

# **Jarrow Slake and Fulfilling Action through Character, Language and Time**

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# **Abstract**

The play *Jarrow Slake* tells the tragic story of Isabella Jobling during the three weeks in which her husband hung outside of her cottage window in the north east town of Jarrow in 1832. The play appears in three acts, each one set during each of those three weeks. Isabella is torn between two men and it is time for her to decide which one she loves the most. This decision will either take her across the globe in an escape, or leave her stuck in Jarrow for the rest of her life.

This essay will, using *Jarrow Slake* as a case study, interrogate important dramatic decisions which the playwright must make during the process of writing their play. These will include considerations regarding character, language and time. I will moreover argue how these key elements interlink to ultimately influence and serve in fulfilling the overall action of the play. Through this study I also hope to contribute, by example, some validation to Tennessee Williams' idea that the playwright's initial distorted perspective of the play, through appropriation-based decision making, becomes a much clearer image.

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## **Jarrow Slake and Fulfilling Action through Character, Language and Time**

‘A play just seems to materialize, like an appropriation it gets clearer and clearer and clearer’

-Tennessee Williams-

(Rader, 2000, p.94).

### **The Execution of William Jobling**

The story of William Jobling’s death is a brutal historical example of injustice between the ruling and working classes and a tragic tale of an innocent man, wrongly sentenced. In the summer of 1832 coal miners in the north-eastern town of Jarrow were out on strike under Thomas Hepburn’s, then recently established, Northern Union of Pitmen. One day, during the month of June, two striking miners were walking from South Shields back to their homes in Jarrow; one was named Ralph Armstrong, and the other was William Jobling. Jobling ‘was known as a good union man, strongly on the side of Hepburn’s law-abiding policy. He had an unblemished personal character’ (Wilkinson, 1939, p.36).

On their journey they came across an elderly magistrate on horseback named Nicholas Fairless. Fairless was well known in the area for having dealt out harsh punishments to the miners, both before and during the strike. The two men begged the magistrate for money, and then as he refused them Ralph Armstrong dragged him from his horse and began to beat him. Later that day William Jobling was arrested for the assault and Ralph Armstrong was never found. Fairless later identified Jobling not as the man who had carried out the attack, but as the man who had fled from the scene and done not a thing to prevent it from happening. When Fairless later died from his injuries the authorities, without the main culprit, needed someone to hold accountable for the death.

William Jobling was sentenced to death and hanged publicly on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 1832 in front of the county courts at Durham. His body was then, by order of the court, transported back to Jarrow and gibbeted upon Jarrow Slake. The ruling classes were delivering a harsh reminder to the miners, reaffirming their place within society and providing a warning of what could happen should the working classes step out of line. For three weeks the body hung out on the slake, with a military guard constantly watching over it. After three weeks the guard was removed and that night the body vanished.

*The Times* newspaper published an article at the time stating: 'Jobling has left a wife and two children, and his widow is far advanced in pregnancy with a third' (1832, p.5). *The Shields Gazette* additionally explains how 'Isabella Jobling, the hanged man's widow, had a cottage near the slake so she would have been able to see her husband clearly for the three weeks he was left on display' (2007).

The play which I chose to write, titled *Jarrow Slake*, tells the story of Isabella Jobling during the three weeks in which her husband hung outside of her cottage window. The play appears in three acts, each one set during each of those three weeks.

This essay will, using *Jarrow Slake* as a case study, interrogate important dramatic decisions which the playwright makes during the process of writing their play. These will include considerations regarding character, language and time. I will moreover argue how these key elements interlink to ultimately influence and serve in fulfilling the overall action of the play. Through this study I also hope to contribute, by example, some validation to Tennessee Williams' idea that the playwright's initial distorted perspective of the play, through appropriation-based decision making, becomes a much clearer image.

## **Getting Started**

I believe that the appeal in choosing Isabella's perspective over William Jobling's at such an early stage in the process of writing this play was very much down to the way in which the historical events had been documented. Jobling's execution is not, in fact, an extremely well known event in British history, although it has not been completely forgotten in the north east today; there is a small exhibition dedicated to the unjust hanging at South Shields Museum and Art Gallery. However, the little documentation which has survived does appear to overlook the perspective of Isabella Jobling completely; she is, at most, briefly mentioned as a side note in any account which I have come into contact with.

There are so many questions which have been left unanswered in these historical documentations, such as what happened to the body? What happened to Ralph Armstrong? What was written in the letter which Jobling sent out while he was in prison, awaiting his execution? Who was that letter meant for?

I wanted to embrace and play around with the mystery in this story, and so Isabella, being one of the most mysterious characters within my research seemed extremely promising in allowing me to do so. I was very much adhering to Stuart Spencer's notion that 'plays must, of course, be accurate. They must be truthful. But not historically truthful. Not factually truthful. Plays seek another kind of truth. They seek a psychological truth, an emotional or spiritual truth' (2002, p.161). I believe that my impulse to choose Isabella at this early stage as a 'main character', fed my hunger to create an original story, loosely based on historical

events, rather than becoming overly concerned with historical facts and telling an accurate account.

When beginning the first draft, freewriting was a huge part of my process, allowing for spontaneity in dialogue and events. I did not, for example, expect that Ralph Armstrong would make an appearance in this play before I began writing. However, as I was remaining open to all different characters and scenarios at this early stage, he did show up at Isabella's cottage. His was to become an arrival which determined the entire action of my play.

### **Unearthing the Action of the Play**

David Edgar explains how 'a dramatic action consists of a *project* (usually described in the form of a subject, verb and object: someone sets out to do something), followed by a *contradiction* or *reversal*' (2009, p.25). This simple and yet logical interpretation was extremely present within my mind as I re-read my first draft of *Jarrow Slake*, and furthermore shared it with my peers for discussion.

The first draft, while possessing more clarity than my initial ideas of what the play could be, remained an extremely distorted image of a whole. There was definitely a skeleton of a play there which I was pleased to be working with but I remained extremely unsure as to what the action of my play was in regards to Edgar's definition. I asked myself the question 'if I could only keep five pages of this play, which five pages would they be?'

This question was not concerning the section where I felt the dialogue was most polished, or where I felt the stage action was the most profound and exciting. This question was purely concerned with where I felt the core of the play resided. It was the moment in the play



which I felt provided me with that 'contradiction' or 'reversal' which Edgar emphasises. The idea of this reversal seemed extremely important to me as I knew it was vital to evoke emotion, and it was the thing which every other device and convention within the play was to work towards and thereafter demonstrate the repercussions of.

The five pages which I furthermore chose to 'save', as it were, took place in Act Two as Ralph Armstrong, the man responsible for the death of Isabella's husband, returned to see her in her cottage to apologise, rekindle a romance, and ask her to flee to America with him. The action was beginning to become clearer to me. This was a play about a widow who sets out to accept her fate of being alone, poor, and trapped in a harsh world who is offered a lifeline and a means of escape and fulfilment. This decision manifests, to a certain extent, within the play as a woman choosing between two men; one being her deceased husband and the other being the man who was largely responsible for that death.

The events of the play could then be structured around this action, creating the plot. However now, in keeping with Aristotle's notion that 'the imitation of character is not the purpose of what the agents do; character is included along with and on account of the actions', we can now begin to consider how this action was influential in determining how the characters were shaped (1996, p.11).

### **Characters in Action**

Once the first draft had been written, re-read and discussed I thought it would be an interesting and useful place to begin re-writing from that core moment which I had selected from the first draft. That is not to say that it became the beginning of the play, but I started

in the middle of the play and worked my way out. I found that the decisions which I made thereafter were becoming more relevant and appropriate to achieving the action of the play. There were many character-related decisions which took place, including a process of justifying each characters place within the play.

Alan Ayckbourn argues 'never include a character with no real function' as well encouraging the writer to ask themselves 'what purpose does this one fulfil? Is it vital? Is it even important?' (2002, p.37). I therefore began questioning the place of each of the characters I had thus far allowed in to the play.

Characters who I knew that I could not tell the story without included Isabella and Ralph as the action of the play was based on her decision to either choose Ralph or stay true to William. Ralph was the character who provided Isabella with that potential reversal, so I could absolutely not tell the story without him. Isabella's two children also provided a great dramatic effect in mirroring their dead father; as in Act Three when Jimmy is literally dressed up and positioned into the image of his gibbeted father. While they were factually both female, I chose to make the two children male in the play for the dramatic purpose of creating a biological male spectrum of the dead, the sick, the living and the unborn, all of which have some form of presence on the stage. Ralph also uses the children's fate as a means of winning Isabella over to the idea of fleeing for a better life in America. Allowing them a tangible presence on stage seemed to make this moment incredibly persuasive not only to Isabella, but the audience and reader as well.

The two characters of Reverend Fishcer of St. Pauls church and Isabella's neighbour Anna Brown did provide me with a problem. Neither of them directly impacts the action of the play, and I believe that I could still write this play without them; perhaps this is something I

could try out in the next draft. However, upon discussion with my mentor and peers I came to realise that these two characters were there to provide a link to the outside world, beyond the confines of the cottage. They are most present within the first twenty minutes of the play and in talking about the miner's strike, the hanging, the neighbours and churchgoers; these two characters build up and communicate an entire community to the audience, allowing for great contextualisation of the play. As that sense of community seemed important to include within the piece, and since I didn't feel it would be necessary to bring in a huge array of different characters belonging to that community, I concluded that Fischer and Anna Brown would be great representatives.

There was one character that, after the first draft, had to be cut. The character of Mary Skipsey is referred to, in the most recent draft of the play, as being another widow in the town whose husband was unjustly murdered. She was a character who made a ten minute appearance in the first draft in which she and Isabella bonded over their stories. When reassessing this character's function I realised that she absolutely wasn't needed to tell this story. She wasn't directly needed to achieve the action of the play, nor did she particularly add any dramatic impact which couldn't have been achieved if she were to simply be referred to by the other characters.

When reviewing the first draft and unearthing the action of the play, there were other alternative characters which I could have chosen who could have had the most prominent example of a reversal or contradiction. For example, Jimmy has an interesting journey in this piece; he starts out as a delinquent, but through the influence of the reverend he attains an appreciation of Christianity and develops behavioural skills. Alternatively the characters of Hepburn and Deags' come to realise that their values and beliefs are not always in line with

each other, as is displayed at the end of Act Two in those moments when Deags demonstrates his willingness to have Ralph killed.

Had I chosen either of these characters' moments of reversals as the core of my play then *Jarrow Slake* would have turned out to be a very different play indeed. Perhaps Aristotle's point that 'necessarily, we are concerned with interactions between people who are closely connected with each other' and furthermore 'what one should look for are situations in which sufferings arise within close relationships' can be used to justify my decision in making the character of Isabella's journey explicitly related to the action of the play (1996, p.23). Reverend Fischer and Jimmy do have a close relationship in the piece, as do Hepburn and Deags, but neither of these relationships quite matches the intensity and tragic potential that Ralph and Isabella's relationship boast.

The stakes are extremely high within their relationship; Ralph risks his life to come back to see Isabella, and Isabella faces a lifelong feeling of guilt if she runs off with Ralph, but a life of misery and hardship if she does not. They also have a history together which, when revealed in the play, further intensifies their relationship and the present action.

Providing a definition of tragedy, Aristotle stated it is 'an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete and possesses magnitude' as well as 'effecting through pity and fear' (1996, p.10). Ralph and Isabella's relationship certainly possesses an intense magnitude, after all life and death is at stake; lives fulfilled and lives wasted are at stake. The action is also complete; there is a beginning, middle and end and finally we do see the devastating impact which Ralph's departure has on Isabella's sanity.

The audience pity Isabella at the end of the play and we can also fear what will happen to her in the future, after the curtain falls. Isabella's internal contradictions center around the idea of temptation and the feeling of guilt. It is more likely than not that the audience will be able to recognise these feelings. If we can empathise with the character at this point then it is possible to feel fear. In these ways *Jarrow Slake* can be fitting with Aristotle's historical definition of tragedy.

Edgar claims that his contemporary model for dramatic action (as referenced on page 7) 'is a model of actions of plays with tragic or ironic endings' (2009, p.26). This is due to their inclusion of contradiction or reversal, which ultimately lead to Aristotle's 'complete' action. Again I argue that *Jarrow Slake* is fitting with this definition of 'the tragic' because of its use of contradiction; that contradiction being an internal one brought about through temptation and guilt.

Edgar also explains how 'in many post-Aristotelian attempts to define an action, there is another element: the idea that the dramatic action expresses not just a progression of cause and effect, but a contradiction in the human condition' (2009, p.23). This further emphasises the importance of the influence of character in fulfilling the action of the play.

As an example, *Summer and Smoke* by Tennessee Williams has an action whereby the play's protagonist Alma's project is to be intimate with her neighbour and childhood friend John. When she is finally explicit in her seduction and reveals her true feelings towards John, it is too late and he is already engaged to be married to someone else. Then, after having been turned down by the love of her life she turns to leading the life she always feared; that of a lonely whore on the lookout for sailors passing through the town.

There is a clear project followed by a clear reversal. However one of the main reasons for this reversal relates to Edgars thoughts on the internal contradiction within the character. Alma's pride and need to be an upstanding member of the community had always been traits which prevented her from succumbing completely to John. Alma articulates this contradiction brilliantly when saying 'I said, 'But what about pride?' – She said, 'forget about pride whenever it stands between you and what you must have' (Williams, 1952, p.87). Unfortunately for Alma, this revolution occurs far too late to her.

When writing *Jarrow Slake* I asked myself 'why wouldn't Isabella just flee with Ralph?' It does appear to be her only lifeline and means of escaping the life she is so unhappy living. The answer to this question was a clear contradiction within the characters feelings. She already feels guilt concerning her affair with Ralph while William had been living, and can therefore not bear the idea of the even larger feeling of guilt which she would carry with her for the rest of her life should she leave Jarrow and William behind.

In a way Isabella can be comparable to Williams' Alma. They are both characters who have these contradictory feelings which are in conflict with their best interests, and as they cannot overcome these feelings, they are doomed to lead the lives which they had feared. The growth which both of these characters experience is a recessive growth, making both plays seemingly conform more to the tragic form.

There is a climax in Act Two of *Jarrow Slake* in which Isabella almost succumbs to Ralph's idea of fleeing, however as the character of Deags enters and reminds her of the guilt which she should be feeling about that decision, she swiftly reconsiders. It is therefore interesting to now look at the language in which the characters speak and how powerful this can be in contributing towards the action of the play.

### **Language in Action**

Now that I had a clear sense of the action which the play would take, and the characters which would allow for this action, I had to ensure that the dialogue in which the characters were to express themselves in each of the drafts to follow not only remained in keeping with their nature, but propelled the action of the play. The language in which *Jarrow Slake* is written does seem like an obvious thing to discuss, mainly because of the influence of north east dialect; this is something which I will review later. After having just considered the functions of characters, it is worthwhile spending some time reflecting on how the characters of the play use language to play with power, to sway an argument and furthermore evoke emotional feeling.

Audiences naturally distrust characters who are too proficient in language; all too often articulacy plays as glibness. Largely this stems from our sense that at points of intensity and emotion the intellect gives way to something more primary; if the language does not mirror this, the moment rings false (Waters, 2010, p.122).

In conjunction with the above quote by Steve Waters I began to consider how silences and inarticulacy could be used within speech in order to better articulate the high emotional intensity at specific moments. This was in the hope that at what first glance appears somewhat illegible actually becomes eloquent in performance.

I began to think about how silences could be used in playwriting. In Jim Cartwright's *Two*, the character of Leslie is largely silent in the scene where she sits at the bar with her

overbearing bully of a husband Roy. This chilling scene not only portrays the vulnerability of Leslie, but additionally the vulnerability of Roy who is left to fill the silences (1996, pp.149-56). This is a great example of how silence and inarticulacy as devices can be extremely effective in portraying relationships and power differences. This example from *Two* could also be used comparably with that moment in *Jarrow Slake* whereby Isabella comes face to face with Ralph for the first time since her husband took the blame for his crime.

As Ralph appears to Isabella in Act Two she, for approximately four pages, does not utter a word. The audience get the sense that Isabella is lost for words, frozen stiff, staring on at Ralph in the way that she does for so long. Very much like Cartwright's Roy, Ralph is left to deal with the silence which he has caused; he deals with it in such a way that he talks. There are moments when he asks Isabella a direct question and she still cannot muster up the words to reply and so Ralph must talk on. Isabella's loss of words demonstrates her vulnerability in this situation, but also Ralph's.

As Ralph is forced to speak to fill silence, the language in which he expresses his apology is greatly lacking in clarity. He finds great difficulty in expressing himself, in conjunction with Waters' point that it is simply such an emotionally heightened moment, this is evident through Ralph's repetition and the way in which some of his sentences trail off and end before they have been fully formed. The situation which he has landed himself in is not only one in which most people would struggle to piece together a sentence, but he has been in hiding, unable to communicate with people for over a month and so his language has suffered as a result (see pp.67-70).

As Isabella later begins to speak with Ralph we see him calming down and his speech begins to flow more easily and eloquently. I felt it important to allow for this progression in his



speech in keeping with the action of the play. His speech becomes more persuasive through his eloquence and ability to articulate his idea of running off together to start a new life in America. His persuasiveness develops at such a crucial moment of the play in fulfilling the action as it really provides the character of Isabella with a huge dilemma as to whether she should flee with Ralph or stay put in Jarrow. If Ralph's language remained as chaotic as it appears at first, there would be no chance of Isabella running off with him. His charm, expressed through speech is what makes for a great contradiction within her character.

I knew that the action of the play involved seeing Isabella ultimately choosing to stay in Jarrow over fleeing to America with Ralph, a decision made partly due to an overbearing feeling of guilt, and partly due to her love for her husband William. At this point in the play during Act Two, after Ralph has seemingly swayed Isabella's reasoning in his favour, I knew that it would then be a huge challenge to change Isabella's decision back to wanting to stay in Jarrow. This is when the character Deags re-enters the cottage, stumbling upon Ralph for the first time since Jobling's death. It was important for me to place the power here with Deags, and upon his entry, speech patterns alter again. This is in keeping with Steve Waters' argument that 'often the power dynamic within a play derives from the battle for supremacy between idioms; one of the tasks of the dramatist is to test each idiom to its limits, to audit their truthfulness or evasiveness' (2010, p.116).

At this point of the play both mindsets of Isabella's are put on trial against each other; one which agrees that she should leave Jarrow for good, the other says that she could never live with the guilt and so she must stay. Ralph fights one corner while Deags fights the other, but one must ultimately triumph, and I knew that it would be Deags. Deags' speech here is very direct and based upon fact: 'There were a rally that day ye's should've been at' (see p.89);

‘and ye ended up killin’ ‘um’ (see p.91). As Deags begins to appear as the probable champion of this argument, Isabella begins to adopt these idiomatic speech patterns from Deags: ‘ye did kill ‘um’ (see p.91). This demonstrates how the entire action of the play is unfolding in these moments; Isabella is about to make her decision.

What pushes her furthermore in the favour of Deags’ argument is the fact that Ralph is reduced once more to the vulnerable man who appeared to Isabella earlier on. He knows he has lost the battle and he struggles to piece a sentence together as his words trail away and he chokes through fear of being killed. He uses repetition again, not as a form of emphasis, but out of sheer desperation. Again, this is a highly charged emotional moment for him and his brain shuts down, allowing for a more raw emotional display, where words do not come easily. Such emotional inarticulacy is also experienced by Isabella at the end of Act Two. She reaches her conclusion and the stage directions inform us that she lingers before ultimately instructing Deags to ‘kill ‘um’ (see p.101).

When reviewing the language in this play, one cannot help but notice the influence of regional dialect. I wanted to write this play in such dense dialect as I was born and grew up in the north-east and I feel like this dialect has, for the most part, been overlooked on the national and international stage. Daniil Kharms’ notion that besides talent and intelligence, writers ‘must also have energy, real interest, clarity of thought and a sense of obligation’ is a concept which I, as a writer, can relate to as I feel a certain representative sense (2009, p.122).

After reading and thereafter seeing Ena Lamont Stewart’s play *Men Should Weep* at the National Theatre in 2010 I realised that if I wanted to write a play in which the language was heavily rooted in regional dialect, with the hope of having it performed to audiences outside

that region, then I could and should be absolutely unapologetic in my decision to do so. *Men Should Weep* was indeed a great challenge to read due to my unfamiliarity to the Glaswegian dialect in which it is fearlessly written however plays texts do not exist for the sole purpose of being read in one's head; they are created to be acted out and performed and they exist to be spoken, as does dialect. It is through hearing this language being spoken in action that it is fully appreciated.

This language in action meant that in 2010, a huge multi-cultural audience at the National Theatre in London could laugh at lines like 'aye. The La Scala. Back stalls. I wis that excited I didna notice there wis silver paper on ma toffees till I wish hauf-way through the poke! Ma Goad, the pain I had in ma stummick! Thought I wis sent for!' (1994, 3. p.56). Through seeing such language being communicated, appreciated and applauded on a national platform, hundreds of miles from where the language originates I was inspired and reassured that my use of language was perfectly acceptable for the contemporary stage and accessible to different geographical audiences.

An additional consideration which I faced in regards to the language relates to the idea of time. My play is set in 1832, but is absolutely never going to be performed to an audience in the year 1832. Whilst being driven to convey the world of Jarrow in 1832 on stage I also had to remember that this was to be communicated to an audience today and must therefore be conveyed in a language which feels living and relevant to them. My decisions on language and time here were very much influenced by writers who translate plays across cultures and times, creating a new living text while also allowing the essence of the original to remain. For example, Joshua Sobol, whose most successful plays include *Ghetto* and *Cut Throat Dog*, reaffirms 'when you translate a playwright who is no longer with us, you have

to make of him a playwright who is with us, who is very much present, here and now' ('On Translation', *NT Platform Papers*, 2003). I was not concerned with the origins of particular dialect words and whether they were historically valid within my play. If I felt like the word had a place in the play, which is intended for performance on the contemporary stage, then it would be included, just as I was not going to force words into the play which cease to be spoken.

Historical links with language were only one way in which I was considering the relationship time has with theatre when writing *Jarrow Slake*, however there are also many other important ways in which time works within this piece.

### **Time in Action**

My decision to set the play over a fictional, staged time of three weeks always seemed to just make sense from the very beginning of the writing process. It was something which I never really questioned or made any radical attempt to change. However, it was only once I had made key decisions on the play's action and its relation to characters that I realised how appropriate this time frame of three weeks was to the play.

Steve Waters describes that 'the task of the playwright is to create something that unfolds in time, that creates a sense of time's movement, but the motor is set to the story they are telling' (2010, p. 72). When I reached that point in the process of writing *Jarrow Slake* whereby I was certain that this was Isabella's story, I knew that it would be a coherent play, in keeping with Edgar's explanation of a play's action, to first show Isabella pursuing her action, followed by her moment of contradiction and reversal and, thereafter, her in the

aftermath of her decision. I was therefore dealing with three separate moments in time which all seemed to want to manifest within their own self-contained segment of the play. I therefore labelled them in different Acts.

When I had researched into the gibbeting of William Jobling earlier on in the process, I had also noted that Isabella could see the body hanging outside of her house for the three weeks which it remained on the stake. My decision to set the play over three weeks, although at first a decision which went unquestioned, seemed clearly appropriate now that I was developing confidence in regards to how Isabella's journey was mapping out.

It is interesting to consider how the play may have been different had Isabella's action been different. For example, if I had decided earlier on that Isabella would indeed flee to America with Ralph; it is likely that Act Three could have taken place only a few fictional hours after the end of Act Two, as we could see the couple preparing to leave the country. Alternatively, Act Three could have been set in America, weeks, months, or even years after the couple had fled Jarrow.

Had I chosen Ralph as my protagonist and told his story within the action of the play, it may have begun a few weeks earlier when he had first retreated into hiding. Again, the play could have ended with him in America, whether Isabella had chosen to flee with him or not; the story could have stretched out over years of fictional time. However, none of these were in fact the story which I was telling and, as Steve Waters explains, I had to ensure that the time setting of the play was in conjunction with the story I was conveying.

There was one section of the play in particular which provided me with a time related dilemma, as I had set up a period of waiting which, in order to be portrayed convincingly,

had to be done within a real time frame. This moment comes at the very end of the play as Deags and Hepburn leave Isabella's cottage to take down the body of Jobling. I knew that I wanted the play to end just as the body was about to be brought into the cottage and so it was my challenge to fill the time in which they left and returned.

This reminded me very much of the set up which Harold Pinter creates in his play *The Dumb Waiter* which sees two hit men, named Ben and Gus, waiting for a call from their boss about their next job. Pinter informs the audience of the fact that these two men are in waiting, and the audience expect that before the play ends the call will take place, however they have no exact clue of how long that will be (Pinter, 1960). In *Jarrow Slake* the audience are informed that Deags and Hepburn will return with the body, the two men emphasise their need to be quick before they leave, however the audience can do nothing but sit and wait with Isabella.

During the time it takes here for the men to bring the body back, I was initially concerned that I had nothing to fill this real-time with. Isabella could just sit in silence for ten minutes but that would be extremely tiresome for an audience. I therefore used this period of waiting in order to allow for the pay off of a mysterious letter which I had spent a lot of time during the play setting up. This seemed like the perfect time to refer back to that letter, as it was sent out by William when he was in prison. Isabella had been waiting for its arrival since she first heard about it on the day Jobling's body was gibbeted, therefore in these last few climactic moments it seemed like an ideal addition.

In order to make the period of time increasingly convincing as real-time I still had to prolong time a little longer. Deciding on a specific action for Isabella in these moments seemed incredibly important; otherwise I ran the risk of just doing anything in order to fill the time.

She therefore sets herself the task of clearing the cottage and preparing it for William's arrival. She sees what's to come as an opportunity to mourn her husband's death through ceremony, something which she was denied when the courts hanged and gibbeted him in the way that they did. Not only does this give her a purpose for her actions in the final moments of the play, but it also builds up an image in the mind of the audience of what is to come when, at the end of the play, William is returned to Isabella.

### **Conclusion**

Although I am a strong believer in the idea that every play is different and therefore requires the writer to take a unique and appropriated approach, there have been important methods and rules which I have practised while writing Jarrow Slake which I would be keen to implement into any future playwriting projects of my own. Probably the most important rule in my process was to ask myself after the first draft 'which five pages would I keep?' as this impulsive decision lead to a defined action for the play being unearthed, followed by the appropriate characters, then the language which they used and so on. It is a process which is all extremely in line with Aristotle's view on plot, as the imitation of action, being the most important factor of tragedy, followed by character and then reasoning (1996, pp.11-12).

An additional point which I will make is that I still do not feel that the play is a finished product. There is still work to be done. As already mentioned, I do feel like I could write the play without at least two of the characters who are currently included in the most recent draft. In regards to decisions on time within the play, Alan Ayckbourn has an interesting

viewpoint: 'I find it dramatically more effective to condense the stage action where possible. To conduct events over the course of a single day or night concentrates the audience's minds far more than meandering through a few decades' (2004, p.21). It would therefore, I believe, be interesting to try condensing the play down so that the entire action can take place during that one night in which Ralph returns to see Isabella. There are always things to consider for the next draft, and these new ideas are constantly allowing me to polish the play so that, and I am sure Tennessee Williams would agree, just like an appropriation *Jarrow Slake* becomes clearer and clearer and clearer.



## **Jarrow Slake**

## **Characters**

<i>Isabella Jobling</i>	Mid-to-late twenties. The pregnant wife of the deceased William Jobling.
<i>Jimmy Jobling</i>	Age 11. Her eldest son and a miner out on strike.
<i>Peter Jobling</i>	Age 5. Her youngest son, ill with pneumonia.
<i>Thomas Hepburn</i>	Mid-thirties. Miner and founder of the Northern Union of Pitmen.
<i>Reverend Fischer</i>	Mid-to-late forties. Reverend of St. Pauls Church in Jarrow.
<i>Ralph Armstrong</i>	Mid-twenties. Work mate of William's and responsible for the murder of Nicholas Fairless.
<i>Deags</i>	Late twenties. A work mate of William's and a friend of the family, also a committee member of the Northern Union of Pitmen.
<i>Anna Brown</i>	Mid-to-late twenties. A friend of Isabella's.

### Act One

Scene 1 (Isabella's cottage)

Scene 2 (Union meeting)

### Act Two (one week later)

Scene 1 (Isabella's cottage)

Interlude (Jimmy on the slake)

### Act Three (one week later)

Scene 1 (Union meeting)

Scene 2 (Isabella's cottage)

\*'Slake' is pronounced 'Slack'.

# Act One

## Scene 1 (Isabella's cottage)

*Lights up on Isabella's cottage. The cottage is brown and black, it is dreary looking in every sense of the word. It is furnished with a fireplace, a wooden table and two wooden chairs, a small barrel containing water, a homemade bed, a window and two doors; one leading to a separate sleeping room, the other leading outside. There are a couple of dirty shirts, a pair of ragged old trousers and some socks hanging on a piece of washing line. The cottage, while being an internal domestic environment, also has an external feel to it, as if the slake has crept into the building.*

*Jimmy and Peter sit on the two chairs, facing away from the audience; they look up at Reverend Fischer in all his glory. Fischer stands holding a bucket in each hand, out to his sides at arm's length. As the lights come up on the scene we realise that the buckets are for the purpose of catching water which is dripping from the roof.*

**Fischer:** There were sheep in their droves. Shepherds, three, sat among flocks. There was the sound of talk in the night. What they talked of, you must understand, is not written, it is not important. The revelation to follow was, however, of most importance not only to the three, and shepherds the world over, but to all of mankind. Glorious light did descend on the three men. It was a heavenly light, shining awesome. In that field of flocks the angel Gabriel of our Lord did appear. That exact same angel whom did appear to the Virgin Mary. You recall? You remember I told you earlier?

*The children nod in agreement.*

A whole host of angels assembled. The angel Gabriel's voice rumbled like thunder: 'This night, in the city of David the saviour is born. The saviour of man. The saviour of the world'. And the angels beamed. There'd have been light, not as we know it. A pure light in a field of darkness. And with that flash, the angels did vanish. They di...

*Stops. Peter coughs. Continues.*

...they disappeared. And then three men were, once again, alone in the night. Flocks unmoved and sky untouched. Instantly the men arose and began their journey to Bethlehem with the promise of the son of God, our saviour Jesus Christ. And, indeed, it is within Bethlehem where the three men did find, in a stable no less, among sheep, cattle, chickens and donkeys, the Virgin Mary exhausted by the manger gazing down at the son...

*Stops. Peter coughs much more violently. Fischer carefully puts down the two buckets under the dripping and pulls out a handkerchief from his sleeve.*

*(Offering) Hankie.*

*Peter takes the handkerchief and coughs into it. He wipes his mouth.*

...gazing down at the son of God. Into the stable...

*Stops. Peter holds up the slimy handkerchief.*

*(A little hesitant) Oh. Thank you.*

*He returns it back into his sleeve.*

Where was I? Oh yes... oh what was I beginning to say there just now?

**Peter:**       Shepherds in Bethlehem.

**Fischer:**     Ah, so I was. Now, as the men...

*Stops. Jimmy lets out a huge sigh in protest. Continues.*

...Now, as the men...

**Jimmy:** Howay and tell wu a story if ye've got tee. One that meks sense.

**Fischer:** Excuse me Jimmy Jobling but take the time to reflect on any extract of our holy bible and you can make perfect sense out of it.

**Jimmy:** Nah!

**Peter:** Ye knaa the angel? What would he look like?

**Fischer:** Would *he* even be male? It's impossible to answer without having seen one.

**Jimmy:** Cause neeone's ever seen one cause thu divvent exist man.

**Peter:** Aa bet thu dee like, *(to the reverend)* divvent thu?

**Fischer:** *(Agreeing)* For it is written.

**Peter:** When de thu torn up like?

**Jimmy:** Thu divvent man, not at aall.

**Fischer:** Quiet Jimmy! *(To Peter)* In moments when an angel is needed, they're the Lord's holy messengers, you see? In moments of great grief or crisis...

*Stops. Peter coughs violently and can't catch his breath. Fischer kneels down to him and pats him on the back.*

That's it. Let it out. Let it out. Don't panic. That's it.

*Peter recovers.*

Angel's: They're guidance. Show us the way. Make the light in a dark world apparent.

**Jimmy:** Whey outside, look. Jarrow's dead dark. Hacky and black. So?

**Fischer:** So you must keep your eyes peeled for the light, don't you think?

**Jimmy:** Ah howay man, tell wu aboot somethin' real. When people die, and thu rot away and kill each other and starve.

**Fischer:** Our holy bible bursts at the spine with hope. It's the one thing not a story within is without.

**Jimmy:** If ye hev te tell a story, tell a story that's real. Else aa'm gettin' tired!

**Fischer:** Don't they teach children a thing about our faith in school anymore?

**Jimmy:** School anymore? Peter cannit gan te school anymore, he's too sick. Aa've not been te school in years man. Grew oot o' it.

**Fischer:** Indeed. Should be back in school during the strike, surely. A child with no grasp of the teachings of our holy bible? What a world.

**Peter:** When's mammy gettin' hyem?

**Fischer:** Truth being told... I had expected her to return before night fell. I'm sure she'll be back home any minute.

**Jimmy:** Howay Peter, bed.

*Jimmy helps Peter walk across the room and into bed. Reverend Fischer pulls out a copy of the bible and a small wooden crucifix. He places them down on to the table.*

**Fischer:** I'll be leaving these here tonight. *(Gesturing with the bible)* you'd do well to have a go through this, the pair of you. Yes a sad day when a child doesn't know the teachings of the holy bible sure enough.

**Jimmy:** *(Tucking Peter into bed)* Howay Peter, sleep.

**Fischer:** *(Moving towards the window)* Why your mother should insist on keeping this window uncovered I'll never know. The view of the slake is not something which you should have displayed in your home as if it were a fine painting. No good for anyone.

**Jimmy:** Divvent cover up the windi. Mam likes te see oot o' it.

**Fischer:** You're full of argue aren't you?

**Jimmy:** Ner!

**Fischer:** Jimmy listen, I want to know how you are, after everything that's happened.

**Jimmy:** The strike? Aa divvent care. Aa never gan te the meetin's anyway, they're fo' the owlder blokes. But the owners aren't backin' doon still.

**Fischer:** No.

**Jimmy:** Divvent care. Divvent even want te gan back doon there anyways; in the grund.

**Fischer:** That's not what I mean.

**Jimmy:** Pitch black, caad, people's aalways dyin'. Aa seen people dyin'.

**Fischer:** I'm not talking about that. Here and now. How are *you*?

**Jimmy:** Just telt ye. It's pitch black, it's caad, people's aalways dyin'.

**Fischer:** Yes.

*The door crashes open and in clammers Anna Brown with a basket in hand.*

**Anna:** God Aalmighty Isabella, pourin' doon in bucket loads... Oh, Reverend.  
What brings yee doon here? Where's wor Isabella hidin'?

**Fischer:** Mrs. Brown.

**Anna:** Jimmy, tek these pasties, they're for yer mammy. 'Less shu says, divvent  
gan eatin' thum.

*Anna hands over the basket to Jimmy.*

*(To the reverend)* Well?

**Fischer:** Being a concerned onlooker and under the circumstances, I thought it best  
that I should be checking up on Mrs. Jobling and the children. No sooner  
after my arrival, without so much as a drink of water offered, did I find  
myself responsible for minding the children for the day. When I arrived  
here it was early morning.

**Anna:** Ah Christ, shu not say owt aboot where shu were gannin'?

**Fischer:** Just up and left in a heartbeat.

**Anna:** Jimmy, did yer mammy say owt te yee and Peter aboot where shu were  
gannin'?

**Jimmy:** Not te us. Deags were rund this mornin' sayin' he had news. Me and Peter  
had te leave the room. Never telt wu nowt and then shu left.



**Anna:** Ah Jesus. Whey then there's nee tellin' where shu's off or when shu'll be back. *(To Jimmy)* Dee iz a favour: oot on that slake, pick wu up some coal eh? While the tide's low.

**Fischer:** Not the best of ideas.

**Jimmy:** Aa divvent want te gan oot there, it's pissin' doon.

**Anna:** Language! Howay, yer mammy'll want coal in the hoose when shu's back.

**Fischer:** The boy should not be out on that slake under the circumstances, Mrs. Brown.

**Anna:** Reverend, thu'll hev te gan oot there sooner or later. Ye want te lock thum up forever? *(Handing Jimmy a sack)* Here, tekk the sack. Divvent come back until it's full, areet? Nee lookin' at yer daddy neither. Aa'm watchin' ye oot the windi here and I'll smack ye meself if aa catch ye so much as stealin' a glimpse o' yer daddy. Aa'm warnin'. Then yer mammy'll hev a gan owa ye an' aall when shu gets back.

**Jimmy:** Aye, aa'm gannin', aa'm gannin'.

**Anna:** Divvent forget that!

*Jimmy leaves with the sack.*

**Anna:** Did shu say owt before shu left?

**Fischer:** 'Morning Reverend. Watch the bairns. Ta ta Reverend'.

**Anna:** Deags was here, was he?

**Fischer:** I had passed him on the road down here.

**Anna:** Say owt?

**Fischer:** 'Terrible day, isn't it Reverend?'

**Anna:** Aboot the news he'd had fo' Isabella man.

**Fischer:** I seem to be the only reverend in the county whose parish like to keep themselves to themselves.

**Anna:** Some would be thankful o' that. Ye not hear of that reverend of St. Hilda's of Middlesbrough who went doolally? Me guess is it's from listenin' te them bunch of owled gobshites he were lumped wi'. Excuse me language. Nowt good and sane's came oot o' Middlesbrough. Me mother-in-law came oot o' Middlesbrough. Soonds like ye shouldn't be complainin' there Reverend.

**Fischer:** I'm trying to help a stone wall it would seem. The word of God means little to Jarrow at this moment in time.

**Anna:** Whey Christ can ye blame wu? Just look oot the windi at what's oot there noo on Jarrow Slake. Any wander that the word o' God's gannin' unnoticed? How'd Isabella look when shu left?

**Fischer:** In a rush, certainly. **Anna:** How

did shu *seem* like? **Fischer:** Honestly? Blank. A

closed door.

**Anna:** Shu'll be wearin' a brave face is aall. Shu's not been herself though Reverend, aa'm tellin' ye. Shu looks worn oot if ye ask me.

**Fischer:** Yes, well that is understandable...

**Anna:** Ah, and would ye look at him aall tucked up in hees lickle bed. When he's not coughin' and wheezin' he's so peaceful like.

*Anna begins walking over to Peter who is now fast asleep in bed, as she does so she trips over the bucket on the floor.*

Jesus Christ aalmighty, aa could've brock me neck. Ah, has shu still not done nowt aboot that bliddy roof? Telt her te get Deags te fix the bliddy thing.

This is what aa'm tellin' ye. Her heed's not aall there. Aa wouldn't lie te ye Reverend. Aa mean look, the bairns seem like thu heven't been fed in days, the roof's faallin' through, there's a layer o' filth aall owa and look, look, look at this (*gesturing to the clothes on the line*). Clean claes bone dry and left te hang. Aa divvent knaa!

*She starts to unpeg the clothes and fold them up into a pile on the table.*

**Fischer:** You'll forgive her for falling behind on chores.

**Anna:** Not Isabella. Aalways tidy, aalways cleanin' and aalways had the dorty claes regimented. Washed, hung, dried and folded in a day. Aa'll tek it from here Reverend, yee get gannin'.

**Fischer:** If it's all the same to you Mrs. Brown, I'll stay to see Mrs. Jobling back.

**Anna:** Aye, please yerself. Could be here a while like. Aa've never knairn her te just tek off wi'oot the bairns. Another thing te add te the list aa suppose. Aa wander what news it were what Deags came wi'.

*Anna finishes folding up the clothes and leaves them in a neat pile on the table.*

Ye wanted watta?

**Fischer:** Sorry?

**Anna:** Ye were just complainin' that wor Isabella left wi'oot even offerin' ye a drink o' watta fo' yer troubles. Whey, here ye are.

*She dunks a cup into a barrel of water and puts it down on the table for the reverend. They sit at opposite ends of the table.*

**Fischer:** Ah, yes, thank you. The town is concerned about Isabella and the children.

**Anna:** Oh, o' course, wu aall are.

**Fischer:** Her name keeps creeping into conversation when I've been carrying out my house visits.

**Anna:** Aye, thu'll aall be stickin' thu're noses in where thu divvent belong.

**Fischer:** Nothing like it, people are worried. Such a horrific thing happening right on their doorstep, people can't help but send out their sympathy, not when it's so close to home.

**Anna:** Aye.

**Fischer:** 'Aye' indeed. How is Mr. Brown, Mrs. Brown?

**Anna:** Who? Oh, him. Idle and sick te the back teeth wi' it.

**Fischer:** Like so many men I'm seeing around.

**Anna:** Aye, what can ye dee? Come at a price like, nee bugger said it'd be easy.  
Not like last year's strike neither.

**Fischer:** How so?

**Anna:** The men've got the taste of success noo fresh in their gobs from last year.  
Aany way's forward as far as anyone's concerned. Trouble is, neither side  
of this war seem te be showin' any signs of surrender. It'll end in tears  
either way fo' some bugger or another. Whether it's wor tears owa  
workin' conditions, or their tears owa lost power, it'll be tears.

**Fischer:** And Mr. Brown was in trouble with the police last week, I've heard?

**Anna:** Whey, what a carry on. Him and the lads went and attacked a bloody  
blackleg on hee's way hyem from hee's shift. Stripped 'um, tied 'um up.  
Serves 'um self right if ye ask me. Bloody blacklegs deserve worse than a  
strippin' fo' brekkin' a strike. Here's us fightin' on behalf o' thum, livin' off  
scraps, starvin', tortured and there they are gannin on wi' life as if  
oblivious te the whole strike aaltogether. It's not right Reverend, it's not  
right. When the good fight's won and wu start te see the benefits, am  
telling ye, the bloody blacklegs shouldn't see an ounce of it. They've  
fought fo' nowt.

**Fischer:** It's a fight sure enough Anna, but the violence, the stripping and tying up  
of men is no way to win. If we don't live by that then there'll be only one  
outcome of this strike and we both know what that looks like.

**Anna:** Ah Christ Reverend, startin' te sound just like Hepburn. Sometimes he  
makes iz wander which side hee's even on too. Ye's taalk about violence

not being the way te achieve owt? Looka poor Isabella's William oot there for Christ sake. Covered in tar, sack owa hees heed, strung up in that metal cage, twenty feet in the air. Dee ye not reckon the courts've gotten their way by means o' violence at aall?

*The door crashes open and in comes Isabella. She is drenched through from the rain, she is exhausted and we can immediately see that she is heavily pregnant.*

**Anna:** Oh Isabella, you're drenched through. Here howay in and get yerself dried up for Christ sake.

**Isabella:** Anna? Reverend, Where's the bairns?

**Anna:** It's areet, Jimmy's oot grabbin' some coal fo' ye. Peter's fast asleep there. There's nowt te worry owa.

**Isabella:** Has anyone been by while aa've been away?

**Anna:** What de ye mean?

**Fischer:** Not a soul but Mrs. Brown here.

**Anna:** Who've ye been expectin' like?

**Isabella:** Neeone.

**Anna:** So, where've ye been aall day then?

**Isabella:** Oh neewhere.

**Anna:** Neewhere? Gone a bloody laang time fo' gannin neewhere.

**Isabella:** Whey aa'm back noo so nee need te panic. Ye didn't send wor Jimmy oot on the slake did ye?

**Anna:** Divvent worry, he's promised a smack if he's lookin' at hees daddy.

**Isabella:** Oh aye, as laang as he knaas. Reverend, aa cannit thank ye enough fo' lookin' after the bairns aal day fo' iz. Aa knaa ye didn't really have a choice like, but cheers aall the same. Were thu any bother fo' ye?

**Fischer:** Not at all, it was a little out of the blue I'll admit but I'm glad I can be of some help.

**Isabella:** Cheers Reverend but aa reckon that'll be aall the help wu'll be needin' fo' noo. Aa divvent want te keep ye away from yer work nee longer.

**Fischer:** You don't need to talk about anything? At all? We had no chance to chat you were in such a rush.

**Isabella:** Oh sorry fo' that Reverend, honestly though am fine, am copin' fine and the bairns seem te be as well. Wu'll caall up at the church if there's owt wu need like, but were areet fo' noo, honestly.

**Fischer:** You're sure?

**Isabella:** Aa am, cheers.

**Fischer:** Well I must say I'm not convinced. I'll give you the benefit of the doubt for tonight, seeing as it's late, and I'll call in again tomorrow.

**Isabella:** Aa'm tellin' ye, there's nee need. We're just tryin wor best te get on wi' life noo.

**Fischer:** There is one other thing before I go.

**Isabella:** Aye?

**Fischer:** Regarding the children.

**Isabella:** Thu're fine.

**Fischer:** They have no grasp of the teachings of our holy bible at all.

**Isabella:** Oh, whey I can aany apologise fo' that Reverend. Yee knaa what it's like fo' a workin' family: aa'm aalways working, Jimmy's aalways workin', William was aalways workin'. Te be headin' up te chorch or teachin' the bairns the bible: wu never found the time.

**Fischer:** In times like these it would do the children, and yourself, the world of good to turn your attention to the teachings of our Lord.

**Isabella:** Reet, wu will dee Reverend, taa fo' that.

**Fischer:** I'm leaving a bible here. For you. You'll find a great deal of comfort in those pages Isabella. As for the children; I want to take them for a few hours each day, up at St. Pauls, for bible study lessons.

**Isabella:** Ye serious?

**Fischer:** At a time like this, I'm sure you'll agree the church would be a nurturing environment for them both. Take their minds off the slake. Shouldn't be sitting here idle all day every day after all. I'll teach them until the strike is over and Jimmy goes back to work.

**Isabella:** But Reverend...



**Fischer:** I can assure you I will persist until you agree.

**Anna:** Gan on Isabella, what's te loose?

**Isabella:** Peter, he cannit hardly get oot o' bed 'less someone helps 'um. Waalk aall the way up te the chorch? Am sure he'd love tee but he's not got it in 'um.

**Fischer:** Send me Jimmy. I'll teach him through the day, he'll teach Peter in the evening when he returns home. I've always believed that one learns best through teaching anyway.

**Isabella:** Fine, aa suppose. Aa'll send Jimmy your way forst thing in the mornin'. He's not gannin' te like it like, am warnin' ye.

**Fischer:** Excellent. The door of the church is always open to you too Isabella. Don't forget that.

**Isabella:** Ta Reverend. And thanks again.

**Fischer:** Anything I can do to help. (*He Leaves*).

**Isabella:** Bible study lessons? Ha, aa cannit wait te see Jimmy's face at that.

**Anna:** The reverend's reet, it'll dee the bairn the world o' good.

**Isabella:** Wu'll see. Aa'm sure wu'll see.

**Anna:** Aa brought yee and the bairns round some pasties. Wu had leftovers from wor tea.

**Isabella:** Leftovers in your hoose? Your bairns lost their appetite owa owt?

**Anna:** Whole town's got somethin' te lose their appetite owa.

**Isabella:** Whey aa divvent knaa what yer taalkin' aboot cos aa'm starvin'.

**Anna:** Aa knaa you're not feelin' fine the way that ye tell the reverend ye are.  
Howay, sit doon, hev a pasty and tell iz what's gannin' on.

**Isabella:** There's nowt te tell. Aa've said aa'm fine and aa'm fine. End!

Aa will have that pasty though. Hang on, aa'm drenched. Aa'll gan and get changed.

*Isabella goes through to the small sleeping room and closes the door behind her to get changed. Anna removes her shawl and drapes it over the back of her chair, she then gets out a pasty and unwraps it. She places the pasty at one end of the table for Isabella, and then sits at the other end of the table so she can watch her eat. She sits in silence. The drips continue to fall from the roof into the buckets. Isabella re-enters wearing bed clothes.*

**Isabella:** There, that's better.

*Isabella walks over to the table, she sits and begins to eat.*

Cheers fo' the pasties.

**Anna:** *(Staring)* Aye.

**Isabella:** *(Noticing Anna's expression)* What?

**Anna:** Where've ye been aall day?

**Isabella:** Neewhere

**Anna:** What news did ye get off Deags?

**Isabella:** Nowt fo' yee.

**Anna:** Why did ye leave in a rush this mornin'?

**Isabella:** Aa divvent knaa. Why de yee wanna knaa anyway?

**Anna:** Not gannin' te leave if ye won't taalk.

**Isabella:** Aa'm tired man.

**Anna:** Taalk te iz and aa'll gan. Divvent taalk te iz and aa'll not gan. It's simple.

*Isabella considers it, and then in protest she picks up the pasty and carries on eating.*

**Isabella:** Cannit. Mooth's full.

*Anna, reacting, calmly puts her feet up on the table and relaxes as if to say 'I've got all night'.*

**Isabella:** There's nee gettin' rid of ye.

**Anna:** Is.

**Isabella:** There's nowt te taalk about.

*Isabella grabs up the cup, goes over to the barrel, dunks it in for water then sits back down and carries on eating and drinking in protest.*

Nowt te taalk about.

**Anna:** Fair enough.

*Anna, sighs, gets up from the table, grabs her shawl and slowly walks towards the door. She hangs the shawl on a hook on the door, slowly walks back to the table, sits, removes her shoes, puts her feet back up on the table and relaxes.*

**Isabella:** Oh for Christ sake, alreet man.

**Anna:** Aa'm listenin'.

**Isabella:** Aa've been te Durham.

**Anna:** Aall that way?

**Isabella:** Te the prison.

**Anna:** Collectin' Willie's stuff?

**Isabella:** Deags came rund this mornin'

**Anna:** So aa hear. Wi' news.

**Isabella:** Aye. Wi' news *of* the news.

**Anna:** News o' the news? Thu fund Ralph Armstrong? Thu've found 'um, aa cannit believe it.

**Isabella:** No. The newspapers.

**Anna:** Thu've put a story in? Good job wu divvent read the bliddy thing.

**Isabella:** Thu've put a story in alreet.

**Anna:** What's wraang?

**Isabella:** Willie sent oot a letter.

**Anna:** When? While he was in the prison?

**Isabella:** Gave it te someone te give te someone.

**Anna:** Yee?

**Isabella:** Nowt's torned up. Divvent knaa who's got the bliddy thing.

**Anna:** Thu not tell ye at the prison?

**Isabella:** Aa was hopin' agyenst hope that the guards'd tell. Aa begged thum.  
Laughed in me face. Wife o' a criminal get nee sympathy.

**Anna:** 'cept yer not the wife o' a criminal.

**Isabella:** Not nee more. Aa asked thum if he'd had any visitors, thu wouldn't say a word. I asked thum what might be in the letter. Thu said nowt. When was it taken? Who was it addressed tee? Nowt.

**Anna:** Willie was a sly devil. Never knew he could read or write.

**Isabella:** Couldn't. Must've had some bugger helpin' him oot. Divvent knaa who.  
Neebody knaas who.

**Anna:** Jesus. What ye hopin' he wrote?

**Isabella:** Aa divvent knaa. Just wanna knaa, ye knaa?

**Anna:** Aye. It'll torn up.

**Isabella:** Think see?

**Anna:** Howay, where else would he send hees last letter tee?

**Isabella:** It'll torn up?

**Anna:** Wheyaye.

**Isabella:** Mebbees.

**Anna:** Aye, mebbees.

*Silence.*

**Isabella:** Whey, cannit spend life expectin' it. Aa'll not think aboot it for the neet.  
Think aboot it when it gets here. If.

*Silence.*

**Anna:** Christ, fo' a minute there I thought ye were gannin' te tell iz thu'd caught  
Ralph. Ye've not hord anythin' aboot that hev ye? Deags mention owt?

**Isabella:** Nah, been weeks since he went missin'. Doubt wu'll ever be seein' owt o'  
him agyen if he's got any brains in hees heed.

**Anna:** Ye would hev 'um caught if ye could though?

**Isabella:** Aa suppose.

**Anna:** Suppose?

**Isabella:** Whey, aa divvent see what difference it would mek, that's aall. William'd  
still be hangin' oot there on the slake.

**Anna:** Aye, but it weren't his crime...

**Isabella:** ...Weren't his crime, William were innocent, honestly aa've been through  
aall this in me aairn heed time and time agyen. Aa need te forget it. Aa  
need te put it te bed. Aa cannit hev people keep askin' iz aboot it, de ye  
see?

**Anna:** Aa divvent. Nah, aa divvent. De ye knaa that yesterday, while yer husband  
were being strung up there, owled Mary Skipsey had te find oot that the  
bloke who murdered her husband was aany sentenced wi' six month in  
prison? Six month fo' murderin' an innocent strikin' miner durin' a rally.

**Isabella:** Six month? Shu'll be devastated.

**Anna:** Shu is, aa sat wi' her aall last neet. Ballin' her eyes oot owa it. Cuthbert were a good man, he didn't deserve te be murdered like that. It's aany because the culprit's a Godforsaken police officer that he got away wi' it so damn lightly.

**Isabella:** How could thu dee this te her?

**Anna:** Thu can dee what thu like. Look oot yer windi. Thu can dee what thu damn well like. Mary said if shu could get her hands on that officer who'd done it, shu'd ring hees neck fo' 'um, shu'd not even think aboot it, just gan ahead and dee it. So forgive iz if aa divvent understand why yee wouldn't dee the same te Ralph Armstrong. He sealed your William's fate fo' 'um and he's gotten away wi' it. If he'd torned 'umself in yer husband'd still be here wi' ye, fo' Gods sake.

**Isabella:** Ssshh! Now be quiet else ye'll wake the bairn. What's happened's happened. If ye want te keep diggin' up the past, raisin' yer voice, then gan and dee it in yer aairn hoose. Not here.

**Anna:** *(Quietening)* Aa just divvent understand how...

**Isabella:** Eee, the babby kicked. There aa felt it.

**Anna:** Kicked?

**Isabella:** Aye just there. Kicked. Feel.

*Anna rushes over to put her hand on Isabella's stomach.*

**Anna:** Eeee, let iz hev a feel. There's nowt happenin'.

**Isabella:** Just wait.

**Anna:** Aa cannit feel nowt. Eeee there aa just felt. Aa felt it. Sssh, wait wait wait... Eee that's it agyen there. Eeee! Eeee! Hey some strength he's got. Thu'll hev 'um straight doon the mines.

**Isabella:** If it's a he. Third time lucky could be a lassie.

**Anna:** Got some strength fo' a little lassie.

**Isabella:** Been kickin' fo' a while noo. Aa telt Willie aboot it when aa went te see 'um in the prison. He wanted te feel it kick but it must've been feelin' shy that day. He couldn't feel nowt. Aa wish he had o' done.

**Anna:** Aww, aa bet he would've loved te hev felt it kick like.

**Isabella:** Aye...

**Anna:** Eee look at iz still here pesterin' ye, aa better get off. (*Putting on her shoes and collecting her shawl*) Aa knaa where aa'm not wanted. Aa'll leave ye in peace.

**Isabella:** Aye, aa reckon aa could dee wi' some peace the neet.

**Anna:** Aa'm sorry, aboot what aa said before. Aa divvent understand why yer bein' so caalm aboot everythin' but aa suppose aa'm not the one it's aall happened tee.

**Isabella:** No. No yer not. So wu'll leave it.



**Anna:** Aye, nee bother. Whey, aa'll pop rund agyen the morrow wi' some o' wu dinner fo' yee and the bairns. Yee get some kip tee and ye knaa where aa am if ye need iz.

**Isabella:** Cheers. Aa'm fine like, but taa.

**Anna:** Ta ta. *(Opens the door)* Pissin' doon. Bliddy Pissin' *(leaves)*.

*Isabella notices the pile of clothes folded up neatly on the table. One by one she unfolds them and hangs them back up on the washing line in complete silence but that of the dripping sound of the water into the buckets. Meanwhile, Jimmy enters DSL in front of the cottage, he is collecting shards of coal from the slake; one by one he picks them up and puts them into the sack, he makes his way across the front of the stage. He exits DSL. Isabella hangs up the last sock and stares at the clothes.*

**Peter:** *(Waking up)* Mammy?

*Isabella does not hear.*

Mammy? *(Louder)* Mammy!

**Isabella:** Peter? Oh Peter, what yee deein' awake? Howay it's late pet, sleep.

**Peter:** Where'd Reverend Fischer gan?

**Isabella:** He's away hyem fo' the neet.

**Peter:** He left wu hees bible ye knaa.

**Isabella:** Aa knaa he did. *(Picking up the bible and the wooden crucifix)* Here on the table it is.

**Peter:** Was tellin' wu aboot angels and that.

**Isabella:** Angels and that? Really?

**Peter:** Aye. Mammy, de ye reckon the reverend's an angel?

**Isabella:** Oh aa divvent think he's an angel. Just a reverend.

**Peter:** Why?

**Isabella:** Doesn't look much like an angel te me. He wears aall black. Angels wears aall white.

**Peter:** De thu? Hev ye seen an angel, mammy, before?

**Isabella:** Not me, nah.

**Peter:** Will ye read iz a story oot o' the reverend's bible, mammy? About the angels or somethin'?

**Isabella:** Mammy cannit read nowt from this pet.

**Peter:** Howay, try and.

**Isabella:** *(Sitting on the edge of the bed)* Aa'll try and tell ye a story but ye've got te promise ye'll be off te beddie byes after mind.

**Peter:** Aa will.

**Isabella:** Reet, let's see here *(Opening the bible)* Eee looka that, mammy opened it on a page o' angels just like that. *(Beginning to tell a story)* Noo, what's it say here then? Aye, aa suppose, once upon a time God sat on a cloud in heaven.

**Peter:** What does heaven look like?

**Isabella:** Aa divvent knaa pet, aa've never been hev aa?

**Peter:** Does the bible not say?

**Isabella:** Nah, just says God sat on a cloud in heaven.

**Peter:** What does God look like then?

**Isabella:** Doesn't say, howay, am aa tellin' ye this story or not?

**Peter:** Aye, what next?

**Isabella:** Whey, God was sat on this cloud in heaven and he was high above the world lookin' doon on it. Aa suppose that's what he's knaairn te dee. And he was lookin' doon feelin' aaful sad fo' the world.

**Peter:** Why?

**Isabella:** Cause it were an aaful place, he thought. It were full of death and people fightin' and there were disaster happenin' aall owa the place. And so God, being God, caalled a meetin' on that cloud in heaven fo' himself and aall the angels, so's thu could figure a plan oot te help the people on earth, help thum get the world back in good shape agyen. Thu couldn't let it gan on the way it were.

So aall the big important angels huddled together and God telt thum he had a plan.

**Peter:** What?

**Isabella:** Aa'll tell ye. He'd med this little babby, and he showed it te the angels there.

**Peter:** Was it Jesus?

**Isabella:** Aye, that's it. So he showed aall the angels Jesus. Telt thum he were gannin' te save the world and aall the poor people there. But aall he needed was some brave angel te tek the babby doon te earth and find a mammy fo' 'um.

Whey, aall the angels jumped back. Nee one wanted te leave heaven and set foot on the evil world, far too much te ask of any angel. And God couldn't dee it 'umself, he were far too busy wi' other things, as he aalways is.

Eventually, after hours and hours o' arguin', this one wee angel steps forward and says 'Aye, aa'll dee it, aa'm not scared'. Aall the rest o' the angels couldn't believe it, he were the littlest, scrawniest angel thu'd ever seen in aall o' heaven. Thu never thought he'd last two minutes on earth. But God passed 'um the little babby and wished 'um aall the best o' luck and sent the wee angel on hees way, doon te earth, te find a mammy fo' Jesus.

Whey, the wee angel landed on earth and it were worse than what it looked from heaven. It were even more evil up close. He were terrified, absolutely scared stiff. But he had a job te dee and he were determined he wasn't gannin' te leave until he fund the babby Jesus a mammy te look after 'um.

He went aall owa the place sorchin', and askin' people along the way. But neeone he could find would mek a decent enough mammy, he thought.

Until, just before he were about te give up hope aalltogether and fly back up te heaven, he came across a young lassie cryin' aall by herself.

Shu said her name was Mary and that shu were cryin' because shu'd had a bairn who had been sick, for years he'd been sick, shu had looked after 'um aall the while but couldn't stop 'um from dyin' in the end. And he had died that very mornin' in her arms. Shu cried and cried and cried, but her story med the angel realise that shu would be the best, most carin' mammy on earth. He knew that if he left Jesus wi' her then the babby would grow up areet, and dee just what God had planned te save the world.

So he carefully gave Mary the babby and telt her that he were a very important babby, and that shu should look after 'um wi' her life. Shu agreed te dee it, and when shu got the babby shu stopped cryin', dried her eyes. Shu knew that shu had an important job te dee, not aany te help save the state o' the world, but te protect this little life infront o' her.

The angel spread hees wings then and off he went back up into the sky...

*Isabella realises that Peter is, once again, fast asleep. She smiles and lifts up his pillow, placing the wooden crucifix underneath. She closes the bible, gets up and walks towards the window. She looks out.*

*The cottage goes to blackout.*

## **Scene 2 (Union meeting)**

*Downstage of the cottage Thomas Hepburn enters. It is the evening meeting for the Northern Union of Pitmen. Hepburn addresses the audience as if they are union members.*

**Hepburn:** Howay lads, howay and settle doon. Settle. Look, it's no ordinary union meetin' the neet. Wu've got a job te dee and wu need te mek sure wu're organised aboot it like. It's a dark neet so chances of wu being caught tekkin the body doon are slim like, but wu need te be quick aboot it nonetheless. Everybody needs te knaa where thu need te be and what thu need te dee once wu're oot there, wu cannit afford nee slip ups. Noo, wu just need te be patient fo' Deags te get here, then wu can be on wor way, Christ knaas where he's got tee.

In the meantime aa just want te thank ye's fo' not gannin' owa te Durham fo' Jobling's hangin' on Friday. Aalthough aa hord that there were a few union members present, aa want te thank the vast majority of ye's fo' listenin' te iz and not gannin'. Would've done wu more damage than favours aa imagine like. Aa reckon Isabella'll thank ye's fo' that an' aall. Aa think wu can aall agree that Jobling wouldn't've wanted the union gettin' in trouble wi' the law that day.

Aa knaa what ye's are like, ye see. Aa knaa that ye's care aboot what happened te Jobling, aa knaa that. Sometimes ye's let yer carin' get the better o' ye's. Ye knaa what aa mean? And when ye's get yerselves aall riled up owa it, whey, that's when trouble gets caused. That's when wu get in trouble wi' the courts. And wu cannit be hevin' that reet noo. But most importantly, Jobling wanted te gan quietly on the day and aa'm glad that wu chose te respect that. He were a good lad. Decent bloke. Wu'll miss 'um. Wu aall will. Some o' ye's knew 'um since ye's were bairns.

And aa knaa ye's are feelin' the harsh reality o' wor justice system noo more than ever. This sentence te death, wu've seen it time and time agyen. Wu cannit accept a world like that. Nee one should hev te accept a fate like that, the courts thinkin' it's areet te decide someone's death fo' thum. Ye cannit justify it. Should be a decision tekken by God and God alein. And what's happened wi' Jobling's been a reminder fo' aall o' wu really, that if thu can hang an innocent man oot o' the need te hang someone, then thu'll hev nee problem hangin' any o' ye's fo' commitin' a crime agyenst thum. That's why it's important that wu're careful when wu're tekkin hees body doon the neet. And it's important that wu compose worselves everyday, especially noo that wu're being tested. And that's what it is, it's wu being tested. Aa divvent want te see any more o' ye's arrested or hanged, but wu'll continue te protest by peaceful means, wu will.

Another thing aa hev te say te ye's is aboot the sorch fo' Ralph Armstrong. Howay lads, it's been weeks and there's been nee sign o' 'um. Chances are, lads, he'll be laang gone by noo, he'll've fled man. Noo aa cannit stop ye's from continuin' te sorch fo' 'um if that's what ye's want te dee, but aa'm not gannin te arrange nee more formal sorches. Wu were tryin' te find 'um te save Jobling's neck. Jobling's hanged fo' the crime noo, there's nee savin' 'um. Wu've got te look forward, use wor resources in a more progressive way like.

Owled Cuthbert Skipsey, God rest hees soul, whey, the officer who took 'um from wu's aany been given six month. What's more is, hees wife Mary's been served notice te leave her hoose. Pit owners divvent want te

be hoosin' a widow of an active member o' the union. Aa'm meetin' wi' the Lord Londonderry at the end o' the week te appeal fo' some kind o' hoosin' agreement fo' her. If not though, aa think it's aany reet that wu dee what wu can fo' her wi' some o' the union funds.

Even though things're tight, Skipsey were a loyal and dedicated member o' the union from the word gan. He died tryin' te control wor demonstration. Wu'll dee what wu can fo' hees widow. He would've done the same fo' the lot o' ye's. And if there's one thing he aalways believed, it were that wu'd never win this battle through the violence.

Ah, which brings iz on te me next point aboot the blacklegs.

Let iz just mek one thing clear. If ye've listened te nowt else, listen te this: there's nee way nee bugger's gannin' te tek wu seriously if wu're runnin' aroond causin' violence, harrassin', strippin' blacklegs. Noo that kind o' behaviour'll get wu neewhere. Divvent get iz wraang like, aa'm not condonin' what thu deein' but, like aa said, aa divvent need ye's endin' up in prison, endin' up strung up like Jobling. Ye understand? Wu payin' oot compensation money te the bloody blacklegs, court ordered noo an' aall. More dryin' up o' the union kitty which wu divvent need.

Noo, if aa hear o' anyone from noo on causin' trouble like that, tek me word fo' it, aa'll be payin' ye's a visit, wu'll be tekkin' serious measures in the union fo' that behaviour. Yer warned.

*Deags enters the meeting.*

Bloody hell Deags, time de ye caall this like?



**Deags:** Hang on, there's a change o' plan...

**Hepburn:** He's here lads, at laang last, howay get yerselves together.

**Deags:** No, wu cannit.

**Hepburn:** Eh?

**Deags:** Wu cannit tek the body doon. Look.

*Deags produces a flyer. Hepburn takes it and reads it to himself.*

Thu've been posted te aall the homes in the area just the neet. The courts've ordered that anyone caught in the act o' tekkin the body doon'll be transported. Seven years transportation. Thu've put a bloody armed guard up on the slake te watch owa the body an'aall. There's nowt wu can dee. Hepburn, there's nowt wu can dee.

**Hepburn:** Aye, aa can hear ye. Damn it.

Lad's, what can aa tell ye's? Aa've got it here, it's here in writin'. Wu cannit risk it. There's nowt wu can dee, aa divvent knaa what te tell ye's that's more than that.

Jobling's body's hangin' up there and it looks like that's where it's stayin', fo' the moment at least.

Damn it.

*Blackout*

## **Act Two**

**(One week later)**

### **Scene 1 (Isabella's cottage)**

*Lights up. The cottage is as before, with the addition of three more buckets placed to catch water dripping down from the roof, and a small bowl of vegetables which is set down by the window. There is no one there apart from Peter who sleeps in the bed, with the sheets only half covering him. We take in the spectacle of the cottage for a few moments in silence before Ralph Armstrong bursts through the door looking panicked. He runs to the window and, trying not to be noticed by anyone outside, peers out timidly. He waits for a while and then begins to calm. Seeing the bowl of vegetables, he picks them up and takes them over to the table where he sits and begins to eat. He gets up, dunks a cup into the barrel of water, and sits back down, continuing to eat in silence. Peter turns in his sleep, startling Ralph. He walks over to the sleeping child and towers above him.*

**Ralph:**       *(Quietly, so as not to wake)* Peter? Ye awake? Peter? Where's yer mammy  
                    at? Where's shu off tee?

*Ralph touches Peter's forehead gently.*

Bairn's freezin' caad.

*He pulls the bed sheets up over Peter, tucking him in properly so only his head pokes out of the sheets. Ralph walks over to the table and collects up the cup with water; he places it down by Peter's bedside.*

There's watta aa've put doon here fo' ye.

*He walks back over to the table and sits down.*

Aa'll sit. Quiet. Aa'll sit and wait.

*Waits for a while.*

Or mebbies aa'll gan. Aye, divvent be daft man. Get oot man.

*He makes towards the door but stops in his tracks.*

Divvent dare. Sit. Wait. Sittin'.

*He sits back down and waits.*

Nah. Cannit. Get up, get oot!

*He stands and makes towards the door again.*

Get oot!

**Isabella:**     *(Voice from offstage)* Jimmy! Jimmy Jobling! Just wait 'til aa get me hands on ye.

**Ralph:**       Here? Ah Christ. Aa'll be sittin'. Sit. Sit.

*He sits back down at the table facing the door, preparing to come face to face with Isabella.*

**Isabella:**     *(Calling from offstage)* Jimmy!

**Ralph:**       Aa'll be standin' *(stands)* here by the table, aa'll be standin'.

**Isabella:**     *(Offstage)* Wait 'til aa get me hands on 'um.

**Hepburn:**    *(Voice from offstage)* Noo divvent be deein' nowt irrational Isabella.

**Ralph:**       Hepburn?

**Deags:**       *(Voice from offstage)* He's aany a bairn remember!

**Ralph:** And Deags? (*Frantically running around the cottage*) Aa'll be hidin' noo.  
Christ, Christ!

**Isabella:** (*Offstage*) Jimmy! Jimmy Jobling!

*Ralph finds a spot to hide under the table just as Isabella, Hepburn and Deags enter through the front door.*

**Isabella:** Bairn or not, aa'll tan hees hide when aa get me hands on 'um. Jimmy?  
Jimmy? Where are ye? Noo divvent gan hidin'.

**Peter:** (*Waking up*) Jimmy?

**Isabella:** Where is he? (*Looks through the door into the next room*) Where is he?

**Peter:** He's not come back.

**Isabella:** He'll not be laang if ye fancy waitin'?

**Hepburn:** Just hoo laang wu taalkin' here like?

**Isabella:** Not laang. He'll be up at the chorch still, deein' hees bible lessons.

**Deags:** Up at the chorch?

**Isabella:** Been up there every day fo' the past week noo. Reverend thought it would  
dee 'um the world o' good.

**Peter:** He'll be comin' back shortly and tellin' iz aboot the bible stories.

**Isabella:** Aye, he'll be callin' oot fo' the Lord once aa've gotton haad of 'um that's fo'  
sure.

**Peter:** Is he gettin' telt off, mammy?

**Isabella:** Worse than telt off pet.

**Peter:** Smacked?

**Isabella:** *(To Deags and Hepburn)* Aa'm sorry fo' aall the bother he's been.

*Deags puts down his diary onto the tabletop.*

**Hepburn:** Aa've complaints comin' oot me ears aboot Jimmy attackin' the bloody blacklegs. Hardly a saint even wi' aall the influence o' the chorch.

**Isabella:** He'll be strung up like hees da, aa knaa it.

**Deags:** Aa wouldn't gan that far like, but...

**Isabella:** How exactly has he been attackin' thum? Aa'm not sayin' yer definitely mistaken like but ye knaa, Jimmy's little compared te them blokes. Surely thu'd knock 'um til next Tuesday. It's hard te imagine 'um attackin' thum.

**Hepburn:** Hoyin' rocks from a distance. When the men finish their shift thu've nee energy te be chasin' after 'um.

**Deags:** Drew blood on a couple o' blokes the other day. Had a blokes eye oot, black eye yesterday.

**Isabella:** Blood and black eyes? Owt more?

**Hepburn:** Aa divvent need nowt more than that on me plate.

**Deags:** Wu've gotta think aboot what this is deein' te the image o' the union.

**Isabella:** Jimmy's not perfect, aa knaa that areet, but, whey, aa thought he had calmed doon the past few days, what wi' the influence o' the reverend an' aall.

**Hepburn:** Obviously not.

**Isabella:** He's been comin' hyem and helpin' iz lookin' after Peter, teachin' 'um aboot the bible, tidyin' up after 'umself.

**Deags:** Wu knaa Jimmy's a good lad really, he's just been angry recently, fo' good reason like. Wu just need te mek sure he's warned aboot this. Wu divvent want 'um gettin' in trouble ye knaa. Nee one likes a blackleg, but...

**Hepburn:** Aa'm payin' compensation oot me arse fo' these blokes, gan cryin' whenever thu're gettin' attacked. Who's got the money te deal wi' aall this?

**Deags:** Wor kitty cannit tek it nee more is aall. Things is tight.

**Hepburn:** It's not just Jimmy neither. If only. This is the fifth hoose visit aa've med the day owa lads attackin' the blacklegs and owners. Aa'm runnin' short on patience noo. How, in God's name how, are the owners gannin' te sit doon at a table face te face wi' a bunch o' thugs and be able te taalk business, workin' rights and a fair trade? It's not just Jimmy.

**Deags:** We're tryin' wor best te control the whole thing but it's gettin' oota hand. And noo wi' the funds dryin' up...

**Hepburn:** If it weren't for wu intervening like this there'd be murder happenin' left right and centre.

**Deags:** Wu divvent want neeone in trouble fo' nowt like that anymore.

**Hepburn:** Aa'm tellin' ye if wu divvent start actin' the way wu want te be treat, like human beings, every last one of wu's gannin te end up on that slake beside Jobling.

**Deags:** Hepburn.

**Hepburn:** Hangin' there in metal cages. Sacks owa wor heeds and swingin' in the wind just like Jobling.

**Deags:** Reet ye've med yer point...

**Hepburn:** Picture that oot ye windi: the whole o' Jarrow. The lot o' wu. Me an'aall. And yee, and Jimmy and Peter.

**Peter:** What am aa?

**Deags:** (*forcefully*) Hepburn, that's enough!

**Hepburn:** ...Sorry. (*To Peter*) aa'm sorry. Look wu need te taalk wi' Jimmy aboot hees behaviour.

**Isabella:** Aa'll see te Jimmy when he's back. Ye's can gan noo.

**Hepburn:** Aye. Aye, aa suppose. Wu've got a couple more hoose visits te mek before wu hev te meet wi' the Lord Londonderry.

**Isabella:** Divvent want te gan and be late.

**Hepburn:** Tell Jimmy this is hees warnin' off the union. Next time wu'll hev te tek it further.

**Isabella:** Aa'll see te Jimmy man, divvent yee be worryin'.

**Deags:** (*To Hepburn*) Yee gan on, aa'll catch ye up.

*Hepburn makes to leave.*

**Isabella:** Before ye gan? Ye've not had any letters come through, hev ye?

**Hepburn:** What sort o' letters?

**Isabella:** Nowt, doesn't matter. Ye'll tell iz if ye dee though?

**Hepburn:** Depends what yer after?

**Isabella:** Never mind fo' noo. Doesn't matter really.

**Hepburn:** Fair enough. Tell Jimmy.

*Hepburn leaves.*

**Deags:** Peter, howay and gan through te yer mammy's bed fo' noo, wu need te  
hev a word.

**Isabella:** De wu? What aboot like?

**Deags:** Wu need a word.

**Isabella:** Howay Peter. Try and get yerself back te sleep and Jimmy'll let ye knaa  
when he's back eh?

*Isabella helps Peter out of the bed and takes him through to the next room. Isabella closes the door behind him.*

**Deags:** He's got a lot worryin' 'um.



**Isabella:**     Hmm?

**Deags:**     Hepburn.

**Isabella:**     So aa can see. He's got the whole town hangin' on hees shoulders.

**Deags:**     Wu've got nee money left. That's nee exaggeration.

**Isabella:**     So what's that te me?

**Deags:**     It'll not be laang til wu'll be forced te end the strike.

**Isabella:**     Men'll be back at work?

**Deags:**     Aye.

**Isabella:**     And Jimmy?

**Deags:**     And him. And at the moment we're nee closer te havin' achieved a thing since wu came oot.

**Isabella:**     So it'll've aall been fo' nowt? Aall this. Jimmy'll gan back te work. Me husband's hangin' oot there fo' nowt?

**Deags:**     It'll aall've been in vain. But Hepburn's tryin' man.

**Isabella:**     Oh what's the bloody point? If ye's had stayed at work, stayed in yer place, hadn't been gettin' greedy...

**Deags:**     Greedy? Wu're treat like dogs. Worse than dogs.

**Isabella:**     ...Me husband would still be here wi' iz.

**Deags:**     The union still has a chance to change things.

**Isabella:** It'll change nowt man, was a daft idea te begin wi'. Ye just said ye'll be forced te end the strike. Will or won't the union collapse?

**Deags:** Wu're deein' everythin' wu can. But part o' the reason wu not able te negotiate is aall this rogue activity agyenst the owners and blacklegs. Ye'll need te drum that inte Jimmy.

**Isabella:** Aa'll tell 'um.

**Deags:** Aa knaa he's angry wi' what's happened wi' hees da but/

**Isabella:** Aa said aa'll tell 'um. It'll dee 'um nee favours causin' violence.

**Deags:** Aye.

**Isabella:** Especially when he's back at work and the owners can hold it agyenst 'um everyday fo' the rest o' hees workin' life.

**Deags:** Divvent be like that man, that's not what it's aboot at aall.

**Isabella:** Is fo' me. Wu'll not be strikin' agyen any time soon. William's oot there te remind wu o' that. Aa've larnt me lesson Deags, hev yee?

**Deags:** Fo' Christ sake wu cannit live in a town where them who's got the upper hand is them who's gannin' te attack people. What if he ended up seriously hurtin' someone, eh? What if he killed? What then?

**Isabella:** Look aa've telt ye aa'll taalk te 'um when hees back, cannit dee nowt more fo' ye Deags.

**Deags:** Jobling was me marra and aa need te keep an eye oot fo' yee and the bairns noo that he's gone. That's what aa'm feelin'. That's aall aa'm deein'.

**Isabella:** Whey ye needn't bother. Aa've got it sorted.

**Deags:** Ye look exhausted.

**Isabella:** Aa'm fine.

**Deags:** Ye not been sleepin'?

**Isabella:** The sound o' drippin' aall neet's deein' me heed in.

**Deags:** Ye knaa aa'll come rund and fix yer roof fo' ye. Just had te ask iz te fix the roof.

**Isabella:** Divvent worry yeself.

**Deags:** Isabella! Look, aa've gotta gan te this meetin' but aa will, aa'll come rund when aa can and aa'll fix the roof. So's ye can sleep.

**Isabella:** Aye. Then aa can sleep.

**Deags:** And ye knaa where aa am if ye need iz.

**Isabella:** Aa dee.

**Deags:** So, aa'll be seein' ye (*going to leave*).

**Isabella:** Be seein' ye.

**Deags:** (*Turning back*) What letter are ye waitin' on?

**Isabella:** Eh?

**Deags:** Ye asked Hepburn aboot a letter. Is that why wu bumped inte ye at the sortin' office this afternoon?

**Isabella:** It's nowt important.

**Deags:** Ye still waitin' on that letter from Willie, is that what it is?

**Isabella:** Nowt's come through yet, nowt at aall.

**Deags:** Whey, just, divvent spend aall yer time waitin' on it.

**Isabella:** Aa knaa.

**Deags:** Ye knaa it might never come.

**Isabella:** Aye, divvent worry aa knaa that. But if ye get owt through that ye think aa might want te see...

**Deags:** Then aa'll bring it straight te ye. Reet, aa'm off (*opens the door*) rain never bloody stops.

*Deags leaves. Isabella moves towards the table and clears away the bowl and half eaten food. She then takes a wet rag and cleans the window with it. She stops and stares out for a while. Then she wipes down the table before sitting down.*

**Isabella:** Aa can feel ye on me foot. Hidin' under the table are wu? Jimmy Jobling get oot from under there noo. 4-3-2-1...

*Ralph appears from under the table. Isabella clambers to her feet and stands facing him across the table, frozen.*

**Ralph:** Divvent run. It's me. Whey, well... it's... aa knaa ye knaa it's me like, but...  
Whey, hoo else dee aa say hello?

*Isabella still frozen stiff stares on in silence.*

Aa'm... aa'm just... Look, aa divvent... divvent want te... erm...

People been wanderin' boot iz? Thu hev... hev... aa knaa thu hev... well... whey... aa've knairn that... that people's been wanderin'... thu been sayin' things's happened te iz, hev thu?... What thu said te ye what happened te iz?... Aa think... whey... thu probably think aa fled eh?... That's probably what's been said... whey... doubt thu'd think aa'd've stayed rund eh?... But aa did... stayed hidin'... mebbies aa was daft te dee that... probably... chances are, that aa were. Where did... where did thu aall say aa'd fled tee?

*Silence.*

Aa should've fled eh? But aa'm... aa had te come and... like... aa had te see ye... agyen... had tee Isabella...

*Silence.*

Yee been wanderin' about iz? Ye wander what happened te iz?

*Silence.*

Whey... aa, aa had te hide away... that's where aa've been. Hidin'... In Sooth Shields. Livin' outside aa hev, for owa the month... Can ye not tell aa've, aa'm lookin' aall scrawny eh? Not eatin' reet... whole month, owa a month... sleepin' in the rain. Aa hev... aye... erm...

*Silence.*

Oh, aa, erm, whey aa'm, aa ate yer food there, them carrots and that what ye had there. Aa'm, whey, aa've been starvin'... aa, ye knaa... so aa ate... aa'm, couldn't stop meself... that's hoo aa've been livin'... in the shadows... hidin' from everyone. Aa knaa thu've been lookin' fo' iz... aa dee...

*Silence.*

Aa seen and watched thum lookin' fo' iz, few times. Aa stayed hidden and saw thum aall askin' if aa'd been seen. Got good at the hidin', not speakin' te people. Couple o' times thu nearly caught iz... thu did...erm... Ye not sayin' owt te iz? Ye divvent hev tee... if ye divvent want tee...

*Silence.*

Aa... whey, aa must've been a fool not te hev fled eh? Course aa am. Should've fled and left. Whey, but, whey man aa had te... had te come and see ye agyen Isabella. Aa couldn't stay, keep meself, away. Couldn't. Aa'd, whey... aa'm sorry. Had te come and say that te ye so's ye knaa. Aa'm sorry boot aall o' it... aa mean... aa'm sorry, aa am.

*Silence.*

Divvent hev te say nowt ye knaa, if ye divvent want.

*Silence.*

Did ye visit Willie in the prison?

*Isabella nods.*

Ye did. Ye knaa, aa wanted te visit 'um. Did. Nee way aa could've walked in there though wi'oot being caught. Wanted te apologise te 'um. Did. Wish aa had o' done, had the chance te. Nee way aa could've walked into the prison wi'oot being recognised and caught. And... whey... did he say owt about iz?

*Silence.*

Divvent hev te say nowt. Aa knaa what he probably was sayin'. Ye knaa aa'm sorry. Was probably wishin' the worst fo' iz, eh? Aye. Divvent blame 'um fo' that. Hoo could aa? Aa... aa mean like... bet he was wishin' wu'd never met. Were he?

*Silence.*

Aa knaa people's probably wanderin' why aa never came forward eh? Aa'm... eh... ye wanderin' that yerself are ye? Aa'm scared. Aa'm sacred's what aa am. Aa divvent want te be hanged. Aa knew what would o' happened te iz if... and aa couldn't dee it. Couldn't hand meself in. Aa'm scared o' dyin' like that. Not brave. Was Willie scared when ye saw 'um? Did ye gan te the hangin'?

*Isabella nods.*

Ye did. Oh God.

*Silence.*

Aa'm sorry, aa am. Was he petrified? Aa knaa aa should've handed meself in like. Ye think Willie'd still be here if aa had? Aa divvent knaa. Divvent think see. Aa should've fled before noo eh? Had te see ye. Come and see ye.

*Ralph moves around the table to Isabella. She stays still.*

Had te. Tell ye aa'm sorry. Aa am. Aa am. Aa am. For Christ sake say somethin' te iz. Aa thought ye'd say things. In me heed ye were sayin' things.

**Isabella:** What would aa say?

**Ralph:** In me heed, aall sorts.

**Isabella:** In me heed aa would say aall sorts an'aall. But noo here ye are, in me hoose, in front of iz... Aa'm... at a loss. Aa'm not sayin' the things aa thought aa would be sayin'. Not thinkin' things aa thought aa would be.

**Ralph:** What ye thinkin? Aa were deed? Ye'd see iz hangin'?

**Isabella:** No.

**Ralph:** What?

**Isabella:** ...Aa'm thinkin' o' me husband.

**Ralph:** Ye are. When ye went te see Willie behind bars... whey, what did ye's taalk aboot? Ye taalk aboot me did ye's?

**Jimmy:** (*Voice from offstage*) Peter, howay wake up, aa'm back.

**Isabella:** Jimmy! (*To Ralph*) Yee stay here.

*Isabella grabs up the empty sack from Act One and walks out of the front door. She re-enters without the sack.*

**Ralph:** Where is he? Aa should taalk wi' 'um.

**Isabella:** Ye'll dee nowt o' the sort. Sent 'um oot on the slake te get wu some coal.



**Ralph:** Ye send 'um oot waalkin' on the slake where hees da hangs?

**Isabella:** Dee aa hev a choice? He's not allowed te look at hees daddy when he's oot there.

**Ralph:** Hoo laang'll the keep the body up there?/

**Isabella:** What ye deein' here?

**Ralph:** Aa telt ye. Had te come and see ye. Aa should've fled. Had te see ye. From the bottom o' me heart aa'm sorry. Aa'm sorry. Te see 'um oot there hung up like that.

**Isabella:** Stop it!

**Ralph:** What did ye's taalk aboot when ye went te see Willie in prison? Aa hev te knaa.

**Isabella:** That's between a wife and her husband.

**Ralph:** Divvent man. Howay, aa mean the guilt's tearin' iz te pieces.

**Isabella:** Ye not think aa'm torn te pieces?

**Ralph:** Course ye are. Ye'll be in bits.

**Isabella:** Aye.

**Ralph:** But howay man, aa need te knaa what was said. What did he say aboot iz? What did yee say aboot iz?

**Isabella:** Forget it.

**Ralph:** Aa need te knaa if he knew aboot us before he was killed. Did he knaa?

**Isabella:** De ye think he should've knairn?

**Ralph:** Did ye tell 'um while he were livin'?

**Isabella:** Ye think he had the right te knaa?

**Ralph:** Howay.

**Isabella:** How'd it mekk ye feel if aa had telt 'um?

**Ralph:** Divvent mess arund like this man.

**Isabella:** Gan on, how'd it mek ye feel if aa had telt 'um?

**Ralph:** Divvent.

**Isabella:** Why not?

**Ralph:** If he knew what we had done before they dragged 'um off and hung 'um... he'd... whey he'd be... he'd have nowt te live fo' anyways. Aa divvent want te think o' 'um bein' that broken. As if aa hadn't done enough te ruin 'um.

**Isabella:** Shut up and stop feelin' sorry fo' yerself. Yer pathetic. Look at ye. Ye didn't deserve te spend nee time wi' a man like Willie. Ye'll never be half the man he were. Never. Yer pathetic. Aa divvent knaa what aa was thinkin'.

**Ralph:** Ye divvent mean this.

**Isabella:** Dee aa not? Dee a really not?

**Ralph:** No.

**Isabella:** Aa must've been mad that neet. It should've never happened and aa regret the day aa ever laid me eyes on ye, yer disgustin'.

**Ralph:** Ye divvent mean this.

**Isabella:** Aa hate ye.

**Ralph:** Aa love ye/

**Isabella:** Shut up!

*Suddenly a part of the roof falls through and the rain pours down onto the washing line, soaking the clothes. Isabella lets out a cry and runs to them.*

Help iz get the line doon. Will ye help iz?

**Ralph:** Did ye hear what aa'm sayin'.

**Isabella:** Shut yer face and untie the other end. Untie the other end.

*They both untie an end of the washing line and pull it out of the rain with the clothes still hanging along it. They hold the line out between them.*

**Ralph:** Will ye listen te what aa'm sayin'?

**Isabella:** No. Aa'm not listenin' te nowt else yer sayin'.

**Ralph:** Aa've been thinkin' about ye.

**Isabella:** No.

**Ralph:** Aa hev.

**Isabella:** Divvent say things like that.

**Ralph:** Ye can not taalk about it if ye divvent want. It happened. Doesn't mean it didn't happen ye knaa.

**Isabella:** Deags'll be fixin' the roof. Work out fine.

**Ralph:** Doesn't mean it didn't happen.

**Isabella:** Jimmy'll be back wi' coal. Start a fire. Get the place waam.

**Ralph:** Aa love ye.

**Isabella:** Divvent say that agyen.

**Ralph:** Aa dee.

*Ralph starts towards Isabella but in order to keep the line straight between them she has to back away at the same pace.*

**Isabella:** No. Haad the line oot.

**Ralph:** Ye hev te feel somethin' fo' iz still. Ye hev tee.

**Isabella:** The hate that aa'm feelin'.

**Ralph:** Yer lyin'.

**Isabella:** Aa'm aa noo? No, aa divvent think see, no.

**Ralph:** Aa knaa ye are. Aa knaa ye are cause yer the one who came te me, divvent forget that.

**Isabella:** Aa'm not hearin' this.

**Ralph:** And why did ye dee that? Never made sense te iz at the time: me never bein' half the man Willie was. Like ye said.

**Isabella:** No, ye'll never.

**Ralph:** So why'd ye come te iz that neet? Weren't drunk. Hadn't been drinkin'.

**Isabella:** Like aa said, aa must've been mad.

**Ralph:** Unless, Willie wasn't half the man you're mekkin' 'um oot te be noo he's deed and gone.

**Isabella:** Shut up!

**Ralph:** Ye didn't love 'um at aall did ye?

**Isabella:** Stop.

**Ralph:** Did ye?

**Isabella:** Aa did. How dare ye. Course aa did.

*Ralph goes to move towards Isabella again, but to keep the line straight between them she has to move back.*

**Ralph:** So why come te me? Why'd ye dee that? If ye felt nowt fo' iz, loved yer husband? Ye weren't bein' mad.

**Isabella:** Aa'm... Aa loved Willie. Aa divvent need yee tellin' iz that aa didn't. Aa still dee. Aa love me husband.

**Ralph:** But ye came te me that neet, not him.

**Isabella:** Aye, aa did. Yer reet, aa did.

**Ralph:** Because ye felt somethin' fo' iz.

**Isabella:** Aa did.

**Ralph:** What was it ye were thinkin'?

**Isabella:** Aa loved Willie, wi' aal me heart, aa did but...

*Silence.*

It weren't his fault. He were a good man. A great man. Great husband,  
great dad te the bairns. But...

*Silence.*

Bein' out o' work... whey it's hard on a family. At each other's throats then.  
Aa should never've...

**Ralph:** You's'd been unhappy. Christ aall o' Jarrow could hear the noise gannin'  
on in this hoose. The screamin' across the slake.

**Isabella:** Aye.

**Ralph:** Not yer fault.

**Isabella:** Weren't his fault neither.

**Ralph:** He should've worshiped ye. Woman like ye.

**Isabella:** When yer not happy, what de ye dee? Aa divvent knaa why we weren't.  
Just weren't. Mebbies it were him oot o' work on strike, drinkin' any  
money wu had away.

**Ralph:** Mebbies aa'm part te blame fo' that an aall.

**Isabella:** Ye never made 'um gan oot aall the time. Had hees aairn mind.

**Ralph:** Aa was aalways there temptin' though.

**Isabella:** Aye.

**Ralph:** And that's why ye came te iz?

**Isabella:** Not just hees drinkin'... aa'm... whey aa just... well, this is it, isn't it?

**Ralph:** What de ye mean?

**Isabella:** Look arund ye, *this*. This is everythin'. Aa wash claes, struggle te feed bairns, aa tidy up, gan te work, clean the rich folks hooses fo' thum. Is this me set fo' life noo?

**Ralph:** Ye were fed up?

**Isabella:** Aa mean what kind of a life's that? Me mother lived that life then died. Aa watched her dyin' aall those years, from when aa were little. Shu were aalways dyin' the whole time. Not from sickness, but from not livin'. Shu never lived and then shu died.

**Ralph:** Why'd ye think aa could fix somethin' like that?

**Isabella:** Aa divvent think ye can fix that. Didn't realise that then. Yer the wild one, never after settlin'. Mebbies that's why aa thought ye could fix it.

**Ralph:** Aa can fix it.

**Isabella:** No. This way o' livin': its bigger than me and yee. Bigger than anyone. Wor kind'll aalways hev te mek dee wi' a life wasted. A whole life wasted.  
(*With one hand she touches her stomach*).

**Ralph:** (*Gesturing with the washing line*) Look, can wu get rid o' this thing?

**Isabella:** Aye, owa by the bed.

*They carry the washing line with the clothes over by the bed and they both hang it up again.*

**Ralph:** (Now right in front of Isabella) Aa mean what aa'm sayin'.

**Isabella:** What?

**Ralph:** Aa can fix it fo' ye.

**Isabella:** No. Ye cannit.

**Ralph:** Aa can man.

**Isabella:** De ye think Willie had the right te knaa what wu had done?

**Ralph:** Did ye tell 'um?

**Isabella:** De ye think he had the right te knaa?

**Ralph:** ...Aye, aa dee.

*Isabella begins to sob.*

**Isabella:** Aa dee.

**Ralph:** Ye never telt 'um did ye?

*Isabella shakes her head.*

Howay man, divvent be like this. It's owa wi'. What's done's done. Cannit spend time thinkin' boot the things ye had never said te 'um. There's things aa never said te 'um but ye cannit dee nowt about it noo.

**Isabella:** Aa knaa, but...



**Ralph:** Think o' the future, what yer gannin' te dee next like.

**Isabella:** Aa divvent knaa. Aa divvent. Cannit live like this. De ye think in death Willie knaas what wu've done?

**Ralph:** Like he can see wu? Aa feel like he's watchin' iz aall the time. Absolutely hatin' iz.

**Isabella:** Aa feel like he's quietly aalways here. Aa think in death he knaas what wu've done and that wu never said nowt. Wu betrayed 'um.

**Ralph:** And he's angry.

**Isabella:** No, he's ashamed. He's sad about that. Aa feel aaful, really aaful.

**Ralph:** (*Silently nodding agreement*). There's somethin' aa need te tell ye... aa'm, whey, aa cannit stay here. If anyone finds oot aa'm still here aa'll be deed before ye knaa. Aa am leavin' Jarrow, and whey... aa'll not be headin' back. Gannin te hop on one of the ships headed te London the neet, hide in wi' the cargo. Aa'm good at the hidin' noo, expert.

**Isabella:** In London? What'll ye dee?

**Ralph:** Aa'll stay in London 'til aa can get on a ship te America.

**Isabella:** America?

**Ralph:** Aye.

**Isabella:** What's fo' yee in America?

**Ralph:** Whey aa'll not be recognised fo' starters.

**Isabella:** Ye knaa people oot there?

**Ralph:** No, but aa'm not scared. Be more scared tryin' te stay here. Aa'll gan and see what's best when aa get there. Get work sorted.

**Isabella:** Thu hev mines in America?

**Ralph:** More farms really. The land's growin', not like here.

**Isabella:** Aa see.

**Ralph:** Aa can see meself on a farm, mebbies travellin' arund places til aa find the right thing. Then there's the big cities. Divvent knaa if aa'm suited te that like. Aye, oot in the country where it's calm, that's where aa'll be.

**Isabella:** Aa never knew anyone from America.

**Ralph:** Aa've hord how it's aalways sunny in parts, air's waam, nee clouds. It'd be peaceful oot in the country. Mebbies aa'll get work farmin' animals, or mebbies wi' crops, aa reckon that'd be what aa'd dee. Could earn enough te one day own me aairn land, Me aairn land te dee wi' what aa wish.

**Isabella:** What're ye taalkin' aboot? That's not life. What yer sayin', it doesn't exist man.

**Ralph:** Aa've hord stories o' lads gannin oot there and deein' just that. Ye've just got te be able te mek the idea of it real. Have the will te dee it.

**Isabella:** Doesn't soond reet.

**Ralph:** Aa want ye te come wi' iz.

**Isabella:** What?

**Ralph:** Aye. Howay wi' iz. Aa divvent want te gan wi'oot ye.

**Isabella:** No, no, no, what're ye sayin'?

**Ralph:** Ye hord iz.

**Isabella:** No, aa'll not. Ralph, it's not real, that kind o' livin' doesn't happen.

**Ralph:** Ye can mek it happen yerself.

**Isabella:** Hev ye hord yerself? Ye've lost it. And even if ye can live that way, looka what's happened here.

**Ralph:** In Jarrow? What is happenin' here? Yer not livin', yer not allowed tee. De ye honestly want te stay here? Why would ye? Look at the place.

**Isabella:** But what's happened wi' William. Listen te what yer askin' iz. Run off wi' yee? Me husband's hangin' oot there. Run off wi' yee after aall this, would ye not feel sick te yer stomach wi' guilt.

**Ralph:** Course aa would, at forst anyone would. But yer not listenin' te iz, ye cannit change what's happened. Ye can aany gan forward or stay stuck. Te stay stuck here oot o' guilt, is that not a life wasted?

**Isabella:** Aa cannit.

**Ralph:** Yer worried aboot it aa can see, it's a big step. It is. Aa'd be there wi' ye the whole time though. And the bairns, wu'd tek the bairns wi' wu, course wu would. Dee it the neet, hop on one o' the ships in the dark. Gan te London, from there America, Howay Isabella.

**Isabella:** Yer askin' too much. What meks ye even think aa wanna run off wi' yee anyway? **Ralph:**

Aa love ye.

**Isabella:** Ye keep sayin' that.

**Ralph:** Aa dee. Aa dee. Ye love me divvent ye. (*Moving close and touching her face*).

**Isabella:** Aa love William.

**Ralph:** Aa knaa ye dee, aa knaa, but... Ye love me an'aall.

*They kiss briefly but passionately. They pull apart. They kiss again, for much longer this time.*

**Isabella:** (*Pulling away*) Aa'm not deein' this, aa'm not.

**Ralph:** Howay.

**Isabella:** No.

**Ralph:** Howay, Deags said himself there, this strikes endin', the union'll collapse and what then, eh? Yee, the bairns and the new babby'll be stuck in this dark place 'til death. Jimmy'll gan back te work, Peter'll be workin' soon, and the babby... What kind o' life de ye want fo' the new babby? (*He touches her stomach gently then jumps back in surprise*) It moved. Aa felt it. Are thu meant te dee that?

**Isabella:** Aye, it kicks.

**Ralph:** Wants te get oot. Is it comin' oot noo?

**Isabella:** No.

**Ralph:** It's not comin' oot noo is it? Oh Jesus.

**Isabella:** No man, it's not. It kicks te let iz knaa it's there, it's not comin' oot just yet.

**Ralph:** *(Moving back towards the stomach, kneeling and touching it gently once more)*. It kicks does it? Ha. Wants te be oot in the world, eh? It kicked there agyen there. *(Softly)* De ye want te come oot and see the world babby, de ye? Is that what yer after? Te see what's gannin' on oot here? *(Looking up at Isabella)* Howay, give it a chance man.

**Isabella:** America? What de ye think it looks like?

**Ralph:** *(Standing up)* Heaven. Aa think it looks like heaven.

**Isabella:** And tell iz what heaven would look like.

**Ralph:** Sun bein' gold and aalways in the sky, nee question. And aa bet it's waam, wu'd not be used te that at forst but after a while wu'd larn te love it. Fields fo' days, wi' things growin' like corn thu hev, veggies, and aall o' that. Fruit on the trees, ye can just gan and pick it and eat it.

**Isabella:** Fruit on the trees? And ye can just help yerself.

**Ralph:** Wheyaye ye can.

**Isabella:** And what else?

**Ralph:** Mountains. High as ye can imagine. Ye climb them ye could be mixin' wi' the angels at the top. And rivers aren't black like the Tyne. Thu're clear, look like jewels when the sun shines off the watta. Imagine swimmin' in

jewels like. That's what heaven would look like. Aa knaa, that's hoo aa've hord it's like. The lads that've gone oot there hevn't came back here in a hurry, must be some place worth stayin' like. Yee said it, ye've never met neeone from America. Why'd any American want te come owa here? Thu've got it too good owa there man.

**Isabella:** What else de ye knaa?

**Ralph:** Ye can be a poor bloke, aye, but not fo' laang if ye've got the will power. Ye can torn things rund fo' yerself. Be born poor and die rich. Ye can own yer land, yer hoose, yer fields and yer crops and yer animals. Ye want te dee it, ye can dee it. That's what'll happen wi' us. Wu'll arrive off the ship and wu'll be neebodies, just like what wu are here. But it'll not last laang. Wu'll hev money before wu knaa it. Wu'll hev wor aairn hoose, big hoose in the country, or by the sea, or in the moontains, or by a river, whatever. Ye'll be wearin' owt but rags.

**Isabella:** Me?

**Ralph:** Course! Ye cannit be wearin' rags once wu knaa people in high places. Ye'll be a lady, wi' the fancy dresses and the hats. Ye'll hev jewellery danglin' off ye. Aall owa ye. Nice shoes. Clean like, wi' nee holes in.

**Isabella:** This aall soonds too good te be true Ralph.

**Ralph:** Honestly. Aa'd not let ye gan wi'oot bein' a lady. Ye'd be mine. Anythin' yer after and aa'd mek sure ye got it. Click yer fingers and that's it, sorted, yours. What de ye want?

**Isabella:** Aa'd want te gan on visits. Gan on trips te new places aa reckon.

**Ralph:** Nee bother at aall. Horse and carriage wu'd hev. Off wu'd gan for a few weeks, trekkin' across the country. The thing's wu'd see man, can ye imagine?

**Isabella:** Aye. And wu'd tek the bairns.

**Ralph:** Course wu would, anywhere wu went. And aa suppose once wu've got the money there's nee reason why thu couldn't grow up te be landowners themselves. See thum succeedin' in life. Deein' great things.

**Isabella:** Thu could own their aairn shops or factories or whatever?

**Ralph:** Aye. Thu could see the bloody world man. Aa'd mek sure thu had anythin' thu ever wanted, like yee. Isabella, aa'd treat thum as if thu were me aairn. Aa mean Christ aany knaas... *(He caresses her stomach)* Howay. Howay. Let wu gan.

*They both move in together to kiss once more but Deags bursts through the door and they pull away from each other.*

**Deags:** Aa left me notes for the... *(Seeing Ralph)* Ye bastard!

*Deags starts towards Ralph. Ralph uses the table as a barrier.*

**Ralph:** Wait. Wait. Wait.

**Deags:** Wait nowt. Ye murderer.

**Ralph:** Aa am. Aa am. Aa'm sorry.

**Deags:** Aa'll beat the life ootta ye.

**Ralph:** Deags man.

**Isabella:** Stop. Stop the pair of ye.

**Deags:** Aa get me hands on 'um. Ye got a death wish comin' back here?

**Ralph:** Aa came te apologise man.

**Deags:** Aa'll give ye apologise.

**Isabella:** Deags.

**Deags:** Mekk ye sorry.

**Ralph:** Aa am. Aa am.

**Isabella:** (*Grabbing hold of Deags*) Stop. Keep the noise doon. Aa've got Peter asleep next door.

**Deags:** What's he deein' here?

**Isabella:** Nowt.

**Ralph:** Aa'm gannin.

**Deags:** Yer not gannin neewhere yee.

**Isabella:** Quiet.

**Deags:** Whey what's he deein' here? What's the scum deein'?

**Ralph:** Aa came te apologise. Te Isabella. Nowt te dee wi' yee. (*Spits at Deags*).

**Deags:** Ye scum bastard.

*Again, Deags starts towards Ralph but Isabella does not loosen her grip.*



**Isabella:** Deags caalm doon.

**Deags:** Aa cannit believe this. Aa cannit believe it. Yee've got some friggin' nerve after what yee've done. Wu've looked high and low.

**Ralph:** Aa got good at the hidin'.

**Deags:** Yer good fo' nowt ye coward. Ye any idea what ye've bloody caused?

**Ralph:** Course aa hev.

**Deags:** Costin' Joblin' hees life. Costin' Isabella her husband. Bairns their Da. Jarrow's crushed. The union's crumblin'. Men gannin back te work o' fear o' what might happen next and could they be next te hang for whatever. Ye've ruined... And why come back?

**Ralph:** Aa knaa, aa'm guilty o' aall o' it, but howay man Deags, aa'm here te apologise.

**Deags:** Too late fo' that noo.

**Ralph:** Aa wanna set things straight.

**Deags:** Ye kiddin' iz?

**Ralph:** It's why aa'm here. What's happened Deags... aa didn't mean fo' it te happen. Didn't.

**Deags:** Ah whey, there wu gan then. Nee bother son, if ye didn't mean it then it's aall fine and dandy. Aa mean, hoo can ye not mean it? What, did Fairless drag 'umself off hees horse, eh?

**Ralph:** Ye weren't there man.

**Deags:** Ner aa wasn't, but by Christ if aa had o' been...

**Ralph:** Wu'd both had a drink man, me and Willie.

**Deags:** On yer way back from the pub, eh? Story o' yer life.

**Isabella:** Deags man here 'um oot.

**Deags:** Eh?

**Isabella:** Give 'um a chance.

**Deags:** What're yee...?

**Ralph:** Aye, wu'd been te the pub. Allowed a drink aren't wu? Not much else te dee when yer oot o' work.

**Deags:** There were a rally that day ye's should've been at.

**Ralph:** Whey wu weren't, wu were drownin' wu sorrows at the thought o' never gannin back te work and bein' skint forever.

**Deags:** If it's bein' skint yer worried aboot then ye divvent gan drinkin'. Why'd ye dee it then, drag Fairless off hees horse? Why'd ye beat 'um, eh? Ye gannin te blame aall that on the drink noo aa suppose.

**Ralph:** Was part te blame, aye.

**Deags:** *(To Isabella)* Yee hearin' this? Is he actually blamin' the drink on hees murder?

**Ralph:** It wasn't aall the drink man. Me and Jobling, wu saw Fairless ridin' past on hees horse, was headin' towards wu on the path. Jobling were the one

who recognised 'um, said he was the magistrate who'd locked most the men up at that rally in North Shields a few weeks before. Willie said he were a bastard, magistrate wi'oot a conscience, if ye believe any o' thum were born wi' one.

**Deags:** Nee reason.

**Ralph:** Jobling were the one who approached 'um at forst. He waved for 'um te stop, and as he came up closer te wu on hees horse he did stop. He were terrifyin', he looked terrifyin', wearin' aall black, black from heed te toe. Had this wrinkly aad face but it were hard as stone, hees eyes looked right doon on wu, ye didn't knaa where te look. Ye thought if ye looked right inte hees eyes for owt more than a couple o' minutes ye'd just be struck doon deed. He was like death. Whey wu asked 'um for money. Not rude or aggressive like, wu spoke te 'um well. Whey didn't he just throw hees heed back and laugh at wu? Telt wu te move and spat on wu. Willie was there aall 'howay Ralph let wu gan', but aa couldn't, me feet were planted in that grund and I wasn't movin' fo' neeone. Especially nee bastard, spittin' magistrate on hees horse.

**Deags:** So ye dragged 'um doon and beat 'um and that solved a million problems.

**Ralph:** It felt brilliant, after aa'd had a drink, and the rush that it gave iz. Once aa made the move te dee it aa just wasn't thinkin' neemore. Just feelin' brilliant. The horse scarpered and aa felt Jobling's hands on me shoulders tryin' te pull iz away. He nearly did. Nearly did. But aa pushed 'um off.

**Isabella:** And that's when Willie ran away didn't he? He telt iz in the prison.

**Ralph:** Ye knaa aall aboot it? Aa didn't mean it though, ye knaa that. Didn't mean te gan as far as aa did wi' it. Aa aany wanted te teach 'um a lesson.

**Deags:** And ye ended up killin' 'um.

**Isabella:** Ye did kill 'um.

**Ralph:** Aa didn't knaa he would die.

**Isabella:** How could ye not? He were an aad man.

**Ralph:** Aye but he looked like stone. Yee didn't see 'um.

**Isabella:** He was just a man.

**Ralph:** But ye didn't see 'um. Spittin' and mockin me and Jobling. The way he looked doon at wu. He deserved a beatin' and that's what aa set oot te give 'um. But once aa'd started, there were nee stoppin' iz.

**Isabella:** Willie ran off but he was still shootin' at ye te stop.

**Ralph:** Was he? Aa divvent knaa. Didn't hear much, cannit remember hearin' much. No, aa remember hearin' the rock crackin' off hees skull. Aa'd picked up this great rock and aa brought it doon on 'um, and then agyen. Then that's when he stopped strugglin', but it didn't stop me. Again and again and again. Blood on the rock and the path. And on me there were blood.

**Deags:** Yer a monster. Nowt but a cold blooded murderer.

**Isabella:** Why wouldn't ye stop?

**Ralph:** Aa couldn't man. Aa telt ye, aa'd had a drink, aa wasn't thinkin' straight. Aa've never done nowt like that in me life, never wanted te harm someone like that, aa didn't knaa that feelin'. When aa dropped the rock back doon on the grund aa realised what aa'd done. Aa looked up te see if Willie were there still, but he weren't. Couldn't see 'um anywhere, aa called oot fo' 'um.

**Isabella:** He were gone by then.

**Ralph:** Aye.

**Deags:** And then ye left Fairless lyin' there in a pool of hees aairn blood.

**Ralph:** No not yet.

**Deags:** Eh?

**Ralph:** Aa looked doon at 'um. Could hardly make oot hees stony face then it were covered in soo much blood. Blood aall in hees wrinkles. Aa was more terrified then than aa had been when he were up on hees horse, 'cause aa started thinkin' o' the things that would happen' te iz if he were deed. Aa put me face reet close te his face. Torned me cheek te hees mooth. Aa felt he were breathin' still, felt the warm breath on me cheek. Aa were glad he were alive. Aa were glad then that aa wasn't a murderer.

**Deags:** But he did die.

**Ralph:** Aa knaa he did. Aa kept checkin' in on 'um up until the time he died.

**Deags:** Yee did?

**Ralph:** Aye.

**Deags:** Hoo the hell ye manage that? He were in hospital.

**Ralph:** Aa can visit a hospital.

**Deags:** But wu had everyone oot lookin' fo' ye. Fairless aalways had family wi' 'um.

**Ralph:** Aa telt ye, aa got good at hidin'. Aa can spy through a hospital windi. Aa can climb through it when hees sleepin' and hees wife's left the room.

**Deags:** It's like ye've got a death wish, it really is.

**Ralph:** Aa had te keep checkin' in te see aa wasn't a killer. Aa nearly got caught a few times ye knaa. Isabella, aa hevn't telt ye this yet but aa were there when thu took Willie there.

**Isabella:** What?

**Deags:** Ye what?

**Ralph:** Aa was. Fairless was asleep and aa was standin' there in hees room. Had hees aairn private room. Aa hord the footsteps comin' towards the door and aa didn't hev the time te get oot the windi so aa got doon under the bed.

**Isabella:** Ye were there in the same room as Willie?

**Ralph:** The pollis hauled 'um in through the door and aa hord Fairless wakin' up above iz in the bed. Aa saw Willie's shoes on the floor, reet next te me face thu were.

**Isabella:** Thu asked Fairless if he could identify 'um.

**Ralph:** And Fairless did.

**Isabella:** Identified Willie as the one who'd done nowt te stop the attack from happenin'. He didn't take part, but he did not a thing te prevent it.

**Ralph:** Then thu dragged Willie oot o' the room and the door slammed shut. Willie never said a word but 'sorry' while he were there in that room.

**Isabella:** Aa knaa. He telt iz.

**Deags:** Fo' Christ sake man, how could ye not torn yerself in reet then?

**Ralph:** Couldn't.

**Deags:** But ye could stand by knowin' that someone else, yer marra, would tekk the blame? Thu had te put the blame on someone once Fairless died, who else would thu hang other than the bloke who did nowt te prevent it?

**Ralph:** When it's yer aairn neck on the line Deags, divvent be too sure that ye wouldn't dee exactly what aa did.

**Deags:** Divvent yee dare make me oot te be owt like yee.

**Isabella:** Aa cannit believe ye'd be there in the same room and ye could put everythin' reet, and choose not te. Willie could've waalked oot o' that room a free man.

**Ralph:** Aa divvent think he would've. Aa can honestly say aa divvent think he would've. Mebbies that's another reason why aa couldn't bring meself te dee it. Willie would've hung regardless.

**Deags:** Ye divvent knaa that. Ye cannit use that as an excuse.

**Ralph:** Isabella, it wouldn't hev made a difference.

**Isabella:** Doesn't mek a difference noo though anyway. Doesn't, does it?

**Ralph:** Aa wish aa could reverse what's happened, but neeone can. Ye can aany think about what's next and hoo de wu get on wi' life noo.

**Deags:** Hoo de wu achieve some sense o' justice.

**Ralph:** Eh?

**Deags:** Yer reet. There, aa agreed wi' ye. Wu've gotta think hoo wu get on wi' wor lives noo that Jobling's been hung for a crime he didn't commit. The best way forward's fo' the people: he's wife, bairns, marras and community, te knaa some sense o' justice. That's it. won't be plain sailin' from then on but it's a start. Wu'll be able te mek a start on gettin' on wi' life agyen. Am aa reet Isabella?

**Ralph:** What're ye gannin te dee wi' iz?

**Deags:** Oh the things wu said wu'd be deein' te yee once wu caught ye. Us in the union.

**Isabella:** Deags, divvent taalk aboot that kind o' thing in me hoose man.

**Deags:** Would wu torn ye in and let them dee the hangin?

**Ralph:** Would ye's?

**Deags:** Or would wu be deein' the hangin worselves?



**Ralph:** Ye's wouldn't.

**Deags:** Wouldn't wu?

**Isabella:** Deags that's enough o' that taalk.

**Ralph:** Ye's wouldn't be deein nee hangin o' me. Hepburn wouldn't let ye's.

**Isabella:** Divvent tempt 'um.

**Deags:** What Hepburn doesn't knaa won't hurt Hepburn.

**Deags:** Mebbies drown ye in the river. Why didn't ye torn yerself in?

**Ralph:** Aa couldn't.

**Deags:** Stone ye. Ye could've saved Jobling. Jobling could o' been livin'.

**Ralph:** Aa loved 'um like a brother.

**Isabella:** Divvent yee dare say nowt like that ye liar.

**Deags:** Burn ye. Mekk ye skin torn black. Hoy ye off the cliff at Tynemooth. Yer body wallop off the rocks. Sound nice aa reckon. What would ye prefer and wu'll gan fo' the opposite.

**Ralph:** Aa'm beggin' ye just let iz gan. Aa'll be oota here. Aa'll not be back ever aa promise.

**Deags:** Could boil ye.

**Isabella:** Deags.

**Deags:** Everyone'll think Ralph Armstrong just disappeared off the face o' the earth, apart from hees marras and hees family. The people that mattered tee 'um most'll knaa justice.

**Ralph:** Please. Howay Deags howay. Please man. Divvent dee this. Howay please. Aa'm beggin'. Beggin'. Isabella divvent let 'um dee it.

**Deags:** Why the hell wouldn't shu? Yer the reason her husbands hangin' oot there. You're the reason.

**Ralph:** It were... but aa didn't... aa telt ye man... howay aa mean... aa didn't mean te dee it. Didn't. Isabella, howay, aa didn't mean it, ye knaa that.

**Isabella:** De ye dee a lot o' things ye divvent mean?

**Ralph:** What? No, no, everythin' aa said te yee aa mean it from the bottom o' me heart. Aa love ye.

**Deags:** Ye what?

**Ralph:** Howay man, America, me and yee.

**Deags:** Hang on, what did aa gan and waalk in on here?

**Isabella:** Deags, it's nowt.

**Ralph:** It's not nowt. Ye divvent mean that.

**Deags:** Yee's two? Aa can not believe aa'm hearin' this. When?

**Isabella:** Nowt. Nowt happened.

**Deags:** Doesn't bloody soond like nowts happenin'.

**Ralph:** Isabella, America, wu'll gan. Remember what aa said about it.

**Deags:** Yee's two plannin' on runnin' off together?

**Isabella:** No.

**Deags:** Isabella, what aboot Willie?

**Isabella:** Aa still love me husband.

**Ralph:** He's deed and gone.

**Isabella:** He's deed, aye, but he's not gone. By God he's certainly not gone. There he is there. Aa can see 'um from here, from me windi. Aa can feel 'um reet here in the room, aa can. What's he thinkin' o' aall this?

**Deags:** Yer surely not gannin' te run off wi' the bloke who killed yer aairn husband?

**Ralph:** No, aa never killed 'um divvent say that.

**Deags:** Hoo can ye stand there and say that ye love yer husband when this is what's gannin on?

**Isabella:** Aa dee, aa dee love 'um still. After aall what's happened aa love 'um. Aa was gannin' te spend the rest o' me life wi' 'um. That's what aa still want.

**Ralph:** But ye cannit. Ye loved 'um, a knaa, but ye love me, Isabella.

**Deags:** Divvent believe this.

**Isabella:** Deags is reet though. Ye might as well've killed Willie wi' yer aairn bare hands. It might as well've been his heed that ye pummelled wi' a rock.

**Ralph:** No.

**Isabella:** Ye didn't torn yerself in cause ye weren't thinkin' aboot what's reet and wraang. Ye were aany thinkin' o' yerself weren't ye? Ye didn't care aboot him or me.

**Ralph:** No aa dee care aboot yee.

**Isabella:** But look what ye've done te iz.

**Ralph:** Aa'm sorry.

**Isabella:** Are ye?

**Ralph:** Aa am.

**Isabella:** *(To Deags)* Ye gannin' te torn 'um in?

**Deags:** Thu'd hang 'um. Justice by their hand.

**Isabella:** Justice?

**Deags:** Or justice by wors.

**Isabella:** Wors?

**Deags:** It's whatever ye want te give yerself peace.

**Ralph:** No. Deags howay... man ye divvent want te be like me. Aa'm a murderer. Hev te live wi' that, it's aaful. Divvent kill iz, am beggin' ye. Ye divvent want te be a murderer.

**Deags:** After what yee've done, aa've no doubts that aa could live wi' it.

**Isabella:** Justice by their hands or wors?

**Ralph:** Isabella, aa'm sorry.

*Peter walks across the room, unseen by the others. He does not acknowledge them, and pulls a chair over to the window. He climbs up and stares out across Jarrow Slake.*

**Ralph:** Isabella. Howay, think o' America.

*Ralph walks towards Isabella and holds her hands; he is terrified and speaking through tears.*

**Ralph:** Like aa said, the sun, the fruits on trees, ownin' land and a hoose in the country or in the moontains. The bairns, think o' the bairns. Givin' thum a chance in life. Wu'd be happy.

**Isabella:** America sounds, well, amazin'.

**Ralph:** It will be. Imagine seein' the bairns succeedin' in life. Imagine yee gettin' oot o' here, bein' a lady wi' dresses and hats and jewels. Imagine swimmin' in the jewels.

**Isabella:** Aa can imagine it. It's beautiful. It is, it's... beautiful.

**Ralph:** Aa'll mek sure it aall happens fo' wu. Aa will ye knaa. Willie wouldn't... wouldn't want... Te hev iz killed. It won't bring 'um back. Aa would if aa could bring 'um but aa cannit. Killin' iz cannit. Justice? Please. Yee tell Deags. Aa'm te gan. America. Isabella... America. Ye'll come wi' iz. Yee and the bairns and the new babby. Away from aall this.

**Isabella:** Deags?

*Peter turns to watch them. As he turns we see blood seeping from his mouth.*

**Deags:**           Isabella, what am aa deein'? It's whatever ye need te give yerself peace.

**Isabella:**       *(Lingers)* Kill 'um.

*Deags' hand on Ralph's shoulder. He drags him outside. Blackout.*

### **Interlude (Jimmy on the slake)**

*Lights up, down stage. Jimmy walks across the slake, as in Act One, collecting shards of coal one by one and putting them into the sack. The sound of Ralph's screams echo in the darkness. Meanwhile Isabella is illuminated in her cottage, she can hear the screaming outside and she tries to block the sound out.*

**Jimmy:**       37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43...

*He stops in his path, the screams continue, a buzzing sound grows louder and louder as Jimmy slowly looks up to the gibbet. He stares and his breathing becomes deeper and quicker. He drops the sack, turns and runs back the way he came.*

*Sudden blackout. The screams and the buzzing stop abruptly.*

*Interval.*

## **Act Three**

**(One week later)**

### **Scene 1 (Union meeting)**

*Lights up downstage. Hepburn and Deags are in a union meeting, they address the audience as if they were addressing members of the union. Deags appears a lot less sure of himself than in previous scenes; Hepburn is, as ever, a bold and brassy leader.*

**Hepburn:** Settle, settle doon noo. There's other business te get through if ye's want te get oot o' here the neet. Noo look, just a few more things and then wu can aall get gannin.

Unfortunately wu've been unsuccessful in tryin' te secure housin' fo' Mary Skipsey. Aa had te brek the news te her this mornin'. Lord Londonderry said he were sorry fo' her loss, but he wasn't prepared te carry on housin' the widow of a miner who were oot on strike in the forst place. The state o' wu funds at the moment mean that the union cannit afford te house her neither. Shu's med plans te move te her sister's in Ashington. Aa sent her aall yer concerns, shu were grateful fo' that.

Another thing is, aa'm aall too aware, that there's rumour gannin rund that the guard watchin' owa Jobling's body is due te be tekkin off the slake. Whey lads, there's nowt wu can confirm as of yet. The law've never said a word te wu, so divvent be jumpin' te yer own conclusions aboot it. Aa hev te tell ye's though that, at some point or another, the guard'll gan. Howay, thu cannit keep watch owa the body forever ye knaa. Wu hev been advised te warn ye's that should any of ye's get caught in the

act of tryin' te snatch the body doon, whether the guard's there or not, ye's'll be in serious trouble wi' the law. Thu've emphasised again that there'll be imprisonment and transportation fo' any bugger caught deein' it. As much as wu aall want te get Jobling doon off that gibbet, wu cannit afford te hev ye's locked up and shipped oot owa it. Areet? Ye's get yerselves arrested and there'd be nowt wu could dee te help ye's. So that's just a warnin' like. Just so's ye's knaa, just so's aa've telt ye's.

**Deags:** And, whey, think o' Isabella and the bairns like.

**Hepburn:** Aye, ye's divvent want te upset the poor lass. Jobling might o' been wor marra, but he were her fella. So that's that. There's te be nee body snatchin', from none of ye's.

What's next? Aye, Ralph Armstrong. Lads, here's the reality o' the situation: it's been near on three weeks since Jobling were hanged; ye've aall been tornin' the entire county owa lookin' fo' Ralph fo' weeks on end noo and not a sign o' 'um; the union hasn't organised any formal sorches in three weeks, and so noo aa'm tellin' ye's it's pointless. There's nee way, nee way on earth wu're gannin te find 'um after aall this time like.

**Deags:** Ralph'll've fled by noo, he's laang gone lads.

**Hepburn:** Aa've said it before but wu were aany sorchin' fo' 'um te restore justice in the forst place. The day Jobling hanged, whey, after that it were irreversible. So, whey, aa'm caalin' off the sorch entirely noo. That's it. The union'll not condone nee more pointless sorchin'.

**Deags:** Aye, nee point thinkin' aboot it noo lads.



**Hepburn:** Aa knaa it's tough te hear, and it's tough te say te ye's. Feels like wu've given up on somethin', but wu heven't, we're just... tryin' te move on from it like. Aa mean wu could sorch forever and never find 'um. Ye knaa what aa'm sayin'?

**Deags:** *(Quietly)* Thu knaa.

**Hepburn:** Aye, whey. So the sorch is off. Nee more o' it. *(To Deags)* Eh, so what's after that?

**Deags:** *(Quietly)* Lord Londonderry.

**Hepburn:** The Lord Londonderry, aye. Whey, ye's aall knaa, more or less, where we (the union) stand at the minute. Aa'm due te be in a meetin' wi' the Lord Londonderry and the rest o' the owners in the county durin' the week. Aa'll let ye's knaa hoo aa get on like, but, whey, aall aa'm gannin' te say is, and there's nee easy way o' sayin' this lads but, just prepare yerselves fo' the worst like. Chances are, and aa'm not sayin' fo' definite, that wu could be back doon the pits by the end o' next week like.

*(Sensing dissatisfaction)* Aa mean, but look hoo far wu've come though. Compare it te where wu were. Divvent let it dishearten ye's. Two years ago, young lads 9, 10, 11 years owled could be working a shift underground for twenty four hours. Noo thu dee a twelve hour maximum. Is that not progress? And what aboot the resources te larn that ye's've noo got. Libraries o' books and pamphlets, the chance te educate worselves. Wu've had the shopkeepers aall on wu side te abolish the tokens system that the landowners had gannin on. Ye divvent hev te

spend yer hard earned money in businesses owned by the landowners anymore. Progress has been med, divvent forget about that.

In me meetin' with the Lord Londonderry, ye's've got me word, aa'll not sell ye's short, aa'd never. Whatever the outcome, knaa that aa did me best by aall o' ye's, eh? Knaa that aa stuck me neck oot fo' every last one o' ye's. And when we're back te work divvent forget the power that wu hev when wu stand together like.

That's aall aa'm sayin'. Fo' noo anyway. Aye, so that's it fo' the neet lads. Get gannin' hyem the lot o' ye's. Wu'll see ye's durin' the week.

*Deags makes to walk off as Hepburn follows behind.*

Deags. Yee were quiet.

**Deags:** Was aa?

**Hepburn:** Aa might as well've stood up there on me airn.

**Deags:** Aye, whey, what can aa say?

**Hepburn:** 's there a problem Deags?

**Deags:** What de yee think? The lads deserve a lot better than what wu've just given thum. A pack o' bloody lies.

**Hepburn:** Here wu gan.

**Deags:** And progress? Wu've not done a patch o' what wu said wu would. Wu'll still gan unpaid on days when the pits idle. Wu'll still get wor wages docked if wu throw a bloody stone in wi' the coal that wu're diggin', or if

the coals not the reet size, or whatever. Fo' Christ sake, there's still nee ventilation shaft te stop explosions, it'll still be a slaughter pit. And why divvent wu just tell thum honestly aboot the state o' the union? Hepburn, it's what thu've fought for, so why shouldn't thu knaa that the union's finished wi'?

**Hepburn:** Aa'll not be the one te kick thum when thu're doon, aa wont.

**Deags:** Thu'll hev te find oot sooner or later.

**Hepburn:** Aye, thu will, but not yet fo' Christ sake. Let thum get back te work forst, isn't that gannin' te be difficult enough wi'oot knaaairn the union's collapsed?

**Deags:** And what aboot the rest? Ralph Armstrong? Thu've been hopin' rund the clock te find 'um. Thu're never gannin te find 'um noo.

**Hepburn:** If that whole business gets oot there'd be uproar and both of us'd hev hell te pay. Answer iz this: de ye wish aa'd never stumbled upon yee wi' Ralph last week? Aa mean howay, what would ye hev done? Can ye imagine clearin' that whole mess up by yerself? Can ye?

**Deags:** No.

**Hepburn:** Sorry?

**Deags:** Aa says no! But, hoo am aa gannin te live wi' it?

**Hepburn:** In secrecy. Yee knaa fine hoo the law deal wi' murderers. Aa divvent want te see nee more hangings arund here, not o' yee, not o' anyone.

**Deags:** Aye, me neither.

**Hepburn:** So nee one can knaa aboot Ralph, and them who dee can keep it te worselves. Not ideal but it's what has te happen.

*Silence.*

Wu'll rebuild the union. Wu will. Aa give ye me word that wu'll start agyen from scratch, but aa couldn't dee it wi'oot yee. Deags?

**Deags:** Yer reet. Ye are. Aa knaa that.

**Hepburn:** Aa'm here te look after ye, after aall o' ye's.

**Deags:** What about Isabella?

**Hepburn:** Keep yer composure, fo' her sake at least. Shu's got a shock comin' her way the neet, shu'll need yee te look after her.

**Deags:** Shu'll lose her hoose wont shu? Just like Skipsey's widow.

**Hepburn:** Shu will. **Deags:**

This isn't fair.

**Hepburn:** Aa knaa it's not.

**Deags:** Not though is it?

**Hepburn:** Wu'll not worry her aboot loosin' the hoose just yet. Shu's got plenty on her plate aalready. Remember what aa said, keep yer composure. Can ye dee that?

**Deags:** Aa can.

**Hepburn:** Good lad. Howay, wu've got things te dee.

*They leave together.*

## **Scene 2 (Isabella's cottage)**

*Lights up on the cottage. The sound of wind can be heard howling, it is difficult to tell whether it comes from outside or within the cottage itself. There are no buckets placed out to catch dripping water as the roof has been repaired. The clothes still hang on the washing line, this time back in their original position as was when the play began. Peter lies in the bed. Isabella stands, with a hand on her stomach, by the window looking out at her husband hanging. She talks to her unborn baby.*

**Isabella:** Wind howlin' across the slake like that, ye hear it babby? Wind howlin' like that, way that the doggies dee. De ye hear it from inside o' there? De ye?

Would ye looka the state o' hees claes oot there. Black as sin, as coal. What'll people be thinkin'? Neeone gans oot dressed, whey in their reet mind gans oot dressed, in claes as dorty as that. Divvent though dee thu? Can ye see yer daddy there, babby? Dadda hangin' high up there? Can ye see the hacky claes he's got on 'um? Used te clamber hyem wi' claes blacker than that after he'd finish workin' hees shift. And aa'd wash and wash them aalways te get thum back clean agyen. Aye. Aa would dee that.

God, that's winds straang eh? Aa swear the wind's pushed that river up higher than aa've ever seen. Not be too laang til it's up that pole and yer daddy'll be dippin' hees toes in it. Eh? De ye reckon? Aa reckon, not before laang, it'll get high as that. That moon's some size the neet an' aall. Like it's gannin te crash inte Jarrow it's so close.

*She feels the baby kicking.*

Did ye just kick on mammy's hands? Eh, is that what ye did? Kickin' on mammy's hands?

See daddy's hands? See them there? Palms are the cleanest part of 'um, fo' once. Aalways had filthy hands he did, and noo look at thum. Thu must've cleaned hees hands up fo' 'um before thu dangled 'um up there. Clean hands danglin' doon by hees sides. Wind's mekkin' thum move like hees wavin' at wu, eh? Ye reckon that's daddy wavin' at wu? Or de ye reckon it's just the wind blowin'?

*She waves out of the window.*

Hey, when yer born aa'll tek ye oot on the slake so's ye can hev a cry te yer daddy. He'd like ye te be there wi' 'um, he would. Ye'd like te gan see yer daddy properly would ye? Aye? Aye, whey mammy'll tek ye. Tek ye when the tide's doon.

Thu've had that sack stuck owa hees face though. Aa say ye'll not see much o' yer daddy's face wi' that great sack thu've shoved owa hees heed. A suppose thu didn't think it'd be nice te be starin' at the last look o' a man hung by the neck. Ye divvent wanna be starin' at the rope burns neither. The sack owa the heed meks it look nicer.

*She feels the baby kick again.*

Ye'll kick reet through in a minute. Kicked a lot more since last week, ye hev. Harder and more times. Aa've noticed.

Ye wantin' te get oot o' there and see the world? Or has somethin' happened te unsettle me babby? It has. Aall that noise from last week what we had was it? Ralph and that screamin'? Did ye not like the fuss did ye not babby? Mammy's sorry fo' aall o' that. Not be happenin' agyen, aa promise.

It were them God aaful screams o' Ralph's soundin' oot owa the slake. Reet there infront o' yer daddy it aall played oot wi' the screams o' Ralph...

Oh God, what've wu done? What've wu done? What've wu done?

*Jimmy walks through the door with the bible in hand.*

There's death aall owa the slake te begin' wi'. What were the difference in one more life? A body te add te the heap o' thum? A drop in the river.

**Jimmy:** Mammy? Mammy!

**Isabella:** Jimmy will ye gan onte that slake and pick wu up some coal eh? Be good lad fo' mammy shu doesn't feel well the neet. Divvent be lookin' at yer daddy neither.

*Jimmy drags Isabella away from the window.*

**Jimmy:** Mammy, howay from the windi. Mam, sit doon will ye? The reverend says ye shouldn't be loookin' oot the windi nee more.

**Isabella:** Did he noo? What's it te him like? Me windi's me windi, not his.

**Jimmy:** Mammy, howay and sit.

**Isabella:** Aye, me feet's tired like. Mebbies aa'll sit noo.

*She sits down at the table.*

Back hyem early aren't wu?

**Jimmy:** No. Aa'm late. Later than aa'm usually.

**Isabella:** Were there owt waitin' fo' iz at the sortin' office?

**Jimmy:** No, there wasn't.

**Isabella:** No? Ye been larnin' aall sorts up at the chorch hev ye?

**Jimmy:** Aye.

**Isabella:** Lots?

**Jimmy:** Lots.

*Isabella senses Jimmy's unhappiness.*

**Isabella:** What's wraang wi' yer face?

**Jimmy:** Nowt.

**Isabella:** Divvent give iz that. Somethin' the reverend said? What's he said that's upsettin' ye?

**Jimmy:** Nah he's not. Reverend says that aa'm larnin' well like.

**Isabella:** Whey aa never thought aa'd see the day... Ye enjoyin' it?

**Jimmy:** Aa am.

**Isabella:** Proved yer mammy wraang then.



**Jimmy:** Reverend says that the bible has different meanin' fo' different people. And it changes aall the time like. Way that ye can use the bible, the word o' God, te help ye in different times in life. Everyone does.

**Isabella:** Never seen much use in aall that stuff meself. It's stories.

**Jimmy:** What the reverend says mam, ye should hear 'um, he meks it mek sense like. It meks sense te iz.

**Isabella:** Ye reckon so de ye?

**Jimmy:** Aye. Bits meanin' different things te people. People usin' it, fo' comfort like.

**Isabella:** Oh aye.

**Jimmy:** There's stories that are mad and ye'd never believe in a million years like, but it's not aboot what happens in the story, it's aboot what ye tek from the story. And what does it say te yee. And how is it important te yee. Ye want iz te tell ye some stuff what aa've been larnin' the day at the chorch?

**Isabella:** Divvent yee be wastin' nen o' that stuff on yer mammy Jimmy.

**Jimmy:** But reverend says ye should be listenin'. He wants te help ye.

**Isabella:** Oh so that's it is it? Reverend's put ye up te it? Shoulda knaairn he'd try usin' yee te get te iz. He's been doon here every morning for a fortnight preachin' this at iz. *(She picks up the bible in a fit of rage)*. Aa cannit tek nee more o' this man! Why didn't aa guess he'd try preachin' through me

aa'rn bairn after aa've sent 'um packin so many times? Aa just want te be left alein. Ye think he'd tek the hint.

**Jimmy:** He does man. He just wants te help ye. Gan up te the chorch wi' iz. He'll read te ye. Help ye read fo' yerself.

**Isabella:** Why should aa be larnin' te read noo? Aa'm aad. Divvent need te be readin' nen o' that bible stuff. Not fo' mammy's. Fo' bairns wi' the imaginations. It's fo' yee and Peter.

*Isabella pushes the bible across the table to Jimmy.*

Gan on and read it te Peter.

**Jimmy:** Aa'll be readin' it te yee.

**Isabella:** Ye'll not be. Tell Peter what the reverend's been teachin' ye.

**Jimmy:** Aa asked 'um te teach iz a story te read te yee mammy.

**Isabella:** It's not fo' me.

**Jimmy:** Then aa'll be readin' it te meself, aa reckon aa'd rather.

**Isabella:** Reverend said ye were te share the stories wi' Peter.

**Jimmy:** Aa divvent want te be sharin' the stories wi' Peter nee more.

**Isabella:** And why not?

**Jimmy:** Mam divvent. Aa just divvent.

**Isabella:** Peter would like te hear thum.

**Jimmy:** Divvent. **Isabella:**

Would like tee.

**Jimmy:** Aa divvent want tee.

**Isabella:** Ye knaa hoo he likes te hear thum. Why're ye fightin' te tell 'um?

*Silence. At this point the tide begins to creep into the cottage from outside. It seeps in under the door and through the window. This continues for the rest of the play. At its highest point it should reach shin height.*

Why? Tell 'um.

**Jimmy:** Aa'm not. Aa'll gan get coal.

**Isabella:** Jimmy! That were wor agreement wi' the reverend. What would the reverend say if he hord ye fightin' like this?

**Jimmy:** (*Tearful*) Mam.

**Isabella:** Yee dee as yer telt.

**Jimmy:** He cannit hear the stories.

**Isabella:** He's tired is aall. Not well.

**Jimmy:** No.

**Isabella:** Then yer not te wake 'um.

**Jimmy:** No.

**Isabella:** Ye'll read te 'um while he sleeps, bless 'um. But divvent wake 'um. He's aall worn oot. Tek the chair owa and read the story te yer brother, be a good lad.

*Jimmy takes a chair over to the bedside and sits.*

**Jimmy:** (Unsure) Aa'll taalk te 'um mam?

**Isabella:** While he sleeps.

**Jimmy:** Aa divvent think he can still hear iz.

**Isabella:** He would like ye te still be speakin' te 'um. Aye, suppose ye'd better, gan on pet.

**Jimmy:** Peter? It's me. It's Jimmy. Can ye hear iz?

*Jimmy looks to Isabella, she nods encouragement.*

If ye can hear iz, aa'm back from the chorch. The reverend telt iz a story ye'd like aboot the angels. Aa asked 'um fo' a story fo' mammy, it's got angels in it. It's aboot Jesus. It's in the bible. Aa've got the bible here.

Mammy aa divvent want te dee this.

**Isabella:** Tell 'um the story.

*Isabella sits at the table and listens.*

**Jimmy:** Whey it's aboot... when Jesus' body had been tekken' off the cross and the disciples, what thu did was, thu took Jesus doon off the cross and the cleaned up hees body and thu dressed 'um up aall in nice claes agyen. Then thu took hees body and instead o' buryin' it, thu laid it in this cave, rolled this massive massive rock reet infront o' it: the cave. A huge stone. And it were left like that. That's hoo thu left it. The body in the cave and

the stone blockin' the way in so nee one could get te it. Peter? Can ye hear the story?

**Isabella:** Divvent wake 'um up. He can hear ye.

**Jimmy:** Aye. Days later, Peter, thu comes back. Comes back te the cave there and thu see the stone rolled away. Someone had rolled the stone away. Thu had said that it'd been the angels what done it. Peter. Had come doon from heaven, opened up the cave, woke Jesus up and took 'um back oot the cave into the fresh air and the sun.

The resurrection it's caaled when Jesus woke up from death and waalked oot the cave. It's good isn't it? And didn't the disciples see Jesus and put their fingers through them holes in the hands... (*Through tears*) Can ye hear the story Peter?

**Isabella:** That's enough Jimmy.

**Jimmy:** Mammy, but...

**Isabella:** Aa said enough.

**Jimmy:** ...He's deed mammy.

**Isabella:** Ye divvent want 'um wakin' up. Still needs hees rest there.

**Jimmy:** Mam, ye need te be gannin' up te see the reverend. He'll help.

**Isabella:** Howay owa here noo.

**Jimmy:** (*Walking over to her*) Mam?

**Isabella:** Aa divvent care too much fo' yer behaviour lately ye knaa. Aall this protestin' and argue.

**Jimmy:** What protestin'?

**Isabella:** Just noo protestin'. Aa ask ye te dee a simple thing and ye cannit dee it. Hev te be asked owa and owa.

**Jimmy:** Aa didn't mean it.

**Isabella:** Ye didn't mean it? Ye often dee things ye divvent mean? Dee wu often dee things in life wu divvent mean, or de we just decide wu didn't mean te dee it after it's already done?

**Jimmy:** Aa... aa divvent knaa what ye mean.

**Isabella:** Aa want less o' the behaviour off ye pet.

**Jimmy:** Aa'm sorry, aa am.

**Isabella:** Aye, still, aa'm yer mam and if aa say fo' ye te dee somethin', ye dee it. That's it, ye dee it. Understood?

**Jimmy:** Aye.

**Isabella:** Dee ye understand iz? Divvent lie mind.

**Jimmy:** Aa dee, aa understand ye mam. Aa'm sorry.

**Isabella:** Reet. Whey then aa'm glad ye understand, cause o' course noo, bein' yer mam, and since there's been behaviour off ye, aa hev te punish ye hinny.

**Jimmy:** Aa'm sorry.

**Isabella:** But ye understand that aa hev te punish ye?

**Jimmy:** What ye gannin te dee?

**Isabella:** Let's see.

*She searches and finds the sack from Acts one and two.*

Ah, here it is.

*She passes it over to Jimmy.*

**Jimmy:** (*Making a move*) Aa'll gan oot collectin'.

**Isabella:** Eh, not so fast.

**Jimmy:** Aa understand. Aa'll collect even while the tide's up. Tide's up and aa'll be swimmin' fo' the coal fo' ye.

**Isabella:** Too reet ye'll be gannin' collectin' pet, but haad yer horses.

**Jimmy:** Or aa'll be deein' it aall neet fo' ye, aa'll not sleep the night cause aa'll be oot collectin' fo' ye mam.

**Isabella:** Oh aye ye'll be collectin' aall neet fo' sure, but aa'm absolutely not finished wi' ye yet son. Get back here.

*Jimmy walks back to Isabella.*

**Jimmy:** What's it?

**Isabella:** Ye seem a little too keen on gettin' oot o' here collectin'. Not a punishment if it's gannin te mek yer life easier pet, is it?

**Jimmy:** Mam, aa'll not enjoy it, why would aa?

**Isabella:** And it's not just yer behaviour towards me that aa'm needin' te punish ye for.

**Jimmy:** What else? There's nowt else.

**Isabella:** Liar, ye knaa fine well ye've been attackin' the blacklegs, aa had Deags and Hepburn rund here last week tellin' iz aall aboot it.

**Jimmy:** Wu've talked aboot that though.

**Isabella:** What was it? black eyes and blood ye caused them blokes attackin' thum like that.

**Jimmy:** But ye've telt iz off fo' that mam the other day.

**Isabella:** Suppose aa need te mek sure it's aall sunk in divvent aa? Aa mean yer protestin' the neet makes iz think that nowt's sunk in. Mekin' an example o' yerself like that.

**Jimmy:** Aa said aa was sorry, aa'll not be deein' it agyen mam. Aa'm sorry, aa am.

**Isabella:** Imagine ye killed one o' them blokes? Imagine Jimmy.

**Jimmy:** Aa knaa.

**Isabella:** Ye knaa what happens te a murderer rund here divvent ye? Ye knaa what would happen te yee if ye ended up murderin'?

**Jimmy:** Aa dee.



**Isabella:** Whey then, ye'll understand that whatever punishment aa give ye noo, it'll be nowt compared te what ye'd get off o' anyone else. Ye understand that?

**Jimmy:** Aa dee. So aa'll gan collectin'.

**Isabella:** Get on the table.

**Jimmy:** What?

**Isabella:** Ye hord iz.

**Jimmy:** What?

**Isabella:** Get yerself up on the table.

**Jimmy:** Why?

**Isabella:** (*Screaming with rage*) because aa'm yer mother and aa'm tellin' ye get up on that table now!

**Jimmy:** Mam, aa divvent like bein' up high.

**Isabella:** Oh aa knaa that.

**Jimmy:** Aa'll feel sick. Aa divvent want te dee it.

**Isabella:** Ye'll dee what aa'm tellin' ye. Fo' yer behaviour, fo' protestin', fo' yer violence.

**Jimmy:** Mam aa cannit be up that high.

**Isabella:** Aa'll not tell ye one more time. Aa'll not tell ye one more time.

*Jimmy, with the sack still in hand, climbs up onto the table with great difficulty.*

**Jimmy:** Mam aa'm up, see, can aa get doon noo? Gan collectin'.

**Isabella:** Aa'm leavin' ye up there, Jimmy, til aa feel ye've larnt yer lesson.

**Jimmy:** (*Through his tears*) Aa hev. Aa hev. Aa'll not dee nen o' it agyen.

**Isabella:** Ye'll stay up aall neet if ye hev tee.

**Jimmy:** Aa cannit stand bein' this high mam.

**Isabella:** Shame that.

**Jimmy:** Please?

**Isabella:** Oh this is nowt, nowt compared te the way ye'd be treat had ye killed one o' them blokes, nowt compared te the punishment ye daddy would o' given ye if he were here. Ye cannit argue that. This is nowt.

**Jimmy:** Please?

**Isabella:** One last lesson ye need te be larnin' while yer up there Jimmy.

*Jimmy is silent, trying to imagine himself out of this situation.*

'Til aa'm blue in the face aa tell ye where te look and where not te look while yer oot collectin' off the slake.

*Jimmy is silent but he knows what she is getting at.*

Aa tell ye time and time agyen til aa'm blue in the face where te look and where not te look while yer oot on that slake.

*Jimmy is silent.*

Jimmy dee aa not tell ye?

**Jimmy:** Mam, howay and speak wi' the reverend.

**Isabella:** Aa divvent need te speak wi' the reverend. Aa'm standin' here speakin' wi' yee. Why'd ye dee it? Look at yer daddy?

*Jimmy is silent.*

Aa can see ye oot the windi. Aalways tell ye and there aa am oot the windi watchin' the slake. Watchin' yee and them wanderin' eyes. Ye dee it. Tell iz why ye dee it? Agyenst me word. Why dee aa catch yee catchin' a glimpse? When aa've telt ye no.

**Jimmy:** Aa'm sorry.

**Isabella:** Why'd ye dee it?

**Jimmy:** Aa couldn't stop meself from lookin' up at 'um. Just looked a couple times.

**Isabella:** And aren't aa aware. Couple times tee many.

**Jimmy:** Couldn't stop meself deein' it. Knaa what ye said but made iz want te look more and. Aa did it quick, then torned away. Ran fast away. Aa'm sorry man. Didn't mean te. Not deein' it agyen. Aa'll gan get coal, not look, just collect off the slake.

**Isabella:** Ye'll stay reet there. Put the sack owa yer heed.

**Jimmy:** What?

**Isabella:** Whey how else am aa meant te knaa yer not gannin' te be lookin' oot the windi at yer daddy hangin' there?

**Jimmy:** Aa wont.

**Isabella:** Nee more arguin' off ye or ye'll stay up there forever. Put that sack owa yer heed noo.

*Jimmy, with tears in his eyes, pulls the sack over his head.*

There. So hard was it? No. 's the aany way ye'll larn pet, the aany way. Yer not te be arguing, not te be attackin', not te be lookin' at yer daddy. This'll see the end o' the behaviour. And this is nice. This punishment off yer mammy's nice compared te that in the real world pet. Ye should knaa that by noo. This is the aany way ye'll larn, aany way any of wu are gannin' te larn. Aa should've invited aall the bairns from Jarrow te hev a look at ye tee. Stand ootside and thu can look in through the windi, see Jimmy Jobling up on the table. Bet the mammys and daddys'd be glad o' that. Bet the sight o' this fo' the bairns in Jarrow would mek thum behave and the mammy's and the daddys'd be livin' life peaceful like.

**Jimmy:** *(Attempting to lift the sack, but just getting it above his eyes)* Mam aa need te get doon.

**Isabella:** Quiet!

**Jimmy:** Aa feel dizzy.

**Isabella:** Ye'll stay up there! And leave the sack.

*Jimmy replaces the sack over his face.*

There. Nee arguin'. What's a mam meant te dee? Eh? How's shu meant te punish aa bairns? Te protect thum? When yer back te work and the

strike's forgotten, Hepburn's forgotten, ye'll remember this. Bein' up that high there like that. Ye like bein' up there?

*Jimmy shakes his head.*

Not enjoyin' it? Aa'll tell ye it's not nice fo' the people doon here that hev te be lookin' up at ye. But wu'll remember the sight o' it. By God wu will. There'll be nee more arguin', there'll be nee more steppin' oot o' line after this. Cause wu'll knaa what happens, won't wu?

*Jimmy nods his head.*

And when yer back te work...

Look at yer bloody hands, they're filthy man.

*Isabella takes a rag and wets it; she wipes the palms of Jimmy's hands clean.*

Cannit be standin' there wi' hands as dorty as that. What'd people say, eh? The neighbours. Isabella doesn't knaa hoo te look after her bairns reet. Aa'll be damnned if that's what they're sayin' aboot iz. There, nice and clean. Jimmy show yer mammy yer palms.

*Keeping his arms hanging by his sides, Jimmy turns his palms to face front.*

Good lad. Keepin' flat yer palms please. Aye.

Not nice this. Fo me it's not nice te see me bairn up there. Howay let iz see yer palms nice and clean.

*Jimmy stresses his palms.*

Aye. The hands were the last piece o' yer daddy that were left alive ye knaa. Aa knaa. Aa were there, saw what thu did te 'um that day. Aa were there. In the back. Hidin' away in the crowds. Didn't want te see that happenin'. Didn't want te but... aa couldn't leave 'um. Te be there alein... he telt iz in the prison that he were pertified o' what were gannin' te happen te 'um. He cried. On the day he could barely stand.

Up the steps he went, rain pourin' doon so hard on 'um. So so hard. Aa hid away in the back. On me tippee toes te see owa aall the people's heeds. Aa could just aboot see 'um there. The men dragged 'um forward, pushin' 'um te say somethin'. Say somethin'. Aa could see 'um tryin' te speak but he couldn't, at forst. Couldn't get nee words oot. And the rain were pummellin' doon. Aa seen hees mooth startin' te open and close like, as if te mek words. He were sayin' somethin' but the rain were too loud hittin' off the wood, couldn't hear nowt. Couldn't. What? What ye sayin'? Aa cannit hear. What's he sayin'?

And aa seen 'um mouthin' me name. Isabella. Saw me name bein' said. What's he said? What's he said? Isabella?

*(Ordering)* Show iz yer palms.

*Jimmy stresses his palms.*

And them blokes hauled ye back William, and were puttin' that rope rund yer neck. Dark, wet rope. And aa were pushin' through the people tryin' te get at ye. People aa need te let iz past, let iz closer. It's me husband. Me name he's sayin', what's he sayin' tee iz? What?

Rope on the neck there. Tight on the neck. Aa'm gettin' choked like it's  
rund mine.

*(Ordering)* Yer palms.

*Jimmy stresses his palms.*

Ye couldn't hear iz shootin' when the grund opened up beneath ye. Ye  
went hurtlin' doon and then snap.

Strugglin' fo' a bit, ye were, and then ye died down, and then ye gave up  
on it. Aa seen ye there when ye stopped. Aa seen the last of the life leavin'  
ye through yer hands. Drippin' off the fingertips, inte the mud. And ye  
were still then. That's when ye were still.

*She is now talking to Jimmy completely as if she is addressing the corpse of William.*

Me name. Ye said me name. Isabella. What were ye sayin' te iz? Were it  
aboot the letter that ye'd sent oot? Aa've been waitin' on it neet and day.  
Aa hev. Should aa wait much longer? And what were in it? Were it fo' me?  
Aa'm hopin' it were meant fo' me but aa would've had it by noo. Were  
there somebody else that ye had besides me...?

*Knocking on the door.*

...Listen, aa want te knaa if ye knaa aboot what me and Ralph did. If, in  
death, ye... ye knaa what wu did together. Aa didn't... didn't mean te dee it.  
Aa cannit say that enough... cannit. The guilt's eatin' away at iz from the  
insides, me stomach chorns.

*Knocking on the door.*

Aa would've never left ye fo' him. Wouldn't. Aa loved ye too much and aa'd never want te leave ye. Aa'm so sorry fo' what aa've done.

*Knocking on the door continues.*

And are ye mad wi' what's happened wi' Ralph noo? Aa divvent like te think aboot it. Aa didn't knaa what te dee then. Aa were thinkin' of yee aany in that moment when aa saw his face agyen, and how he betrayed yee. Someone like that shouldn't be allowed te waalk arund the world free. He shouldn't be havin' thoughts of freedom and escapin'. Should be payin' fo' what he's done. That were what aa were thinkin', he should be payin' fo' aall that he's done.

But are ye mad noo aboot what's happened wi' Ralph on Jarrow Slake?

*Deags enters, as soon as he does so he runs to the table and pulls Jimmy straight down. The sack is taken off Jimmy's head.*

William? William!

**Deags:** Isabella? Jimmy? What's gannin' on man?

**Isabella:** Deags!

*As soon as Jimmy's feet make contact with the floor he runs out and away from the cottage.*

Jimmy divvent man.

**Deags:** What the hell's happenin' here like?

**Isabella:** Yee mind yer aairn business.

**Deags:** What kind o'...



**Isabella:** Leave it.

**Deags:** This isn't good fo' the bairn. Ye cannit be mekkin' 'um dee things like that man.

**Isabella:** Needed punishin'. My bairn. Aa'll punish 'um hoo aa like tee.

**Deags:** Not like this.

**Isabella:** Aye like that.

**Deags:** Yer not well. Yee and the bairns divvent need this.

**Isabella:** Not well? Who? Who asked yee? Aa'm fine.

**Deags:** This needs te stop. Stop it.

**Isabella:** Aa'm fine. Stop yerself.

**Deags:** Not te the bairn. Divvent bring what's gannin' on ootside inte the hoose. It's not the way te punish 'um.

**Isabella:** Seems like.

**Deags:** Ye cannit see what yer actin' like.

**Isabella:** Actin' like?

**Deags:** Yee. Aall this madness these past few days: causin' scenes at the sortin' office, blowin' up at the reverend, and noo this.

**Isabella:** Haad on, madness?

**Deags:** Aye.

**Isabella:** What de yee reckon's brought aall o' the madness on then? Yee o' aall knaain'.

**Deags:** What thu've done wi' Willie. And noo, what wu've done...

**Isabella:** Wu've done?

**Deags:** What wu've done wi' Ralph...

**Isabella:** And why should aa hev any cause te be mad aboot what's happened wi' Ralph? Gan on, yee tell iz?

**Deags:** Look Isabella, William wasn't just yer husband. Yer forgettin' that. Me marra since wu were bairns, aa grew up wi' the lad. Aa'm hurtin', wu aall are. What's happened wi' Ralph... whey at the time aa thought wu were reet te want te kill 'um. But noo, aa can aany think o' the blood, and aa think o' the blood on wor hands... is it justice te hev Ralph's blood on wor hands? Is it justice fo' Jobling? Who's te say? Aa thought aa wanted Ralph deed but...

**Isabella:** But?

**Deags:** But Christ, Hepburn's reet. Wu gan on killin' and fightin' the way wu are then there'll never be any hope in hell of a union lastin'. Divvent ye see? Willie would've wanted a union.

**Isabella:** Deags, will ye gan? Please gan. Aa divvent knaa why yer here tellin' iz aall this.

**Deags:** Aa were in a fit o' rage when aa seen Ralph standin' here in this hoose.

**Isabella:** Aa was.

*Deags breaks down.*

**Deags:** Fo' wu te decide it's someone's death... Meks wu nee better than the class wu're fightin'. We're not God. Wu've got nee right te be tekkin' people's lives off thum.

**Isabella:** *(Showing affection)* Divvent. Deags divvent. Christ, why didn't wu just hand 'um owa?

**Deags:** Would o' still been us decidin' hees death.

**Isabella:** Aye, but look at what this has done te wu. Look what it's deein' te yee.

**Deags:** Ye divvent understand.

**Isabella:** Aa dee. Deags, aa'm sorry aa asked ye te dee that te Ralph. Aa should've never. Aa'm sorry. Look at iz Deags, aa'm sorry.

**Deags:** Ye divvent need te be feelin' guilty owa Ralph.

**Isabella:** Deags, aa'm the one te blame. But wu'll put it oot wor minds, eh? Wu'll hev tee, get rid o' it oot wor minds.

**Deags:** Aa'm the one should be feelin' the guilt, not yee. Ye hevn't got a clue.  
Isabella, aa'm sorry. Aa'm so so sorry.

**Isabella:** Divvent yee start apologisin'.

**Deags:** *(Hoarsely calling)* Hepburn.

*Deags looks at Isabella as Ralph walks through the door, followed by Hepburn. Isabella turns and upon seeing Ralph, she immediately runs into the corner.*

**Ralph:** Isabella.

**Isabella:** No, no, no, no. What's happenin'?

**Deags:** Isabella, ye were never meant te find oot.

**Isabella:** Why? What's ha... How can he be...?

**Deags:** Aa'll explain.

**Isabella:** Deags, what?

**Deags:** Wu had te bring 'um back here. Aa've seen the way ye've been actin' since ye thought aa'd killed 'um. It's been destroyin' ye.

**Ralph:** Aa thought that was the last aa'd ever see o' ye.

**Isabella:** He's not here, but. Ye took 'um away te kill 'um. Aa hord 'um screamin'. Aa did, aa swear aa did.

**Deags:** Hepburn saw what aa were aboot te dee...

**Hepburn:** And thank the Lord someone wi' a sane heed on thum were there te stop it from happenin'.

**Isabella:** Aa cannit... aa divvent...

**Deags:** Isabella, Hepburn saved iz from murderin'. And aa'm glad he did, aa couldn't've lived wi' meself. At the time aa were raging, aa were so angry te see 'um here agyen. But howay, aa'm not made te murder neeone.

**Ralph:** Thu hid iz away agyen.

**Deags:** Wu had te hide ‘um away, other men would’ve slaughtered ‘um.

**Hepburn:** Wu would’ve gotten rid of ‘um there and then. Aa wish wu could’ve just slung ‘um onto a ship te London like but the shipments o’ coal te the south hevn’t been as frequent durin’ the strike. Wu had te wait.

**Deags:** Wu thought it’d be easier fo’ yee te believe that he’d been killed. Aa didn’t want te bring ‘um back inte yer life agyen. But even yee hev te admit, ye’ve not been reet since then. Yee knaa it’s not reet te hev ‘um killed.

**Isabella:** What’s happenin’? Aa divvent... what’s happenin’?

**Ralph:** *(To Deags and Hepburn)* Can ye leave wu?

**Deags:** Aa divvent think see.

**Ralph:** Please?

**Hepburn:** Wu need te mek this quick before...

**Ralph:** Aye, aa will be, aa’ll be quick like. But please.

**Deags:** *(Reluctantly gesturing to Hepburn)* Howay. *(To Ralph)* Watch what yer sayin’.

*Hepburn and Deags wait outside the cottage, and close the door behind them.*

*Silence.*

**Ralph:** Seein’ ye standin’ there... aa still love ye. After aall that’s happened.

**Isabella:** Ye should be deed.

**Ralph:** Aa knaa.

**Isabella:** Ye should o' been killed.

**Ralph:** Ye divvent want that. Aa knaa, Deags' been tellin' iz o' the state ye've been in since last week.

**Isabella:** And Hepburn were the one te save ye?

**Ralph:** If he hadn't come back te the slake at that moment yee and Deags would've been murderers. Like me. It's the feelin' yer lucky not te be livin' wi'. Aa should knaa.

**Isabella:** Any decent human being would gan and hand themselves in. So why divvent ye?

**Ralph:** Aa'm terrified. Aa'll never deny it. Why divvent yee gan and hand iz in?

*Isabella says nothing.*

Aa shouldn't've aksed that. Aa knaa fine why ye cannit bring yersel te gan te the pollis aboot this. Divvent hev te say it but aa knaa that inside o' ye there's somethin' that still loves iz. And if aa die, whey, ye knaa now that if aa die it won't bring William back.

**Isabella:** What're ye deein' back here?

**Ralph:** Aa'm sayin' goodbye te ye.

**Isabella:** Get oot.

**Ralph:** Wanted te say goodbye. Knew ye'd say that. Aa'm deein' what aa said: climbin' on a ship te London. From there it's America.

**Isabella:** Aye whey gan on then. Gan, leave iz alein. Fo' Christ sake stop torturin' iz.

*Hepburn and Deags re-enter.*

**Hepburn:** Howay, wu've got te act fast, finish up you's two.

**Isabella:** We're finished. Gan, we're finished here.

**Ralph:** We're finished?

**Isabella:** Deags tek 'um te the docks, get 'um on that ship. Aa never want te see 'um agyen.

**Deags:** Aa will.

**Isabella:** Aa divvent care nee more.

**Deags:** Ye'll never hev te worry about 'um comin' back. Wu'll tek 'um.

**Hepburn:** *(To Deags)* But before wu gan...

**Deags:** Before wu gan Isabella, there's somethin' else.

**Isabella:** Oh, what? What else?

**Deags:** *(Stepping forward)* Isabella, ye've noticed the guard's gone?

**Isabella:** Eh?

**Deags:** Thu took the guard off the slake who was watchin' owa William's body. He clocked off this afternoon, neeone came te replace 'um.

**Isabella:** What? *(Checking out of her window)* The guard's off.

**Deags:** Aye, he's away.

**Isabella:** Away... but why does that mean owt?

**Deags:** Whey, wu hev te be quick aboot this but, wu're gannin' te tek the body doon the neet.

**Isabella:** What? No!

**Hepburn:** Wu hev tee.

**Deags:** Wu'll row oot while the tide's high and wu can reach the body.

**Hepburn:** Wu hev te dee it the neet before some other bugger notices the guard's off and does it before wu.

**Isabella:** Whey aa... whey... but ye cannit.

**Deags:** Look, wu're William's marras. If someone's tekkin' the body doon, and someone will, it should be us that's deein' it.

**Isabella:** But what aboot... but what'll ye dee wi' 'um? Ye cannit. Thu'll get ye fo' snatchin' the body.

**Deags:** Neeone's watchin' it nee more. Especially this time o' neet. Jarrow'll wake up in the mornin', look oot thu windis and Jobling'll be gone.

**Isabella:** No! Aa divvent want that. Leave 'um. De ye hear iz? Leave 'um be.

**Deags:** Wu cannit leave 'um man. Howay, aa knaa, but it's time te let 'um gan. Wu cannit keep 'um up there forever.

**Isabella:** Cannit wu?

**Deags:** No, wu cannit.



**Isabella:** But aa divvent understand, what'll wu dee wi' 'um?

**Deags:** Give 'um a burial.

**Isabella:** At St. Pauls?

**Deags:** Divvent. Reverend wouldn't let wu dee that if he fund oot.

**Isabella:** He would. He would am tellin' ye. The reverend would let wu dee it if wu just ask 'um.

**Deags:** Try not te get hysterical.

**Hepburn:** Wu cannit bury 'um at St. Pauls.

**Isabella:** But what else? Where?

**Deags:** Inte the river. Let 'um gan the way o' the tide.

**Isabella:** No! Where'll aa visit 'um? Where'll aa tek me babby te see it's daddy when it's born? Bring 'um here te me.

**Deags:** Divvent man. Wu cannit.

**Isabella:** Why not?

**Deags:** Ye knaa fine well why.

**Isabella:** Well bury 'um in the grund.

**Hepburn:** He'll be dug back up before ye knaa it.

**Isabella:** He'll not be.

**Hepburn:** What if someone finds the body?

**Isabella:** Somewhere neeone walks.

**Hepburn:** Wu cannit risk someone findin' 'um.

**Isabella:** Somewhere neeone'd think te look. Please. Aa need te have a place where aa can gan and be wi' 'um. Somewhere te tek the bairns tee. Please, Deags, please.

**Deags:** Where though?

**Isabella:** Aa knaa of somewhere. The trees up the river. There's places off the road where neeone ever waalks, he'll be safe hidden away there. Christ if ye's can hide Ralph away, a livin', movin' man then wu can surely hide William tee. Please, wu hev tee, am beggin' ye's. Aa need te be able te visit 'um. Aa dee. Please, at least give iz that.

**Deags:** *(With difficulty)* Aye. Alreet.

**Hepburn:** What if we're caught?

**Deags:** Wu'll be careful aboot it. Wu'll not get caught. Shu's reet, shu needs somewhere te visit 'um.

**Hepburn:** Wu hev te be quick aboot this.

**Deags:** *(To Isabella)* Look, wu're rowin' oot te smuggle Ralph onto the ship noo. Wu're rowin' oot te tek the body doon and wu'll tek it straight te a spot in the woods where ye said. There's space in the boat fo' yee, if yer comin'?

**Isabella:** Comin' wi' ye? Aa'm... whey... aa'm not.

**Deags:** Not?

**Isabella:** Ye hord iz.

**Deags:** Thought ye'd be comin'?

**Isabella:** Whey aa'm not. Aa'll be watchin' oot the windi. Moon's big the neet, aa'll see ye's tek 'um doon.

**Hepburn:** Howay man wu need te get crackin'.

**Deags:** If that's what ye want.

**Isabella:** Aye. Aa suppose it's what aa want.

**Deags:** Wu'll say goodbye te 'um off yee and the bairns. Aa'll tek ye te the spot where hees buried in the mornin'.

**Isabella:** No, before that ye'll bring me husband hyem.

**Deags:** Isabella wu cannit man.

**Hepburn:** Howay man, we're gannin'.

**Isabella:** Ye'll bloody well dee it. Bring 'um here te iz. Aa'll say me aairn goodbyes te 'um. Aa'll tek that sack off from owa hees face and touch hees cheek. Haad hees hand and let 'um feel hees babby kickin'. And then ye's can tek 'um. Dee what ye said and bury 'um, tek iz te see the grave in the mornin'. And that's where aa'll tek me bairn when it's born.

**Deags:** Wu're te bring 'um here?

**Isabella:** Aye. Then aa'll let 'um gan. Promise ye aa will.

**Hepburn:** Wu cannit dee this.

**Deags:** If it's fo' the best, if it'll help yee, then it's what wu'll dee.

**Hepburn:** Fo' Christ sake though can wu hurry up aboot it?

**Isabella:** Aye. Gan.

**Hepburn:** Wu'll be back quick as wu can.

*Hepburn, Ralph and Deags make to leave but they stop as Ralph turns back to Isabella.*

**Ralph:** Isabella, come wi' iz.

**Isabella:** Divvent ye see Ralph? Aa've got a husband here in Jarow.

**Ralph:** Wu could be happy away from here. What aboot livin'? Divvent stay here.

*Isabella intimately takes Ralph's face in her hands.*

**Isabella:** Be careful, Ralph.

**Ralph:** Goodbye.

*They part.*

**Isabella:** Goodbye. Goodbye.

**Deags:** *(To Ralph)* Howay. *(To Isabella)* Wu'll be quick.

*Ralph, Deags and Hepburn leave.*

**Isabella:** Be quick. Goodbye. Goodbye. Goodbye.

*Isabella is alone. She is silent. She walks over to the table and sits for a while, shaking, silently going over everything that has just happened in her mind. She looks down at her stomach and puts her hand on her bump. She takes her time.*

There's still more ruckus still te come. Ye daddy'll feel ye kickin' on the belly. And ye hev te promise ye'll kick hard fo' 'um. So's he'll feel. Ye divvent gan quiet.

*Isabella gets up and takes down the clothes from the washing line. She lays them out on the table in front of her.*

And hees claes. He'll hev te be wearin' clean claes when he's buried. Wu'll mek dee even wi'oot a burial by the reverend. *(About the shirt)* There's still some dort left on that. Never mind, wu'll still just hev te mek dee. Dee it properly like. Change hees claes, lay 'um doon here and wu'll say goodbyes.

*Isabella moves over to the window.*

Christ, that moon'll crash inte Jarow. There's the boat rowin' oot.

And Jimmy. Where's Jimmy got tee? He'll hev te see hees da. Not a worry. Wu can wait fo' 'um te get back.

And Peter...

*She turns to face Peter who lies dead in the bed.*

Peter. Peter. Wake up. Howay Peter, it's mammy.

*She walks over to the bed and sits beside Peter.*

Ye'll need te wake up and get dressed te see daddy comin' hyem.

*She closes her eyes tight. She knows that Peter is dead.*

Peter. Me bairn.

*She hugs Peter's corpse.*

Me bairn.

*Silence.*

*Anna Brown appears, cautiously stepping through the door of the cottage.*

**Anna:** Isabella? Isabella, what's gannin' on?

**Isabella:** *(Getting up)* Anna?

**Anna:** What's happened?

**Isabella:** William. Thu've... thu're gettin' William. Te bring 'um...

**Anna:** What? Howay, pet yer shakin'. What happened? Aa were up at the chorch wi' the reverend when Jimmy came burstin' in. He were in floods, could hardly speak.

**Isabella:** Where's Jimmy? Where is he?

**Anna:** It's alreet, he's up at the chorch. The reverend's tryin' te caalm 'um doon like.

**Isabella:** Is he? Is he alreet?

**Anna:** Aye, ye look as if ye need some caalmin' doon yerself, eh? Where's Deags anyway?

**Isabella:** Was here.

**Anna:** Jimmy said Deags had torned up. What Jimmy was tryin' te tell iz about what happened... he wasn't makin' any sense, bless 'um. Aa couldn't mek neither heed nor tail oot of it.

**Isabella:** William's comin' hyem.

**Anna:** What?

**Isabella:** And thu've tekken Ralph.

**Anna:** Ralph? Ralph Armstrong? Pet, yer not mekkin' much sense yerself. Howay, start from the beginnin'. Caalm doon. Everythin's fine, it's fine. Jesus Christ, when aa saw Jimmy in the state he were in aa thought somethin' aaful must've happened. Aa ran aall the way here aa did, aall the way in the rain. But noo that aa'm here aa can see that ye'll be alreet. Everythin's fine. Yer just a bit shook up. Yee *and* Jimmy. But other than that yer fine. Thank the Lord. Noo, caalm, and slowly tell iz what's gannin' on?

**Isabella:** Deags came by. He did.

**Anna:** Uh-huh.

**Isabella:** And the guard what was watchin' owa William... he's gone. Aa never noticed he were gone until Deags just said there, and he is, he's away. Thu took the guard away.

**Anna:** Thu hev? 's that what's rattled ye, has it?

**Isabella:** Where's Jimmy at? He needs te see hees da.

**Anna:** It's alreet. What de ye mean he needs te see hees da?

**Isabella:** Fo' Christ sake where's Jimmy? Get jimmy, he needs te be here.

**Anna:** Sshh. Aa've telt ye, Jimmy's up at the chorch wi' the reverend. He was hysterical so the reverend's tryin' te caalm 'um doon and then he's gannin' te pop doon here te see yee. Reverend'll be here soon enough.

**Isabella:** No. Aa divvent want te see the reverend.

**Anna:** Isabella, yer gannin' te want te see the reverend.

**Isabella:** Just gan and get Jim... What? Why?

**Anna:** Look, yer just gannin' te want te see 'um, that's aall. He'll be better explainin' than me.

**Isabella:** What're ye taalkin' aboot? What de ye knaa?

**Anna:** It's that letter ye've been askin' after.

**Isabella:** Somethin's torned up?

**Anna:** Aye, it has pet.

**Isabella:** Where? Wi' the reverend? What is it?

**Anna:** The reverend has a letter fo' ye.

**Isabella:** Off William?

*Anna nods.*

It is? It's the letter off William? What's it? Aa need te see it.

**Anna:** The reverend's bringin' it doon fo' ye in a bit.



**Isabella:** Ye read it?

**Anna:** Aa hevn't pet. It's unopened.

**Isabella:** Hoo does he knaa it's off William?

**Anna:** Reverend got a letter as well. There were two. One fo' him and one fo' yee.

**Isabella:** What does his say?

**Anna:** It's some bits from the bible. William said that thu were read te 'um by a cellmate in the prison. Said that thu brought 'um comfort before he died and that he wanted the reverend te read thum oot te yee and the bairns. And then there's a separate letter fo' yee, William asks the reverend te pass it on te ye. Wu've not opened it. It's fo' yee.

**Isabella:** Wu need te gan te the chorch and get it. Aa need te see the reverend noo.

**Anna:** Wu can gan then, howay pet aa'll tek ye up.

**Isabella:** But aa cannit, not reet noo.

**Anna:** What's wraang wi' reet noo?

**Isabella:** Deags' comin' back.

**Anna:** Why ye worryin' about Deags for? Howay wu'll gan up te the chorch. It's the letter ye've been waitin' weeks on, Deags can wait fo' ye here til ye get back if it's owa owt important.

**Isabella:** No, aa cannit gan noo. Aa hev te stay here.

**Anna:** But why?

**Isabella:** Anna, aa need ye te gan up te the chorch agyen fo' iz.

**Anna:** Yer not comin yerself?

**Isabella:** Look, just get the reverend, get Jimmy and bring thum both back doon here as quick as ye can. Tell 'um te bring the letter wi' 'um.

**Anna:** This doesn't mek any sense.

**Isabella:** Aa knaa, aa knaa it doesn't. There's too much te explain, ye need te hurry. It's aall happenin' noo. It'll aall mek sense when ye get back, aa swear it will.

**Anna:** But aa don't unde...

**Isabella:** Please just do it fo' iz will ye?

**Anna:** *(Sighing)* Aye, aa will.

**Isabella:** Be quick.

**Anna:** Aa will, aa will.

*Anna goes to leave.*

**Isabella:** Wait.

**Anna:** What?

**Isabella:** Who delivered the letter?

**Anna:** What, to the reverend?

**Isabella:** Aye, must've been someone.

*Anna shakes her head.*

**Anna:** Reverend said he'd seen light glowin' in the Norman Tower. When he went te gan and see who were in there aall he fund were the two letters on the floor and a candle lit. He looked arund the place but there were neeone there. He went lookin' arund the chorch grunds but there were nee sign o' anyone. It's strange. Who de ye reckon it were?

*Isabella shakes her head.*

Reet, well, divvent worry, aa'll be back in a flash.

*Anna leaves.*

*Isabella stands in the cottage alone.*

**Isabella:** Me letter's come at last. Did he knaa what aa'd done wi' Ralph?

*She touches her stomach gently.*

Babby, aa'll find oot what's the last thing yer daddy had te say te iz. Ye hev te promise te kick hard fo' 'um mind. He'd want te feel it.

*She stands by the table.*

Wu'll set 'um doon here fo' a while when he gets here, aye. Lie 'um doon. Tek that sack off from owa hees face. That's what wu'll dee. The reverend can read oot the bits Willie chose from the bible. Wu'll dee it properly.

Peter, howay and wake up. It's yer mammy tellin' ye te wake up. Ye divvent want te miss it. Ye divvent want te miss it.

*Silence as Isabella waits expectantly. She smiles.*

*The door of the cottage bursts open as Deags, soaked through, clambers in.*

**Deags:**       Isabella.

*She turns to him.*

Wu've got 'um doon. He's ootside.

**Isabella:**     He's here? ...Bring 'um in.

*Deags disappears outside again.*

*Blackout.*

*---END---*

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