of Maud and Ruth. I began to appreciate the benefit of considering "what each character wants, to place each character as far away from that want as possible and to watch (Weigh, 27 Oct 08)."

4. THE THIRD DRAFT

Focus on structure

Following my supervision in April with Steve Waters, I realised how much my play was suffering from its lack of structure. It dawned on me that on the whole the play was ineffective, chaotic and confusing, mainly because of my early decision demoting the importance of structure. I had finally begun to understand that: “structure is not just a convenient way of organising material, but a conveyor or meaning” (Edgar 99) and that Aristotle had a point when he claimed that whilst “Plot is the first and most important thing” (Aristotle 14). The support of strong well thought-out structure was vital. Like a human body, the unique elements of the play on the surface layer were nothing but blubber without the skeleton structure to hold the play together (Edgar 09).

The first issue Waters and I discussed was the fact I had four levels of story within the play. Deciding to cut the character of Maud’s Mam was one way of tackling the issue. I realised that her character did not need a physical presence but the effect upon Maud of the circumstances of her death as a patient at High Royds could still be powerful. Mam not being present did not mean the motivation for Maud wanting to become a psychiatric nurse was not evident.

Having made a cut back, I needed to assess which elements needed to be developed. My second supervisor Kara Reilly, highlighted the potential for The Women to have a larger role, to allow their individual stories room to grow. Having implemented the women in the second draft as ghostly choric device, I was aware that some critics believe the use of such devices to be: “crude fixatives to patch up the

mechanical failures of the medium of theatre” (Edgar, 2009; 54). Through writing the scene in which Maud and Lexie read the women’s case notes revealing how each woman came to be patient was an early attempt in breaking the confines of the women merely being a ghostly chorus. Acting upon Kara’s advice enabled me to further develop each woman as an individual, deepening the pathos of their situation at High Royds. This was something I was keen to fulfil from the outset.

Waters suggested that instead of having the case notes revealed consecutively in one scene, it would be better to stagger the case notes across the play. Thus the audience would stand a better chance of absorbing and appreciating the story of each Woman if they were interwoven throughout the play. Inspiration was sparked to use *The Women* to structure the play beginning by laying out the plot in the present and then separating the plot in the past I could clearly see the points of connection and contrast and how they could be linked through *The Women*. Wanting to retain the two act structure, I envisaged two lengthy scenes within each act. Reducing the number of ‘women’ to four, I decided each scene would be allocated to one of *The Women*. In subsequent drafts however, I found the lengthy scenes to be ineffective and potentially problematic for a director and actors as so much was happening in each scene. To remedy this I looked for natural scene breaks.

The revelation of each of *The Women*’s stories and circumstances were not hindered through breaking the larger scenes into smaller scenes. The strong focus on each of the stories, conveyed through monologues, memories from a scene within the asylum and of, course, the reading of the case notes remained.

During the performed readings in June, I felt the matter-of-fact case note readings had more resonance when sequenced after the characters monologues and true situations had been revealed. Director Jenny Stephens instructed the actors playing *The Women* to perform the case notes with muted colour to contrast the heart felt delivery of the monologues and memories. As rounded characters, characters with hopes, dreams, and concerns, all the traits of real, recognisable people, their situation at High Royds is more evocative.

Poet John Clare's poignant and emotive poem *I Am*, concerning his own experiences within an asylum, linked well with the situation of the characters in my play. When I first came across the poem, with every line I read I could hear a character whispering the line as they connected and empathised with it. Incorporating the whispered lines of the poem throughout the play I hoped would be intriguing and would compliment the other devices to convey *The Women's* stories.

Planning a programme (a shopping list of elements I wanted to include in each scene (Edgar 09)) and the sequence in which those elements occurred, helped achieve focus and clarity within my own mind as to how each scene contributed to the play as a whole and how the plot was progressing. Maintaining the two time periods and moving between them however, I still felt was important, and that both time periods contributed to the play. Despite my precise planning I still intended the play to progress in terms of plot, but not in a linear fashion: "disrupted time is a way of dramatising women's traditional experience, which has often been characterised as more circular and less linear than men's" (Edgar 111). With an all female cast I felt such an approach would be appropriate.

Inspired by Shelagh Stephenson's 1999 play *An Experiment with an Air Pump*, I wanted to achieve a fluid transition between time periods using the same setting. I chose to do this through focussing on parallels in emotion and Maud's memory being triggered. For example at the end of Act 2 Scene 1, the shock conveyed by Theresa at witnessing the beheading of the canary as the piano lid is slammed on it is carried through into the present as Ruth is shocked and moved having discovered the paupers' graveyard. Director Jenny Stephens, when working on the script in preparation for the rehearsed reading of the play, described the transitions as being "a strength of the play".

Through retaining the contrasting time periods and developing connections, considering the impact of the contrasts provided a further challenge in the third draft. In his lecture on Devices, David Edgar discussed the advantages of plays which have gaps in time. Edgar highlighted the potential for change to be conveyed (7 Oct 08). In comparing the overcrowded wards of High Royds in 1964 to the same wards which lie empty today, I wanted to incorporate the change as the institutionalised Asylum mental health system gives way to care within the community. It was never my intention to be didactic in approaching the debate. The primary reason for this is because the debate is so immense. As reported in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* the change was intended to be a positive one "a movement away from the isolation of the mentally ill in old Victorian asylums towards their integration into the community" (Iqbal 26 Nov 08). Despite the positive intentions, care in the community is frequently criticised "Britain's Care in the Community programme has become a sick joke (...)

Closing the grim Victorian asylums once seemed a bold vision. Yet for all their faults, they did at least give sanctuary to the most troubled and troublesome of those suffering severe forms of mental illness” (qtd. in Bannister 23)

The monumental changes in approaches to mental health care are clearly a very important issue but with there not being scope within my play to fully convey the complexities of the debate I sought to include a section of a scene in which Ruth’s curiosity as to why High Royds has been closed is aroused:

Ruth gently opens the box and gets out the Scrabble pieces.

Ruth: Did y’ play this with the patients?

Maud pauses and looks up at Ruth for a moment.

Maud: I think we did ‘ave it on our ward in later years. Some would ‘ave a go at it. ‘Ad t’ make sure it were only the board they were putting letters on.

Ruth: I don’t get why they shut that place. There’s still mental people... People with mental problems isn’t there?

Maud: Always ‘as been, always will be.

(“The Canary and the Piano”, Third draft, apr 09)

In order to gain a better understanding of the situation, Ruth probes Maud with questions while Maud remains objective in her explanations whilst trying to help Ruth appreciate the grey area of the debate.

5. THE FOURTH DRAFT

Resolving too much story and not enough plot

In the post showcase supervision, it became apparent that I needed to prioritise simplifying the story of the play. Although I had done a great deal of work restructuring the plot in the third draft, as the story and plot are joined at the hip (Waters, 03 Nov 08) the weaknesses with the story were illuminated. In order for the tighter structure developed in the previous draft to be truly effective, the episodic jumps in the story needed to be reduced and smoothed over. The primary element of the play highlighted for potentially being cut was Maud's affair with the Mortician. Although dramatic and intriguing, the story was too much when combined with other elements of the play. The revelation of the affair on the slab at one level reveals that Ruth shares Maud's wild streak but the primary purpose of the Mortuary plot was to enhance her feelings of guilt and regret about her past. In retrospect I realised that guilt and regret was already apparent in Lexie being committed. Paring back and allowing the heart of the play to flourish helped me understand how alternative subplots such as the Mortuary affair were jarring and unhelpful to the play.

Incorporating symbolic props such as the old horse-hair chair, the wireless and the telephone assisted transactions between the time periods further allowing them to become smoother. Ruth's waiting for the telephone to ring acted as a device to build tension for Matron's climatic telephone call informing Lexie's father that Matron believes Lexie needs to be committed. The wireless and telephone are also employed in an attempt to strengthen the sense of the world outside Maud's flat and High Royds.

Separating the three levels of story was useful as it was clear that the story in the present was still weaker in comparison to the story in the past. In approaching this issue, I decided to refocus on the character objectives. Returning to my programme developed in the previous draft, I closely considered the character objectives and was able to see if and how each scene contributed to the overall plot.

Ruth's Objective: Get Maud to reassure her that she hasn't seen a ghost.

Maud's Objective: Get Ruth to see she is being melodramatic and persuade her to bed.

Purpose of scene: Comedy as a relief to the incipient tension between Maud and Ruth. Ruth stops thinking about herself and is forced to understand Maud's world more as she is still surrounded by her past.

Point of connection established between the two characters.

(Act 1 scene 1, draft 4, structuring, June 09).

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When working on rewriting the present story within the play, it was important to interconnect each level of story to make one united play. It is more common for plays to have two levels of story but my play has three and in order for each story to contribute to making one unified play, I needed to find ways of plugging each story into the others more than I had in the third draft. This result of this was more work and rewriting. Perhaps it would have been simpler to reduce the play into two stories, but I believed each of the three stories were important and it was therefore necessary for me to find a way of unifying them to make them work. Stephen Daldry's 2003 film *The Hours* has been a wonderful influence as Daldry avoided being episodic in presenting three different levels of narrative and instead effectively combined the

narratives through an emotional arc. Having begun to experiment with an emotional parallel myself for a smooth transition between time periods in the play, I found the opportunity to develop the connections further throughout the scenes an exciting challenge.

Connecting story levels through character

Older Maud's accurate time keeping and daily routine.	~	Matron.
Ruth's passion for life and gentle side to nature (putting the daisies on the empty grave.	~	Lexie.
Theresa's talent for and enjoyment of music.	~	Maud's Mam.
Theresa's dark undercurrent (murdering her children.	~	Lexie's volatile and self destructive streak.
Charlotte's anxiety about not being good enough - always wanting to please others.	~	Young Maud.

In rewriting the second act, the greater emphasis on Maud's storytelling and memories provided scope to blur the past and present stories simultaneously, a further method of entwining stories to make one plot:

Maud: There's a huge ballroom in there y' know? With a stage and everything. It was lovely and not just because it didn't reek o' cabbage and wee.

As Maud continues to speak, the women line up on stage. This time they are not staring vacantly out to the audience but giggling and whispering to each other. Distant band music is heard. Charlotte and Julie dance with absent figures. Tina whirls around the space with a silk scarf. She moves the scarf in

time with the music. Theresa stands frozen to the spot as she stares up at the chandelier she can see. She smiles.

Every Friday we'd get the patients all ready and take them down, line them up against the wall in't ballroom. Male nurses would do the same w' the male patients and they'd be all lined up opposite. The music would start up and they'd dance together.

(“The Canary and the Piano”, draft 4, July 09).

Returning to those striking images of hope, the ballroom, canary and piano provided, I wanted to ensure that having rewritten and redrafted so much of the play that my initial intentions, inspired by those very hopeful images were not compromised. Whilst it would have been easy to wallow and be heavily influenced by the dark history of High Royds past, I really wanted to ensure that the bleak positivity shone through. Escaping the flat / ward in the final section of Act 2 scene 2 created a liminal zone; where “The truth of people is explored” (Edgar 73) provided a good opportunity to end with bleak positivity. Having faced her guilt and regret Maud sets the injured bird free in the memorial garden. The bird represents her freedom from guilt and angst as well as hope for the future of psychiatric care.

6. SUBMITTING A REWRITE

Cutting back on characters

Embarking upon the rewrite was difficult as it became clear to me how sketchy a lot of the story and characters were. Characters were roughly drawn out and hadn't been granted room to develop, to become more defined. My first job was to prioritise the characters and closely consider what they contributed to the broader story. The twelve characters were reduced to nine. Matron was only present in one scene previously and I already felt that there would not be a place for her scene in the new draft. Through ridding Matron I was able to develop Annie's character and inject some much needed comic relief into the ward scenes. In addition to this I also found Annie to be a catalyst for a key climatic moment to occur:

Theresa: Voices don't like you.

Annie: Don't the'? I just don't know 'ow I'll sleep at night now knowing that.

Beat.

I'm off t' get me extra cigs Matron promised me. Don't cry all night will y?

Theresa lunges at Annie knocking her to the ground. Annie tries to get away but Theresa yanks her head back with one hand and pounds Annie in the stomach with the other. They continue to tussle and struggle with each other. Theresa rams Annie into Charlotte's bed which tips sideways. Tablets hidden in the slit in the mattress pour out onto the floor. Two Nurses run on and separate the pair. Annie and Theresa gasp for breath. Everybody stares at the tablets.

("The Canary and the Piano", rewrite, July 10)

Reading the examiners comments concerning my own lack of clarity with regards to the character Lexie and her story, I agreed wholeheartedly and felt strongly that she needed to be cut in the new draft. I realised Lexie was simply Maud before she accepts the constraints of her situation and therefore was unnecessary.

Strengthening Ruth's character

Through cutting Lexie I found I could focus development of the two main characters, Ruth and Maud. With Ruth, I understood that the idea of her being related to Maud and having to stay with an Aunt she had little connection with needed to be seriously rethought. Revisiting my initial research on High Royds, I came across a local newspaper article in which a group of teenagers had gained entry to the hospital and taken photographs of each other posing dead on the Mortuary slab. I imagined Ruth to be one of the group who participated in this gruesome dare. Becoming intrigued by the idea, I decided that as a consequence for her actions Ruth would have to do community service to develop the memorial garden of High Royds. By Ruth and Maud's paths crossing through these circumstances, I felt both characters would have potential for a more interesting journey to go on and for there to be a stronger platform for Maud's secrets and guilt to unfold upon.

Bringing together Maud and Ruth's characters I needed to ensure did not seem odd and implausible. I linked Ruth's reluctance to return home until she had completed her community service and consequently trying to gain entry to an empty flat to sleep in, to Maud being pressured to have Ruth stay with her.

In staying with Maud, a key intention for the rewrite was to be more thoughtful and sensitive in introducing Ruth to Maud being haunted by ghosts of her past. Instead of accepting the fact Maud sees ghosts so readily as in the previous draft, I wanted to create tension between Maud and Ruth, some grit in the development of their relationship as Ruth denies there being any possibility that ghosts exist until the final

scene in which Ruth finally sees a ghost when she has learnt to understand the pain and grief of Maud and the patients.

Transition Development

Moving between the two time eras has proved to be a challenge since my writing process began. For the rewrite I tackled the weakness of the transitions by simply making Maud's presence a constant. In the following extract for example, Maud acknowledges the ghost:

***Ruth** exits. **Maud** carries **Ruth's** bag and deposits it through a bedroom door. She makes her way over to wireless and flicks it on. Nothing. **Maud** realises it is unplugged at the socket, she looks briefly perturbed.*

*Enter **Theresa***

***Maud** plugs in the wireless.*

Theresa: Connect apparatus to mains supply by means of mains cable.

***Maud** pauses and turns to meet **Theresa's** gaze. **Maud** smiles weakly at **Theresa** and **Theresa** steps back OS.*

("The Canary and the Piano", rewrite, July 10.)

Through using Maud to bridge the past and the present I have attempted to create a more focussed and unified transition.

With regard to the final scene in the memorial garden, I understand how, in the previous draft this was too sudden. For the rewrite I still felt there was potential to keep the setting of the memorial garden but in keeping it knew I needed to go back into the events leading up to the scene and earn it. I have attempted to earn and build up to the scene through the development of the memorial garden being Ruth's

purpose for being on the High Royds site. The use of the calendar in which Ruth crosses off the days until the opening ceremony of the memorial garden provides a further example.

My own progress in writing *The Canary and the Piano* has, I feel, at times been as patchy in progress as the journey in treating and understanding mental health problems. Although challenging, the writing and redrafting process has been a valuable learning curve. I appreciate that I will never be completely happy with the play and have many techniques to develop and refine as a playwright. I am however pleased that I have been able to revisit my play for resubmission and address such serious weaknesses as I had with plot and structuring. In particular, I intend to build upon my lesson in simplifying the plot, allowing the heart of my work to breathe and not be overcrowded in my future writing.

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PART B

THE CANARY AND THE PIANO

CAST LIST

Older Maud, 67 (West Yorkshire accent)

Ruth, 17

Younger Maud, 20

Theresa

Mrs Winter

Julie

Charlotte

Tina

Annie

The Doctor can be played by any of the women.

With the exception of Older Maud, each actor plays two roles.

/ indicates an overlap in speech.

Menston, West Yorkshire 2010.

A large open plan living area of a flat. Kitchen cupboards and surface tops are upstage. An old metal wireless sits prominently on the surface top. A small white circular table with three chairs is centre stage.

To the right of the table is an old horsehair chair. Stage left is the main door leading outside and stage right is a door leading to a bedroom. Downstage left is a window in which the characters look out to see High Royds.

Scenes set in High Royds (1964) also take place in the living area. The wireless and horse haired chair are both present in each scene regardless of the time period but with the exception of the final scene in the memorial garden.

Masked Nurses move props used solely for the ward scenes such as beds, trolleys, nursing equipment. The Nurses are seen in some scenes assisting patient restraints for example, they however, do not speak.

Act 1 scene 1

*The flat. In the darkness each of **The Women** whisper lines from John Clare's poem 'I am' from the edge of the stage. **The Women** each whisper their first line one after another and their second lines are whispered at the same time. Only occasional words are intended to be determined.*

Tina: Into the nothingness of scorn and noise
Into the living sea of waking dreams,

Charlotte: A place where woman never smil'd or wept;
There to abide with my creator, God.

Theresa: And e'en the dearest – that I loved the best –
Are strange - nay, rather stranger than the rest.

*The whispering gradually fades to silence as weak early morning summer light filters into the flat. **Maud** has fallen asleep in the horse haired chair. A **Nurse** wheels on a bed with a white sheet neatly folded and tucked onto it. On top of the bed is an Electroconvulsive therapy machine. **Maud** jolts in her sleep as a result of the sound of the bed being wheeled on stage but does not wake. The **Nurse** tuts as she looks around for an electricity socket. She unplugs the wireless and plugs in the machine causing it to whir into life momentarily. Darkness*

*Lights up. **Maud** tosses and turns in the chair. Waking suddenly **Maud** gasps for breathe. The **Nurse** shakes her head as she unplugs the machine and wheels the equipment and bed OS.*

*The door bell rings. **Maud** takes deep breathe and straightens her skirt before making he way over to open the door. **Ruth** stands at the door with a suitcase by her side, she glances at **Maud** and then looks at her feet.*

Maud: So you're Ruth then.

***Ruth** nods a little.*

Y' do talk don't y'?

***Ruth** nods with more certainty.*

Right then.

Ruth: Wasn't sure if y'd be up.

Maud: Of course I'm up.

Ruth: But with it being so early.

Maud: I'm a Lark, not an Owl.

Beat.

'Re y' in or out then?

***Ruth** brings in her suitcase.*

Ruth: Shall I call y' summat? Nurse or Mrs...

Maud: Maud will be fine.

***Maud** runs **Ruth** a glass of water and hands it to her.*

Ruth: Thanks.

Maud: If you're 'ere f' two weeks does that mean the memorial garden needs to be finished by then?

Ruth: I guess.

Maud: Y've an awful long way t' go on it then.

Ruth: I know. If us Batley lot weren't made t' work on it it'll never have got it done in time.

Maud: Still might not.

Ruth pulls out a calendar from the outer pouch of her suitcase. 14 consecutive days have thick black crosses through them. There is a 14 day gap and then a smiley face marked in red on the page.

Ruth: Is it Okay if I hang this up? I've been crossing each day off when I've finished a shift.

Maud: The smiley face marks day y' free from 'ere an' working on garden?

Ruth: I like t' see how far away I am from my targets.

Maud: Go on then. Over there.

Ruth hangs the calendar on a hook by the front door.

Sit if want. Y've a long shift ahead o' y'.

Ruth makes a few steps towards the horse haired chair and stops.

It's a chair.

Ruth: IKEA sell some funny looking chairs but not even them have owt like that.

Maud: I rescued it. In a skip outside. Perfectly good chair that.

Ruth continues to look around the flat. Maud observes Ruth.

Makes a difference seeing a furnished one of these flats does it?

Ruth shrugs.

Must be nice t' be let in through a front door and not try t' break...

Ruth: I never got in.

Maud: Can't deny y' weren't trying t' get in.

Ruth: It was raining and I weren't going t' sleep on mud.

Maud: Y' should 'ave gone 'ome on bus w' others.

Ruth: I don't do buses. I get sick.

Maud: Aye, Bob said.

Ruth: I came on bus f' first week of shifts and threw up all me innards every day. I 'aint got no more t' throw up.

Maud: The physical work y've been doing in memorial garden should 'ave sorted y' out in no time.

Ruth: It didn't.

Maud: If I w' you I'd be thinking I w' lucky Bob found y' and took pity on y.' Y' need t' keep y' nose clean, y' in trouble enough f' what you lot did in 'sylum.

Ruth: I'm not going t' rob y' if that's what y' think.

Maud: I wouldn't give y' chance.

Ruth: Wouldn't need a chance, I'm not a thief.

Maud: Good.

Beat.

'ave y' eaten?

Ruth: Not hungry.

No one lives in other flats yet d' the'?

Maud: No, but empty or not empty, y' still can't break in.

Ruth: Old Bob w' right then, y' 're only one living in these new flats.

Maud: Y' really can't wait t' leave can y'?

Ruth pulls a face.

Been telling y' 'bout me 'as 'e?

Ruth: Not much.

Maud: We go right back.

Ruth: Did y' go out?

Maud: No.

Ruth: Yeah, he's nice an' that but that wart on his head would put y' right off. It's all I can look at when he talks. I just want t' pop it.

Beat.

Can't help what I think.

Maud: Got this flat as a retirement present.

Ruth: Better than getting a clock eh? If I got some money I'd live in a flat like this.

Maud: Not near old 'sylum though.

Ruth: Why not?

Maud: All that History an' that, puts lots off.

Ruth: Wouldn't bother me.

It's not that bad round 'ere. That pub up road is okay and that little bakery has cornflake nests t' die f'.

Maud shakes her head and looks at a laminated sheet on the table.

What's that?

Maud: Flat rules and a list of jobs t' occupy y' with.

Ruth: Why laminate it?

Maud: Protects it.

Ruth: From what?

Maud: Owt!

(Taking the rules from Maud and reading them out loud)

Ruth: 1. No running.
No running?

Maud: No running. If y' run about people might think summat's up.

Ruth: So I can't run unless something's wrong?

Maud: D' y' want t' cause panic when there's no need?

Ruth: No.

2. No unexpected loud noises-

Maud: I've a hearing aid.

Ruth: Y' won't hear loud noises then!

Maud: Loud noises make it go funny.

Ruth: 3. Breakfast is at..... Dinner..... don't be late.
4. Don't be rude.
What made y' so sure I'd be rude when y'd never even met me?

Maud: Didn't judge, just wanted t' make me expectations clear from start.

Ruth: 5. Respect quiet time with wireless.
There's no telly is there?

Maud: No.
Ruth gets her mobile from out of her pocket.

Ruth: Great, no signal either.

Maud: Y' can use house phone after six if y' ringing landlines.

Ruth: Landlines! No-one I know has a landline.
Daily chores..... dusting, hoovering, mopping, taking rubbish out, shopping- I have allergies.

Maud: I 'ave gloves.

Ruth: Rubber?

Maud: Rubber.

Ruth: I'm allergic t' rubber.

Maud: Right, well I'll find y' something y' not allergic t' then.
I like living on me own Ruth. Letting you stay was a favour t' Bob. Y' 'ave t' pull y' weight t' earn y' keep.
Ruth observes Maud.
I 'ave me ways just like I'm sure you 'ave yours. I just ask that y' respect me and my ways while y' stay.

Ruth: Is that it then?

Maud: F' now.

Ruth: I'm off.

Ruth goes to pick her bag up.

Maud: Just go on. They won't be impressed if y' late.

Ruth exits. Maud carries Ruth's bag and deposits it through a bedroom door. She makes her way over to wireless and flicks it on. Nothing. Maud realises it is unplugged at the socket, she looks briefly perturbed.

Enter Theresa

Maud plugs in the wireless.

Theresa: Connect apparatus to mains supply by means of mains cable.

Maud pauses and turns to meet Theresa's gaze. Maud smiles weakly at Theresa and Theresa steps back OS. The radio crackles, Maud tries to find a station. She gives up and flicks the radio off. The Women OS, whisper their line from the 'I am' poem. Maud sighs and makes her way over the horsehaired chair.

Lights fade on Maud in the chair and up on Young Maud struggling to keep her nurses cap on her hair. A trolley with a squeaky wheel is heard OS. Young Maud quickly puts her hands by her side and half smiles at Annie as she emerges. Annie, a skinny middle aged woman with greasy grey hair, wearing a plain grey dress and faded green apron wheels on a three tiered trolley. On the top is a large bowl of scummy looking water, 2 bars of soap, tough looking cloths and a scouring pad. 2 large grey towels are folded in half and draped over the side.

As Annie speaks Young Maud stares at her.

Annie: *(Seeing Young Maud)* Another new one.

Young Maud: I'm Maud.

Annie: *(Indicating the trolley)* I'll tell y' bout this before we go in. Y' get 'back trolley' from in there. Them that stay in t' beds 're swimming in them by seven so y' 'ave t' work fast. Strip 'em, wash 'em, bed em.

Annie pulls out some straps from the second tier.

Here's the straps. Some might need strapping down. You'll know which ones.

Annie holds up two garments.

This is a nightie and this is a shroud. Y' 'ave some shrouds down 'ere. When y' find someone 'as died on y' way round it saves y' traipsing back t' get 'em.

Silence. Annie's eyes wander over the trolley making sure everything is in place. She rolls her sleeves up to reveal long bandages on both arms from wrists to shoulders.

All right? Just keep y' 'ead down and get on w' it.

Young Maud: So... will I be shadowing you today?

Annie: Shadowing me?

Young Maud: Should y' be doing this if y' arms 're hurt?

Beat.

Annie: Y' do know I'm a patient don't y'?

Young Maud: Oh.

Annie: Matron said I'm doing better. I can do jobs an' that now.

Young Maud: That's great! On y' way t' leaving then.

Annie: This is y' first experience in 'ere in't it?

Young Maud nods.

Y'd best get going, Matron's very funny 'bout time keeping. This way.

Annie leads Young Maud OS (onto the ward.)

Scene 2

Older **Maud** bustles around the kitchen impatiently. The laminated set of rules are still on the kitchen table. Enter **Ruth**. She gets a black marker pen from her pocket and crosses off one day on the calendar.

Ruth: Sorry.

Maud: Y' tea's burnt to a cinder.

Ruth: I'll eat owt I'm starving. Hard work that was.

Maud: Huh, 'ard work eh?

Maud places a plate of burnt food on the table. Ruth sits down and waits for Maud to sit.

Y've some manners, I'll say that f' y'. Go on, I ate at tea time.

Ruth begins to eat slowly.

I thought y' finished at half four.

Ruth: We did. I was helping Steve.

Maud: Steve?

Ruth: A friend. He tripped over one of them old iron things and scuffed up his new Nikes.

Maud: Those aren't any ordinary 'old iron things.' They're grave markers.

A smirk grows across Ruth's face.

What's possibly funny about that?

Ruth: Have y' see them M&S adverts? With that woman saying (*Mocking*) "This is no ordinary chocolate mousse, it's a Marks and Spencer's chocolate mousse." She says it in that daft voice trying t' sound sexy and you just reminded me of it.

Maud: Sounding "sexy" w' not my intention.

Ruth: (*Smirking*) Sexy is not a word you can get away with really. Don't suit y'.

Maud: You just cut the jabbering and get on w' y' tea.

Ruth continues eating and Maud observes her.

It never took y' an hour an' 'alf t' sort 'is daft shoes out, surely!

Ruth: Nah, the bus the lads get back t' Batley was late again. I said I'd keep them company.

Maud: I'm sure they can look after 'em sen. I want y' back on time in future.

Ruth continues to eat without looking up.

Ruth: It's like Steve said t' me, I'm lucky staying here 'cos I don't have t' travel anymore. I can have a lie in compared t' them. That is unless y've got jobs for me before me shifts.

Maud: I'll 'ave jobs f' y'.

Sounds daft as a brush this Steve.

Ruth: He's alright really.

Maud: 'im and others w' wi' y' when... y' know in 'sylum?

Ruth nods.

Does this Steve feel bad f' what 'e did?

Ruth: Don't know really. Hasn't said.

Maud: 'Ave y' asked 'im?

Ruth: No.

W're all paying f' it by doing this garden up.

Steve's a dark horse. He's right good with them plants. Very gentle and looks like he knows what he's doing.

Maud: Everyone 'as something 'bout them y' don't expect.

Ruth: Not everyone.

Maud: Everyone. Y'll see it more as y get older. I remember one patient, as rough an' tough as y' like. As blunt as a knife, she'd 'elp out w' other patients but they 'ated 'er, w' scared o' 'er. Do y' know what she loved more than anything?

Ruth shrugs

Ballet. She could whittle off the names o' all famous ballerinas and describe the dances they w' in w' such eloquence and not swear once! If she though no one w' looking she'd do a battement frappe or pli   by 'er bed. Scared me 'alf t' death first time I saw 'er.

Beat.

're you a gardener?

Ruth: Nah.

Maud: Not too good w' y' hands?

Ruth: I hope so. I want t' be a hairdresser.

Maud: I see.

Ruth: I'd do it properly an' that. I want my own salon, run my own business. That one in y' village is right tatty. I'd soon sort it out like that (*Clicks her fingers.*)

Mam thinks I'll be wasting a good brain.

Maud: Ah.

Ruth: People 're funny about their hair 'ren't they? It's really important t' them. Some think they can come in one person and go out a new one just 'cos they've their hair done. I like that.

Maud: Some probably do think that.

Ruth: What do y' want me t' do first? Wash these up?

Maud nods slowly and sits in the horse haired chair while Ruth collects the plates and begins to wash up. Maud stares vacantly OS. The Women enter walking in a line. The Women all except Tina exit at the other side of the stage. Tina stands alone centre stage Maud watches her while Ruth washes up oblivious to Tina's presence.

Tina: Grass. Tree. More tree. Hedge. Sky. Bird. Outside time is good. The air goes all over you. Sometimes it is cold. I like it. The smells are good. The noises are good. When everyone is in bed. When I am good I look. I look down there. Lights, little lights. Tiny houses. Tiny people in tiny houses. Good tiny people in tiny houses. I want to be a good people in tiny houses. We can be outside all day and go into the tiny houses for sleep time.

Exit Tina. Ruth begins drying.

Ruth: Y'd think in a new flat like this they'd a given you a dishwasher.

Ruth observes Maud's frozen expression.

What's wrong?

Maud: Nowt.

Ruth continues to observe Maud whilst she dries the dishes.

Made much progress today?

Ruth: Dug some more flower beds and we've got all the Ivy off the chapel now. That was a job an' half.

Maud: I 'ope y' all careful where y' dig.

Looking at the plate she's drying, Ruth takes her time and dries it more thoroughly than the previous ones.

Ruth: Can't hurt them if they're dead.

Maud: Is that what y' think?

Ruth: It's what I know. I heard y' hair keeps growing f' a bit but y' don't feel owt.

Maud: It must be so pleasant t' be ignorant an' do as y' please.

Ruth: Ignorant?!? Being realistic y' mean.

Maud: No I don't. I mean being a pig headed girl.

Ruth: Oh my God, y' on about me having t' respect y'. Why should I when you treat me like dirt on y' shoe?

Beat.

Yes we 're bloody careful. What d'y' think we do dig up skulls and run round after each other with them.

Maud: I worked too 'ard and too long 'an saw patient after patient in that place. Y've been walking over most o' 'em every day on y' shifts.

Y' might not think y' 'ave t' show me respect but y' damn well need t' show 'em respect.

Ruth nods slowly as she stacks the plates up and looks under the sink to see if it's the right cupboard. She gently places the plates inside and

shuts the cupboard door. Ruth dries her hands and exits to the bedroom.

The Women gather in a semi circle whispering their line from the John Clare poem. Whispering abruptly sops as The Doctor marches on with a clipboard. Tina steps forward into the spotlight.

Doctor: Name.

Tina: Tina.

Doctor: Occupation?

Tina: Blank.

Doctor: Admitted on the?

Tina: Open bracket, born here, parents were patients, close bracket.

Doctor: Age?

Tina: 60.

Doctor: Married, Single or Widowed?

Tina: Blank.

Doctor: Religious persuasion?

Tina: Blank.

Doctor: Previous place of abode?

Tina: None.

The Women step forward. Tina is once again part of the semi circle. Exit the doctor.

Tina: I am: yet what I am none cares or knows.

The Women disperse OS.

Scene 3

Lights up on the ward. Three empty beds are neatly made in a row. Annie is sweeping the floor. Enter Young Maud guiding Charlotte.

Annie: Still 'ere then?

Young Maud: I am.

Annie: Not scared y' off then?

Charlotte begins to try and struggle away from Young Maud.

Charlotte: I'm not staying here.

Young Maud: It's Okay.

Young Maud looks around for someone to help as she struggles to keep hold of Charlotte.

Charlotte: Get off me! I'm not staying here.

Young Maud: Annie, would y' mind?

Annie: Oh no honey, I do bedpans and sick, not psychos.

Charlotte: I'm not meant to be here!

Young Maud: Now y' 'eard what Matron said Charlotte. Y' agreed t' come 'ere. You're voluntary remember. Think o' it like having a little rest.

Charlotte: I've changed my bastard mind.

Young Maud: Come on now, y'll just be here a short time.

Charlotte: Noooooooo!!!

Charlotte fights Young Maud off and runs OS. Young Maud begins running after her. Annie sighs and continues sweeping. Two Nurses enter restraining one of Charlotte's arms each and dragging her across the floor. One nurse pins Charlotte to the bed whilst the other lifts up her grey dress and injects her in the bottom. Charlotte whimpers and sobs into her pillow. The Nurses exit and Young Maud puts Charlotte's dress back in place and strokes her hair.

Annie: Now that's way t' bloody do it.

Young Maud looks at Annie

Y'll learn.

Annie whistles as she exits.

Young Maud: The other patients 're at breakfast, would y' like me t' bring y' something?

Charlotte's sobbing is now softer but she doesn't respond to Young Maud.

I'll tell y' something. I'm new too and if I'm 'onest I'm not too sure o' this place either. Maybe we could stick together, y' know, look out f' each other.

I'll leave y' rest now.

Young Maud gets up to go.

Charlotte: Please... stay here just a minute.

Young Maud looks nervously OS before sitting back on the bed and resuming her previous position.

I'm supposed to be on my honeymoon.

Young Maud: We'll get y' fixed.

Lights down exit ward scene.

The next morning.

Lights up on Maud's living space. Charlotte stands in the centre. Enter Maud from her bedroom. She freezes when she sees Charlotte.

Charlotte: Loving Father I come to say, thank you for this magnificent day. I awoke at dawn this morning. The Gulls were louder than usual and the sun was already shining brightly. The sea was so calm and smooth. I knew it was a sign from you. It was so beautiful. I felt selfish to be looking at such a scene alone. I thought of Sam sleeping soundly and wanted him so badly to be there with me sharing the moment. Two more days until the big day. Three until we wake up together. He's so good with me, Sam. He can tell I'm nervous about all that and he says not to be. I am trying, but truth be told, I'm terrified. Pathetic, I know. Please help me to be a good wife.

Maud slowly makes a few steps towards Charlotte.

The dress fits perfectly. Mam took it in whilst Dad polished his shoes. I wasn't sure at first as it doesn't cover my ankles. The shop assistant said the style was very fashionable and Mam agreed. I agree as well, it's just I've always imagined having a more traditional dress. Dad hasn't said he doesn't like it so I guess it's just me being daft. Not long to go now. Guard me in the dark of night and in the morning send your light.

Amen.

As Charlotte makes the sign of the cross Maud reaches out her hand to touch the side of Charlotte's face. Charlotte quickly stands and makes a swift exit.

Enter Annie

Annie: It is essential to maintain firm electrode contact to patient throughout treatment.

Exit Annie.

Maud grabs a tea towel and throws it with all her might at Annie.

Enter Ruth.

Ruth: If y' throwing at me y' aims out.

Ruth follows Maud's gaze OS.

Ironings finished.

Maud: Right.

Ruth: Mopped all floors as well. I'll do bins now.

Maud: It's fine, they can wait a bit.

Ruth: Is it.. y' know... all alright an' that?

Maud: Aye.

Ruth is thoughtful as she picks the tea towel up and gently folds it over a cupboard handle.

Ruth: It's going t' rain.

Maud: Might 'ave a shower or two.

Ruth: Looks like a real bad storm is brewing t'me. Garden'll be like a bog.

Maud: My new wellies 're by front door, they can do w' being worn in.

Ruth: They'll never fit me.

Maud: Wear some big socks.

Ruth: Not brought none.

Maud: Y' always need big socks in Yorkshire. Where d'y' think y've gone, the Algarve?

Ruth: They'll make my feet sweat and I'll get a rash.

Maud: Y'll be fine f' a day.

Ruth: What if it rains tomorrow?

Maud: What if it does?

Ruth: Then I'll definitely get a rash if I have t' wear them f' two days!

Maud: I'll give y' rash! Y' can borrow my socks.

Beat

Ruth: Wouldn't y' rather I stopped here and really did this kitchen a good going over? Y've allsorts in them cupboards. They need a right sorting out.

Maud: Y' going Ruth.

Ruth: Just look in here. I mean.... *(a metal bird cage tumbles out and clatters loudly on the floor. Ruth stands it up and looks at it.)*

Maud: A birdcage.

Ruth: I'll have this all sorted like that *(Clicks her fingers.)* I like doing jobs like that.

Maud: Aye, an' I like people who do see their consequence through and learn their lesson.

Beat.

W' that your phone going off before?

Ruth: Just a text.

Maud: From Steve.

Ruth: He's not the only person who texts me y' know.

Maud: He's not going t' do 'is shift again is 'e?

Ruth: He's not well Maud!

Maud: There we go.

Ruth: He's not well though.

Maud: 'as 'e cut another finger or is it man flu this time?

Ruth: Eh, that scythe was right sharp, we thought he was going t' lose his finger!

Maud: Whatever it is, y' going.

Ruth moans and makes her way to the bedroom.

Big socks 're in my top drawer.

Ruth re enters the living space and makes her way to the front door.

Ruth: If I get a rash I'm suing you.

Maud: I'll see y' later.

Exit Ruth.

Maud kneels gingerly by the side of the birdcage and touches it lightly. The Nurses bring on the 3 beds for the ward scene. Charlotte lies in the middle bed. Julie is sat cross legged on top of her bed sheets pretending to pour tea from an imaginary teapot into imaginary cups. Tina is curled in a ball in bed sobbing quietly. As Maud suddenly slams the door shut on the cage and stuffs it back in the cupboard Young Maud marches across the stage jangling a large bunch of keys. She unlocks the door and opens it. Lights fade on Maud.

Enter Mrs Winter. She briefly scans the room before clearing her throat.

Young Maud: Can I help?

Mrs Winter: Yes, you can. I've come to see my daughter.

Young Maud: Name?

Mrs Winter: Charlotte McCann. Mrs.

Young Maud: Oh she will be pleased. I'm Maud, I've been working w' 'er for few months. Just 'ere. *(To Charlotte)* Look who's come t' see y' Charlotte.

Charlotte looks at who it is from the corner of her eye and in one smooth move, rolls off the bed and lies face down on the floor. Mrs Winter sees her daughter do this but Young Maud does not realise.

She's picked up slightly over past few days.

Mrs Winter goes to stand over her daughter.

Charlotte: Get away from me.

Mrs Winter: Hello, Charlotte. Feeling a little bit grumpy today I see.

Charlotte: Where is he? Sam McCan that cuntin'g son of a bitch.

Mrs Winter: No, Charlotte! You've been brought up better than to use such language. I shan't talk to you until you get back on the bed.

(To Maud) and she wonders why she's been sectioned!

Charlotte crawls back on the bed and stares at the ceiling.

Mrs Winter: Your Father says hello.

Beat.

The chicks in the garden have hatched.

Beat.

Your Father has put up a lovely big bird bath for them. Oh you should see them splashing away.

Charlotte: Now?

Mrs Winter: Not now no. Oh Charlotte, where's your slippers? Little blocks of ice for toes you'll have.

Mrs Winter goes to cover Charlotte's feet with the blanket. Charlotte jerks back suddenly and stares at Mrs Winter. Mrs Winter returns her gaze for a moment then looks away and clears her throat. Julie creeps up beside Mrs Winter.

Julie: Tea, madam?

Mrs Winter mistakes Julie for a nurse.

Mrs Winter: *(Without looking up)* Yes, please.

Julie: *(Shouting)* Tip me up and pour me out!

Mrs Winter suddenly looks up and stares at Julie for a moment. She half smiles and pats Julie on the shoulder. Julie launches herself on Mrs Winter giving her a huge hug. Young Maud rushes on and pulls Julie off Mrs Winter. Mrs Winter brushes down her clothes and rearranges her hair.

Charlotte: I'd have ripped off your fucking head off and thrown up down your neck you..... bitch.

Mrs Winter: Who are you? Just who are you? You're not my little girl. My lovely, lovely, little girl. You want to know where Sam is? He's found someone else. A nice, normal young girl.

Beat.

You are there though Charlotte. You are there somewhere. Aren't you? It's tough, yes, but you've got to pick yourself up, you've got to believe. I pray everyday day for you but you've got to pray too. Think of all the good things.... your Father and I, all those dancing trophies you've won, seeing the new chicks! Please Charlotte, do that for me. I need to see you trying to help yourself.

Charlotte: Fuck off.

Mrs Winter: Goodbye, Charlotte.

Exit Mrs Winter. Julie waves at her as she exits. Mrs Winter does not look back. Tina follows Mrs Winter. The metal gate is heard slamming and Tina stumbles back.

Young Maud: Look y' calm again now. Why couldn't y' do that when y' Mam w' 'ere?

Charlotte: Because she's a bitch.

Young Maud: Y' won't be trailed on leave if y' behave like that.

Charlotte: He's got someone else.

Beat.

Young Maud: I'm sorry.

Charlotte: Don't be, I'm not. I can't laugh anymore, I can't cry anymore, I can't feel anymore. This was only meant to be for a break.

Beat.

Young Maud:I could see that y' Mam cared. She didn't know what t' say. It's 'ard f' 'er.

Charlotte: If she cared so bloody much she'd have visited before now.

Beat.

I remember once I was really excited because I was picked to be in the school Nativity. I was only meant to be a Sheep but one of the Angels got sick.

A very good week turned into a perfect week with my Angel promotion. In handwriting we were to write special invites to our parents. I can see my teacher now: "They must be able to read your handwriting if you want them to come!" Mine was near enough perfect. I knew Father wouldn't be able to come, he'd be working but I wanted Mother there.

I was on my hands and knees under the stage waiting. I was waiting for my cue to jump up and flutter to baby Jesus. I could see rows of parents' feet. Mother's shiny red court shoes were nowhere to be seen. I wet myself. The Angel next to me started screaming and the next thing I knew was these big arms are dragging me up from under the stage. "Everyone gets stage fright," Miss Smith said.

Young Maud:She wasn't there?

Charlotte: She was. Just didn't see her. She's claustrophobic. She stood at the back by the door.

Young Maud:She didn't get t' see you?

Charlotte: She didn't hear me say my line as the angel, I was getting my knickers changed but she did hear me sing. Miss Smith wasn't having any excuses, she put me back on the stage for my solo. Said Tommy had practised so hard on the piano accompaniment it wouldn't be fair on him to miss it out. As soon as I saw Mother I felt like I could burst.

Beat.

Young Maud:So you're musical?

Charlotte: I was.

*The ward scene exits. **Charlotte** remains on stage. She stands, the other **women** enter muttering their lines from the John Clare poem and stand behind her. Enter **Maud** she observes. Enter **The Doctor**, he bustles on with a clipboard and sheets of paper. **Charlotte** stares vacantly forward.*

Doctor: Name?

Charlotte: Charlotte Jane McCann.

Doctor: Occupation?

Charlotte: Teacher.

Doctor: Admitted on?

Charlotte: The 5th day of November 1962.

Doctor: Age?

Charlotte: 22 years.

Doctor: Married, Single or Widowed?

Charlotte: Married.

Doctor: Religious persuasion?

Charlotte: Catholic.

Doctor: Other facts communicated?

Charlotte: Sam McCann, her husband, states that she suddenly became chronically insane on the night of the wedding. She is unpredictable, has lost her reason and has to be constantly watched.

***The Doctor** exits. **The Women** step forward, **Charlotte** is again part of the semi circle.*

Charlotte: I long for scenes where man has never trod;
A place where women never smiled or wept;
There to abide with my creator, God.

*Exit **Charlotte**.*

Scene 4

Enter Ruth. Ruth is carrying Maud's wellies which are covered in layers of mud. Ruth holds the wellies in one hand and looks at the calendar. 6 more days have already been crossed off. Ruth crosses off another day.

Maud: Y've some colour in y' cheeks.

Ruth: I'm soaked again.

Maud: At least y' feet 'ren't. Any rash yet?

Ruth: Not yet.

Maud: Go on then get a towel.

Ruth exits to her room to deposit her wet clothes and re enters.

Ruth: 2858

Beat.

Maud: Not quite. There's six stillborn babies buried there too.

Ruth: There's not enough space.

Maud: They managed; 'ad to.

Ruth: Never noticed that plaque before.

A half smile creeps over Maud's face, she goes to say something and changes her mind.

Maud: Tough day?

Ruth: Alright really. Old Bob didn't have a go at me once. He opened up t' me, told allsorts 'bout life in there.

Maud: So, y' know all 'bout it now. No doubt how grim it was, 'ow we mistreated 'em.

Ruth: Not really no.

Beat.

My Mam was on a psychiatric ward f' month. Might not sound like a lot t' you.

Beat

That surprised y' didn't it?

Maud: I rarely get surprised.

Beat.

Ruth: After me Nan died. We knew it was coming, she'd been ill f' years. Still came as a shock when it happened. Mam had trouble coping.

Maud: Did it 'elp?

Ruth: Didn't talk much about what happened to her in there. I know it did her good, had a bit more o' her spark back when she came home. Think she just needed some time out. She wasn't anywhere near as sick as some o' women on that ward. I remember going t' visit her once an' she 'ad a load o' patients around her 'an' she was trying t' teach them how to play Monopoly on a battered old board. She was like Jack Nicholson in One Flew over Cuckoo's Nest.

She's had loads o' funny stories 'bout other patients. She had one long stay patient who took a shine 't her. Wherever she went on ward she'd follow Mam and eventually one day she spoke to her: "You're fucking wicked you." Mam said "Thank you. Why's that?" an' this patient replied "You kill people f' a living don't y'?" Think Mam just smiled and then scuttled of t' her room, didn't have the heart t' tell her she served sandwiches and tea at a village tea rooms.

Maud: We 'ad one, a lovely little thing, Julie 'er name was. She thought she was a teapot.

Ruth: An actual teapot?

What w' 'er story then?

Maud: General Paralysis of the Insane.

Ruth: What's that?

Maud: T' do w' Syphilis.

Ruth: Really?

Maud: *(Continuing)* Now the' know that can be treated w' Penicillin.

Ruth: So she could have just taken a few tablets?

Maud: They didn't know that then.

We found out later she'd been a maid. She w' dismissed an' admitted after they found out she'd had affair w' mistress.

Ruth: Never thought 'bout a woman being able t' give another woman Syphillis. Suppose it makes sense though.

Maud: She w' 'appy enough in 'er own world pouring us pretend cups o' tea an' that.

Ruth: That's sad.

Did y' try and like, understand them?

Maud smirks a little.

Don't laugh at me.

Maud: We did try Ruth, Yes; some of us more than others.

Ruth: Is she buried there too?

Maud nods.

Old Bob said y' were always there when one was being buried off y' ward. Said y'd be the only one there sometimes.

Maud: Matron 'ated me doing that. "There are too many patients and not enough staff for you to go tittling off every time one dies. It's those who are alive we have to concentrate on."

Beat

Ruth: Why shut 'sylum?

Maud: Things 'ave changed aven't the'? Think 'ow much that place costs t' run. As y' know, it's all Care in the Community an' that now.

Ruth: D' y' think that's better?

Maud: Like everything, people 'ave their own opinions. Victorians' decision t' build 'sylums. For every new problem they thought there w' building t' solve it.

Ruth: Out o' sight out o' mind...

Beat.

Old Bob told me 'bout some o' treatments. The Insulin comas, ECT...

Maud: Never liked those really. Refused t' 'elp w' ECT a lot.

Ruth: Did y' get int' trouble?

Maud: I did.

Ruth: What did they do t' y'?

Maud: Back t' back shifts, filthy jobs... put me in Mortuary once f' shift.

Beat.

Didn't make much difference t' Matron if I refused t' help w' ECT. She'd easy enough find someone else t' do it. Made a point o' proving that t' me she did.

Ruth: Y' stuck t' y' principles though; what y' believed in.

Beat.

I'm glad me Mam didn't go in there.

Maud: I still see 'em y' know.

Ruth: Who?

Maud: The patients.

Ruth: Some 're still alive?

Maud: No, the dead ones.

Ruth: *(Half laughing)* Oh right.

Maud: I'm not joking. You don't do buses, I don't do sarcasm.

Ruth: What?

Maud: The ghosts of my patients visit me.

Ruth: 're y' telling me this place is haunted?

Beat.

Is this what y' tell prospective new neighbours? 'Cos if it is no wonder people 're put off living here.

Maud: My patients, troubled souls, not at peace. I didn't want to unnerve y'.

Ruth: Y' should know by now I'm not unnerved easy, just...

Maud: Just?

Ruth: Just y' know, I don't believe in ghosts.

Maud: Ah!

Ruth: D'ya believe in Aliens and the Loch Ness Monster?

Maud: No.

Ruth: Thank God f' that.

Maud: If this is all just a game t' y Ruth...

Ruth: No, I just don't get how y' can believe in something that's not there.

Maud: They 're 'ere!

Ruth: Now?

Maud: No. They pass through 'ere all o' time though.

Ruth: What the one's y've talking about?

Maud: *(Nodding)* My first group o' patients I worked w' in there.

Ruth: Y' might be able t' persuade me t' wear big socks but y' can't persuade me t' believe in ghosts; there's no such thing.

Maud: I'm not..... ooh you're stubborn... Just you believe in what you want and I'll believe in what I want.

Ruth: That's fine.

Maud: I know what I see. I don't make things up Ruth.

Ruth: Did I say y' did?

Maud: Didn't 'ave t.

Beat.

Ruth: I will tell y' one thing, I couldn't have done what you did f' all them years in there. Bet y' saw some awful things.

Maud: There were good intentions, Ruth. Problems yes, but there's always been little steps, little steps all the time t' try and cheers the patients, better their lives.

Lights dim on Maud and Ruth and spotlight on A Nurse struggling to push a piano on from stage left. The Nurse walks around the piano looking for an obstruction. She fiddles with the wheel and realises she is now able to move the piano more easily. The spotlights fade and lights up to reveal two beds positioned next to each other with little space between them. Annie is attempting to hold Julie still while Young Maud cuts her nails. Charlotte is shouting obscenities to an absent figure. Theresa is sitting in the horsehaired chair humming to herself.

The Nurse pushes the piano centre stage. Young Maud makes her way over.

Young Maud: Oh wow. Just needs the finishing touch.

The Nurse runs off stage and re-enters carrying a metal cage with a canary inside. She places a cage on top of the piano. The canary shrieks and flaps around.

Young Maud: There

Annie: Won't last five minutes that

As Maud and Annie converse Theresa creeps towards the piano.

Young Maud: We've all got one! Every ward.

Annie: Matron's never given in t' one o' y' new fangled ideas?

Young Maud: Someone above 'er came up w' it so she couldn't ignore it.

Theresa pulls up her skirt and urinates up the side of the piano.

No, Theresa!

Theresa scampers away howling to her bed. Annie starts strapping her into the bed.

Annie: That can't stay there.

Young Maud: It can now it's been christened!

Annie: Won't last ten seconds.

Julie bangs the keys.

No.... you'll wreck it. (*to Young Maud*) Where's the key? We'll 'ave t' lock it?

Young Maud: It's there t' be enjoyed!

Annie: That's not enjoying it. Look!

Julie bangs her head on the keys.

Young Maud slips in the urine. Julie stands close to Maud pointing right in her face laughing loudly.

Annie: Maud!

Young Maud looks to where Annie is pointing to, Theresa has got back out of bed, picked up the cage and begun shaking it. Young Maud retrieves it. The whole ward scene freezes. Lights dim a little. Charlotte rushes over to Young Maud with her arms out stretched to the Canary. Spotlight on Young Maud and Charlotte. Sound from the ward is muted.

Young Maud:It's all right. He's a tough little fella.

Charlotte: A boy.

Young Maud:Think so?

Charlotte: He's called Trevor.

Young Maud:Trevor seems to like you.

Charlotte smiles.

Really. You've picked up so much over this past year.

Charlotte: Can you keep a secret?

Young Maud nods.

I've been cutting back on my tablets, I'm nearly off them now.

Young Maud:Charlotte!

Charlotte: You won't say anything will you?

Young Maud:No, no. 'ow 'ave y' managed to do that?

Charlotte: I've found a good hiding place.

Young Maud: If they get found...

Charlotte: They won't. You said yourself I'm doing better. It's the tablets that were keeping my mood so low and making me feel queer. I want to prove I'm fine, that I don't need to be here.

Charlotte stares at the piano

Young Maud: It's all right, have a go.

Charlotte awkwardly kneels before the piano and hums and sways as she plays.

You're still musical then.

Charlotte stops playing suddenly and turns to Young Maud.

Charlotte: You won't go, will you?

Young Maud: I'll 'ave t' go help over....

Charlotte: No, working here.

Young Maud: You're not goin' t' be 'ere f' much longer so what does it matter?

Charlotte: It's not just coming off the tablets that have helped. I want you to help the others get better too.

Smiling, Young Maud shakes her head and strokes Charlotte's hair a little as Charlotte continues to play. Lights fade to dark.

Scene 5

Evening. There are two days left on the calendar until the smiley face is reached.

Maud: I'd forgotten that bottle o' sherry w' there 'till you unearthed it. Shall we 'ave a small glass?

Ruth: What is it?

Maud: Sherry.

Ruth: Sherry! Who drinks sherry other than Father Christmas?

Maud: I do.

Ruth: I'm underage.

Maud: I'd forgotten y' don't break rules.

Ruth: You'd forgotten you don't do sarcasm more like.

Maud: That's your fault. Almost two weeks w' you and y've messed my 'ead up.

Ruth: If it's any consolation, y've not messed mine.

Maud: Come on, just a small glass. A celebratory drink, only two days t'....

Ruth: What, 'till I leave?

Maud: F' the opening of the memorial garden.

Maud gets out two sherry glasses and pours the sherry while Ruth observes her. Ruth takes a glass and downs it in one. She is disgusted by the taste.

Y' meant t' sip it.

Ruth: Why did y' put it in a shot glass then?

Maud: It's a proper sherry glass.

Maud pours another glass and tops her own up.

Sip it this time.

Will y' see much o' that Steve when y' go back t' Batley?

Ruth: Doubt it.

Beat.

He's not all that really.

Maud: It wasn't your idea t' break into the 'sylum was it?

Ruth: No, it was Steve's. He'd not spoken t' me before. It got round in common room him an' lads were planning a big scare fest thing at High Royds. Hardly anyone wanted t' go really. My mate told him I don't scare easy, don't believe in ghosts an' that so he said t' tell me I could come if I wanted.

I had t' keep watch while they bloodied themselves up with ketchup and took photographs of themselves on Mortuary slab. There was blood y' know. Dried blood on t' floor. Y' could still see it. That was last thing I saw before Old Bob and police arrived.

Beat.

Maud: Y' 'ave t' 'ave been in there, lived and breathed in there t' understand really.

Ruth: It wasn't what I thought y' know.

I've been thinking 'bout what y' said, the little steps. I saw something I didn't think I would. Lost the lads at one point an' I got through this door. F' a split second I actually thought I'd gone into Narnia, I was in a huge room with a proper stage.

Maud: The ballroom.

Loved it in there. Only part o' building that didn't reek o' cabbage an' wee.

Ruth: Y' used it then?

As Maud speaks, The Women line up on stage. This time they are not staring vacantly out to the audience but giggling and whispering to each other. Distant band music is heard. Charlotte dances with absent figures. Tina whirls around the space with a silk scarf. She moves the scarf in time with the music. Theresa stands frozen to the spot as she stares up at the chandelier she can see. She smiles.

Maud: Every Friday we'd get patients all ready an' take 'em down, line 'em up against the wall in't ballroom. Male nurses would do the same w'

the male patients and they'd be all lined up opposite. Music'd start up an' they'd dance together.

Ruth: All o' them, all the women y've been telling me 'bout? They all danced there.

Maud: All o' 'em.

*Beat. Lights fade on **The Women**. They exit*

Ruth: What's behind them bricked up bits.

***Maud** smiles. Enter **Annie** cautiously looking around 'er. She is smoking.*

Maud** watches **Annie

Maud: Lovely fireplaces. Annie used t' stand by one smoking, giving everyone the evil eye. As soon as she thought no-on ew' looking, 'er hand'd go on fireplace an' arm out an' fag in't other she'd plié.

*After **Annie** plies she resumes her previous position scowling at everyone before she exits.*

***Maud** and **Ruth**'s laughing subsides. Silence.*

Ruth: Sorry.

Beat.

If y' good, I'll do y' hair on last night.

Maud: I don't want t' look like a muppet f' opening of memorial garden.

Ruth: Eh, I'm good me. Mam let's me do hers an' all her friends say how good she looks.

Maud: Will y' Mam be there f' opening?

Ruth: Doubt it.

I'm looking forward t' seeing her when I've finished me community service. I hated going back an' facing her after the shifts every night. She couldn't look me in eye.

Maud: Thought it might o' 'ad been more than just y' travel sickness story. Y've nearly paid y' dues.

Ruth: So y'll let me cut y' hair yeah?

Maud: I'm fine as I am.

Ruth: Y' do need a change.

Beat.

Y' 'ad a tough time there I know, the stuff y' saw. On one hand I think y' brave f' sticking it out but on other y' could'a done more, brought in more o' little steps or something. I mean is it out o' guilt that y' still think y' see patients? Y' know like y' mind is playing tricks on y'?

Maud: It w'nt as black an' white as that.

Ruth: That didn't come out way I meant. It's just y' retired an' y' still so tied t' that place. They've gone now, y' need t' think 'bout you.

Maud begins rummaging in the cupboard under the sink. She pulls out the birdcage, an old bottle green telephone and a pile of paper work which include photographs, news paper cuttings. She scatters them on the floor. She reaches back into the corner of the cupboard and pulls out an old carrier bag with two large trophies inside they clatter together as she thrusts them at Ruth.

Maud: 'Ere.

Ruth reads each plaque on the trophies.

Ruth: Mental Health Nursing award 1973.... Excellence in Professional Nursing.

Maud: Y' may 'ave 'eard a few sad stories and think y' understand now but you 'ave no idea. Do y' know we were'nt even allowed t' see patients notes when I first started! Spent all that time w' 'em, meant t' be caring f' them an' we didn't know their circumstances or their proper diagnoses.

I fought that. Sneaked into office where they w' kept. Nearly got caught, 'ad t' stuff em up my dress. The really sad thing is I don't think it w' even noticed that some o' 'em were missing.

Maud lays out some of the papers on the table. Ruth slowly makes her way over and sits before them. Enter The Women whispering their lines from the John Clare poem. Theresa steps forward. The Doctor bustles on with his clipboard.

Doctor: Facts observed by Dr E Rose:

Theresa: No less than six persons should enter her room should she become violent and confinement will be necessary.

Doctor: Patient is to be rehabilitated. The past ten years have been spent at Broadmoor. Patient was found guilty of murdering her children. She chopped the bodies up and hid them in the potting shed.

Silence.

Transcription of diary: July 26.

Theresa: Patient has been dejected and very restless much of the time since her transfer. In an hour or more after being put to bed the first night she screamed the names of her children, banged her head against the wall persistently and would not be appeased. 11 grains of choral hydrate were then given, afterwards patient slept all night. Patient has made no effort to be clean, neither has she responded to endeavours to keep her clean. Has fed herself, but very hastily. Has thrown herself on the floor in a passion when displeased. No fit. Bowels moved yesterday.

Exit The Doctor. Maud sits in the horse hair chair and watches Theresa as Ruth continues to pour over the notes.

Theresa: To sleep as I in childhood sweetly slept.

Theresa perches herself on the arm of the chair.

Someone calls you useless for long enough, you start to believe you are. "The one thing you have to do is take care of t' children and do a little cooking here and there and you can't even do that. No wonder your Father was so keen f' me to marry you." I wanted him to understand, I wanted to try to help him understand. "They've been," I'd say. "Who's bloody been?" he'd reply. "The postman, Sandra from next door ... the rag and bone man?" I'd wish t' God I could say it had been one of those he listed. I'd shake my head and he'd collapse onto his chair slapping his hand against his forehead. I didn't need to say anything. "Where are they? Are they here now?" He'd scream. I'd nod sheepishly and he'd shove me into each room of the house. "Where are they then? Show me." I'd go quiet and he'd carry on. "They don't exist do they? You can't see them, you can't hear them it's all in here."

Theresa jabs herself in the head.

"No bugger else has a raging lunatic to contend with after a twelve hour shift, so why should I?"

It wasn't always like this. Every now and again, usually after he'd won on the horses, his features would soften: "What do they tell y' these ... visitors?" I'd pour him another beer and make something up. "They said it will rain tomorrow." "Aye," he'd said say, "If they ever tell you which horse will come in first, let me know won't y'?"

More of them started coming and for more of the time. All different shapes, sizes and colours they were, but one thing they all shared was they hated my Alfie and Barbara. “They’re my own flesh and blood,” I’d plead. They wouldn’t have any of it.

All I remember is seeing a tuft of Alfie’s hair smeared in blood in the fist of my hand. I don’t remember anymore.

Exit Theresa.

Ruth: I don’t know what t’ say.

Maud: I don’t know about you but I’m ready f’ me bed. I’ll see y’ in morning.

Ruth watches Maud as she exits. Ruth collects all of the papers and puts them in the back of the cupboard. She gently polishes the trophies and places them in the centre of the kitchen table. Lights fade to black.

Scene 6

The ward. Darkness.

The Women whisper their lines.

Annie: Patients should have nothing to eat or drink for 6 hours proceeding treatment.

Annie lights a cigarette. Lights up dimly. Annie sits on the edge of Theresa's bed. Theresa is curled up on her side sobbing softly. Julie's lies with the sheet over her head.

Okay Teapot?

Julie: Tip me...

Annie: Good. *(To Theresa)* Still crying then?

Theresa continues to sob.

Christ it was just a bird.

Theresa: He was my friend.

Annie: Y' sound like religious one.

Theresa: Is she back? Charlotte?

Annie: I'll lick bedpan if she comes back t'night. 'ow many people 'ave we seen die on this ward an' then soft Canary is killed an' y'd a thought it w' end o' world.

Theresa: Murdered. Trevor w' murdered.

Annie: 'ow could such a daft bird create such a bloody mess? Eh, this'll cheer y', when the piano lid crashed own on it, it's 'ead came clean off.

Theresa's sobbing crescendos.

It's a good thing. It died straight away!

Y' a soft bastard you. I knew this would end in tears, I just knew it as soon as I saw it I said "what y' fucking doing w' that you idiots," but oh, do they listen to me?

Julie: Maud pot.

Annie: Aye, Maud pot. Ooooh she'll get it in't neck f' this. Matron's 'ated 'er since day she clapped eyes on 'er. I wouldn't be surprised if she's already been sent down drive.

Theresa: It wasn't her fault.

Annie: She likes all these new fangled ideas.

Theresa: I like her.

Annie: D'ya really or is it y' voices that like 'er?

Theresa: Voices don't like you.

Annie: Don't the'? I just don't know 'ow I'll sleep at night now knowing that.

Beat.

I'm off t' get me extra cigs Matron promised me. Don't cry all night will y'?

Theresa lunges at Annie knocking her to the ground. Annie tries to get away but Theresa yanks her head back with one hand and pounds Annie in the stomach with the other. They continue to tussle and struggle with each other. Theresa rams Annie into Charlotte's bed which tips sideways. Tablets hidden in the slit in the mattress pour out onto the floor. Two Nurses run on and separate the pair. Annie and Theresa gasp for breath. Everybody stares at the tablets.

Lights fade to black. Lights up on Maud sitting on a chair. Hair is scattered all over the top of the tablets. Ruth is sweeping up. The trophies are still present but have been moved to the back of a kitchen unit top. On the calendar all of the days before the smiley face have been crossed off.

Ruth: Wouldn't it be better if I just swept up when we're finished.

Maud: No, get it all up now. I can't stand mess.

Ruth: Y' looking loads better already.

Maud: I'll reserve judgement 'til end.

Ruth: Will it be funny when I'm gone?

Maud: 'aven't really thought.

Ruth: Y'll have peace and quiet.

Beat.

Apart from them y' think y' see.

Beat.

I used t' believe in ghosts. Mam did too. After Nan died she begged and pleaded f' Nan t' come back an' see her. Sad really. She just wanted t' say goodbye. Nan an' her were dead close. Do owt f' each other they would. If ghosts were real Nan would've come back even if just once, f' a moment. She never did.

Beat.

If she knew about you an' the ghosts it'd make her really annoyed; hurt her a lot.

Maud: Do I 'urt you?

Ruth: No. I think y' just remembering patients.

Maud: I don't Ruth. I don't control what 'appens.

Beat.

I'll tell y' why you and y' Mam never saw y' Nan's ghost. She's 'appy now an' at peace. She's no reason t' come back.

Those I see 're different, no peace in life or death.

Couldn't really 'elp 'em enough when they w' alive and certainly can't now.

Ruth: Y' wouldn't have won those awards if that was true.

If someone I knew'd gone in there an' you w' on ward, I'd be happy.

Beat.

Is there any patient that really stands out in y' mind?

Maud: Charlotte.

Ruth: The one y' said 'ad gone funny on her wedding night?

Maud nods.

Maud: Shouldn't 'ave favourites but she was mine. She w' making real progress over the years. I was positive she'd get t' leave.

Ruth: She didn't?

Maud: She'd always said the drugs she was on were suppressing her mood. She'd been hiding them away. I knew she'd been hiding them but didn't know where. Came back on ward one day to see hundreds of them scattered on floor. Bed'd been knocked over; she'd been hiding them in slit in mattress. Matron said her deception was part of her illness and that Charlotte was more ill than she'd thought.

Her Mother was only too happy to sign her up for ECT treatment Matron said she needed.

Ruth: No!

Maud: It may seem barbaric but over the years I saw that ECT helped a lot of patients.

Ruth: Did it help Charlotte?

Maud: They didn't see an improvement so they gave her more and more. Galvanised her brain to pulp I'd say.

Matron reckoned I'd had something to do with hidden tablets in mattress and arranged for me to be moved to another ward. I saw her through first few treatments and then that was it. Never saw her again.

Ruth: I thought you never went in for ECT treatments?

Maud: I went in with Charlotte.

Lights fade, exit Ruth.

Lights up dimly on A Nurse as she wheels on a bed with a white sheet neatly folded and tucked onto it. On top of the bed is an Electroconvulsive therapy machine. The Nurse tuts as she looks around for an electricity socket. She unplugs the wireless and plugs in the machine causing it to whir into life.

Enter Julie

Julie: Place mode switch to ECT and briefly press TREAT switch to initiate stimulus.

Enter a second Nurse restraining Charlotte's arms. Charlotte struggles ferociously and moans. The two Nurses strap Charlotte onto the bed. One Nurse roughly shoves a gag between Charlotte's jaws

*while the other checks the padded electrodes have been soaked before being placed on **Charlotte's** temples.*

*Enter **Young Maud** abruptly. **The Nurses** look at each other before staring at **Young Maud**.*

Young Maud: I'm 'ere now.

***One Nurse** exits and **Young Maud** takes her place. **Young Maud** gently strokes **Charlotte's** hair.*

I'm sorry.

Charlotte: It will be Okay.

Young Maud: I'm so sorry.

Charlotte: It's not you're fault.

***Charlotte** opens her hand for **Young Maud** to put her hand inside. **Young Maud** does so. The rest of **the women** stand beside **Maud**. **The Women** each hold a lit candle.*

The women: I am the self consumer of my woes,

They rise and vanish in oblivious host,

Like shades in love and death's oblivion lost.

Maud: And yet I am! And live with the shadows tost.

***The women** blow out their candles.*

***The Nurse** suddenly snaps the switch on the machine to turn it on. **Charlotte's** body goes rigid before vigorously shaking.*

Blackout.

Scene 7

Lights up brightly on an empty stage. Greens with splashes of pinks, purples, yellows, blues and reds are projected onto the stage floor to represent the memorial garden. Birds are heard singing.

Maud stands alone.

Enter Ruth. She looks around the garden as she approaches Maud. They stand side by side. Maud does not look at Ruth.

Ruth: A good turn out.

Maud: Not bad.

Ruth: Shame Steve an' boys didn't come f' today.

Maud: Y' not surprised they didn't 're y'?

Ruth: Guess not.

Maud: Bob's impressed you're still 'ere.

Beat.

Ruth: Y'll 'ave more people passing by from now on, coming t' see this place.

Beat.

Did y' know many people today?

Maud: A few.

Ruth: Go on then, 're y' going to tell me?

Maud: Yes Ruth, they liked me 'air.

Ruth: Noooo. Who was that woman who was chatting to y' f' ages?

Beat.

Y' know, the little old one.

Maud: Relative o' one of patients.

Ruth: What, a patient y've told me about?

Maud: Charlotte's

Ruth: No way. Her Mam?

Maud: Oh no. 'er Aunt, 'er Mam's younger sister. I'd not met 'er before. Last time she'd seen Charlotte 'ad been on Charlotte's wedding day. She w' Charlotte's next o' kin in end. She got phone call saying she'd died, but time she'd got up 'ere, Charlotte w' in ground. She collected 'er belongings an' went.

Ruth: What brought 'er back today then? Guilt?

Maud: Aye.

Beat.

An' she wanted t' find me.

Ruth: You?

Maud: Amongst 'er belongings was an envelope w' 'Nurse Maud' on. Said she'd tried years ago t' get my details but couldn't. She read about opening o' garden an' although knew it a long shot, wanted t' find someone who knew me, if not me t' pass it on.

Ruth: And?

Maud looks at Ruth.

Y've not opened it have y'?

Maud gently takes a small crumpled white envelope from her pocket and traces the letters with her finger.

Would you like me t'?

Maud continues to stare at the envelope for a moment before slowly raising her hand to pass Ruth the envelope. Ruth's hand quivers slightly as she carefully opens the letter and unfolds a single piece of paper. As Ruth does so Maud looks out to the audience.

Maud: I waited and 'oped t' see 'er after I moved wards. Those Friday's at ballroom when we'd all come together. Week after week, f' years an' years I looked f' 'er. They won't o' let 'er out ward. I knew that really but part o' me still 'oped a new Matron would not realise an' allow 'er t' go.

*Ruth smiles and holds out the letter for them both to read together.
Enter Charlotte.*

Charlotte: I'll never forget that you were my Canary and Piano. Thank you.

Silence.

Ruth: Maud! I can see her. I can see Charlotte!

Maud smiles at Ruth and pulls her in closer to her. Exit Charlotte.

I won't see her again though. Bet you won't either.

Maud: What y' talking 'bout soft lass?

Ruth: She's found y' now she can rest can't she? Maybe they all can now they have a resting place more people know about.

Maud: Most won't understand what 'appened t' them though.

Ruth: Maybe not but they can still be respected.

Maud: Aye.

Enter the Women behind Maud and Ruth

Tina: Untroubling and untroubled where I lie;

Julie: The grass below

Theresa: Above the vaulted sky.

Lights fade to black.

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