Year 12 Theatre Studies – Summer Holiday Work (for Year 11 Students Progressing to Sixth Form)

Welcome to A-Level Theatre Studies.

In preparation for starting the course in September, you are required to complete the following important tasks over the Summer break. This work will ensure you have a strong foundation as we begin to explore theatre texts, practitioners and production elements.

1. **Set Text Reading and Research**

You must **read in full both of the following set texts**:

- **Woyzeck** by Georg Büchner
- **Equus** by Peter Shaffer

For each play, complete some **background research** covering:

- A brief biography of the playwright: their life, other significant works, and their influence on theatre.
- The **historical, social, and political context** in which each play was written.
- Major themes and issues explored in each play.
- The play's original production (if known) and significant modern interpretations.
-

Note: You will sit a short test on these texts and their contexts in the first week back to check your knowledge and understanding.

2. **Live Theatre Experience and Review Presentation**

Over the summer, you must attend a minimum of **two live theatre performances**. These can include professional, amateur, or fringe theatre but must not be filmed or screened productions – they must be experienced live.

Following your visits, you will need to create a **10-minute presentation** to deliver to the class in the first few weeks of term. This presentation should include the following:

- **Details of the production**: Title of the play, playwright, theatre venue, date of the performance, and the company performing.
- **Summary of the performance**: A brief overview of the plot and your personal response to the production.
- **Analysis of performance and production elements**, including:

    - **Set design** – layout, materials, mood, and how it supported the action.
    - **Lighting design** – use of colour, intensity, shadow, atmosphere creation.
    - **Costume design** – characterisation, period accuracy, symbolism.
    - **Sound design** – music, effects, amplification, use of silence.
    - **Acting and direction** – actor choices, blocking, use of space, movement.

- Your evaluation of the **overall effectiveness** of these elements in communicating meaning to the audience.

Your presentation **must include visual materials** such as photographs, programme scans, or sketches (where possible). The more detailed and thoughtful your analysis, the more valuable your presentation will be to your classmates.

Final Checklist:

✓ Read and research both set texts in full
✓ Prepare for a test on both plays, the playwrights and their context
✓ See at least two live theatre productions
✓ Create a 10-minute presentation with visuals reviewing your theatre experiences

If you have any questions about this Summer work or wish to discuss possible theatre visits, please email your Theatre Studies teacher in advance.

Enjoy your summer and your theatrical adventures!

edexcel
advancing learning, changing lives

Set text

Woyzeck by Georg Buchner

GCE Drama and Theatre Studies

Edexcel Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre Studies (9DR01)

Unit 4 (6DR04)

A PEARSON COMPANY

Woyzeck

by

Georg Buchner

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

ANDRES	*Soldier.*
WOYZECK	*Soldier, with additional duties as batman.*
MARIE	*Woyzeck's common-law wife.*
MARGARET	*Marie's neighbour.*
DRUM-MAJOR	*Specially privileged senior N.C.0, used as a mascot and for recruitment purposes. Chosen for physique, splendidly uniformed; excused normal duties.*
SHOWMAN*	*from the travelling fair.*
SERGEANT*	*associate of the Drum-Major.*
THE CAPTAIN,	*for whom Woyzeck acts as batman.*
THE DOCTOR,	*Regimental officer.*
1st JOURNEYMAN*	*artisans beyond apprenticeship who must*
2nd JOURNEYMAN*	*serve a period in another area before they become mastercraftsmen. A black uniform with headgear was worn.*
GRANDMOTHER	*very old. Blind.*
JEW*	

*These parts *may* be doubled.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE ONE

The woods. **ANDRES** *is splitting sticks and whistling the tune of his song.* **WOYZECK** *comes on to him.*

WOYZECK:

The place is cursed, you know, Andres. You see that light strip on the grass there, where the toadstools're so thick? A head rolls down it every evening. There was a man picked it up once, he thought it was a hedgehog: three days and nights after, he was lying in his coffin.

(Whispers.) It was the Freemasons, Andres, I'm sure of it, the Freemasons.
- Quiet!

ANDRES: *(sings).*

A pair of hares were sitting there
Nibbling the green, green grass . . .

WOYZECK:

Quiet.
Can you hear it, Andres? Can you hear it?
Something moving.

ANDRES:

Nibbling the green, green grass
Until the ground was bare.

WOYZECK:

Moving behind me, beneath me –

He stamps on the ground.

Listen; it's hollow. It's all hollow under there.
- The Freemasons.

ANDRES:

It's scary.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

WOYZECK:

So strange: still. 'Makes you hold your breath.
- Andres!

ANDRES:

What?

WOYZECK:

Say something!

He stares out across the landscape.

Andres! How bright! It's all glowing above the town, glowing . . .
A fire raging in the sky and clamour there below like trumpets.
It's coming this way!

Drags **ANDRES** *into the bushes.*

Quick! Don't look behind you!

ANDRES:

. . . Woyzeck? Can you still hear it?

WOYZECK:

Silence, nothing but silence; as if the world w's dead.

ANDRES:

The drums're going, listen. We've got to get back.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWO

MARIE *and* **MARGARET** *at* **MARIE's** *window as the retreat is being drummed.* **MARIE** *holds her child.*

MARIE:

Hup, baby! Ta ra ra! - Hear it? - Here they come!

Precise and perfect, the **DRUM-MAJOR** *marches the length of the street.*

MARGARET:

What a man, straight as a tree!

MARIE:

And brave as a lion, I'll bet.

The **DRUM-MAJOR** *gives an eyes right salute.*
MARIE *acknowledges.*

MARGARET:

Hey, that was a friendly eye you gave him neighbour! You don't treat every man to that.

MARIE (*sings*):

Soldiers, they are handsome lads . .

MARGARET:

Look at your eyes; still shining.

MARIE:

So what? Take yours to the Jewman and let him polish them; you might be able to sell them for buttons if he c'n brighten them up.

MARGARET:

Who're you to talk to me like that? Miss Motherhood! I'm an honest woman, I am, but you could see your way through seven pair of leather britches, you.

(*She goes out*).

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

MARIE:

Bitch.
Well, baby, let them have it their way. After all, you're only the child of a whore, unlucky thing; 'nd your wicked face just fills your mother's heart with joy.

(*She sings*) What shall you do, my pretty maid?
You've got a baby without a dad.
Never you mind about me -
All night long I'll sit and sing,
'Rockabye, rockabye, tiny thing,'
Though nobody cares for me.

Unsaddle your six white horses, do
And give them fodder fresh and new -
Oats they won't eat for you,
Water won't drink for you,
Nothing will do but wine, hop, hop,
Nothing but pure, cold wine.

(**WOYZECK** *comes to the window, knocks*).

- Who's there?
'That you, Franz? Come inside.

WOYZECK:

Can't. 'Got to go to muster.

MARIE:

Have you been cutting wood f'r the Captain?

WOYZECK:

Yes.

MARIE:

What's the matter, Franz? You look so wild.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

WOYZECK:

There was something there again, Marie, a lot of things.
- Isn't it written, 'And behold, there came forth a smoke from the land like the smoke of an oven'?

MARIE:

Oh, man!

WOYZECK.:

It followed me all the way to town. - What does it mean?

MARIE:

Franz!

WOYZECK:

Got to go. - See you at the fair this ev'ning; I've put something by.

(*He leaves.*)

MARIE:

That man! So haunted by everything. - He didn't even stop to look at his child.
Thinking's wound his mind up like a watchspring, it'll break one'v these days.
Why're you so quiet, baby? Are you frightened?
It's so dark you could be going blind. - No light.
The streetlamp usually shines in all the time. These shadows, gathering like deadmen . .
It's horrible!

She hurries out with the child.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE THREE

The fairground (at the edge of the woods). A voice sings over its emptiness.

On earth is no abiding stay,
All things living pass away -
No-one, no-one says me nay.

MARIE *and* **WOYZECK** *come on.*

WOYZECK:

An old man singing for a boy to dance to. Joy and tribulation.

MARIE:

People. When fools're wise it makes fools of the rest of us.
Crazy old world, beautiful world!

A **SHOWMAN** *comes out of his tent.*

SHOWMAN:

- Roll up, ladies and gentlemen! Come and see a monkey walking upright like a man! He wears a coat and trousers and carries a sword. Art improving on nature: our monkey's a soldier. - Not that that's much. Lowest form of animal life in fact. No? Come and see the astronomical horse then. Admired by all the crowned heads 'v Europe. Tell you anything you like - how old you are, how many children you've got, what y'r illnesses are. Hurry now, the show's just opening! Hurry now, roll up - it's the commencemong of the commencemong!

WOYZECK:

Want to go in?

MARIE:

I don't mind. - Yes, let's, there must be all kinds of things.

They go into the tent as the **SERGEANT** *and* **DRUM-MAJOR** *enter the fairground.*

SERGEANT:

Hold it. Look at that. - What a woman!

DRUM-MAJOR:

Jesus, you could foal a cavalry regiment out of her. And breed drum-majors.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SERGEANT:

Look 't the way she holds herself. That's what I call a body. All that meat to squeeze 'nd yet it moves as easy as a fish. Strange eyes -

DRUM-MAJOR:

'Make you think you're looking down a well, or a chimney. - Quick, it's starting! Get in.

They go inside and the **SHOWMAN** *takes their money.*

MARIE:

- So bright!

WOYZECK:

In the dark - black cats with fires in their eyes.
'Strange night.

SHOWMAN:

Observe: the unique phenomenon of the astronomical horse. -- Show your paces now, show them y'r horse sense. Put humanity to shame. Gentlemen, this animal you see before you with a tail and four hooves is a member of all the learned societies and, what's more, a professor at our university; where he teaches the students riding and kicking. That's a straightforward matter of understanding, though. -- Now think inside-out. Show them what you can do when you use inside-out reasoning. Is there an ass in this learned company?

The **HORSE** *shakes its head responsively.*

- See the effect of inside-out thinking? Done with equine-imity. Remarkable. This is no mute beast, I tell you; this is a person, a human being, an animalised human being - but still an animal.

The **HORSE** *defecates.*

That's it, put humanity to shame. - This animal's still in a state of nature, you see, of plain, unvarnished nature! You ought to take a lesson from him. Ask your doctor, it's positively harmful to be any other way! The message is: Man, be natural. You were fashioned out of dust, out of sand, out of mud - would you be anything more than dust, sand, mud? Look here, how about this for the power of reason? The astronomical horse c'n calculate, but he can't count on his fingers. Why's that?

Because he can't express himself, can't explain - in fact, he's a human being translated! - Tell the gentlemen what time it is. Has any of you ladies or gentlemen a watch? - A watch?

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SERGEANT:

A watch?

(Produces one from his pocket magisterially)

There you are, sir.

MARIE:

I must see this!

DRUM-MAJOR

That's all woman.

(*The* HORSE stamps *its foot to tell the time*)

SHOWMAN:

Eight o'clock! I ask you, is that not truly remarkable?!
- Ladies and gentlemen, this astonishing feat concludes the performance. Thanking you.

The **DRUM-MAJOR** *and* **SERGEANT** *watch* **MARIE** *out as she passes them, followed by* **WOYZECK**. *The* **SHOWMAN** *attends to his effects*.

SERGEANT:

Give the man a hand, soldier.

WOYZECK *helps the* **SHOWMAN**. *The* **DRUM-MAJOR** *follows* **MARIE,** *who walks off by the woods. Eventually, the* **SERGEANT** *lets* **WOYZECK** *go.*

WOYZECK:

Marie?
Marie?

He runs out of the fairground. The **SERGEANT** *and* **SHOWMAN** *exchange looks.*

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE FOUR

MARIE's *room. She is tucking the baby into its crib.*

MARIE:

The man gives him an order and he has to go, just like that.

She takes a piece of broken mirror from her blouse and examines the ear-rings she is wearing.

Look how they catch the light. I wonder what they are?
What'd he say?
- Go to sleep, baby, shut your eyes tight.

She bends over towards the crib.

Tighter. That's it. Now you keep still or else he'll come and get you.
(*Sings*) Polly, close the shutter tight,
A gipsy lad will come tonight.
He will take you by the hand
And lead you off to gipsy land.
- They must be gold!
An old crack in the back wall of a corner to live in and a bit of broken glass to see with, that's enough for the likes of us. My mouth's as red as my lady's, though, for all her full-length mirrors and rows of fine gentlemen kissing her hand. An' I'm just another poor girl.
- Sshh, baby, close your eyes. (*She oscillates the fragment.*)
Here comes the sandman, walking across the wall. Keep your eyes closed! If he looks in them you'll go blind.

WOYZECK *enters,* **MARIE** *starts and covers her ears.*

WOYZECK:

What's that?

MARIE:

Nothing.

WOYZECK:

Under your fingers; it's shining.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

MARIE:

An ear-ring. I found it.

WOYZECK:

I never found that kind of nothing. Two at once, too.

MARIE:

So? What does that make me?

WOYZECK:

You're alright, Marie.
'Kid's well away, look at him. 'Ll just move this arm so he doesn't get cramp. Shiny drops, all over his forehead. - Nothing but work under the sun; we even sweat in our sleep. The poor.
- 'Some more money, Marie. My pay and the extra from the Captain.

MARIE:

God reward you, Franz.

WOYZECK:

Got to go. 'See you tonight. (*He goes out*.)

MARIE:

Oh, I'm a bad bitch! I ought to cut my throat.
What sort of world d'you call this? It's going to hell, all of it and us with it.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE FIVE

The **CAPTAIN** *on his chair awaiting a shave,* **WOYZECK** *comes on to him.*

CAPTAIN:

Slowly, Woyzeck, take it slowly. One thing *after* another one. You make me feel giddy. - What am I supposed to do with the ten minutes you save rushing that way? What use are they to me? (**WOYZECK** starts shaving him.) Think about it, Woyzeck; you've got a good thirty years left. Thirty years. That makes three hundred and sixty months - and then there's days, hours, minutes! What're you going to do with such a monstrous amount of time? Eh?
- Space it out a bit, Woyzeck.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN.

It makes me worried about the world, the thought of eternity. It's some business, Woyzeck, some business! Eternity . . is eternity . . is eternity - you can see that. But it's also not eternity, it's a single moment, Woyzeck, yes, a single moment. It's frightening, how the world turns round in a day. What a waste of time! What does it amount to?
I can't stand to look at millwheels any more, they're so totally depressing.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN:

You always look so wrought! A good citizen doesn't look like that, Woyzeck, not a good citizen with a clear conscience.
. . Say something, Woyzeck. – How's the weather today?

WOYZECK:

Bad, sir, bad. Windy.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

CAPTAIN:

I'll say. There's a real wind out there, I can feel it. 'Makes my back prickle, as if a mouse w's running up and down it.
. . (Slyly.) I should say it was a north-southerly.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN:

Ha ha ha! North-southerly. Ha ha ha!! - God, but the man's dense, horribly dense. You're a good fellow, Woyzeck, but (*Solemnly*) you've no morals. Morals are . . well, observing morality, you understand. That's the way of it. You've got a child without the church's blessing, as our reverend padre calls it - without the church's blessing; that's his expression.

WOYZECK:

Sir, God the Father isn't going to worry if nobody said amen at the poor worm's making. The Lord said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me'.

CAPTAIN:

What do you mean? What an odd thing to say. What you said, I mean, not what he said.
- You're confusing the issue.

WOYZECK:

Being poor. .
D'you see, sir? Money, money! If you've no money - , Just you try getting one of our sort into the world in a moral way; though we're flesh and blood as well. We never get much luck, here or hereafter. If we went to heaven I expect they'd put us to work on the thunder.

CAPTAIN:

Woyzeck, you've no sense of virtue. You're not a virtuous man!
Flesh and blood?!
When I'm lying by my window, after it's been raining, and I see a pair of white stockings twinkling down the street, hop-skip . .
Dammit, Woyzeck, *I* feel desire then! I'm flesh and blood, too. But my virtue, Woyzeck, my virtue! - So what do I do? I keep saying to myself: You are a virtuous man . . (*Maudlin*) a good man, a good man.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir. I don't think virtue's so strong in me, sir. You see, people like us don't have any virtue, they only have what's natural to them. But if I was a gentlemen and I had a hat and a watch and a big coat and all the proper words, I'd be virtuous alright. Must be a great thing, sir, virtue. Only I'm just a poor man.

CAPTAIN:

Well, Woyzeck, you're a good fellow, a good fellow. But you think too much. You're wearing y'rself out, grinding away 't things in there.
- You always look so wrought!
(*Stands*.) This discussion's upset me completely. Get along now. (**WOYZECK** *removes the chair and his equipment*.)
And don't run! - Slowly. Nice and slowly down the street.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE SIX

The street. **WOYZECK** *against a wall, doing up his fly. The* **DOCTOR** *strides over and pulls him round roughly.*

DOCTOR:

What d'you call this, Woyzeck? A man of your word, are you, eh? You? You?!

WOYZECK:

What's the matter Doctor?

DOCTOR:

I saw you, Woyzeck. You were pissing in the street, pissing like a dog down the wall - and I'm giving you two groschen a day, and board! It's bad, Woyzeck, bad. The whole world's going completely to the bad; completely.

WOYZECK:

But, Doctor. When you get a call of nature -

DOCTOR:

Call of nature! Call of *nature*! - Superstition, sheer, abominable superstition! Nature!
Haven't I demonstrated conclusively that the musculus constrictor vesicae is subject to the will? Nature!
Man is free, Woyzeck. Man is the ultimate expression of the individual urge to freedom. - Can't hold your water! It's deceit, Woyzeck.

He shakes his head and paces, hands behind his back.

- Have you eaten your peas now, Woyzeck? You must eat nothing but peas, cruciferae, remember. We can start on the mutton next week. A revolution's taking place in science, I'm blowing the whole thing sky-high.
Uric acid 0.01, ammonium hydrochlorate, hyperoxide - Woyzeck, can't you have another piss? Go inside and try again!

WOYZECK:

I can't, doctor.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

DOCTOR (*upse*t):

Pissing against the wall, though! And I've a written undertaking, in your own handwriting! I saw it, saw it with these two eyes - I'd just stuck my nose out of the window and was letting the sunbeams play on it in order to observe the phenomenon of the sneeze. - Have you got me any frogs? Or spawn? Fresh water polyps? No snakes? Vestillae? Crystatelae? - Be careful of the microscope, Woyzeck, I've a germ's tooth under there. I'm going to blow the whole lot sky-high ! No spiders' eggs? Toads'?
Oh, but pissing down the wall! I *saw* you.
(*Paces again in agitation*.) No, Woyzeck, I shall not be angry. Anger is unhealthy, unscientific. I am calm; completely calm. My pulse is its usual sixty and I'm addressing you with the utmost coolness. There's no reason for me to get angry with you, you're only a man. If it'd been a question of one of the newts dying, though - ! But really, Woyzeck, you shouldn't have pissed down that wall -

WOYZECK:

D'you see, Doctor? A man might have one sort of character, one sort of make-up -- But nature's something again, you see: nature's a thing - (*Flicks his fingers to catch it*.) How c'n I say? For example -

DOCTOR:

Woyzeck, you're philosophising again.

WOYZECK:

Have you ever seen nature inside-out, Doctor? When the sun stands still at midday and it's 's if the world was going up in flames? That's when the terrible voice spoke to me.

DOCTOR:

You've an aberration, Woyzeck.

WOYZECK:

Yes. Nature, Doctor, when nature's out -

DOCTOR:

What does that mean, 'when nature's out'?

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

WOYZECK:

When nature's out, that's - when nature's *out*. When the world gets so dark you have to feel your way round it with your hands, till you think it's coming apart like a spider's web. When there's something there, yet there's nothing; and everything's dark but there's still this redness in the west like the glow of a huge furnace. When - (*Moves in starts as he tries to think it out*.)
When –

DOCTOR:

You're feeling your way with y'r feet like an insect, man!

WOYZECK:

The toadstools, Doctor, it's all in the toadstools. Have you noticed how they grow in patterns on the ground? If only someb'dy could read them.

DOCTOR.

Woyzeck, you've a beautiful aberratio mentalis partialis of the second order: fully formed, too. Beautiful. I shall give you a rise, Woyzeck! Second order: fixed idea with non-impairment of faculties. - You're carrying on as usual, shaving the Captain?

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

DOCTOR:

Eating your peas?

WOYZECK:

Just like you said, sir. The money helps my wife with the housekeeping.

DOCTOR:

Performing your duties?

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

DOCTOR:

You're an interesting case, patient Woyzeck. It's a lovely idée fixe; certain to put you in the asylum. So bear up now, you're getting another groschen.
Give me your pulse, Woyzeck. Mm, yes.

WOYZECK:

What do I do?

DOCTOR:

Keep eating the peas and cleaning your rifle! You'll be getting another groschen soon.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE SEVEN

MARIE's *room. MARIE and the* **DRUM-MAJOR.**

DRUM MAJOR:

Come on, Marie.

MARIE:

Show me again, go round the room.

(He reproduces his parade ground march.)

The chest of an ox, with fur like a lion's mane. There's not another man like you. You make me proud to be a woman.

DRUM-MAJOR:

You should see me Sundays with my plume and gauntlets. That's really something. 'He's my idea of a soldier,' the prince always says, 'A real man.'

MARIE:

Does he now?
(*Goes up to him, teasing*.) A real man ... ?

As he responds her mood changes and she moves away.

DRUM-MAJOR:

And you're a real woman. Christ, I'm going to fill your belly full of drum-majors, sire a whole damn stable of them. Come on.

Grabs her. She struggles, violently.

MARIE:

Let me go!

DRUM-MAJOR:

Wild, eh? Come on then, animal.

MARIE:

Just you dare.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

DRUM-MAJOR:

'Devil in you, isn't there? I can see it in your eyes.

MARIE (*relaxes*):

What's it matter anyway? It's all one.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE EIGHT

WOYZECK *comes in with a pair of steps, places them carefully, withdraws. The* **DOCTOR** *enters and ascends them to survey the audience, which he addresses as his assembled students.*

DOCTOR:

Gentlemen, here I am aloft like David when he spied Bathsheba; but all I ever see is the boarding school girls' knickers hanging out to dry. - Now, we come to the important question of the relation between subject and object. If we take one of those creatures in whom, gentlemen, the capacity of the divine for self-affirmation most clearly manifests itself and we examine its relation to space, the earth and the planetary universe. If, gentlemen, I take (*Producing it from his pocket.*) this cat, and I throw it out of the window - what will be its instinctive behaviour relative to its centre of gravity?
- Woyzeck! - Woyzeck!!

He runs back in as the **DOCTOR** *throws the cat at him, which he catches.*

WOYZECK:

Doctor, it's biting me!

DOCTOR:

And look at you, nursing it like your grandmother. Fool.

WOYZECK:

I'm getting the shakes, Doctor.

DOCTOR (*pleased, descending*):

Is that so? How interesting. How very, very interesting.
And what's this, a new species of animal louse? 'Fine one, too.

Takes out a magnifying glass to mock-examine the cat.

WOYZECK:

You're frightening it. (*Takes the cat out.*)

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

DOCTOR:

Animals have no scientific instincts. - Therefore, I shall use another demonstration subject.

Clicks his fingers. **WOYZECK** *returns.*

Observe, gentlemen. For three months this man has eaten nothing but peas. Note the effect, it's clearly apparent. The pulse is irregular, singularly. And the eyes: note the peculiarity of the eyes.

WOYZECK:

Doctor - everything's going dark on me again.

Teeters, almost falling onto the steps.

DOCTOR:

Cheer up, Woyzeck. Just a few more days and it'll all be over.

He prods at glands and points of the thorax.

The effect is palpable, gentlemen, palpable.
- Just wiggle your ears for the young gentlemen while we're at it, Woyzeck. I meant to show you this before. He uses the two muscles quite independently. - Go on then.

WOYZECK (embarrassed):

Oh, Doctor -

DOCTOR:

Do I have to wiggle them for you, you brute?! Are you going to behave like the cat? - There you are, gentlemen, another case of progressive donkeyfication resulting from female upbringing and the use of the German language! You're losing your hair. Has your mother been pulling it out for mementos?
Ah, no, it's the peas, gentlemen, the peas.
Well, we must conclude. Thank you all. Woyzeck, when you've taken those back the Captain wants to see you.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

The **DOCTOR** *goes out,* **WOYZECK** *following with the steps.*

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE NINE

The street. The **DOCTOR** walks briskly down it with the **CAPTAIN** *puffing after him.*

CAPTAIN:

Doctor. Just a minute, Doctor! You shouldn't go so fast, you know. The only thing you'll catch up with rushing like that's y'r last day. A good man with a clear conscience doesn't hurry that way. A good man. (*Snorts, breathes heavily to regain himself.*)

The **DOCTOR** *tries to move away but the* **CAPTAIN** *has him by his coat.*

Allow me the privilege of saving a human life, Doctor.

DOCTOR:

(*agitating his arm*) I'm in a hurry, Captain. A hurry!

CAPTAIN:

My dear ghoul, you'll wear your legs down to the pavement. Stop trying to take off on your stick.

DOCTOR:

I'll tell you something - your wife will be dead inside four weeks. Total collapse occasioned by complications in the seventh month. I've had twenty identical cases: they all died. Inside four weeks - you'd better start getting used to the idea.

CAPTAIN:

Please, Doctor, I get so depressed; it's making me imagine things. I can't look at my empty coat hung up on the wall without bursting into tears.

DOCTOR:

Hm. - Puffy, fat; thick neck. Apoplectic type. Yes, Captain, that'll be the way of it. You're a certainty for apoplectic seizure of the brain. . . Of course, you might only be affected down one side, hemi-paresis, then you'd still be able to move the unparalysed half of your body. Or alternatively you might be even luckier and have simply local cerebral paralysis, in which case you'd become a sort of human potato.
Yes, that's the outlook for you in the next month. Though there's also the possibility that you could become a really interesting case by having just one half of your tongue paralysed. Now if that happens I'll be able to do experiments on it that will make you go down in medical history.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

CAPTAIN:

Don't frighten me like that, Doctor. People have been known to die of fright, you know, of sheer bloody fright.

- I can see the mourners already, getting the lemons out'v their pockets to make them cry. Still, they'll say, 'He was a good man; a good man.' - Oh, you damned old coffin nail!

DOCTOR:

Ha. Do you see this? (*Holds up his hat.*)
This, my dear squarebasher, is an empty headpiece.

CAPTAIN:

And this (*Displays one of his buttons.*), my dear ghoul, is a bonehead. Ha ha ha! - No offence, mind. I'm a virtuous man, but I can give as good as I get when I feel like it, Doctor.
Ha ha ha! When I feel like it -

WOYZECK *comes down the street trying to avoid notice.*

Hey! Woyzeck!
Where're you dashing off to? Just wait there a minute, Woyzeck. You go through the world like an open razor. You'll be giving someone a nasty cut one of these days. Have you got to shave a regiment of eunuchs on pain of death if you miss one hair or something? Eh?
On the subject of hairs, that puts me in mind of the saying -
You know, Woyzeck -

DOCTOR:

Pliny states: troops are to be discouraged from wearing facial hair.

CAPTAIN:

The one about finding a hair from someone else's beard in your soup. - You take my meaning?
Or perhaps we should say in this case, from someone else's moustache - a sapper's, or a sergeant's, or, maybe, a drum-major's?
Eh, Woyzeck?
But then, your wife's a good woman, isn't she? Not like some.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir. What do you mean, sir?

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

CAPTAIN:

Look at the man's face!
You might not find that hair in your soup, but if you popped round the corner you could just find it sticking to a certain pair of lips. A certain pair of lips, Woyzeck. Ah yes, I've known love in my time, too.
- Good God, you've turned to chalk, man; you're stone white!

WOYZECK:

Captain, I'm a poor man - I've nothing but her in the world. Please don't make jokes, sir.

CAPTAIN:

Make jokes? Me, make jokes with you?

DOCTOR:

Pulse, Woyzeck, pulse!
Short, skipping, violent, irregular. irregular

WOYZECK:

The earth's hotter th'n hell . . and I'm cold.
Ice. Ice.
Hell must be cold, I'm sure. - It's not possible!
Slut! Slut!! - Not possible.

CAPTAIN:

What are you doing, staring at me like that? Do you want a bullet in the brain, man?! Your eyes're like knives. - I'm only doing you a favour, it's for your own good. Because you're not a bad fellow, Woyzeck, not such a bad fellow.

DOCTOR:

Facial muscles taut, rigid; occasional twitches. Manner tense, hyperexcited.

WOYZECK:

I'm off. Anything can be possible. - The slut! Anything at all.
- 'Fine day, Captain, isn't it? With a fine grey, stone sky. You c'd just hammer a peg in it and hang yourself. All because of the little pause between 'Yes' and 'Yes' again - and 'No'.
Yes and No, Captain. - Is the No to blame for the Yes, or the Yes for the No?
I sh'll have to think about that.

Moves away, step by step at first then increasingly quickly.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

DOCTOR:

Unique, unique! (*Runs after him.*)
Woyzeck! Another rise, Woyzeck!

CAPTAIN:

People, they make me dizzy. - Look at them. One sparking and veering while the other reaches after him like a spider's shadow.
Thunder following lightning. - Grotesque, grotesque!
I don't like such things. A good man takes care of himself, takes care of his life; he isn't foolhardy. No, foolhardiness is for scoundrels, for dogs!
I'm not like that.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TEN

MARIE's *room.* **WOYZECK** *is staring at her with mad intensity.*

WOYZECK:

I can't see anything. Can't see anything.
It should show! You should be able to see it, get hold of it with y'r hands!

MARIE:

Franz? What's the matter? You're raving.

WOYZECK:

What a fine street - you could wear your feet to stumps on it! It's good to stand in the street . . Even better when there's company.

MARIE:

Company?

WOYZECK:

Lots'v people can walk down a street, can't they? And you can talk to them, to whoever you choose. And it's nothing to do with me!
Did he stand here? - Then close to you? So?
Oh, I wish I'd been him.

MARIE:

Him? - What're you talking about? I can't stop people coming down the street or make them wear muzzles, can I?

WOYZECK:

And your lips're so beautiful - it's a shame you couldn't leave them at home.
But that would've brought the wasps in, I suppose.

MARIE:

Well which wasp's bitten you then? You're like the cow th't the hornets stung.

WOYZECK:

Such a sin. Such a great, gleaming, fat one – it reeks! You'd think the stink of it would bring the angels tumbling out of heaven.
Your mouth's so red, Marie. Why're there no blisters on it? Why're you so beautiful, Marie? As beautiful as sin.
Can mortal sin be beautiful?

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

MARIE:

You're delirious.

WOYZECK:

Did he stand here?! So?! Did he!?!

MARIE:

Days're long and the world's old. A lot of people c'n stand in the same place, one after another.

WOYZECK:

I can see him!!

MARIE:

You c'n see lots'v things, if you've eyes 'nd the sun shining 'nd you're not blind.

WOYZECK (*goes to strike her*):

–Slut!!

MARIE:

Don't touch me, Franz!
Put a knife in my guts if you want but not your hand on mine. My own father didn't dare do that when I was ten years old. He couldn't while I looked him in the face, and you won't now.

WOYZECK:

Whore!
No, it would have to show. - Everyone's an abyss. You get dizzy if you look down.
Just suppose! - She walks like any innocent.
Oh, innocence, there's a stain on your robe.
Am I sure? Sure? - Who's ever sure? (Goes out.)

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE ELEVEN

The guardroom. **ANDRES** *is cleaning his boots and singing.*
WOYZECK *is sitting down.*

ANDRES:

The landlord has a pretty wife,
Sits in the garden day and night;
She sits in the garden waiting -

WOYZECK:

Andres!

ANDRES:

What now?

WOYZECK:

A fine evening out.

ANDRES:

Yeh, Sunday weather alright.
There's some music later, over the heath. The women've gone up there already.
'Be some sweat shed, you can bet.

WOYZECK:

Dancing, Andres. They'll be dancing!

ANDRES:

At The Horse 'nd The Star, that's right.

WOYZECK:

Dancing, dancing!

ANDRES:

Why not?
(*Sings.*) She sits in the garden waiting -
Until the village clock strikes twelve
And the soldier-boys come marching.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

WOYZECK:

Andres - I can't get any rest from it.

ANDRES:

More fool you.

WOYZECK:

'Got to get out. Everything spins round. - Dancing, dancing!
Her hands'll be hot. - Oh, damn her, Andres, damn her!

ANDRES:

What's the matter with you?

WOYZECK:

'Got to go. 'See for myself.

ANDRES:

Why make trouble? Over one like that.

WOYZECK:

'Got to get out. It's stifling. *(Goes.)*

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWELVE

The tavern. Redness, heat. A crowd including **MARGARET** *two* **JOURNEYMEN** *and the old* **GRANDMOTHER**, *who is blind with cataracts. The* **FIRST JOURNEYMAN** *is singing.*

1st JOURNEYMAN:

I've got a shirt on, but it isn't mine;
My soul is stinking with brandy wine -

2nd JOURNEYMAN:

Let me punch a hole in your face, brother, for friendship's sake. Come on, I'm going to punch a hole in your face. - I'm twice the man he is any day!
'Smash every flea on y'r body to bits.

1st JOURNEYMAN:

My soul *is*, my soul is stinking with brandy wine.
Even money rots. - My little forget-me-not; why is the world so beautiful? I could weep a sea of buckets at the sadness of it, brother. - I wish our noses w're both bottles; we could empty them down one another's throats.

Some of the others begin to clap and the two **JOURNEYMEN** *dance peasant fashion as everyone sings.*

ALL:

There were two hunters from the Rhine
Rode through the woods in clothes so fine.
Tally-ho! Tally-ho! Merrily we'll go,
Roaming together the wild woods free -.
A hunter's life is the life for me!

WOYZECK *enters.*

A hunter's life is the life for me!

MARIE *and the* **DRUM-MAJOR** *appear outside, dancing.*

WOYZECK:

Him. Her
Hell. - Hell, hell!

They spin a long, elaborate revolve.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

MARIE:

On and on -

DRUM-MAJOR:

Round and round -

MARIE:

For ever and ever -
On and on and on . .

They dance away. **WOYZECK** *is stricken, the crowd silent as they watch.*

WOYZECK:

On and on. On and on and on! (*Staggers, lurching towards the spectators.*)
For ever! (*Beats his fist on his palm.*)
Turn, turn. Go on turning, dancing! - Why don't you blow the sun out, God? Let everything fall over itself in lewdness. Flesh, filth, man, woman, human, animal. - They all do it in the open day, do it on the back of a hand like flies.
Slut!! - She's hot, hot! (*Staggers again.*)

He falls down, catches onto a bench.

Feeling his way round her, round her body.
Him. He's got her . . Like I had her at the beginning.

He collapses. Everyone talks at once. The **FIRST JOURNEYMAN** *goes to where* **WOYZECK**'s *lying and turns to still them.*

1st JOURNEYMAN:

Brethren -think now upon The Wanderer, who stands poised beside the stream of time and communes with himself, receiving the wisdom of God and saying, 'Wherefore is man?' And again, 'Wherefore is man?'
Verily, verily I say to you, how should the farmer, the cooper, the doctor, the shoemaker live if God had not created man?
How should the tailor ply his trade, if God had not implanted shame in the human breast? Or the soldier his, if man had not been equipped with the need for self-destruction?
Therefore, be not afraid . .
Yes, it's all very fine, very wonderful, but the earth's vain.
Even money rots.
So, in conclusion, beloved - let's piss on the crucifix and a Jew will die!

WOYZECK *comes to and runs out.*

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE THIRTEEN

The woods beyond.

WOYZECK:

On and on! For ever! On, on, on!
Stop the music. - Shh.
(*Throws himself down.*) What's that? ..- What's that you say? What're you saying?
. . Stab. . . Stab the she-wolf, dead.
Shall I?
Must I?
- Is it there, too? In the wind even.

(*Stands up.*) It's all round me. Everywhere. Round, round, on and on and on . . .

Stab her. Dead, dead - dead!! (*Runs out.*)

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE FOURTEEN

The guardroom. **ANDRES** asleep in a blanket. **WOYZECK** comes in, shakes him.

WOYZECK:

Andres, Andres! - I can't sleep. Everything starts spinning when I shut my eyes and I hear the fiddles - on and on, round and round. Then it says it again, out of the wall.
Can you hear it?

ANDRES (*mumbles*):

Yes, yes; let th'm dance.
(*Turns over*.) 'Man gets tired. God save us. Amen.

WOYZECK:

Always the same - stab, stab!
Between my eyes. Like a knife.

ANDRES:

Get to bed, y'fool.
(*Goes back to sleep*, **WOYZECK** *goes out.*)

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE FIFTEEN

The tavern, late. The **DRUM-MAJOR** *is seated alone at one side. Others grouped carefully away from him.* WOYZECK**.**

DRUM-MAJOR:

I'm a man! (*Pounds his chest*.)
A man! D' you hear? - Who's looking f'r a fight? If y're not 's pissed 's creeping Jesus keep away from me. I'll ram y'r nose up your arse!
(*To* **WOYZECK**.) Hey, you, drink up. Everyone has to drink. Drink. I wish the world w's made'v schnapps, me, schnapps - I said, everyone has to drink. You: drink.

WOYZECK *whistles*
You little shit.
I'll rip the tongue from y'r throat and strangle you with it.

Throws himself on **WOYZECK***, who takes a bad beating in the ensuing fight. It ends with him on the ground.*

Bastard; rat turd. I'm going to knock the breath out'v you alright. You won't have enough f'r an old woman's fart.

Jumps on **WOYZECK'S** *back with his knees.*

- Now try and whistle, shit. You c'n whistle y'rself sky-blue f'r all I care.
(*Sings*.) Oh - brandy is the drink for me;
Brandy gives a man spunk!

Goes for more drink. The crowd feel free to talk.

2nd JOURNEYMAN:

He's had his bellyful.

MARGARET:

Look, he's bleeding.

WOYZECK *starts to rise, falls again.*

WOYZECK:

One thing after another.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE SIXTEEN

Morning, the guardroom. **ANDRES** *with a towel.* WOYZECK *comes in to him.*

WOYZECK:

Was he in the washroom? Did he say anything?

ANDRES (*dries his face*):

He w's with his mates.

WOYZECK:

What'd he say? What'd he say?

ANDRES:

What's the difference?
What d'you want him to say - a red-hot piece, fantastic, h'r inside's like running butter?

WOYZECK (*cold*):

So that's what he said.
What was I dreaming about last night? A knife, was it?
Stupid things, dreams.

Gathers his kit up.

ANDRES:

Where're you off to?

WOYZECK:

'Fetch my officer's wine.
- But you know, Andres, there was no-one like her.

ANDRES:

Who?

WOYZECK:

Doesn't matter. - 'See you.

He goes out.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE SEVENTEEN

The **JEW** *in his shop.* **WOYZECK** *enters*

WOYZECK:

Any guns?

JEW:

Maybe.

WOYZECK:

How much?

JEW:

Four crowns, five crowns. How much you got?

WOYZECK:

'S too dear.

JEW:

You buy, you don't buy, Which?

WOYZECK:

How much for a knife?

JEW:

This one?
Lovely straight, this one. - You want to cut your throat with it? So, what's that? I give you cheap -same price as anyone else. Cheap you can have your death; not for nothing. So, what's that? You get death economical.

WOYZECK (*feels*):

It'll cut more th'n bread.

JEW:

Two groschen.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

WOYZECK:

Take it.

Pushes the money into his hand and goes.

JEW.

Take it!
Just like that: as if it was nothing. - And it's money, all of it money.
Dog!

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE EIGHTEEN

MARIE's room. The child is in its crib, **MARIE** knelt nearby with an an open Bible.

MARIE:

'. . Neither was guile found in his mouth.'

Looks across at the crucifix.

Don't look at me, Lord.

She turns to another page.

'And the scribes and the pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and set her in the midst. . And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more.'

Tries to hold her hands together in prayer.

I can't. - Can't.
Dear God, don't take everything, at least let me pray.

The child stirs and she comforts him.

And Franz doesn't come. Yesterday, today. 'Still doesn't come.
- It gets so hot!

Goes to the window and opens it, comes back to the Bible. She picks it up and reads where she's standing.

'. . And she stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with an ointment.'

Strikes herself on the breast.

Dead; all dead! -- Oh my Lord, my Lord!
If only I could anoint your feet.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE NINETEEN

The guardroom. **WOYZECK** *is going through his kitbag,* **ANDRES** *watching.*

WOYZECK:

This waistcoat's not standard issue, Andres. You might be able to use it for something.
The cross belongs to my sister, so does the ring. I've got a holy picture somewhere too, a pair of twined hearts – my mother used to keep it in her bible. There's a motto: Christ, as your heart was red and wounded, so let mine be cleft and sundered. She's no feeling left, my mother, only when the sun shines on h'r hands. - Doesn't matter.

ANDRES:

'Course.

WOYZECK (*pulls out a sheet of paper*):

'Friedrich Johann Franz Woyzeck. Rifleman. Second Fusiliers Regiment, Second Battalion, Fourth Company. Born on the Feast of The Annunication -'
I'm thirty years old. Thirty years, seven months and twelve days.

ANDRES:

You ought to report sick, Franz, you're not right.
Have a schnapps with powder in it to kill the fever.

WOYZECK:

That's it, Andres.
When the carpenter collects his shavings for the box, no-one knows whose head'll lie on them.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWENTY

The street. **MARIE** *and* **MARGARET** *standing by the* **GRANDMOTHER,** *seated.*

MARGARET (*sings*):

At Candlemas the sun shines bright,
The corn stands up to drink the light
And everywhere, the meadows through,
The folk come dancing two by two.
Oh pipers put your best foot first,
Fiddlers fiddle until you burst
And kick your red legs in the air –

GRANDMOTHER:

I don't like that one.

MARGARET:

What d'you want then?

GRANDMOTHER:

You sing, Marie.

MARIE:

No.

MARGARET:

Why not?

MARIE:

Because.

MARGARET:

Because what?

MARIE:

Just because.

MARGARET:

All right, Grandma 'll tell us a story.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

GRANDMOTHER:

Sit, sit.
Once upon a time there was a poor little boy who had no father and mother; everything was dead and there was no-one left in the whole world. Everthing was quite dead, so he went off, whimpering. All day and all night. And since there was no-one left on earth he decided to go up to heaven where the moon shone down so kind. But when he got to the moon it was a lump of rotten wood. Then he went to the sun, but when he got there it was a withered-up sunflower. And when he got to the stars they were little spangled midges stuck there, like the ones shrikes stick on blackthorns. So he went back to the earth, but the earth was an overturned pot. He was completely alone, and he sat down and cried. He's sitting there still, all alone.

WOYZECK *comes into the street.*

WOYZECK:

Marie!

MARIE (*starts*):

What is it?

WOYZECK:

We've to go, Marie, it's time.

MARIE:

Go where?

WOYZECK:

Does it matter?

They go down the street.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWENTY ONE

The woods. **WOYZECK** *and* **MARIE** *come through them slowly.*

MARIE:

The town's that way. It's dark.

WOYZECK:

Stay a bit. Here, sit down.

MARIE:

I've got to get back.

WOYZECK:

You won't get sore feet from walking. I'll save you that.

MARIE:

What're you on about?

WOYZECK:

D'you know how long it's been, Marie?

MARIE:

Two years this Whitsun.

WOYZECK:

D'you know how long it's going to be?

MARIE:

I've got to go, there's supper to get.

WOYZECK:

Are you cold, Marie?
'Nd yet you're warm! – And you've got hot lips, hot breath, Hot, hot whore's breath! I'd give heav'n to kiss them again though.
When we're really cold, then we don't feel the weather any more. You won't feel the damp in the morning.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

MARIE:

What's that you say?

WOYZECK:

Nothing.

A silence.

MARIE:

The moon's up. 'All red.

WOYZECK:

Like blood on iron.

MARIE:

What d'you mean? - Franz, you're so pale.

He draws the knife.

No, Franz!
Merciful God. Help! Help!

He stabs her.

WOYZECK:

There! There! There!
Why don't you die? - Die, die!!
- Ha, still moving? Even now; even now?

He holds the head back and cuts her throat.

Still moving?

Lets the body fall.

Now are you dead? Now?
Dead. Dead. Dead.

He moves away backwards from the body, then turns and runs.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWENTY TWO

The tavern. The same people, dancing. **WOYZECK** *bursts in.*

WOYZECK:

Dance! Dance! Everyone dance! - Sweat, stink, round and round!
He'll come for you all in the end.

He joins in the dance and sings.

My daughter, oh my daughter,
What were you thinking of -
Hanging round grooms and coachmen
And giving them your love?

- So, Margaret, sit down. - I'm hot, hot!
That's the way it is, the devil takes one and lets the other go. You're hot, Margaret. Why's that? You'll be cold, too. Yes, cold.
You want to be careful!
- Why don't you sing something?

MARGARET (*sings*):

To the South Land I'll not go,
I will not wear long dresses, no;
For dresses long and pointed shoes
A serving-girl must never choose.

WOYZECK:

No. No shoes. You c'n get to hell without shoes.

MARGARET (*sings*):

Oh no, my love, the girl made moan -
Keep your money and sleep alone.

WOYZECK:

That's right. I wouldn't want to get myself all bloody.

MARGARET:

What's that then? On your hand!

WOYZECK:

Where?

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

MARGARET (*backs away*):

You're all red! - With blood!

WOYZECK:

With blood?
With blood?

The crowd has gathered.

1st JOURNEYMAN:

Ai - blood!

WOYZECK:

'Must have cut myself, cut my hand.

2nd JOURNEYMAN:

How'd it get on your elbow then?

WOYZECK:

When I wiped it off.

2nd JOURNEYMAN:

Wipe that hand on that elbow? You'd have t'be a genius.

GRANDMOTHER:

Fee fie fo fum. I smell the blood of a dead wo-man.

WOYZECK:

What d'you want, dammit? What's going on? Give me some room, or else -
Hell, d'you think I've done someone in? 'Think I'm a murderer? What're you staring at? Take a look at yourselves!

Rushes through them.

Give me room! Room!
He runs away.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWENTY THREE

The woods. MARIE's *body where it fell.* **WOYZECK** *comes through the shadows.*

WOYZECK:

Getting closer. Closer
This is a strange place. Weird. - What's that?
Something moving. - Shh. Just there.
- Marie?

He moves and stumbles onto the body. It shows bloody in the light.

Aah!
Marie.
- So still. - Everything so still.

He kneels on one knee by the body. Pulls the trunk up onto him resting her back on his knee, holding her like a child.

Why're you so pale, Marie?
What's that red thing round your neck? Is it a necklace?
Who gave you a necklace to commit sins with him?
Oh, you were black with them, black.
Have I made you white again?
Why's your hair so wild, Marie? - Didn't you comb it today?
So, I'll tidy it for you. You have to look your best, there'll be people to meet.
What're all these marks? Look. Here, here. Like bloodstains.
How did you get them? Have you been fighting, Marie?

Starts to lift the body.

You have to get up now, then I can wash you.
It's not far. Up.

Stands upright with the body held in front of him.

There's water here, to wash you. To wash everything away, then you'll be clean. - Come to the water.

Drags her down to the pool side.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

D'you see the moon, Marie? There's even blood on the moon.
But you'll be clean.
Take a step. Then another.
And another.
Another.
-Water, Marie. All the water in the world to wash you.
Water -

They disappear into the pool. Silence.

The two **JOURNEYMEN** *come by the wood carefully, halt.*

2nd JOURNEYMAN:

What's the matter?

1st JOURNEYMAN:

Can't you hear it? - There.

2nd JOURNEYMAN:

Ei! What a sound!

1st JOURNEYMAN:

'The water, calling. No-one's been drowned for a long time. It's bad luck to hear it. Come on!

2nd JOURNEYMAN:

There! Again. Like a death-cry.

1st JOURNEYMAN:

Uncanny…
Fog creeping in - Everywhere grey. Beetles whirring like cracked bells.
- Come on!

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWENTY FOUR

The morgue. **MARIE** *and* **WOYZECK'S** *corpses under sheets. The* **DOCTOR** *comes in with his instrument case. Looks at them, then lifts the sheet on* **MARIE**. *He indents the body with his finger at various points and sniffs it.*

DOCTOR:

Hmm.
Little decomposition. Minor contusions.
Multiple laceration and perforation to a point – some millimetres forward of the spine. No vertebral displacement. One right side tendon intact.
General pallor, modified rigor; abdominal distension.
Consistent with a prolonged immersion.

Takes out a large knife and incises the muscle wall.

Confirmed by comparative absence of blood, fluid or static.

Kneels up on the slab and takes his saw from the case. Uses it to cut briskly through the rib cage. Lays down the saw, takes up his knife and incises again deeply.

Non-evidence of water in the lung. Indicative of post-mortem immersion.
'Routine case. - Death by asphyxiation, occasioned by transverse passage of an unknown instrument across the trachea, probably a knife.
Yes: routine, routine.

Climbs down, imperfectly replacing the sheet on her. Crosses to **WOYZECK'S** *body with his case, exposes the head.*

Ah, Woyzeck.
What a waste! Just when you were really becoming interesting.
No consideration. - If you'd only stopped to think!
You could have been in the asylum now, Woyzeck, visited by all the foremost medical practitioners.
The trouble I took with you. - Waste, waste.

He pulls the sheet back fully.

A very poor cadaver.
No exceptional disfigurement; no marks of violence. – Normal decomposition consistent with immersion in water.
Hrnm -

Punctures the body casually with his knife.

Presence of same commensurate with death by drowning.
A poor ending, Woyzeck.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD.
Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

The **CAPTAIN** *enters portentously.*

CAPTAIN:

A bad business, Doctor.
These people - Their lives -
Messy.

DOCTOR:

Putrefaction is the process whereby chemical fats comprising the tissue are rendered to their constituent elements. A disagreeable odour may be discerned.

CAPTAIN:

I knew he'd come to a bad end. - Woyzeck, I said, this dashing about'll do you no good at all. You're only running toward the grave.
And now he's got there, ahead of time.
It's a sad world, Doctor, going on the way it does for ever without stopping. - How can it have time to think?!

DOCTOR:

Absence of scientific method, Captain! Proceed empirically. By the use of the empirical faculty I have been able to establish that this woman had her throat cut and this man died by drowning.

CAPTAIN:

Oh, marvellous - marvellous! To work that out from them being found in the lake and her with her head hanging off!

DOCTOR:

Deduction, deduction.
This corpse has no water in the lung and no blood. – This corpse has water in the lung and blood in a condition of stasis. Observe.

He incises **WOYZECK'S** *body*,

What's this? Where's the blood? - What have you done with
your blood, Woyzeck?

CAPTAIN:

Ha ha! Deduction, my dear ghoul - he's lost it.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

DOCTOR:

I shall report this. It's an affront to medicine.

Gathers up his instruments and packs them quickly.

CAPTAIN:

Don't rush off, Doctor. Look here, look what comes of it. - I haven't told you my symptoms yet. This business's upset me dreadfully, I get indigestion -

DOCTOR (*pauses*):

Where's the blood, Woyzeck? What's happened to the blood?

Goes out urgently.

CAPTAIN (*follows*):

Doctor! Wait!

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.
Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

SCENE TWENTY FIVE

The woods, ground mist. **ANDRES,** *kneeling, splits sticks. A voice whistles the first line of 'I had a little nut tree', making him look round. He recommences chopping.*

ANDRES:

Wha - ?

Feels among the sticks, looks at his fingers.

'Must've cut myself. Cut my hand.

The second line is whistled, closer. **ANDRES** *hardly hears. He examines his fingers.*

Eh?

Scrabbles at the sticks. The GRANDMOTHER *appears behind him in a cloak and hood.*

Where - ?

He picks the sticks up tentatively: their undersides are running with gore. It drips. **ANDRES** *drops them, backs away.*

It's coming out 'the ground. - Coming out 'the ground!

The **GRANDMOTHER** *laughs. He runs off.*

She walks forward as the mist thickens round her and is then lit red, reflecting on her cataracts. She looks round the wood. The voice whistles 'I had a little nut tree' again, but moving further and further away this time.

The **GRANDMOTHER** *nods and moves off slowly as the mist thickens to opacity.*

Published by A & C Black Publishers Limited, 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY.

Text copyright © John Mackendrick 1979.
Caution notice:
This translation is fully protected by copyright. Any enquiries concerning the rights for professional or amateur stage production should be addressed to Michael Imison Playwrights Limited, 28 Almeida Street, London N1 1TD. Centres taking Edexcel GCE Drama and Theatre Studies have permission to use the text for the purposes specified for Unit 4 of the Specification.

December 2007

For more information on Edexcel and BTEC qualifications please contact
Customer Services on 0870 240 9800
or http://enquiries.edexcel.org.uk
or visit our website: www.edexcel.org.uk

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales No. 4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London WC1V 7BH. VAT Reg No 780 0898 07

LONGMAN

LONGMAN LITERATURE

EQUUS

PETER SHAFFER

Teenager Alan Strang, fought over by a religious mother and an atheist father, finds release in horses. Then something drives him to blind the horses with a spike. Why? While treating the boy, a psychiatrist discovers his own life is paradoxically in the witness box. A savage, passionate play which pinpoints the modern human spiritual quest.

ISBN 0-582-09712-6

9 780582 097124

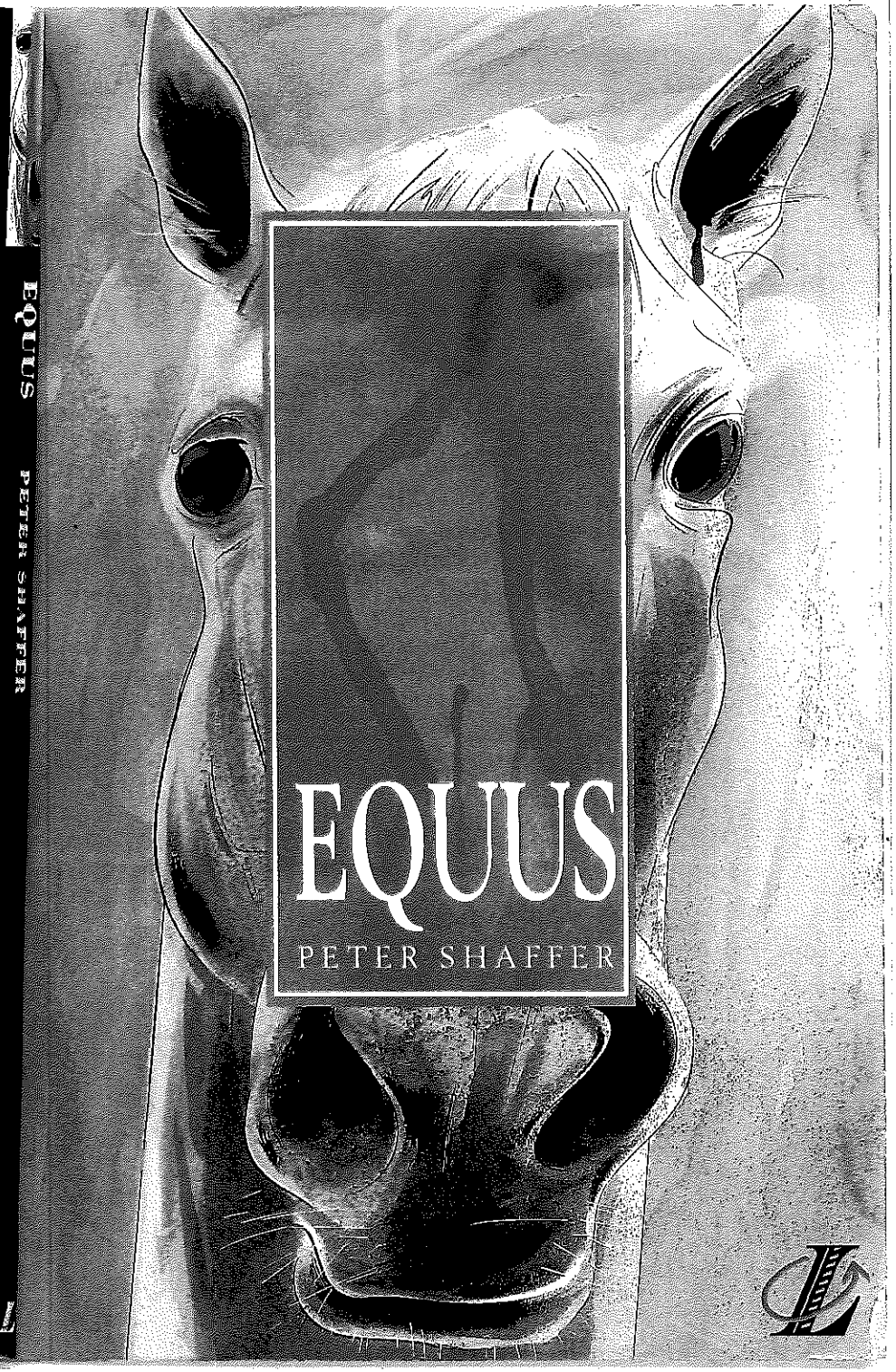
LONGMAN LITERATURE

Series editor
Roy Blatchford

IAN POLLOCK

EQUUS

PETER SHAFFER



Characters

MARTIN DYSART, *a psychiatrist*
ALAN STRANG
FRANK STRANG, *his father*
DORA STRANG, *his mother*
HESTHER SALOMON, *a magistrate*
JILL MASON
HARRY DALTON, *a stable owner*
A YOUNG HORSEMAN
A NURSE

Six actors – *including the Young Horseman, who also plays Nugget – appear as Horses.*

The main action of the play takes place in Rokeby Psychiatric Hospital in Southern England.

The time is the present.

The play is divided into numbered scenes, indicating a change of time or locale or mood. The action, however, is continuous.

Act One

1

Darkness.

Silence.

Dim light up on the square. In a spotlight stands Alan Strang, a lean boy of seventeen, in sweater and jeans. In front of him, the horse Nugget. Alan's pose represents a contour of great tenderness: his head is pressed against the shoulder of the horse, his hands stretching up to fondle its head. The horse in turn nuzzles his neck.

The flame of a cigarette lighter jumps in the dark. Lights come up slowly on the circle. On the left bench, downstage, Martin Dysart, smoking. A man in his mid-forties.

DYSART With one particular horse, called Nugget, he embraces. The animal digs its sweaty brow into his cheek, and they stand in the dark for an hour – like a necking couple. And of all nonsensical things – I keep thinking about the *horse*! Not the boy: the horse, and what it may be trying to do. I keep seeing that huge head kissing him with its chained mouth. Nudging through the metal some desire absolutely irrelevant to filling its belly or propagating its own kind. What desire could that be? Not to stay a horse any longer? Not to remain reined up for ever in those particular genetic strings? Is it possible, at certain moments we cannot imagine, a horse can add its sufferings together – the non-stop jerks and jabs that are its daily life – and turn them into grief? What use is grief to a horse?

Alan leads Nugget out of the square and they disappear together up the tunnel, the horse's hooves scraping delicately on the wood.

Dysart rises, and addresses both the large audience in the theatre and the smaller one on stage.

You see, I'm lost. What use, I should be asking, are questions like these to an overworked psychiatrist in a provincial

hospital? They're worse than useless: they are, in fact, subversive.

He enters the square. The light grows brighter.

The thing is, I'm desperate. You see, I'm wearing that horse's head myself. That's the feeling. All reined up in old language and old assumptions, straining to jump clean-hoofed on to a whole new track of being I only suspect is there. I can't see it, because my educated, average head is being held at the wrong angle. I can't jump because the bit forbids it, and my own basic force – my horsepower, if you like – is too little. The only thing I know for sure is this: a horse's head is finally unknowable to me. Yet I handle children's heads – which I must presume to be more complicated, at least in the area of my chief concern. . . . In a way, it has nothing to do with this boy. The doubts have been there for years, piling up steadily in this dreary place. It's only the extremity of this case that's made them active. I know that. The *extremity* is the point! All the same, whatever the reason, they are now, these doubts, not just vaguely worrying – but intolerable. . . I'm sorry. I'm not making much sense. Let me start properly: in order. It began one Monday last month, with Hesther's visit.

2

The light gets warmer.

He sits. Nurse enters the square.

NURSE Mrs Salomon to see you, Doctor.

DYSART Show her in, please.

Nurse leaves and crosses to where Hesther sits.

Some days I blame Hesther. She brought him to me. But of course that's nonsense. What is he but a last straw? A last symbol? If it hadn't been him, it would have been the next patient, or the next. At least, I suppose so.

Hesther enters the square: a woman in her mid-forties.

HESTHER Hallo, Martin.

Dysart rises and kisses her on the cheek.

DYSART Madam Chairman! Welcome to the torture chamber!

HESTHER It's good of you to see me right away.

DYSART You're a welcome relief. Take a couch.

HESTHER It's been a day?

DYSART No – just a fifteen year old schizophrenic, and a girl of eight thrashed into catatonia by her father. Normal, really . . . You're in a state.

HESTHER Martin, this is the most shocking case I ever tried.

DYSART So you said on the phone.

HESTHER I mean it. My bench wanted to send the boy to prison. For life, if they could manage it. It took me two hours solid arguing to get him sent to you instead.

DYSART Me?

HESTHER I mean, to hospital.

DYSART Now look, Hesther. Before you say anything else, I can take no more patients at the moment. I can't even cope with the ones I have.

HESTHER You must.

DYSART Why?

HESTHER Because most people are going to be disgusted by the whole thing. Including doctors.

DYSART May I remind you I share this room with two highly competent psychiatrists?

HESTHER Bennett and Thoroughgood. They'll be as shocked as the public.

DYSART That's an absolutely unwarrantable statement.

HESTHER Oh, they'll be cool and exact. And underneath they'll be revolted, and immovably English. Just like my bench.

DYSART Well, what am I? Polynesian?

HESTHER You know exactly what I mean! . . . (*pause*) Please, Martin. It's vital. You're this boy's only chance.

DYSART Why? What's he done? Dosed some little girl's Pepsi

with Spanish Fly? What could possibly throw your bench into two-hour convulsions?

HESTHER He blinded six horses with a metal spike.

A long pause.

DYSART Blinded?

HESTHER Yes.

DYSART All at once, or over a period?

HESTHER All on the same night.

DYSART Where?

HESTHER In a riding stable near Winchester. He worked there at weekends.

DYSART How old?

HESTHER Seventeen.

DYSART What did he say in Court?

HESTHER Nothing. He just sang.

DYSART Sang?

HESTHER Any time anyone asked him anything.

Pause.

Please take him, Martin. It's the last favour I'll ever ask you.

DYSART No, it's not.

HESTHER No, it's not – and he's probably abominable. All I know is, he needs you badly. Because there really is nobody within a hundred miles of your desk who can handle him. And perhaps understand what this is about. Also....

DYSART What?

HESTHER There's something very special about him.

DYSART In what way?

HESTHER Vibrations.

DYSART You and your vibrations.

HESTHER They're quite startling. You'll see.

DYSART When does he get here?

HESTHER Tomorrow morning. Luckily there was a bed in Neville Ward. I know this is an awful imposition, Martin. Frankly I didn't know what else to do.

Pause.

DYSART Can you come in and see me on Friday?

HESTHER Bless you!

DYSART If you come after work I can give you a drink. Will 6.30 be all right?

HESTHER You're a dear. You really are.

DYSART Famous for it.

HESTHER. Goodbye.

DYSART By the way, what's his name?

HESTHER Alan Strang.

She leaves and returns to her seat.

DYSART (*to audience*) What did I expect of him? Very little, I promise you. One more dented little face. One more adolescent freak. The usual unusual. One great thing about being in the adjustment business: you're never short of customers.

Nurse comes down the tunnel, followed by Alan. She enters the square.

NURSE Alan Strang, Doctor.

The boy comes in.

DYSART Hallo. My name's Martin Dysart. I'm pleased to meet you.

He puts out his hand. Alan does not respond in any way.

That'll be all, Nurse, thank you.

3

Nurse goes out and back to her place. Dysart sits, opening a file.

So: did you have a good journey? I hope they gave you lunch at least. Not that there's much to choose between a British Rail meal and one here.

Alan stands staring at him.

DYSART Won't you sit down?

Pause. He does not. Dysart consults his file.

Is this your full name? Alan Strang?

Silence.

And you're seventeen. Is that right? Seventeen?... Well?

ALAN (*singing low*) Double your pleasure
Double your fun
With Doublemint, Doublemint
Doublemint gum.

DYSART (*unperturbed*) Now, let's see. You work in an electrical shop during the week. You live with your parents, and your father's a printer. What sort of things does he print?

ALAN (*singing louder*) Double your pleasure
Double your fun
With Doublemint, Doublemint
Doublemint gum.

DYSART I mean does he do leaflets and calendars? Things like that?

The boy approaches him, hostile.

ALAN (*singing*) Try the taste of Martini
The most beautiful drink in the world.
It's the right one –
The bright one –
That's Martini!

DYSART I wish you'd sit down, if you're going to sing. Don't you think you'd be more comfortable?

Pause.

ALAN (*singing*) There's only one T in Typhoo!
In packets and in teabags too.
Any way you make it, you'll find it's true:
There's only one T in Typhoo!

DYSART (*appreciatively*) Now that's a good song. I like it better than the other two. Can I hear that one again?

Alan starts away from him, and sits on the upstage bench.

ALAN (*singing*) Double your pleasure
Double your fun
With Doublemint, Doublemint
Doublemint gum.

DYSART (*smiling*) You know I was wrong. I really do think that one's better. It's got such a catchy tune. Please do that one again.

Silence. The boy glares at him.

I'm going to put you in a private bedroom for a little while. There are one or two available, and they're rather more pleasant than being in a ward. Will you please come and see me tomorrow? . . . (*He rises*) By the way, which parent is it who won't allow you to watch television? Mother or father? Or is it both? (*calling out of the door*) Nurse!

Alan stares at him. Nurse comes in.

NURSE Yes, Doctor?

DYSART Take Strang here to Number Three, will you? He's moving in there for a while.

NURSE Very good, Doctor.

DYSART (*to Alan*) You'll like that room. It's nice.

The boy sits staring at Dysart. Dysart returns the stare.

NURSE Come along, young man. This way. . . . I said this way, please.

Reluctantly Alan rises and goes to Nurse, passing dangerously close to Dysart, and out through the left door. Dysart looks after him, fascinated.

4

Nurse and patient move on to the circle, and walk downstage to the bench where the doctor first sat, which is to serve also as Alan's bed.

NURSE Well now: isn't this nice? You're lucky to be in here, you know, rather than the ward. That ward's a noisy old place.

ALAN (*singing*) Let's go where you wanna go – Texaco!

NURSE (*contemplating him*) I hope you're not going to make a nuisance of yourself. You'll have a much better time of it here, you know, if you behave yourself.

ALAN Fuck off.

NURSE (*tight*) That's the bell there. The lav's down the corridor.

She leaves him, and goes back to her place. Alan lies down.

5

Dysart stands in the middle of the square and addresses the audience. He is agitated.

DYSART That night, I had this very explicit dream. In it I'm a chief priest in Homeric Greece. I'm wearing a wide gold mask, all noble and bearded, like the so-called Mask of Agamemnon found at Mycenae. I'm standing by a thick round stone and holding a sharp knife. In fact, I'm officiating at some immensely important ritual sacrifice, on which depends the fate of the crops or of a military expedition. The sacrifice is a herd of children: about five hundred boys and girls. I can see them stretching away in a long queue, right across the plain of Argos. I know it's Argos because of the red soil. On either side of me stand two assistant priests, wearing masks as well: lumpy, pop-eyed masks, such as also were found at Mycenae. They are enormously strong, these other priests, and absolutely tireless. As each child steps forward, they grab it from behind and throw it over the stone. Then, with a surgical skill which amazes even me, I fit in the knife and slice elegantly down to the navel, just like a seamstress following a pattern. I part the flaps, sever the inner tubes, yank them out and throw them hot and steaming on to the floor. The other two then study the pattern they make, as if they were reading hieroglyphics. It's obvious to me that I'm tops as chief priest. It's this unique talent for carving that has got me where I am. The only thing is, unknown to them, I've started to feel distinctly nauseous. And with each victim, it's getting worse. My face is going green behind the mask. Of course, I redouble my efforts to look professional – cutting and snipping for all I'm worth: mainly because I know that if ever those two assistants so much as glimpse my distress – and the implied doubt that this repetitive and smelly work is doing any social good at all – I will be the next across the stone. And

then, of course – the damn mask begins to slip. The priests both turn and look at it – it slips some more – they see the green sweat running down my face – their gold pop-eyes suddenly fill up with blood – they tear the knife out of my hand . . . and I wake up.

6

Hesther enters the square. Light grows warmer.

HESTHER That's the most indulgent thing I ever heard.

DYSART You think?

HESTHER Please don't be ridiculous. You've done the most superb work with children. You must know that.

DYSART Yes, but do the children?

HESTHER Really!

DYSART I'm sorry.

HESTHER So you should be.

DYSART I don't know why you listen. It's just professional menopause. Everyone gets it sooner or later. Except you.

HESTHER Oh, of course. I feel totally fit to be a magistrate all the time.

DYSART No, you don't – but then that's you feeling unworthy to fill a job. I feel the job is unworthy to fill me.

HESTHER Do you seriously?

DYSART More and more. I'd like to spend the next ten years wandering very slowly around the *real* Greece . . . Anyway, all this dream nonsense is your fault.

HESTHER Mine?

DYSART It's that lad of yours who started it off. Do you know it's his face I saw on every victim across the stone?

HESTHER Strang?

DYSART He has the strangest stare I ever met.

HESTHER Yes.

DYSART It's exactly like being accused. Violently accused. But

what of? . . . Treating him is going to be unsettling. Especially in my present state. His singing was direct enough. His speech is more so.

HESTHER (*surprised*) He's talking to you, then?

DYSART Oh yes. It took him two more days of commercials, and then he snapped. Just like that – I suspect it has something to do with his nightmares.

Nurse walks briskly round the circle, a blanket over her arm, a clipboard of notes in her hand.

HESTHER He has nightmares?

DYSART Bad ones.

NURSE We had to give him a sedative or two, Doctor. Last night it was exactly the same.

DYSART (*to Nurse*) What does he do? Call out?

NURSE (*to desk*) A lot of screaming, Doctor.

DYSART (*to Nurse*) Screaming?

NURSE One word in particular.

DYSART (*to Nurse*) You mean a special word?

NURSE Over and over again. (*consulting clipboard*) It sounds like 'Ek'.

HESTHER Ek?

NURSE Yes, Doctor. Ek . . . 'Ek!' he goes. 'Ek!'

HESTER How weird.

NURSE When I woke him up he clung to me like he was going to break my arm.

She stops at Alan's bed. He is sitting up. She puts the blanket over him, and returns to her place.

DYSART And then he burst in – just like that – without knocking or anything. Fortunately, I didn't have a patient with me.

ALAN (*jumping up*) *Dad!*

HESTHER What?

DYSART The answer to a question I'd asked him two days before. Spat out with the same anger as he sang the commercials.

HESTHER Dad what?

ALAN Who hates telly.

He lies downstage on the circle, as if watching television.

HESTHER You mean his dad forbids him to watch?

DYSART Yes.

ALAN It's a dangerous drug.

HESTHER Oh, really!

Frank stands up and enters the scene downstage on the circle. A man in his fifties.

FRANK (*to Alan*) It may not look like that, but that's what it is. Absolutely fatal mentally, if you receive my meaning.

Dora follows him on. She is also middle-aged.

DORA That's a little extreme, dear, isn't it?

FRANK You sit in front of that thing long enough, you'll become stupid for life – like most of the population. (*to Alan*) The thing is, it's a *swiz*. It seems to be offering you something, but actually it's taking something away. Your intelligence and your concentration, every minute you watch it. That's a true swiz, do you see?

Seated on the floor, Alan shrugs.

I don't want to sound like a spoilsport, old chum – but there really is no substitute for reading. What's the matter: don't you like it?

ALAN It's all right.

FRANK I know you think it's none of my beeswax, but it really is you know . . . Actually, it's a disgrace when you come to think of it. You the son of a printer, and never opening a book! If all the world was like you, I'd be out of a job, if you receive my meaning!

DORA All the same, times change, Frank.

FRANK (*reasonably*) They change if you let them change, Dora. Please return that set in the morning.

ALAN (*crying out*) No!

DORA Frank! No!

FRANK I'm sorry, Dora, but I'm not having that thing in the house a moment longer. I told you I didn't want it to begin with.

DORA But, dear, everyone watches television these days!

FRANK Yes, and what do they watch? Mindless violence! Mindless jokes! Every five minutes some laughing idiot selling you something you don't want, just to bolster up the economic system. (*to Alan*) I'm sorry, old chum.

He leaves the scene and sits again in his place.

HESTHER He's a Communist, then?

DYSART Old-type Socialist, I'd say. Relentlessly self-improving.

HESTHER They're *both* older than you'd expect.

DYSART So I gather.

DORA (*looking after Frank*) Really, dear, you are very extreme!

She leaves the scene too, and again sits beside her husband.

HESTHER She's an ex-school teacher, isn't she?

DYSART Yes. The boy's proud of that. We got on to it this afternoon.

ALAN (*belligerently, standing up*) She knows more than you.

Hesther crosses and sits by Dysart. During the following, the boy walks round the circle, speaking to Dysart but not looking at him. Dysart replies in the same manner.

DYSART (*to Alan*) Does she?

ALAN I bet I do too. I bet I know more history than you.

DYSART (*to Alan*) Well, I bet you don't.

ALAN All right: who was the Hammer of the Scots?

DYSART (*to Alan*) I don't know: who?

ALAN King Edward the First. Who never smiled again?

DYSART (*to Alan*) I don't know: who?

ALAN You don't know anything, do you? It was Henry the First. I know all the Kings.

DYSART (*to Alan*) And who's your favourite?

ALAN John.

DYSART (*to Alan*) Why?

ALAN Because he put out the eyes of that smarty little –

Pause.

(*sensing he has said something wrong*) Well, he didn't really. He was prevented; because the gaoler was merciful!

HESTHER Oh dear.

ALAN *He was prevented!*

DYSART Something odder was to follow.

ALAN Who said 'Religion is the opium of the people'?

HESTHER Good Lord!

Alan giggles.

DYSART The odd thing was, he said it with a sort of guilty snigger. The sentence is obviously associated with some kind of tension.

HESTHER What did you say?

DYSART I gave him the right answer. (*to Alan*) Karl Marx.

ALAN No.

DYSART (*to Alan*) Then who?

ALAN Mind your own beeswax.

DYSART It's probably his dad. He may say it to provoke his wife.

HESTHER And you mean she's religious?

DYSART She could be. I tried to discover – none too successfully.

ALAN Mind your own beeswax!

Alan goes back to bed and lies down in the dark.

DYSART However, I shall find out on Sunday.

HESTHER What do you mean?

DYSART (*getting up*) I want to have a look at his home, so I invited myself over.

HESTHER Did you?

DYSART If there's any tension over religion, it should be evident on a Sabbath evening! I'll let you know.

He kisses her cheek and they part, both leaving the square. Hesther sits in her place again; Dysart walks round the circle, and greets Dora who stands waiting for him downstage.

7

DYSART (*shaking hands*) Mrs Strang.

DORA Mr Strang's still at the Press, I'm afraid. He should be home in a minute.

DYSART He works Sundays as well?

DORA Oh, yes. He doesn't set much store by Sundays.

DYSART Perhaps you and I could have a little talk before he comes in.

DORA Certainly. Won't you come into the living room?

She leads the way into the square. She is very nervous.

Please . . . .

She motions him to sit, then holds her hands tightly together.

DYSART Mrs Strang, have you any idea how this thing could have occurred?

DORA I can't imagine, Doctor. It's all so unbelievable! . . . Alan's always been such a gentle boy. He loves animals! Especially horses.

DYSART Especially?

DORA Yes. He even has a photograph of one up in his bedroom. A beautiful white one, looking over a gate. His father gave it to him a few years ago, off a calendar he'd printed – and he's never taken it down . . . And when he was seven or eight, I used to have to read him the same book over and over, all *about* a horse.

DYSART Really?

DORA Yes: it was called Prince, and no one could ride him.

Alan calls from his bed, not looking at his mother.

ALAN (*excited, younger voice*) Why not? . . . Why not? . . . Say it! In his voice!

DARA He loved the idea of animals talking.

DYSART Did he?

ALAN *Say it! Say it! . . . Use his voice!*

DORA (*'proud' voice*) 'Because I am faithful!'

Alan giggles.

'My name is Prince, and I'm a Prince among horses! Only my young Master can ride me! Anyone else – I'll *throw off!*'

Alan giggles louder.

And then I remember I used to tell him a funny thing about

falling off horses. Did you know that when Christian cavalry first appeared in the New World, the pagans thought horse and rider was one person?

DYSART Really?

ALAN (*sitting up, amazed*) One person?

DORA Actually, they thought it must be a god.

ALAN *A god!*

DORA It was only when one rider fell off, they realized the truth.

DYSART That's fascinating. I never heard that before. . . . Can you remember anything else like that you may have told him about horses?

DORA Well, not really. They're in the Bible, of course. 'He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha.'

DYSART Ha, ha?

DORA The Book of Job. Such a noble passage. *You* know – (*quoting*) 'Hast thou given the horse strength?'

ALAN (*responding*) 'Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?'

DORA (*to Alan*) 'The glory of his nostrils is terrible!'

ALAN 'He swallows the ground with fierceness and rage!'

DORA 'He saith among the trumpets –'

ALAN (*trumpeting*) 'Ha! Ha!'

DORA (*to Dysart*) Isn't that splendid?

DYSART It certainly is.

ALAN (*trumpeting*) Ha! Ha!

DORA And then, of course, we saw an awful lot of Westerns on the television. He couldn't have enough of those.

DYSART But surely you don't have a set, do you? I understood Mr Strang doesn't approve.

DORA (*conspiratorially*) He doesn't . . . I used to let him slip off in the afternoons to a friend next door.

DYSART (*smiling*) You mean without his father's knowledge?

DORA What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve over, does it? Anyway, Westerns are harmless enough, surely?

Frank stands up and enters the square. Alan lies back under the blanket.

(*to Frank*) Oh, hallo dear. This is Dr Dysart.

FRANK (*shaking hands*) How d'you do?

DYSART How d'you do?

DORA I was just telling the Doctor, Alan's always adored horses.

FRANK (*tight*) We assumed he did.

DORA You know he did, dear. Look how he liked that photograph you gave him.

FRANK (*startled*) What about it?

DORA Nothing dear. Just that he pestered you to have it as soon as he saw it. Do you remember? (*to Dysart*) We've always been a horsey family. At least my side of it has. My grandfather used to ride every morning on the downs behind Brighton, all dressed up in bowler hat and jodhpurs! He used to look splendid. Indulging in equitation, he called it.

Frank moves away from them and sits wearily.

ALAN (*trying the word*) Equitation....

DORA I remember I told him how that came from *equus*, the Latin word for horse. Alan was fascinated by that word, I know. I suppose because he'd never come across one with two U's together before.

ALAN (*savouring it*) *Equus!*

DORA I always wanted the boy to ride himself. He'd have so enjoyed it.

DYSART But surely he did?

DORA No.

DYSART Never?

DORA He didn't care for it. He was most definite about not wanting to.

DYSART But he must have had to at the stables? I mean, it would be part of the job.

DORA You'd have thought so, but no. He absolutely wouldn't, would he, dear?

FRANK (*dryly*) It seems he was perfectly happy raking out manure.

DYSART Did he ever give a reason for this?

DORA No. I must say we both thought it most peculiar, but he wouldn't discuss it. I mean, you'd have thought he'd be longing to get out in the air after being cooped up all week in that dreadful shop. Electrical and kitchenware! Isn't *that* an environment for a sensitive boy, Doctor?...

FRANK Dear, have you offered the doctor a cup of tea?

DORA Oh dear, no, I haven't!... And you must be dying for one.

DYSART That would be nice.

DORA Of course it would... Excuse me...

She goes out – but lingers on the circle, eavesdropping near the right door. Alan stretches out under his blanket and sleeps. Frank gets up.

FRANK My wife has romantic ideas, if you receive my meaning.

DYSART About her family?

FRANK She thinks she married beneath her. I daresay she did. I don't understand these things myself.

DYSART Mr Strang, I'm fascinated by the fact that Alan wouldn't ride.

FRANK Yes, well that's him. He's always been a weird lad, I have to be honest. Can you imagine spending your weekends like that – just cleaning out stalls – with all the things that he could have been doing in the way of Further Education?

DYSART Except he's hardly a scholar.

FRANK How do we know? He's never really tried. His mother indulged him. She doesn't care if he can hardly write his own name, and she a school teacher that was. Just as long as he's happy, she says...

Dora wrings her hands in anguish. Frank sits again.

DYSART Would you say she was closer to him than you are?

FRANK They've always been thick as thieves. I can't say I entirely approve – especially when I hear her whispering that Bible to him hour after hour, up there in his room.

DYSART Your wife is religious?

FRANK Some might say excessively so. Mind you, that's her business. But when it comes to dosing it down the boy's throat – well, frankly, he's my son as well as hers. She

doesn't see that. Of course, that's the funny thing about religious people. They always think their susceptibilities are more important than non-religious.

DYSART And you're non-religious, I take it?

FRANK I'm an atheist, and I don't mind admitting it. If you want my opinion, it's the Bible that's responsible for all this.

DYSART Why?

FRANK Well, look at it yourself. A boy spends night after night having this stuff read into him: an innocent man tortured to death – thorns driven into his head – nails into his hands – a spear jammed through his ribs. It can mark anyone for life, that kind of thing. I'm not joking. The boy was absolutely fascinated by all that. He was always mooning over religious pictures. I mean real kinky ones, if you receive my meaning. I had to put a stop to it once or twice! . . . (*pause*) Bloody religion – it's our only real problem in this house, but it's insuperable: I don't mind admitting it.

Unable to stand any more, Dora comes in again.

DORA (*pleasantly*) You must excuse my husband, Doctor. This one subject is something of an obsession with him, isn't it, dear? You must admit.

FRANK Call it what you like. All that stuff to me is just bad sex.

DORA And what has that got to do with Alan?

FRANK Everything! . . . (*seriously*) Everything, Dora!

DORA I don't understand. What are you saying?

He turns away from her.

DYSART (*calmingly*) Mr Strang, exactly how informed do you judge your son to *be* about sex?

FRANK (*tight*) I don't know.

DYSART You didn't actually instruct him yourself?

FRANK Not in so many words, no.

DYSART Did *you*, Mrs Strang?

DORA Well, I spoke a little, yes. I had to. I've been a teacher, Doctor, and I know what happens if you don't. They find out through magazines and dirty books.

DYSART What sort of thing did you tell him? I'm sorry if this is embarrassing.

DORA I told him the biological facts. But I also told him what I believed. That sex is not *just* a biological matter, but spiritual as well. That if God willed, he would fall in love one day. That his task was to prepare himself for the most important happening of his life. And after that, if he was lucky, he might come to know a higher love still . . . I simply . . . don't understand. . . . *Alan!* . . .

She breaks down in sobs. Her husband gets up and goes to her.

FRANK (*embarrassed*) There now. There now, Dora. Come on!

DORA (*with sudden desperation*) All right – laugh! Laugh, as usual!

FRANK (*kindly*) No one's laughing, Dora.

She glares at him. He puts his arms round her shoulders.

No one's laughing, are they Doctor?

Tenderly, he leads his wife out of the square, and they resume their places on the bench.

Lights grow much dimmer.

8

A strange noise begins. Alan begins to murmur from his bed. He is having a bad nightmare, moving his hands and body as if frantically straining to tug something back. Dysart leaves the square as the boy's cries increase.

ALAN Ek! . . . Ek! . . . *Ek!* . . .

Cries of Ek! *on tape fill the theatre, from all around. Dysart reaches the foot of Alan's bed as the boy gives a terrible cry —*

EK!

— and wakes up. The sounds snap off. Alan and the Doctor stare at each other. Then abruptly Dysart leaves the area and re-enters the square.

9

Lights grow brighter.

Dysart sits on his bench, left, and opens his file. Alan gets out of bed, leaves his blanket, and comes in. He looks truculent.

DYSART Hallo. How are you this morning?

Alan stares at him.

Come on: sit down.

Alan crosses the stage and sits on the bench, opposite.

Sorry if I gave you a start last night. I was collecting some papers from my office, and I thought I'd look in on you. Do you dream often?

ALAN Do *you?*

DYSART It's my job to ask the questions. Yours to answer them.

ALAN Says who?

DYSART Says me. Do you dream often?

ALAN Do you?

DYSART Look – Alan.

ALAN I'll answer if you answer. In turns.

Pause.

DYSART Very well. Only we have to speak the truth.

ALAN (*mocking*) Very well.

DYSART So. Do you dream often?

ALAN Yes. Do you?

DYSART Yes. Do you have a special dream?

ALAN No. Do you?

DYSART Yes. What was your dream about last night?

ALAN Can't remember. What's yours about?

DYSART I said the truth.

ALAN That is the truth. What's yours about? The special one.

DYSART Carving up children.

Alan smiles.

My turn!

ALAN What?

DYSART What is your first memory of a horse?

ALAN What d'you mean?

DYSART The first time one entered your life, in any way.

ALAN Can't remember.

DYSART Are you sure?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART You have no recollection of the first time you noticed a horse?

ALAN I told you. Now it's my turn. Are you married?

DYSART (*controlling himself*) I am.

ALAN Is she a doctor too?

DYSART It's my turn.

ALAN Yes, well what?

DYSART What is Ek?

Pause.

You shouted it out last night in your sleep. I thought you might like to talk about it.

ALAN (*singing*) Double Diamond works wonders,
Works wonders, works wonders!

DYSART Come on, now. You can do better than that.

ALAN (*singing louder*) Double Diamond works wonders,
Works wonders
For you!

DYSART All right. Good morning.

ALAN What d'you mean?

DYSART We're finished for today.

ALAN But I've only had ten minutes.

DYSART Too bad.

He picks up a file and studies it. Alan lingers.

Didn't you hear me? I said, Good morning.

ALAN That's not fair!

DYSART No?

ALAN (*savagely*) The Government pays you twenty quid an hour to see me. I know. I heard downstairs.

DYSART Well, go back there and hear some more.

ALAN *That's not fair!*

He springs up clenching his fists in a sudden violent rage.
You're a – you're a – You're a swiz! . . . Bloody swiz! . . . Fucking swiz!
DYSART Do I have to call Nurse?
ALAN She puts a finger on me, I'll bash her!
DYSART She'll bash you much harder, I can assure you. Now go away.
He reads his file. Alan stays where he is, emptily clenching his hands. He turns away.
A pause.
A faint hum starts from the Chorus.
ALAN (*sullenly*) On a beach. . . .

10

He steps out of the square, upstage, and begins to walk round the circle. Warm light glows on it.

DYSART What?
ALAN Where I saw a horse. Swizzy.
Lazily he kicks at the sand, and throws stones at the sea.
DYSART How old were you?
ALAN How should I know? . . . Six.
DYSART Well, go on. What were you doing there?
ALAN Digging.
He throws himself on the ground, downstage centre of the circle, and starts scuffing with his hands.
DYSART A sandcastle?
ALAN Well, what else?
DYSART (*warningly*) And?
ALAN Suddenly I heard this noise. Coming up behind me.
A young Horseman issues in slow motion *out of the tunnel. He carries a riding crop with which he is urging on his invisible horse, down the right side of the circle.*
The hum increases.

DYSART What noise?
ALAN Hooves. Splashing.
DYSART Splashing?
ALAN The tide was out and he was galloping.
DYSART Who was?
ALAN This fellow. Like a college chap. He was on a big horse – urging him on. I thought he hadn't seen me. I called out: Hey!
The horseman goes into natural time, *charging fast round the downstage corner of the square straight at Alan.*
and they just swerved in time!
HORSEMAN (*reining back*) Whoa! . . . Whoa there! *Whoa!* . . . Sorry! I didn't see you! . . . Did I scare you?
ALAN No!
HORSEMAN (*looking down on him*) That's a terrific castle!
ALAN What's his name?
HORSEMAN Trojan. You can stroke him, if you like. He won't mind.
Shyly Alan stretches up on tip-toe, and pats an invisible shoulder.
(*amused*) You can hardly reach down there. Would you like to come up?
Alan nods, eyes wide.
All right. Come round this side. You always mount a horse from the left. I'll give you a lift. O.K.?
Alan goes round on the other side.
Here we go, now. Just do nothing. Upsadaisy!
Alan set his foot on the Horseman's thigh, and is lifted by him up on to his shoulders.
The hum from the Chorus becomes exultant. Then stops.
All right?
Alan nods.
Good. Now all you do is hold onto his mane.
He holds up the crop, and Alan grips on to it.
Tight now. And grip with your knees. All right?
All set? . . . Come on, then, Trojan. Let's go!
The Horseman walks slowly upstage round the circle, with Alan's legs

tight round his neck.

DYSART How was it? Was it wonderful?

Alan rides in silence.

Can't you remember?

HORSEMAN Do you want to go faster?

ALAN Yes!

HORSEMAN O.K. All you have to do is say 'Come on, Trojan – bear me away!' . . . Say it, then!

ALAN Bear me away!

The Horesman starts to run with Alan round the circle.

DYSART You went fast?

ALAN Yes!

DYSART Weren't you frightened?

ALAN No!

HORSEMAN Come on now, Trojan! Bear us away! Hold on! Come on now! . . .

He runs faster. Alan begins to laugh. Then suddenly, as they reach again the right downstage corner, Frank and Dora stand up in alarm.

DORA Alan!

FRANK Alan!

DORA Alan, stop!

Frank runs round after them. Dora follows behind.

FRANK Hey, you! *You!* . . .

HORSEMAN Whoa, boy! . . . Whoa! . . .

He reins the horse round, and wheels to face the parents. This all goes fast.

FRANK What do you imagine you are doing?

HORSEMAN (*ironic*) 'Imagine'?

FRANK What is my son doing up there?

HORSEMAN Water-skiing!

Dora joins them, breathless.

DORA Is he all right, Frank? . . . He's not hurt?

FRANK Don't you think you should ask permission before doing a stupid thing like that?

HORSEMAN What's stupid?

ALAN It's lovely, dad!

DORA Alan, come down here!

HORSEMAN The boy's perfectly safe. Please don't be hysterical.

FRANK Don't you be la-di-da with me, young man! Come down here, Alan. You heard what your mother said.

ALAN No.

FRANK Come down at once. Right this moment.

ALAN No. . . . NO!

FRANK (*in a fury*) I said – this moment!

He pulls Alan from the Horseman's shoulders. The boy shrieks, and falls to the ground.

HORSEMAN Watch it!

DORA Frank!

She runs to her son, and kneels. The Horseman skitters.

HORSEMAN Are you mad? D'you want to terrify the horse?

DORA He's grazed his knee. Frank – the boy's hurt!

ALAN I'm not! I'm *not!*

FRANK What's your name?

HORSEMAN Jesse James.

DORA Frank, he's bleeding!

FRANK I intend to report you to the police for endangering the lives of children.

HORSEMAN Go right ahead!

DORA Can you stand, dear?

ALAN Oh, *stop* it! . . .

FRANK You're a public menace, d'you know that? How dare you pick up children and put them on dangerous animals.

HORSEMAN Dangerous?

FRANK Of course dangerous. Look at his eyes. They're rolling.

HORSEMAN So are yours!

FRANK In my opinion that is a dangerous animal. In my considered opinion you are both dangers to the safety of this beach.

HORSEMAN And in my opinion, you're a stupid fart!

DORA Frank, leave it!

FRANK What did you say?

DORA It's not important, Frank – really!

FRANK *What did you say?*

HORSEMAN Oh bugger off! Sorry, chum! Come on, Trojan!

He urges his horse straight at them, then wheels it and gallops off round the right side of the circle and away up the tunnel, out of sight. The parents cry out, as they are covered with sand and water. Frank runs after him, and round the left side of the circle, with his wife following after.

ALAN Splash, splash, splash! All three of us got covered with water! Dad got absolutely soaked!

FRANK (*shouting after the Horseman*) Hooligan! Filthy hooligan!

ALAN I wanted to laugh!

FRANK Upper class riff-raff! That's all they are, people who go riding! That's what they *want* – trample on ordinary people!

DORA Don't be absurd, Frank.

FRANK It's why they do it. It's why they bloody do it!

DORA (*amused*) Look at you. You're covered!

FRANK Not as much as you. There's sand all over your hair!

She starts to laugh.

(*shouting*) Hooligan! Bloody hooligan!

She starts to laugh more. He tries to brush the sand out of her hair.

What are you laughing at? It's not funny. It's not funny at all, Dora!

She goes off, right, still laughing. Alan edges into the square, still on the ground.

It's just not funny! . . .

Frank returns to his place on the beach, sulky.

Abrupt silence.

ALAN And that's all I remember.

DYSART And a lot, too. Thank you. . . You know, I've never been on a horse in my life.

ALAN (*not looking at him*) Nor me.

DYSART You mean, after that?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART But you must have done at the stables?

ALAN No.

DYSART Never?

ALAN No.

DYSART How come?

ALAN I didn't care to.

DYSART Did it have anything to do with falling off like that, all those years ago?

ALAN (*tight*) I just didn't care to, that's all.

DYSART Do you think of that scene often?

ALAN I suppose.

DYSART Why, do you think?

ALAN 'Cos it's funny.

DYSART Is that all?

ALAN What else? My turn. . . . I told you a secret: now you tell me one.

DYSART All right. I have patients who've got things to tell me, only they're ashamed to say them to my face. What do you think I do about that?

ALAN What?

DYSART I give them this little tape recorder.

He takes a small tape recorder and microphone from his pocket.

They go off to another room, and send me the tape through Nurse. They don't have to listen to it with me.

ALAN That's stupid.

DYSART All you do is press this button, and speak into this. It's very simple. Anyway, your time's up for today. I'll see you tomorrow.

ALAN (*getting up*) Maybe.

DYSART Maybe?

ALAN If I feel like it.

He is about to go out. Then suddenly he returns to Dysart and takes the machine from him.

It's stupid.

He leaves the square and goes back to his bed.

11

DORA (*calling out*) Doctor!

Dora re-enters and comes straight on to the square from the right. She wears an overcoat, and is nervously carrying a shopping bag.

DYSART That same evening, his mother appeared.

DORA Hallo, Doctor.

DYSART Mrs Strang!

DORA I've been shopping in the neighbourhood. I thought I might just look in.

DYSART Did you want to see Alan?

DORA (*uncomfortably*) No, no... Not just at the moment. Actually, it's more you I wanted to see.

DYSART Yes?

DORA You see, there's something Mr Strang and I thought you ought to know. We discussed it, and it might just be important.

DYSART Well, come and sit down.

DORA I can't stay more than a moment. I'm late as it is. Mr Strang will be wanting his dinner.

DYSART Ah. (*encouragingly*) So, what was it you wanted to tell me?

She sits on the upstage bench.

DORA Well, do you remember that photograph I mentioned to you. The one Mr Strang gave Alan to decorate his bedroom a few years ago?

DYSART Yes. A horse looking over a gate, wasn't it?

DORA That's right. Well, actually, it took the place of another kind of picture altogether.

DYSART What kind?

DORA It was a reproduction of Our Lord on his way to Calvary. Alan found it in Reeds Art Shop, and fell absolutely in love with it. He insisted on buying it with his pocket money, and hanging it at the foot of his bed where he could see it last thing at night. My husband was very displeased.

DYSART Because it was religious?

DORA In all fairness I must admit it was a little extreme. The Christ was loaded down with chains, and the centurions were really laying on the stripes. It certainly would not have been my choice, but I don't believe in interfering too much with children, so I said nothing.

DYSART But Mr Strang did?

DORA He stood it for a while, but one day we had one of our tiffs about religion, and he went straight upstairs, tore it off the boy's wall and threw it in the dustbin. Alan went quite hysterical. He cried for days without stopping – and he was not a crier, you know.

DYSART But he recovered when he was given the photograph of the horse in its place?

DORA He certainly seemed to. At least, he hung it in exactly the same position, and we had no more of that awful weeping.

DYSART Thank you, Mrs Strang. That *is* interesting... Exactly how long ago was that? Can you remember?

DORA It must be five years ago, Doctor. Alan would have been about twelve. How is he, by the way?

DYSART Bearing up.

She rises.

DORA Please give him my love.

DYSART You can see him any time you want, you know.

DORA Perhaps if I could come one afternoon without Mr Strang. He and Alan don't exactly get on at the moment, as you can imagine.

DYSART Whatever you decide, Mrs Strang... Oh, one thing.

DORA Yes?

DYSART Could you describe that photograph of the horse in a little more detail for me? I presume it's still in his bedroom?

DORA Oh, yes. It's a most remarkable picture, really. You very rarely see a horse taken from that angle – absolutely head on. That's what makes it so interesting.

DYSART Why? What does it look like?

DORA Well, it's most extraordinary. It comes out all eyes.

DYSART Staring straight at you?
DORA Yes, that's right...
An uncomfortable pause.
I'll come and see him one day very soon, Doctor. Goodbye.
She leaves, and resumes her place by her husband.
DYSART (*to audience*) It was then – that moment – I felt real alarm. What was it? The shadow of a giant head across my desk?... At any rate, the feeling got worse with the stable-owner's visit.

12

Dalton comes in to the square: heavy-set: mid-fifties.

DALTON Dr Dysart?
DYSART Mr Dalton. It's very good of you to come.
DALTON It is, actually. In my opinion the boy should be in prison. Not in a hospital at the tax-payers' expense.
DYSART Please sit down.
Dalton sits.
This must have been a terrible experience for you.
DALTON Terrible? I don't think I'll ever get over it. Jill's had a nervous breakdown.
DYSART Jill?
DALTON The girl who worked for me. Of course, she feels responsible in a way. Being the one who introduced him in the first place.
DYSART He was introduced to the stable by a girl?
DALTON Jill Mason. He met her somewhere, and asked for a job. She told him to come and see me. I wish to Christ she never had.
DYSART But when he first appeared he didn't seem in any way peculiar?
DALTON No, he was bloody good. He'd spend hours with the horses cleaning and grooming them, way over the call of

duty. I thought he was a real find.
DYSART Apparently, during the whole time he worked for you, he never actually rode.
DALTON That's true.
DYSART Wasn't that peculiar?
DALTON Very... *If* he didn't.
DYSART What do you mean?
Dalton rises.
DALTON Because on and off, that whole year, I had the feeling the horses were being taken out at night.
DYSART At night?
DALTON There were just odd things I noticed. I mean too often one or other of them would be sweaty first thing in the morning, when it wasn't sick. Very sweaty, too. And its stall wouldn't be near as mucky as it should be if it had been in all night. I never paid it much mind at the time. It was only when I realised I'd been hiring a loony, I came to wonder if he hadn't been riding all the time, behind our backs.
DYSART But wouldn't you have noticed if things had been disturbed?
DALTON Nothing ever was. Still, he's a neat worker. That wouldn't prove anything.
DYSART Aren't the stables locked at night?
DALTON Yes.
DYSART And someone sleeps on the premises?
DALTON Me and my son.
DYSART Two people?
DALTON I'm sorry, Doctor. It's obviously just my fancy. I tell you, this thing has shaken me so bad, I'm liable to believe anything. If there's nothing else, I'll be going.
DYSART Look: even if you were right, why should anyone do that? Why would any boy prefer to ride by himself at night, when he could go off with others during the day.
DALTON Are you asking me? He's a loony, isn't he?
Dalton leaves the square and sits again in his place. Dysart watches him go.

ALAN It was *sexy.*
DYSART His tape arrived that evening.

13

Alan is sitting on his bed holding the tape-recorder. Nurse approaches briskly, takes the machine from him – gives it to Dysart in the square – and leaves again, resuming her seat. Dysart switches on the tape.

ALAN That's what you want to know, isn't it? All right: it was. I'm talking about the beach. That time when I was a kid. What I told you about. . . .
Pause. He is in great emotional difficulty.
Dysart sits on the left bench listening, file in hand. Alan rises and stands directly behind him, but on the circle, as if recording the ensuing speech. He never, of course, looks directly at the Doctor.
I was pushed forward on the horse. There was sweat on my legs from his neck. The fellow held me tight, and let me turn the horse which way I wanted. All that power going any way you wanted . . . His sides were all warm, and the smell . . . Then suddenly I was on the ground, where Dad pulled me. I could have bashed him . . .
Pause.
Something else. When the horse first appeared, I looked up into his mouth. It was huge. There was this chain in it. The fellow pulled it, and cream dripped out. I said 'Does it hurt?' And he said – the horse said – said –
He stops, in anguish. Dysart makes a note in his file.
(*desperately*) It was always the same, after that. Every time I heard one clop by, I had to run and see. Up a country lane or anywhere. They sort of pulled me. I couldn't take my eyes off them. Just to watch their skins. The way their necks twist, and sweat shines in the folds . . . (*pause*) I can't remember when it started. Mum reading to me about Prince who no one could ride, except one boy. Or the white horse in

Revelations. 'He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. His eyes were as flames of fire, and he had a name written that no man knew but himself' . . . Words like reins. Stirrup. Flanks . . . 'Dashing his spurs against his charger's flanks!' . . . Even the words made me feel – . . . Years, I never told anyone. Mum wouldn't understand. She likes 'Equitation'. Bowler hats and jodhpurs! 'My grandfather dressed for the horse,' she says. What does that mean? The horse isn't dressed. It's the most naked thing you ever saw! More than a dog or a cat or anything. Even the most broken down old nag has got its *life!* To put a bowler on it is *filthy!* . . . Putting them through their paces! Bloody gymkhanas! . . . No one understands! . . . Except cowboys. They do. I wish I was a cowboy. They're free. They just swing up and then it's miles of grass . . . I bet all cowboys are *orphans!* . . . I bet they are!
NURSE Mr Strang to see you, Doctor.
DYSART (*in surprise*) Mr Strang? Show him up, please.
ALAN No one ever says to cowboys 'Receive my meaning'! They wouldn't dare. Or 'God' all the time. (*mimicking his mother*) 'God sees you, Alan. God's got eyes everywhere—'
He stops abruptly.
I'm not doing any more! . . . I hate this! . . . You can whistle for anymore. I've had it!
He returns angrily to his bed, throwing the blanket over him. Dysart switches off the tape.

14

Frank Strang comes into the square, his hat in his hand. He is nervous and embarrassed.

DYSART (*welcoming*) Hallo, Mr Strang.
FRANK I was just passing. I hope it's not too late.
DYSART Of course not. I'm delighted to see you.

FRANK My wife doesn't know I'm here. I'd be grateful to you if you didn't enlighten her, if you receive my meaning.

DYSART Everything that happens in this room is confidential, Mr Strang.

FRANK I hope so . . . I hope so . . .

DYSART (*gently*) Do you have something to tell me?

FRANK As a matter of fact I have. Yes.

DYSART Your wife told me about the photograph.

FRANK I know, it's not that! It's *about* that, but it's – worse. . . . I wanted to tell you the other night, but I couldn't in front of Dora. Maybe I should have. It might show her where all that stuff leads to, she drills into the boy behind my back.

DYSART What kind of thing is it?

FRANK Something I witnessed.

DYSART Where?

FRANK At home. About eighteen months ago.

DYSART Go on.

FRANK It was late. I'd gone upstairs to fetch something. The boy had been in bed hours, or so I thought.

DYSART Go on.

FRANK As I came along the passage I saw the door of his bedroom was ajar. I'm sure he didn't know it was. From inside I heard the sound of this chanting.

DYSART Chanting?

FRANK Like the Bible. One of those lists his mother's always reading to him.

DYSART What kind of list?

FRANK Those Begats. So-and-so begat, you know. Genealogy.

DYSART Can you remember what Alan's list sounded like?

FRANK Well, the *sort* of thing. I stood there absolutely astonished. The first word I heard was . . .

ALAN (*rising and chanting*) *Prince!*

DYSART Prince?

FRANK Prince begat Prance. That sort of nonsense.

Alan moves slowly to the centre of the circle, downstage.

ALAN And Prance begat Prankus! And Prankus begat Flankus!

FRANK I looked through the door, and he was standing in the moonlight in his pyjamas, right in front of that big photograph.

DYSART The horse with the huge eyes?

FRANK Right.

ALAN Flankus begat Spankus. And Spankus begat Spunkus the Great, who lived three score years!

FRANK It was all like that. I can't remember the exact names, of course. Then suddenly he knelt down.

DYSART In front of the photograph?

FRANK Yes. Right there at the foot of his bed.

ALAN (*kneeling*) And Legwus begat Neckwus. And Neckwus begat Fleckwus, the King of Spit. And Fleckwus spoke out of his chinkle-chankle!

He bows himself to the ground.

DYSART What?

FRANK I'm sure that was the word. I've never forgotten it. Chinkle-chankle.

Alan raises his head and extends his hands up in glory.

ALAN And he said 'Behold – I give you Equus, my only begotten son!'

DYSART Equus?

FRANK Yes. No doubt of that. He repeated that word several times. 'Equus my only begotten son.'

ALAN (*reverently*) Ek . . . . wus!

DYSART (*suddenly understanding: almost 'aside'*) Ek. . . . Ek. . . .

FRANK (*embarrassed*) And then. . .

DYSART Yes: what?

FRANK He took a piece of string out of his pocket. Made up into a noose. And put it in his mouth.

Alan bridles himself with invisible string, and pulls it back.

And then with his other hand he picked up a coat hanger. A wooden coat hanger, and – and—

DYSART Began to beat himself?

Alan, in mime, begins to thrash himself, increasing the strokes in

speed and viciousness.

Pause.

FRANK You see why I couldn't tell his mother.... Religion. Religion's at the bottom of all this!

DYSART What did you do?

FRANK Nothing. I coughed – and went back downstairs.

The boy starts guiltily – tears the string from his mouth – and scrambles back to bed.

DYSART Did you ever speak to him about it later? Even obliquely?

FRANK (*unhappily*) I can't speak of things like that, Doctor. It's not in my nature.

DYSART (*kindly*) No. I see that.

FRANK But I thought you ought to know. So I came.

DYSART (*warmly*) Yes. I'm very grateful to you. Thank you.

Pause.

FRANK Well, that's it...

DYSART Is there anything else?

FRANK (*even more embarrassed*) There is actually. One thing.

DYSART What's that?

FRANK On the night that he did it – that awful thing in the stable –

DYSART Yes?

FRANK That very night, he was out with a girl.

DYSART How d'you know that?

FRANK I just know.

DYSART (*puzzled*) Did he tell you?

FRANK I can't say any more.

DYSART I don't quite understand.

FRANK Everything said in here is confidential, you said.

DYSART Absolutely.

FRANK Then ask him. Ask him about taking a girl out, that very night he did it.... (*abruptly*) Goodbye, Doctor.

He goes. Dysart looks after him. Frank resumes his seat.

15

Alan gets up and enters the square.

DYSART Alan! Come in. Sit down. (*pleasantly*) What did you do last night?

ALAN Watched telly.

DYSART Any good?

ALAN All right.

DYSART Thanks for the tape. It was excellent.

ALAN I'm not making any more.

DYSART One thing I didn't quite understand. You began to say something about the horse on the beach talking to you.

ALAN That's stupid. Horses don't talk.

DYSART So I believe.

ALAN I don't know what you mean.

DYSART Never mind. Tell me something else. Who introduced you to the stable to begin with?

Pause.

ALAN Someone I met.

DYSART Where?

ALAN Bryson's.

DYSART The shop where you worked?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART That's a funny place for you to be. Whose idea was that?

ALAN Dad.

DYSART I'd thought he'd have wanted you to work with him.

ALAN I haven't the aptitude. And printing's a failing trade. If you receive my meaning.

DYSART (*amused*) I see... What did your mother think?

ALAN Shops are common.

DYSART And you?

ALAN I loved it.

DYSART Really?

ALAN (*sarcastic*) Why not? You get to spend every minute with electrical things. It's fun.

Nurse, Dalton and the actors playing horses call out to him as Customers, seated where they are. Their voices are aggressive and demanding. There is a constant background mumbling, made up of trade names, out of which can clearly be distinguished the italicized words, which are shouted out.

CUSTOMER *Philco!*

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Of course it might just drive you off your chump.

CUSTOMER I want to buy a hot-plate. I'm told the *Philco* is a good make!

ALAN I think it is, madam.

CUSTOMER *Remington* ladies' shavers?

ALAN I'm not sure, madam.

CUSTOMER *Robex* tableware?

CUSTOMER *Croydex?*

CUSTOMER *Volex?*

CUSTOMER *Pifco* automatic toothbrushes?

ALAN I'll find out, sir.

CUSTOMER *Beautiflor!*

CUSTOMER *Windolene!*

CUSTOMER I want a *Philco* transistor radio!

CUSTOMER This isn't a *Remington!* I wanted a *Remington!*

ALAN Sorry.

CUSTOMER Are you a dealer for *Hoover?*

ALAN Sorry.

CUSTOMER I wanted the heat retaining *Pifco!*

ALAN *Sorry!*

Jill comes into the square: a girl in her early twenties, pretty and middle class. She wears a sweater and jeans. The mumbling stops.

JILL Hallo.

ALAN Hallo.

JILL Have you any blades for a clipping machine?

ALAN Clipping?

JILL To clip horses.

Pause. He stares at her, open-mouthed.

What's the matter?

ALAN You work at Dalton's stables. I've seen you.

During the following, he mimes putting away a pile of boxes on a shelf in the shop.

JILL I've seen you too, haven't I? You're the boy who's always staring into the yard around lunch-time.

ALAN Me?

JILL You're there most days.

ALAN Not me.

JILL (*amused*) Of course it's you. Mr Dalton was only saying the other day: 'Who's that boy keeps staring in at the door?' Are you looking for a job or something?

ALAN (*eagerly*) Is there one?

JILL I don't know.

ALAN I can only do weekends.

JILL That's when most people ride. We can always use extra hands. It'd mainly be mucking out.

ALAN I don't mind.

JILL Can you ride?

ALAN No . . . No . . . I don't want to.

She looks at him curiously.

Please.

JILL Come up on Saturday. I'll introduce you to Mr Dalton.

She leaves the square.

DYSART When was this? About a year ago?

ALAN I suppose.

DYSART And she did?

ALAN Yes.

Briskly he moves the three benches to form three stalls in the stable.

16

Rich light falls on the square.

An exultant humming from the Chorus.

Tramping is heard. Three actors playing horses rise from their places. Together they unhook three horse masks from the ladders to left and right, put them on with rigid timing, and walk with swaying horse-motion into the square. Their metal hooves stamp on the wood. Their masks turn and toss high above their heads – as they will do sporadically throughout all horse scenes – making the steel gleam in the light.

For a moment they seem to converge on the boy as he stands in the middle of the stable, but then they swiftly turn and take up positions as if tethered by the head, with their invisible rumps towards him, one by each bench.

Alan is sunk in this glowing world of horses. Lost in wonder, he starts almost involuntarily to kneel on the floor in reverence – but is sharply interrupted by the cheery voice of Dalton, coming into the stable, followed by Jill. The boy straightens up guiltily.

DALTON First thing to learn is drill. Learn it and keep to it. I want this place neat, dry and clean at all times. After you've mucked out, Jill will show you some grooming. What we call strapping a horse.

JILL I think Trooper's got a stone.

DALTON Yes? Let's see.

He crosses to the horse by the left bench, who is balancing one hoof on its tip. He picks up the hoof.

You're right. (*to Alan*) See this? This V here. It's what's called a frog. Sort of shock-absorber. Once you pierce that, it takes ages to heal – so you want to watch for it. You clean it out with this. What we call a hoof-pick.

He takes from his pocket an invisible pick.

Mind how you go with it. It's very sharp. Use it like this.

He quickly takes the stone out.

See?

Alan nods, fascinated.

You'll soon get the hang of it. Jill will look after you. What she doesn't know about stables, isn't worth knowing.

JILL (*pleased*) Oh yes, I'm sure!

DALTON (*handing Alan the pick*) Careful how you go with that.

The main rule is, anything you don't know: ask. Never pretend you know something when you don't. (*smiling*) Actually, the main rule is: enjoy yourself. All right?

ALAN Yes, sir.

DALTON Good lad. See you later.

He nods to them cheerfully, and leaves the square. Alan clearly puts the invisible hoof-pick on the rail, downstage left.

JILL All right, let's start on some grooming. Why don't we begin with him? He looks as if he needs it.

They approach Nugget, who is standing to the right. She pats him. Alan sits and watches her.

This is Nugget. He's my favourite. He's as gentle as a baby, aren't you? But terribly fast if you want him to be.

During the following, she mimes both the actions and the objects, which she picks up from the right bench.

Now this is the dandy, and we start with that. Then you move on to the body brush. This is the most important, and you use it with this curry-comb. Now you always groom the same way: from the ears downward. Don't be afraid to do it hard. The harder you do it, the more the horse loves it. Push it right through the coat: like this.

The boy watches in fascination as she brushes the invisible body of Nugget, scraping the dirt and hair off on to the invisible curry-comb. Now and then the horse mask moves very slightly in pleasure.

Down towards the tail and right through the coat. See how he loves it? I'm giving you a lovely massage, boy, aren't I? ... You try.

She hands him the brush. Gingerly he rises and approaches Nugget. Embarrassed and excited, he copies her movements, inexpertly.

Keep it nice and easy. Never rush. Down towards the tail and right through the coat. That's it. Again. Down towards the tail and right through the coat.... Very good. Now you keep that up for fifteen minutes and then do old Trooper. Will you?

Alan nods.

You've got a feel for it. I can tell. It's going to be nice

teaching you. See you later.

She leaves the square and resumes her place. Alan is left alone with the horses.

They all stamp. He approaches Nugget again, and touches the horse's shoulder. The mask turns sharply in his direction. The boy pauses, then moves his hand gently over the outline of the neck and back. The mask is re-assured. It stares ahead unmoving. Then Alan lifts his palm to his face and smells it deeply, closing his eyes.

Dysart rises from his bench, and begins to walk slowly upstage round the circle.

DYSART Was that good? Touching them.

Alan gives a faint groan.

ALAN Mmm.

DYSART It must have been marvellous, being near them at last ... Stroking them ... Making them fresh and glossy ... Tell me ...

Silence. Alan begins to brush Nugget.

How about the girl? Did you like her?

ALAN (*tight*) All right.

DYSART Just all right?

Alan changes his position, moving round Nugget's rump so that his back is to the audience. He brushes harder. Dysart comes downstage around the circle, and finally back to his bench.

Was she friendly?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART Or stand-offish?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART Well which?

ALAN What?

DYSART Which was she?

Alan brushes harder.

Did you take her out? Come on now: tell me. Did you have a date with her?

ALAN What?

DYSART (*sitting*) Tell me if you did.

The boy suddenly explodes in one of his rages.

ALAN (*yelling*) TELL ME!

All the masks toss at the noise.

DYSART What?

ALAN *Tell me, tell me, tell me, tell me!*

Alan storms out of the square, and downstage to where Dysart sits. He is raging. During the ensuing, the horses leave by all three openings.

On and on, sitting there! Nosey Parker! That's all you are! Bloody Nosey Parker! Just like Dad. On and on and bloody on! Tell me, tell me, tell me! ... Answer this. Answer that. Never stop! –

He marches round the circle and back into the square. Dysart rises and enters it from the other side.

17

Lights brighten.

DYSART I'm sorry.

Alan slams about what is now the office again, replacing the benches to their usual position.

ALAN All right, it's my turn now. You tell me! Answer me!

DYSART We're not playing that game now.

ALAN We're playing what I say.

DYSART All right. What do you want to know?

He sits.

ALAN Do *you* have dates?

DYSART I told you. I'm married.

Alan approaches him, very hostile.

ALAN I know. Her name's Margaret. She's a dentist! You see, I found out! What made you go with her? Did you use to bite her hands when she did you in the chair?

The boy sits next to him, close.

DYSART That's not very funny.

ALAN Do you have girls behind her back?

DYSART No.

ALAN Then what? Do you fuck her?
DYSART That's enough now.
He rises and moves away.
ALAN Come on, tell me! Tell me, tell me!
DYSART I said that's enough now.
Alan rises too and walks around him.
ALAN I bet you don't. I bet you never touch her. Come on, tell me. You've got no kids, have you? Is that because you don't fuck?
DYSART (*sharp*) Go to your room. Go on: quick march.
Pause. Alan moves away from him, insolently takes up a packet of Dysart's cigarettes from the bench, and extracts one.
Give me those cigarettes.
The boy puts one in his mouth.
(*exploding*) Alan, *give them to me!*
Reluctantly Alan shoves the cigarette back in the packet, turns and hands it to him.
Now go!
Alan bolts out of the square, and back to his bed. Dysart, unnerved, addresses the audience.
Brilliant! Absolutely brilliant! The boy's on the run, so he gets defensive. What am *I*, then?... Wicked little bastard – he knew exactly what questions to try. He'd actually marched himself round the hospital, making enquiries about my wife. Wicked and – of course, perceptive. Ever since I made that crack about carving up children, he's been aware of me in an absolutely specific way. Of course, there's nothing novel in that. Advanced neurotics can be dazzling at that game. They aim unswervingly at your area of maximum vulnerability... Which I suppose is as good a way as any of describing Margaret.
He sits. Hesther enters the square.
Light grows warmer.

18

HESTHER Now stop it.
DYSART Do I embarrass you?
HESTHER I suspect you're about to.
Pause.
DYSART My wife doesn't understand me, Your Honour.
HESTHER Do you understand her?
DYSART No. Obviously I never did.
HESTHER I'm sorry. I've never liked to ask but I've always imagined you weren't exactly compatible.
She moves to sit opposite.
DYSART We were. It actually worked for a bit. I mean for both of us. We worked for each other. She actually for me through a kind of briskness. A clear, red-headed, inaccessible briskness which kept me keyed up for months. Mind you, if you're kinky for Northern Hygienic, as I am, you can't find anything much more compelling than a Scottish Lady Dentist.
HESTHER It's *you* who are wicked, you know!
DYSART Not at all: She got exactly the same from me. Antiseptic proficiency. I was like that in those days. We suited each other admirably. I see us in our wedding photo: Doctor and Doctor Mac Brisk. We were brisk in our wooing, brisk in our wedding, brisk in our disappointment. We turned from each other briskly into our separate surgeries: and now there's damn all.
HESTHER You have no children, have you?
DYSART No, we didn't go in for them. Instead, she sits beside our salmon-pink, glazed brick fireplace, and knits things for orphans in a home she helps with. And I sit opposite, turning the pages of art books on Ancient Greece. Occasionally, I still trail a faint scent of my enthusiasm across her path. I pass her a picture of the sacred acrobats of Crete leaping through the horns of running bulls – and she'll say: 'Och, Martin, what an *absurred* thing to be doing! The Highland

Games, now there's *norrmal* sport!' Or she'll observe, just after I've told her a story from the Iliad: 'You know, when you come to think of it, Agamemnon and that lot were nothing but a bunch of ruffians from the Gorbals, only with fancy names!' (*He rises*) You get the picture. She's turned into a Shrink. The familiar domestic monster. Margaret Dysart: the Shrink's Shrink.

HESTHER That's cruel, Martin.

DYSART Yes. Do you know what it's like for two people to live in the same house as if they were in different parts of the world? Mentally, she's always in some drizzly kirk of her own inheriting: and I'm in some Doric temple – clouds tearing through pillars – eagles bearing prophecies out of the sky. She finds all that repulsive. All my wife has ever taken from the Mediterranean – from that whole vast intuitive culture – are four bottles of Chianti to make into lamps, and two china condiment donkeys labelled Sally and Peppy.

Pause.

(*more intimately*) I wish there was one person in my life I could show. One instinctive, absolutely unbrisk person I could take to Greece, and stand in front of certain shrines and sacred streams and say 'Look! Life is only comprehensible through a thousand local Gods. And not just the old dead ones with names like Zeus – no, but living Geniuses of Place and Person! And not just Greece but modern England! Spirits of certain trees, certain curves of brick wall, certain chip shops, if you like, and slate roofs – just as of certain frowns in people and slouches... I'd say to them – 'Worship as many as you can see – and more will appear!'... If I had a son, I bet you he'd come out exactly like his mother. Utterly worshipless. Would you like a drink?

HESTHER No, thanks. Actually, I've got to be going. As usual...

DYSART Really?

HESTHER Really. I've got an Everest of papers to get through before bed.

DYSART You never stop, do you?

HESTHER Do you?

DYSART This boy, with his stare. He's trying to save himself through me.

HESTHER I'd say so.

DYSART What am I trying to do to him?

HESTHER Restore him, surely?

DYSART To what?

HESTHER A normal life.

DYSART Normal?

HESTHER It still means something.

DYSART Does it?

HESTHER Of course.

DYSART You mean a normal boy has one head: a normal head has two ears?

HEATHER You know I don't.

DYSART Then what else?

HESTHER (*lightly*) Oh, stop it.

DYSART No, what? You tell me.

HESTHER (*rising: smiling*) I won't be put on the stand like this, Martin. You're really disgraceful!... (*Pause*) You know what I mean by a normal smile in a child's eyes, and one that isn't – even if I can't exactly define it. Don't you?

DYSART Yes.

HESTHER Then we have a duty to that, surely? Both of us.

DYSART Touché.... I'll talk to you.

HESTHER Dismissed?

DYSART You said you had to go.

HESTHER I do... (*she kisses his cheek*). Thank you for what you're doing.... You're going through a rotten patch at the moment. I'm sorry... I suppose one of the few things one can do is simply hold on to priorities.

DYSART Like what?

HESTHER Oh – children before grown-ups. Things like that.

He contemplates her.

DYSART You're really quite splendid.

HESTHER Famous for it. Goodnight.
She leaves him.
DYSART (*to himself – or to the audience*) Normal! . . . Normal!

19

Alan rises and enters the square. He is subdued.

DYSART Good afternoon.
ALAN Afternoon.
DYSART I'm sorry about our row yesterday.
ALAN It was stupid.
DYSART It was.
ALAN What I said, I mean.
DYSART How are you sleeping?
Alan shrugs.
You're not feeling well, are you?
ALAN All right.
DYSART Would you like to play a game? It could make you feel better.
ALAN What kind?
DYSART It's called *Blink*. You have to fix your eyes on something: say, that little stain over there on the wall – and I tap this pen on the desk. The first time I tap it, you close your eyes. The next time you open them. And so on. Close, open, close, open, till I say Stop.
ALAN How can that make you feel better?
DYSART It relaxes you. You'll feel as though you're talking to me in your sleep.
ALAN It's stupid.
DYSART You don't have to do it, if you don't want to.
ALAN I didn't say I didn't want to.
DYSART Well?
ALAN I don't mind.
DYSART Good. Sit down and start watching that stain. Put

your hands by your sides, and open the fingers wide.
He opens the left bench and Alan sits on the end of it.
The thing is to feel comfortable, and relax absolutely . . . Are you looking at the stain?
ALAN Yes.
DYSART Right. Now try and keep your mind as blank as possible.
ALAN That's not difficult.
DYSART Ssh. Stop talking . . . On the first tap, close. On the second, open. Are you ready?
Alan nods. Dysart taps his pen on the wooden rail. Alan shuts his eyes. Dysart taps again. Alan opens them. The taps are evenly spaced. After four of them the sound cuts out, and is replaced by a louder, metallic sound, on tape. Dysart talks through this, to the audience – the light changes to cold – while the boy sits in front of him, staring at the wall, opening and shutting his eyes.
The Normal is the good smile in a child's eyes – all right. It is also the dead stare in a million adults. It both sustains and kills – like a God. It is the Ordinary made beautiful: it is also the Average made lethal. The Normal is the indispensable, murderous God of Health, and I am his Priest. My tools are very delicate. My compassion is honest. I have honestly assisted children in this room. I have talked away terrors and relieved many agonies. But also – beyond question – I have cut from them parts of individuality repugnant to this God, in both his aspects. Parts sacred to rarer and more wonderful Gods. And at what length . . . sacrifices to Zeus took at the most, surely, sixty seconds each. Sacrifices to the Normal can take as long as sixty months.
The natural sound of the pencil resumes.
Light changes back.
(*to Alan*) Now your eyes are feeling heavy. You want to sleep, don't you? You want a long, deep sleep. Have it. Your head is heavy. Very heavy. Your shoulders are heavy. Sleep.
The pencil stops. Alan's eyes remain shut and his head has sunk on his chest.

Can you hear me?

ALAN Mmm.

DYSART You can speak normally. Say Yes, if you can.

ALAN Yes.

DYSART Good boy. Now raise your head, and open your eyes.

He does so.

Now, Alan, you're going to answer questions I'm going to ask you. Do you understand?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART And when you wake up, you are going to remember everything you tell me. All right?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART Good. Now I want you to think back in time. You are on that beach you told me about. The tide has gone out, and you're making sandcastles. Above you, staring down at you, is that great horse's head, and the cream dropping from it. Can you see that?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART You ask him a question. 'Does the chain hurt?'

ALAN Yes.

DYSART Do you ask him aloud?

ALAN No.

DYSART And what does the horse say back?

ALAN 'Yes.'

DYSART Then what do you say?

ALAN 'I'll take it out for you.'

DYSART And he says?

ALAN 'It never comes out. They have me in chains.'

DYSART Like Jesus?

ALAN Yes!

DYSART Only his name isn't Jesus, is it?

ALAN No.

DYSART What is it?

ALAN No one knows but him and me.

DYSART You can tell me, Alan. Name him.

ALAN Equus.

DYSART Thank you. Does he live in all horses or just some?

ALAN All.

DYSART Good boy. Now: you leave the beach. You're in your bedroom at home. You're twelve years old. You're in front of the picture. You're looking at Equus from the foot of your bed. Would you like to kneel down?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART (*encouragingly*) Go on, then.

Alan kneels.

Now tell me. Why is Equus in chains?

ALAN For the sins of the world.

DYSART What does he say to you?

ALAN 'I see you.' 'I will save you.'

DYSART How?

ALAN 'Bear you away. Two shall be one.'

DYSART Horse and rider shall be one beast?

ALAN One person!

DYSART Go on.

ALAN 'And my chinkle-chankle shall be in thy hand.'

DYSART Chinkle-chankle? That's his mouth chain?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART Good. You can get up . . . Come on.

Alan rises.

Now: think of the stable. What is the stable? His Temple? His Holy of Holies?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART Where you wash him? Where you tend him, and brush him with many brushes?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART And there he spoke to you, didn't he? He looked at you with his gentle eyes, and spake unto you?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART What did he say? 'Ride me?' 'Mount me, and ride me forth at night'?

ALAN Yes.

DYSART And you obeyed?

ALAN Yes.
DYSART How did you learn? By watching others?
ALAN Yes.
DYSART It must have been difficult. You bounced about?
ALAN Yes.
DYSART But he showed you, didn't he? Equus showed you the way.
ALAN No!
DYSART He didn't?
ALAN He showed me nothing! He's a mean bugger! Ride – or fall! That's Straw Law.
DYSART Straw Law?
ALAN He was born in the straw, and this is his law.
DYSART But you managed? You mastered him?
ALAN Had to!
DYSART And then you rode in secret?
ALAN Yes.
DYSART How often?
ALAN Every three weeks. More, people would notice.
DYSART On a particular horse?
ALAN No.
DYSART How did you get into the stable?
ALAN Stole a key. Had it copied at Bryson's.
DYSART Clever boy.
Alan smiles.
Then you'd slip out of the house?
ALAN Midnight! On the stroke!
DYSART How far's the stable?
ALAN Two miles.
Pause.
DYSART Let's do it! Let's go riding! . . . Now!
He stands up, and pushes in his bench.
You are there now, in front of the stable door.
Alan turns upstage.
That key's in your hand. Go and open it.

20

Alan moves upstage, and mimes opening the door.
Soft light on the circle.
Humming from the Chorus: the Equus Noise.
The horse actors enter, raise high their masks, and put them on all together. They stand around the circle – Nugget in the mouth of the tunnel.

DYSART Quietly as possible. Dalton may still be awake. Sssh . . .
Quietly . . . Good. Now go in.
Alan steps secretly out of the square through the central opening on to the circle, now glowing with a warm light. He looks about him. The horses stamp uneasily: their masks turn towards him.
You are on the inside now. All the horses are staring at you.
Can you see them?
ALAN (*excited*) Yes!
DYSART Which one are you going to take?
ALAN Nugget.
Alan reaches up and mimes leading Nugget carefully round the circle downstage with a rope, past all the horses on the right.
DYSART What colour is Nugget?
ALAN Chestnut.
The horse picks his way with care. Alan halts him at the corner of the square.
DYSART What do you do, first thing?
ALAN Put on his sandals.
DYSART Sandals?
He kneels, downstage centre.
ALAN Sandals of majesty! . . . Made of sack.
He picks up the invisible sandals, and kisses them devoutly.
Tie them round his hooves.
He taps Nugget's right leg: the horse raises it and the boy mimes tying the sack round it.
DYSART All four hooves?
ALAN Yes.

DYSART Then?
ALAN Chinkle-chankle.
He mimes picking up the bridle and bit.
He doesn't like it so late, but he takes it for my sake. He bends for me. He stretches forth his neck to it.
Nugget bends his head down. Alan first ritually puts the bit into his own mouth, then crosses, and transfers it into Nugget's. He reaches up and buckles on the bridle. Then he leads him by the invisible reins, across the front of the stage and up round the left side of the circle. Nugget follows obediently.
ALAN Buckle and lead out.
DYSART No saddle?
ALAN Never.
DYSART Go on.
ALAN Walk down the path behind. He's quiet. Always is, this bit. Meek and mild legs. At least till the field. Then there's trouble.
The horse jerks back. The mask tosses.
DYSART What kind?
ALAN Won't go in.
DYSART Why not?
ALAN It's his place of Ha Ha.
DYSART What?
ALAN Ha Ha.
DYSART Make him go into it.
ALAN (*whispering fiercely*) Come on!... Come on!...
He drags the horse into the square as Dysart steps out of it.

21

Nugget comes to a halt staring diagonally down what is now the field. The Equus noise dies away. The boy looks about him.

DYSART (*from the circle*) Is it a big field?
ALAN Huge!

DYSART What's it like?
ALAN Full of mist. Nettles on your feet.
He mimes taking off his shoes – and the sting.
Ah!
DYSART (*going back to his bench*) You take your shoes off?
ALAN Everything.
DYSART All your clothes?
ALAN Yes.
He mimes undressing completely in front of the horse. When he is finished, and obviously quite naked, he throws out his arms and shows himself fully to his God, bowing his head before Nugget.
DYSART Where do you leave them?
ALAN Tree hole near the gate. No one could find them.
He walks upstage and crouches by the bench, stuffing the invisible clothes beneath it. Dysart sits again on the left bench, downstage beyond the circle.
DYSART How does it feel now?
ALAN (*holds himself*) Burns.
DYSART Burns?
ALAN The mist!
DYSART Go on. Now what?
ALAN The Manbit.
He reaches again under the bench and draws out an invisible stick.
DYSART Manbit?
ALAN The stick for my mouth.
DYSART Your mouth?
ALAN To bite on.
DYSART Why? What for?
ALAN So's it won't happen too quick.
DYSART Is it always the same stick?
ALAN Course. Sacred stick. Keep it in the hole. The Ark of the Manbit.
DYSART And now what?... What do you do now?
Pause. He rises and approaches Nugget.
ALAN Touch him!
DYSART Where?

ALAN (*in wonder*) All over. Everywhere. Belly. Ribs. His ribs are of ivory. Of great value! . . . His flank is cool. His nostrils open for me. His eyes shine. They can see in the dark . . . *Eyes!—*

Suddenly he dashes in distress to the farthest corner of the square.

DYSART *Go on!* . . . Then?

Pause.

ALAN Give sugar.

DYSART A lump of sugar?

Alan returns to Nugget.

ALAN His Last Supper.

DYSART Last before what?

ALAN Ha Ha.

He kneels before the horse, palms upward and joined together.

DYSART Do you say anything when you give it to him?

ALAN (*offering it*) Take my sins. Eat them for my sake . . . He always does.

Nugget bows the mask into Alan's palm, then takes a step back to eat. And then he's ready?

DYSART You can get up on him now?

ALAN Yes!

DYSART Do it, then. Mount him.

Alan, lying before Nugget, stretches out on the square. He grasps the top of the thin metal pole embedded in the wood. He whispers his God's name ceremonially.

ALAN Equus! . . . Equus! . . . Equus!

He pulls the pole upright. The actor playing Nugget leans forward and grabs it. At the same instant all the other horses lean forward around the circle, each placing a gloved hand on the rail. Alan rises and walks right back to the upstage corner, left.

Take me!

He runs and jumps high on to Nugget's back.

(*crying out*) *Ah!*

DYSART What is it?

ALAN Hurts!

DYSART Hurts?

ALAN Knives in his skin! Little knives – all inside my legs.

Nugget mimes restiveness.

ALAN Stay, Equus. No one said Go! . . . That's it. He's good. Equus the Godslave, Faithful and True. Into my hands he commends himself – naked in his chinkle-chankle. (*he punches Nugget*) Stop it! . . . He wants to go so badly.

DYSART Go, then. Leave me behind. Ride away now, Alan. Now! . . . Now you are alone with Equus.

Alan stiffens his body.

ALAN (*ritually*) Equus – son of Fleckwus – son of Neckwus – *Walk.*

A hum from the Chorus.

Very slowly the horses standing on the circle begin to turn the square by gently pushing the wooden rail. Alan and his mount start to revolve. The effect, immediately, is of a statue being slowly turned round on a plinth. During the ride however the speed increases, and the light decreases until it is only a fierce spotlight on horse and rider, with the overspill glinting on the other masks leaning in towards them.

Here we go. The King rides out on Equus, mightiest of horses. Only I can ride him. He lets me turn him this way and that. His neck comes out of my body. It lifts in the dark. Equus, my Godslave! . . . Now the King commands you. Tonight, we ride against them all.

DYSART Who's all?

ALAN My foes and His.

DYSART Who are your foes?

ALAN The Hosts of Hoover. The Hosts of Philco. The Hosts of Pifco. The House of Remington and all its tribe!

DYSART Who are His foes?

ALAN The Hosts of Jodhpur. The Hosts of Bowler and Gymkhana. All those who show him off for their vanity. Tie rosettes on his head for their vanity! Come on, Equus. Let's get them! . . . *Trot!*

The speed of the turning square increases.

Stead-y! Stead-y! Stead-y! Stead-y! Cowboys are watching! Take off their stetsons. They know who we are. They're admiring

us! Bowing low unto us! Come on now – show them! *Canter!*
. . . CANTER!
He whips Nugget.
And Equus the Mighty rose against All!
His enemies scatter, his enemies fall!
TURN!
Trample them, trample them,
Trample them, trample them,
TURN!
TURN!!
TURN!!!
The Equus noise increases in volume.
(*shouting*) WEE! . . . WAA! . . . WONDERFUL! . . .
I'm stiff! Stiff in the wind!
My mane, stiff in the wind!
My flanks! *My* hooves!
Mane on my legs, on my flanks, like whips!
Raw!
Raw!
I'm raw! Raw!
Feel me on you! *On* you! *On* you! *On* you!
I want to be *in* you!
I want to BE you forever and ever!–
Equus, I love you!
Now! –
Bear me away!
Make us One Person!
He rides Equus frantically.
One Person! One Person! One Person! One Person!
He rises up on the horse's back, and calls like a trumpet.
Ha-HA! . . . Ha-HA! . . . Ha-HA!
The trumpet turns to great cries.
HA-HA! HA-HA! HA-HA! HA-HA! HA! . . . HA! . . . HAAAAA!
He twists like a flame.
Silence.
The turning square comes to a stop in the same position it occupied at

the opening of the Act.
Slowly the boy drops off the horse's back on to the ground. He lowers his head and kisses Nugget's hoof. Finally he flings back his head and cries up to him:
AMEN!
Nugget snorts, once.

Blackout

Act Two

22

Darkness.

Lights come slowly up on Alan kneeling in the night at the hooves of Nugget. Slowly he gets up, climbing lovingly up the body of the horse until he can stand and kiss it.

Dysart sits on the downstage bench where he began Act One.

DYSART With one particular horse, called Nugget, he embraces. He showed me how he stands with it afterwards in the night, one hand on its chest, one on its neck, like a frozen tango dancer, inhaling its cold sweet breath. 'Have you noticed,' he said, 'about horses: how they'll stand one hoof on its end, like those girls in the ballet?'

Alan leads Nugget out of the square. Dysart rises. The horse walks away up the tunnel and disappears. The boy comes downstage and sits on the bench Dysart has vacated. Dysart crosses downstage and moves slowly up round the circle, until he reaches the central entrance to the square.

Now he's gone off to rest, leaving me alone with Equus. I can hear the creature's voice. It's calling me out of the black cave of the Psyche. I shove in my dim little torch, and there he stands – waiting for me. He raises his matted head. He opens his great square teeth, and says – (*mocking*) '*Why?*... Why Me?... Why – ultimately – Me?... Do you really imagine you can account for Me? Totally, infallibly, inevitably account for Me?... Poor Doctor Dysart!'

He enters the square.

Of course I've stared at such images before. Or been stared at by them, whichever way you look at it. And weirdly often now with me the feeling is that *they* are staring at *us* – that in some quite palpable way they precede us. Meaningless, but unsettling... In either case, this one is the most alarming yet. It asks questions I've avoided all my professional life.

(*Pause*) A child is born into a world of phenomena all equal in their power to enslave. It sniffs – it sucks – it strokes its eyes over the whole uncomfortable range. Suddenly one strikes. Why? Moments snap together like magnets, forging a chain of shackles. Why? I can trace them. I can even, with time, pull them apart again. But why at the start they were ever magnetized at all – just those particular moments of experience and no others – I don't know. *And nor does anyone else.* Yet *if* I don't know – if I can never know that – then what am I doing here? I don't mean clinically doing or socially doing – I mean *fundamentally!* These questions, these Whys, are fundamental – yet they have no place in a consulting room. So then, do I?.. This is the feeling more and more with me – No Place. Displacement.... 'Account for me,' says staring Equus. 'First account for Me!...' I fancy this is more than menopause.

Nurse rushes in.

NURSE Doctor!... Doctor! There's a terrible scene with the Strang boy. His mother came to visit him, and I gave her the tray to take in. He threw it at her. She's saying the most dreadful things.

Alan springs up, down left. Dora springs up, down right. They face each other across the bottom end of the stage. It is observable that at the start of this Act Frank is not sitting beside his wife on their bench. It is hopefully not observable that he is placed among the audience upstage, in the gloom, by the central tunnel.

DORA Don't you dare! *Don't you dare!*

DYSART Is she still there?

NURSE Yes!

He quickly leaves the square, followed by the Nurse. Dora moves towards her son.

DORA Don't you look at me like that! I'm not a doctor, you know, who'll take anything. Don't you dare give me that stare, young man!

She slaps his face. Dysart joins them.

DYSART Mrs Strang!

DORA I know your stares. They don't work on me!
DYSART (*to her*) Leave this room.
DORA What did you say?
DYSART I tell you to leave here at once.
Dora hesitates. Then:
DORA Goodbye, Alan.
She walks past her son, and round into the square. Dysart follows her. Both are very upset. Alan returns to his bench and Nurse to her place.

23

Lights up on the square.

DYSART I must ask you never to come here again.
DORA Do you think I want to? Do you think I want to?
DYSART Mrs Strang, what on earth has got into you? Can't you see the boy is highly distressed?
DORA (*ironic*) Really?
DYSART Of course! He's at a most delicate stage of treatment. He's totally exposed. Ashamed. Everything you can imagine!
DORA (*exploding*) *And me? What about me? . . . What do you think I am?* . . . I'm a parent, of course – so it doesn't count. That's a dirty word in here, isn't it, 'parent'?
DYSART You know that's not true.
DORA Oh, I know. I know, all right! I've heard it all my life. It's *our* fault. Whatever happens, *we* did it. Alan's just a little victim. He's really done nothing at all! (*savagely*) What do you have to do in this world to get any sympathy – blind animals?
DYSART Sit down, Mrs Strang.
DORA (*ignoring him: more and more urgently*) Look, Doctor: you don't have to live with this. Alan is one patient to you: one out of many. He's my son. I lie awake every night thinking about it. Frank lies there beside me. I can hear him. Neither

of us sleeps all night. You come to us and say Who forbids television? who does what behind whose back? – as if we're criminals. Let me tell you something. We're not criminals. We've done nothing wrong. We loved Alan. We gave him the best love we could. All right, we quarrel sometimes – all parents quarrel – we always make it up. My husband is a good man. He's an upright man, religion or no religion. He cares for his home, for the world, and for his boy. Alan had love and care and treats, and as much fun as any boy in the world. I know about loveless homes: I was a teacher. Our home wasn't loveless. I know about privacy too – not invading a child's privacy. All right, Frank may be at fault there – he digs into him too much – but nothing in excess. He's not a bully . . . (*gravely*) No, doctor. Whatever's happened has happened *because of Alan*. Alan is himself. Every soul is itself. If you added up everything we ever did to him, from his first day on earth to this, you wouldn't find why he did this terrible thing – because that's *him*: not just all of our things added up. Do you understand what I'm saying? I want you to understand, because I lie awake and awake thinking it out, and I want you to know that I deny it absolutely what he's doing now, staring at me, attacking me for what *he's* done, for what *he* is! (*pause: calmer*) You've got your words, and I've got mine. You call it a complex, I suppose. But if you knew God, Doctor, you would know about the Devil. You'd know the Devil isn't made by what mummy says and daddy says. The Devil's *there*. It's an old-fashioned word, but a true thing . . . I'll go. What I did in there was inexcusable. I only know he was my little Alan, and then the Devil came.
She leaves the square, and resumes her place. Dysart watches her go, then leaves himself by the opposite entrance, and approaches Alan.

24

Seated on his bench, the boy glares at him.

DYSART I thought you liked your mother.
Silence.
She doesn't know anything, you know. I haven't told her what you told me. You do know that, don't you?
ALAN It was lies anyway.
DYSART What?
ALAN You and your pencil. Just a con trick, that's all.
DYSART What do you mean?
ALAN Made me say a lot of lies.
DYSART Did it? . . . Like what?
ALAN All of it. Everything I said. Lot of lies.
Pause.
DYSART I see.
ALAN You ought to be locked up. Your bloody tricks.
DYSART I thought you liked tricks.
ALAN It'll be the drug next. I know.
Dysart turns, sharply.
DYSART What drug?
ALAN I've heard. I'm not ignorant. I know what you get up to in here. Shove needles in people, pump them full of truth drug, so they can't help saying things. That's next, isn't it?
Pause.
DYSART Alan, do you know why you're here?
ALAN So you can give me truth drugs.
He glares at him. Dysart leaves abruptly, and returns to the square.

25

Hesther comes in simultaneously from the other side.

DYSART (*agitated*) He actually thinks they exist! And of course

he wants one.
HESTHER It doesn't sound like that to me.
DYSART Of course he does. Why mention them otherwise? He wants a way to speak. To finally tell me what happened in that stable. Tape's too isolated, and hypnosis is a trick. At least that's the pretence.
HESTHER Does he still say that today?
DYSART I haven't seen him. I cancelled his appointment this morning, and let him stew in his own anxiety. Now I am almost tempted to play a real trick on him.
HESTHER (*sitting*) Like what?
DYSART The old placebo.
HESTHER You mean a harmless pill?
DYSART Full of *alleged* Truth Drug. Probably an aspirin.
HESTHER But he'd deny it afterwards. Same thing all over.
DYSART No. Because he's ready to abreact.
HESTHER Abreact?
DYSART Live it all again. He won't be able to deny it after that, because he'll have shown me. Not just told me – but acted it out in front of me.
HESTHER Can you get him to do that?
DYSART I think so. He's nearly done it already. Under all that glowering, he trusts me. Do you realise that?
HESTHER (*warmly*) I'm sure he does.
DYSART Poor bloody fool.
HESTHER Don't start that again.
Pause.
DYSART (*quietly*) Can you think of anything worse one can do to anybody than take away their worship?
HESTHER Worship?
DYSART Yes, that word again!
HESTHER Aren't you being a little extreme?
DYSART Extremity's the point.
HESTHER Worship isn't destructive, Martin. I know that.
DYSART I don't. I only know it's the core of his life. What else has he got? Think about him. He can hardly read. He knows

no physics or engineering to make the world real for him. No paintings to show him how others have enjoyed it. No music except television jingles. No history except tales from a desperate mother. No friends. Not one kid to give him a joke, or make him know himself more moderately. He's a modern citizen for whom society doesn't exist. He lives *one hour* every three weeks – howling in a mist. And after the service kneels to a slave who stands over him obviously and unthrowably his master. With my body I thee worship!... Many men have less vital relationships with their wives.

Pause.

HESTHER All the same, they don't usually blind their wives, do they?

DYSART Oh, come on!

HESTHER Well, do they?

DYSART (*sarcastically*) You mean he's dangerous? A violent, dangerous madman who's going to run round the country doing it again and again?

HESTHER I mean he's in pain; Martin. He's been in pain for most of his life. That much, at least, you *know*.

DYSART Possibly.

HESTHER *Possibly?!*... That cut-off little figure you just described must have been in pain for years.

DYSART (*doggedly*) Possibly.

HESTHER And you can take it away.

DYSART Still – possibly.

HESTHER Then that's enough. That simply has to be enough for you, surely?

DYSART No!

HESTHER Why not?

DYSART Because it's his.

HESTHER I don't understand.

DYSART His pain. His own. He made it.

Pause.

(*earnestly*) Look... to go through life and call it yours – *your life* – you first have to get your own pain. Pain that's unique

to you. You can't just dip into the common bin and say 'That's enough!'... He's done that. All right, he's sick. He's full of misery and fear. He was dangerous, and could be again, though I doubt it. But that boy has known a passion more ferocious than I have felt in any second of my life. And let me tell you something: I envy it.

HESTHER You can't.

DYSART (*vehemently*) Don't you see? That's the Accusation! That's what his stare has been saying to me all this time. '*At least I galloped! When did you?*'... (*simply*) I'm jealous, Hesther. Jealous of Alan Strang.

HESTHER That's absurd.

DYSART Is it?... I go on about my wife. That smug woman by the fire. Have you thought of the fellow on the other side of it? The finicky, critical husband looking through his art books on mythical Greece. What worship has *he* ever known? Real worship! Without worship you shrink, it's as brutal as that... I shrank my *own* life. No one can do it for you. I settled for being pallid and provincial, out of my own eternal timidity. The old story of bluster, and do bugger-all... I imply that we can't have children: but actually, it's only me. I had myself tested behind her back. The lowest sperm count you could find. And I never told her. That's all I need – her sympathy mixed with resentment... I tell everyone Margaret's the puritan, I'm the pagan. Some pagan! Such wild returns I make to the womb of civilization. Three weeks a year in the Peleponnese, every bed booked in advance, every meal paid for by vouchers, cautious jaunts in hired Fiats, suitcase crammed with Kao-Pectate! Such a fantastic surrender to the primitive. And I use that word endlessly: 'primitive'. 'Oh, the primitive world,' I say. 'What instinctual truths were lost with it!' And while I sit there, baiting a poor unimaginative woman with the word, that freaky boy tries to conjure the reality! I sit looking at pages of centaurs trampling the soil of Argos – and outside my window he is trying to *become one*, in a Hampshire field!... I watch that

woman knitting, night after night – a woman I haven't *kissed* in six years – and he stands in the dark for an hour, sucking the sweat off his God's hairy cheek! (*pause*) Then in the morning, I put away my books on the cultural shelf, close up the Kodachrome snaps of Mount Olympus, touch my reproduction statue of Dionysus for luck – and go off to hospital to treat him for insanity. Do you see?

HESTHER The boy's in pain, Martin. That's all I see. In the end . . . I'm sorry.

He looks at her. Alan gets up from his bench and stealthily places an envelope in the left-hand entrance of the square, then goes back and sits with his back to the audience, as if watching television.

Hesther rises.

HESTHER That stare of his. Have you thought it might not be accusing you at all?

DYSART What then?

HESTHER Claiming you.

DYSART For what?

HESTHER (*mischievously*) A new God.

Pause.

DYSART Too conventional, for him. Finding a religion in Psychiatry is really for very ordinary patients.

She laughs.

HESTHER Maybe he just wants a new Dad. Or is that too conventional too? . . . Since you're questioning your profession anyway, perhaps you ought to try it and see.

DYSART (*amused*) I'll talk to you.

HESTHER Goodbye.

She smiles, and leaves him.

26

Dysart becomes aware of the letter lying on the floor. He picks it up, opens and reads it.

ALAN (*speaking stiffly, as Dysart reads*) 'It is all true, what I said after you tapped the pencil. I'm sorry if I said different. Post Scriptum: I know why I'm in here.'

Pause.

DYSART (*calling, joyfully*) Nurse!

Nurse comes in.

NURSE Yes, Doctor?

DYSART (*trying to conceal his pleasure*) Good evening!

NURSE You're in late tonight.

DYSART Yes! . . . Tell me, is the Strang boy in bed yet?

NURSE Oh, no, Doctor. He's bound to be upstairs looking at television. He always watches to the last possible moment. He doesn't like going to his room at all.

DYSART You mean he's still having nightmares?

NURSE He had a bad one last night.

DYSART Would you ask him to come down here, please?

NURSE (*faint surprise*) Now?

DYSART I'd like a word with him.

NURSE (*puzzled*) Very good, Doctor.

DYSART If he's not back in his room by lights out, tell Night Nurse not to worry. I'll see he gets back to bed all right. And would you phone my home and tell my wife I may be in late?

NURSE Yes, Doctor.

DYSART Ask him to come straight away, please.

Nurse goes to the bench, taps Alan on the shoulder, whispers her message in his ear, and returns to her place. Alan stands up and pauses for a second – then steps into the square.

27

He stands in the doorway, depressed.

DYSART Hallo.

ALAN Hallo.

DYSART I got your letter. Thank you. (*pause*) Also the Post Scriptum.

ALAN (*defensively*) That's the right word. My mum told me. It's Latin for 'After-writing'.

DYSART How are you feeling?

ALAN All right.

DYSART I'm sorry I didn't see you today.

ALAN You were fed up with me.

DYSART Yes. (*pause*) Can I make it up to you now?

ALAN What d'you mean?

DYSART I thought we'd have a session.

ALAN (*startled*) Now?

DYSART Yes! At dead of night!... Better than going to sleep, isn't it?

The boy flinches.

Alan – look. Everything I say has a trick or a catch. Everything I do is a trick or a catch. That's all I know to do. But they work – and you know that. Trust me.

Pause.

ALAN You got another trick, then?

DYSART Yes.

ALAN A truth drug?

DYSART If you like.

ALAN What's it do?

DYSART Make it easier for you to talk.

ALAN Like you can't help yourself?

DYSART That's right. Like you have to speak the truth at all costs. And all of it.

Pause.

ALAN (*slyly*) Comes in a needle, doesn't it?

DYSART No.

ALAN Where is it?

DYSART (*indicating his pocket*) In here.

ALAN Let's see.

Dysart solemnly takes a bottle of pills out of his pocket.

DYSART There.

ALAN (*suspicious*) That really it?

DYSART It is... Do you want to try it?

ALAN No.

DYSART I think you do.

ALAN I don't. Not at all.

DYSART Afterwards you'd sleep. You'd have no bad dreams all night. Probably many nights, from then on...

Pause.

ALAN How long's it take to work?

DYSART It's instant. Like coffee.

ALAN (*half believing*) It isn't!

DYSART I promise you... Well?

ALAN Can I have a fag?

DYSART Pill first. Do you want some water?

ALAN No.

Dysart shakes one out on to his palm. Alan hesitates for a second – then takes it and swallows it.

DYSART Then you can chase it down with this. Sit down.

He offers him a cigarette, and lights it for him.

ALAN (*nervous*) What happens now?

DYSART We wait for it to work.

ALAN What'll I feel first?

DYSART Nothing much. After a minute, about a hundred green snakes should come out of that cupboard singing the Hallelujah Chorus.

ALAN (*annoyed*) *I'm serious!*

DYSART (*earnestly*) You'll feel nothing. Nothing's going to happen now but what you want to happen. You're not going to say anything to me but what you want to say. Just relax. Lie back and finish your fag.

Alan stares at him. Then accepts the situation, and lies back.

DYSART Good boy.

ALAN I bet this room's heard some funny things.

DYSART It certainly has.

ALAN I like it.

DYSART This room?

ALAN Don't you?
DYSART Well, there's not much to like, is there?
ALAN How long am I going to be in here?
DYSART It's hard to say. I quite see you want to leave.
ALAN No.
DYSART You don't?
ALAN Where would I go?
DYSART Home....
The boy looks at him. Dysart crosses and sits on the rail upstage, his feet on the bench. A pause.
Actually, I'd like to leave this room and never see it again in my life.
ALAN (*surprise*) Why?
DYSART I've been in it too long.
ALAN Where would you go?
DYSART Somewhere.
ALAN Secret?
DYSART Yes. There's a sea – a great sea – I love... It's where the Gods used to go to bathe.
ALAN What Gods?
DYSART The old ones. Before they died.
ALAN Gods don't die.
DYSART Yes, they do.
Pause.
There's a village I spent one night in, where I'd like to live. It's all white.
ALAN How would you Nosey Parker, though? You wouldn't have a room for it any more.
DYSART I wouldn't mind. I don't actually enjoy being a Nosey Parker, you know.
ALAN Then why do it?
DYSART Because you're unhappy.
ALAN So are you.
Dysart looks at him sharply. Alan sits up in alarm.
Oooh, I didn't mean that!
DYSART Didn't you?

ALAN Here – is that how it works? Things just slip out, not feeling anything?
DYSART That's right.
ALAN But it's so quick!
DYSART I told you: it's instant.
ALAN (*delighted*) It's wicked, isn't it? I mean, you can say anything under it.
DYSART Yes.
ALAN Ask me a question.
DYSART Tell me about Jill.
Pause. The boy turns away.
ALAN There's nothing to tell.
DYSART Nothing?
ALAN No.
DYSART Well, for example – is she pretty? You've never described her.
ALAN She's all right.
DYSART What colour hair?
ALAN Dunno.
DYSART Is it long or short?
ALAN Dunno.
DYSART (*lightly*) You must know that.
ALAN I don't remember. *I don't!*
Dysart rises and comes down to him. He takes the cigarette out of his hand.
DYSART (*firmly*) Lie back....Now listen. You have to do this. And now. You are going to tell me everything that happened with this girl. And not just *tell* me – *show* me. Act it out, if you like – even more than you did when I tapped the pencil. I want you to feel free to do absolutely anything in this room. The pill will help you. I will help you... Now, where does she live?
A long pause.
ALAN (*tight*) Near the stables. About a mile.
Dysart steps down out of the square as Jill enters it. He sits again on the downstage bench.

28

The light grows warmer.

JILL It's called The China Pantry.
She comes down and sits casually on the rail. Her manner is open and lightly provocative. During these scenes Alan acts directly with her, and never looks over at Dysart when he replies to him.
When Daddy disappeared, she was left without a bean. She had to earn her own living. I must say she did jolly well, considering she was never trained in business.
DYSART What do you mean, 'disappeared'?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) He ran off. No one ever saw him again.
JILL Just left a note on her dressing table saying 'Sorry, I've had it.' Just like that. She never got over it. It turned her right off men. All my dates have to be sort of secret. I mean, she knows about them, but I can't ever bring anyone back home. She's so rude to them.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) She was always looking.
DYSART At you?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Saying stupid things.
She jumps off the bench.
JILL You've got super eyes.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Anyway, *she* was the one who had them.
She sits next to him. Embarrassed, the boy tries to move away as far as he can.
JILL There was an article in the paper last week saying what points about boys fascinate girls. They said Number One is bottoms. I think it's eyes every time... They fascinate you too, don't they?
ALAN Me?
JILL (*sly*) Or is it only horse's eyes?
ALAN (*startled*) What d'you mean?
JILL I saw you staring into Nugget's eyes yesterday for ages. I spied on you through the door!
ALAN (*hotly*) There must have been something in it!

JILL You're a real Man of Mystery, aren't you?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Sometimes, it was like she knew.
DYSART Did you ever hint?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Course not!
JILL I love horses' eyes. The way you can see yourself in them. D'you find them sexy?
ALAN (*outraged*) What?!
JILL Horses.
ALAN Don't be daft!
He springs up, and away from her.
JILL Girls do. I mean, they go through a period when they pat them and kiss them a lot. I know *I* did. I suppose it's just a substitute, really.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) That kind of thing, all the time. Until one night...
DYSART Yes? What?
ALAN (*to Dysart: defensively*) She did it! Not me. It was her idea, the whole thing!... She got me into it!
DYSART What are you saying? 'One night': go on from there.
A pause.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Saturday night. We were just closing up.
JILL How would you like to take me out?
ALAN What?
JILL (*coolly*) How would you like to take me out tonight?
ALAN I've got to go home.
JILL What for?
He tries to escape upstage.
ALAN They expect me.
JILL Ring up and say you're going out.
ALAN I can't.
JILL Why?
ALAN They expect me.
JILL Look. Either we go out together and have some fun, or you go back to your boring home, *as usual*, and I go back to mine. That's the situation, isn't it?
ALAN Well... where would we go?

JILL The pictures! There's a skinflick over in Winchester! I've never seen one, have you?

ALAN No.

JILL Wouldn't you like to? *I* would. All those heavy Swedes, panting at each other! . . . What d'you say?

ALAN (*grinning*) Yeh! . . .

JILL Good! . . .

He turns away.

DYSART Go on, please.

He steps off the square.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) I'm tired now!

DYSART Come on now. You can't stop there.

He storms round the circle to Dysart, and faces him directly.

ALAN I'm *tired!* I want to go to bed!

DYSART (*sharply*) Well, you can't. I want to hear about the film.

ALAN (*hostile*) Hear what? . . . *What?* . . . It was bloody awful!

The actors playing horses come swiftly on to the square, dressed in sports coats or raincoats. They move the benches to be parallel with the audience, and sit on them – staring out front.

DYSART Why?

ALAN Nosey Parker!

DYART *Why?*

ALAN *Because!* . . . Well – we went into the Cinema!

29

A burst of rock music, instantly fading down. Lights darken.

Alan re-enters the square. Jill rises and together they grope their way to the downstage bench, as if in a dark auditorium.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) The whole place was full of men. Jill was the only girl.

They push by a patron seated at the end, and sit side by side, staring up at the invisible screen, located above the heads of the main audience.

A spotlight hits the boy's face.

We sat down and the film came on. It was daft. Nothing happened for ages. There was this girl Brita, who was sixteen. She went to stay in this house, where there was an older boy. He kept giving her looks, but she ignored him completely. In the end she took a shower. She went into the bathroom and took off all her clothes. The lot. Very slowly. . . . What she didn't know was the boy was looking through the door all the time. . . . (*he starts to become excited*) It was fantastic! The water fell on her breasts, bouncing down her. . . .

Frank steps into the square furtively from the back, hat in hand, and stands looking about for a place.

DYSART Was that the first time you'd seen a girl naked?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes! You couldn't see everything, though. . . . (*looking about him*) All round me they were all looking. All the men – staring up like they were in church. Like they were a sort of congregation. And then – (*he sees his father*) *Ah!*

At the same instant Frank sees him.

FRANK Alan!

ALAN God!

JILL What is it?

ALAN *Dad!*

JILL *Where?*

ALAN At the back! *He saw me!*

JILL You sure?

ALAN Yes!

FRANK (*calling*) Alan!

ALAN Oh God!

He tries to hide his face in the girl's shoulder. His father comes down the aisle towards him.

FRANK Alan! You can hear me! Don't pretend!

PATRONS *Ssssh!*

FRANK (*approaching the row of seats*) Do I have to come and fetch you out? . . . Do I? . . .

Cries of 'Sssh!' and 'Shut up!'

Do I, Alan?

ALAN (*through gritted teeth*) Oh fuck!

He gets up as the noise increases. Jill gets up too and follows him.

DYSART You went?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) What else could I do? He kept shouting. Everyone was saying Shut up!

They go out, right, through the group of Patrons – who rise protesting as they pass, quickly replace the benches and leave the square.

Dysart enters it.

30

Light brightens from the cinema, but remains cold: streets at night.

The three walk round the circle downstage in a line: Frank leading, wearing his hat. He halts in the middle of the left rail, and stands staring straight ahead of him, rigid with embarrassment. Alan is very agitated.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) We went into the street, all three of us. It was weird. We just stood there by the bus stop – like we were three people in a queue, and we didn't know each other. Dad was all white and sweaty. He didn't look at us at all. It must have gone on for about five minutes. I tried to speak. I said – (*to his father*) I – I – I've never been there before. Honest... Never... (*to Dysart*) He didn't seem to hear. Jill tried.

JILL It's true, Mr Strang. It wasn't Alan's idea to go there. It was mine.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) He just went on staring, straight ahead. It was awful.

JILL I'm not shocked by films like that. I think they're just silly.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) The bus wouldn't come. We just stood and stood.... Then suddenly he spoke.

Frank takes off his hat.

FRANK (*stiffly*) I'd like you to know something. Both of you. I came here tonight to see the Manager. He asked me to call on him for business purposes. I happen to be a printer, Miss. A picture house needs posters. That's entirely why I'm here. To discuss posters. While I was waiting I happened to glance in, that's all. I can only say I'm going to complain to the council. I had no idea they showed films like this. I'm certainly going to refuse my services.

JILL (*kindly*) Yes, of course.

FRANK So long as that's understood.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Then the bus came along.

FRANK Come along, now Alan.

He moves away downstage.

ALAN No.

FRANK (*turning*) No fuss, please. Say Goodnight to the young lady.

ALAN (*timid but firm*) No. I'm stopping here... I've got to see her home... It's proper.

Pause.

FRANK (*as dignified as possible*) Very well. I'll see you when you choose to return. Very well then... Yes...

He walks back to his original seat, next to his wife. He stares across the square at his son – who stares back at him. Then, slowly, he sits.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) And he got in, and we didn't. He sat down and looked at me through the glass. And I saw...

DYSART (*soft*) What?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) His face. It was scared.

DYSART Of you?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) It was terrible. We had to walk home. Four miles. I got the shakes.

DYSART You were scared too?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) It was like a hole had been drilled in my tummy. A hole – right here. And the air was getting in!

He starts to walk upstage, round the circle.

31

The girl stays still.

JILL (*aware of other people looking*) Alan...

ALAN (*to Dysart*) People kept turning round in the street to look.

JILL Alan!

ALAN (*to Dysart*) I kept seeing him, just as he drove off. Scared of me.... And me scared of *him*.... I kept thinking – all those airs he put on!... 'Receive my meaning. Improve your mind!'... All those nights he said he'd be in late. 'Keep my supper hot, Dora!' 'Your poor father: he works so hard!'... Bugger! Old bugger!... Filthy old bugger!

He stops, clenching his fists.

JILL Hey! Wait for me!

She runs after him. He waits.

What are you thinking about?

ALAN Nothing.

JILL Mind my own beeswax?

She laughs.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) And suddenly she began to laugh.

JILL I'm sorry. But it's pretty funny, when you think of it.

ALAN (*bewildered*) What?

JILL Catching him like that! I mean, it's terrible – but it's very funny.

ALAN Yeh!

He turns from her.

JILL No, wait!... I'm sorry. I know you're upset. But it's not the end of the world, is it? I mean, what was he doing? Only what we were. Watching a silly film. It's a case of like father like son, I'd say!... I mean, when that girl was taking a shower, you were pretty interested, weren't you?

He turns round and looks at her.

We keep saying old people are square. Then when they suddenly aren't – we don't like it!

DYSART What did you think about that?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) I don't know. I kept looking at all the people in the street. They were mostly men coming out of pubs. I suddenly thought – *they all do it! All of them!*... They're not just Dads – they're people with pricks!... And Dad – he's not just Dad either. He's a man with a prick too. You know, I'd never thought about it.

Pause.

We went into the country.

He walks again. Jill follows. They turn the corner and come downstage, right.

We kept walking. I just thought about Dad, and how he was nothing special – just a poor old sod on his own.

He stops.

(*to Jill: realising it*) Poor old sod!

JILL That's right!

ALAN (*grappling with it*) I mean, what else has he got?... He's got mum, of course, but well – she – she – she—

JILL She doesn't give him anything?

ALAN That's right. I bet you... She doesn't give him anything. That's right... That's really right!... She likes Ladies and Gentlemen. Do you understand what I mean?

JILL (*mischievously*) Ladies and gentlemen aren't naked?

ALAN That's right! Never!... *Never*! That would be disgusting! She'd have to put bowler hats on them!... Jodhpurs!

She laughs.

DYSART Was that the first time you ever thought anything like that about your mother?... I mean, that she was unfair to your dad?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Absolutely!

DYSART How did you feel?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Sorry. I mean for him. Poor old sod, that's what I felt – he's just like me! He hates ladies and gents just like me! Posh things – and la-di-da. He goes off by himself at night, and does his own secret thing which no one'll know about, just like me! There's no difference – he's just the

same as me – just the same!—
He stops in distress, then bolts back a little upstage.
Christ!
DYSART (*sternly*) Go on.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) I can't.
DYSART Of course you can. You're doing wonderfully.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) No, please. *Don't make me!*
DYSART (*firm*) Don't think: just answer. You were happy at that second, weren't you? When you realised about your dad. How lots of people have secrets, not just you?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes.
DYSART You felt sort of free, didn't you? I mean, free to do anything?
ALAN (*to Dysart, looking at Jill*) Yes!
DYSART What was she doing?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Holding my hand.
DYSART And that was good?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Oh, yes!
DYSART Remember what you thought. *As if it's happening to you now. This very moment*... What's in your head?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Her eyes. *She's* the one with eyes!... I keep looking at them, because I really want—
DYSART To look at her breasts?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes.
DYSART Like in the film.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes... Then she starts to scratch my hand.
JILL You're really very nice, you know that?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Moving her nails on the back. Her face so warm. Her eyes.
DYSART You want her very much?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes...
JILL I love your eyes.
She kisses him.
(*whispering*) Let's go!
ALAN Where?
JILL I know a place. It's right near here.

ALAN Where?
JILL Surprise!... Come on!
She darts away round the circle, across the stage and up the left side.
Come *on!*
ALAN (*to Dysart*) She runs ahead. I follow. And then – and then—!
He halts.
DYSART What?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) I see what she means.
DYSART What?... Where are you?... Where has she taken you?
ALAN (*to Jill*) *The Stables?*
JILL Of course!

32

Chorus makes a warning hum.
The horses-actors enter, and ceremonially put on their masks – first raising them high above their heads. Nugget stands in the central tunnel.

ALAN (*recoiling*) No!
JILL Where else? They're perfect!
ALAN No!
He turns his head from her.
JILL Or do you want to go home now and face your dad?
ALAN No!
JILL Then come on!
He edges nervously past the horse standing at the left, which turns its neck and even moves a challenging step after him.
ALAN Why not your place?
JILL I can't. Mother doesn't like me bringing back boys. I told you.... Anyway, the Barn's better.
ALAN No!
JILL All that straw. It's cosy.
ALAN No.

JILL *Why not?*
ALAN Them!
JILL Dalton will be in bed . . . What's the matter? . . . Don't you want to?
ALAN (*aching to*) Yes!
JILL So?
ALAN (*desperate*) *Them! . . . Them! . . .*
JILL *Who?*
ALAN (*low*) Horses.
JILL *Horses?* . . . You're really dotty, aren't you? . . . What do you mean?
He starts shaking.
Oh, you're freezing . . . Let's get under the straw. You'll be warm there.
ALAN (*pulling away*) No!
JILL What on earth's the matter with you? . . .
Silence. He won't look at her.
Look, if the sight of horses offends you, my lord, we can just shut the door. You won't have to see them. All right?
DYSART What door is that? In the barn?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes.
DYSART So what do you do? You go in?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes.

33

A rich light falls.
Furtively Alan enters the square from the top end, and Jill follows. The horses on the circle retire out of sight on either side. Nugget retreats up the tunnel and stands where he can just be glimpsed in the dimness.

DYSART Into the Temple? The Holy of Holies?
ALAN (*to Dysart: desperate*) What else can I do? . . . I can't say! I can't tell her . . . (*to Jill*) Shut it tight.
JILL All right . . . You're crazy.

ALAN Lock it.
JILL Lock?
ALAN Yes.
JILL It's just an old door. What's the matter with you? They're in their boxes. They can't get out . . . Are you all right?
ALAN Why?
JILL You look weird.
ALAN *Lock it!*
JILL Ssssh! D'you want to wake up Dalton? . . . Stay there, idiot.
She mimes locking a heavy door, upstage.
DYSART Describe the barn, please.
ALAN (*walking round it: to Dysart*) Large room. Straw everywhere. Some tools . . . (*as if picking it up off the rail where he left it in Act One*) A hoof pick! . . .
He 'drops' it hastily, and dashes away from the spot.
DYSART *Go on.*
ALAN (*to Dysart*) At the end this big door. Behind it—
DYSART Horses.
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes.
DYSART How many?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Six.
DYSART Jill closes the door so you can't see them?
ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes.
DYSART And then? . . . What happens now? . . . Come on, Alan. Show me.
JILL See, it's all shut. There's just us . . . Let's sit down. Come on.
They sit together on the same bench, left.
Hallo.
ALAN (*quickly*) Hallo.
She kisses him lightly. He responds. Suddenly a faint trampling of hooves, off-stage, makes him jump up.
JILL What is it?
He turns his head upstage, listening.
Relax. There's no one there. Come here.

She touches his hand. He turns to her again.

You're very gentle. I love that...

ALAN So are you... I mean...

He kisses her spontaneously. The hooves trample again, harder. He breaks away from her abruptly towards the upstage corner.

JILL (*rising*) What is it?

ALAN Nothing!

She moves towards him. He turns and moves past her. He is clearly distressed. She contemplates him for a moment.

JILL (*gently*) Take your sweater off.

ALAN What?

JILL I will, if you will.

He stares at her. A pause.

She lifts her sweater over her head: he watches – then unzips his. They each remove their shoes, their socks, and their jeans. Then they look at each other diagonally across the square, in which the light is gently increasing.

ALAN You're... You're very...

JILL So are you.... (*pause*) Come here.

He goes to her. She comes to him. They meet in the middle, and hold each other, and embrace.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) She put her mouth in mine. It was lovely! *Oh, it was lovely!*

They burst into giggles. He lays her gently on the floor in the centre of the square, and bends over her eagerly.

Suddenly the noise of Equus fills the place. Hooves smash on wood. Alan straightens up, rigid. He stares straight ahead of him over the prone body of the girl.

DYSART Yes, what happened then, Alan?

ALAN (*to Dysart: brutally*) I put it in her!

DYSART Yes?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) I put it in her.

DYSART You did?

ALAN(*to Dysart*) Yes!

DYSART Was it easy?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes.

DYSART Describe it.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) I told you.

DYSART More exactly.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) I put it in her!

DYSART Did you?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) All the way!

DYSART Did you, Alan?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) All the way. I shoved it. I put it in her all the way.

DYSART Did you?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes!

DYSART Did you?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes!... Yes!

DYSART Give me the TRUTH!... Did you?... *Honestly?*

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Fuck off!

He collapses, lying upstage on his face. Jill lies on her back motionless, her head downstage, her arms extended behind her. A pause.

DYSART (*gently*) What was it? You couldn't? Though you wanted to very much?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) I couldn't... see her.

DYSART What do you mean?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Only Him. Every time I kissed her – *He* was in the way.

DYSART Who?

Alan turns on his back.

ALAN (*to Dysart*) You *know* who!... When I touched her, I felt *Him*. Under me... His side, waiting for my hand... His flanks... I refused him. I looked. I looked right at her... and I couldn't do it. When I shut my eyes, I saw Him at once. The streaks on his belly... (*with more desperation*) I couldn't feel *her* flesh at all! I wanted the foam off his neck. His sweaty hide. Not flesh. *Hide! Horse-hide!*... Then I couldn't even kiss her.

Jill sits up.

JILL What is it?

ALAN (*dodging her hand*) No!

He scrambles up and crouches in the corner against the rails, like a little beast in a cage.

JILL Alan!

ALAN Stop it!

Jill gets up.

JILL It's all right... It's all right... Don't worry about it. It often happens – honest... There's nothing wrong. I don't mind, you know... I don't at all.

He dashes past her downstage.

Alan, look at me... Alan?... Alan!

He collapses again by the rail.

ALAN Get out!...

JILL What?

ALAN (*soft*) Out!

JILL There's nothing wrong: believe me! It's very common.

ALAN *Get out!*

He snatches up the invisible pick.

GET OUT!

JILL Put that down!

ALAN Leave me alone!

JILL Put that down, Alan. It's very dangerous. Go on, please – drop it.

He 'drops' it, and turns from her.

ALAN You ever tell anyone. Just you tell...

JILL Who do you think I am?... I'm your friend – Alan...

She goes towards him.

Listen: you don't have to do anything. Try to realize that. Nothing at all. Why don't we just lie here together in the straw. And talk.

ALAN (*low*) Please...

JILL Just talk.

ALAN *Please!*

JILL All right, I'm going... Let me put my clothes on first.

She dresses, hastily.

ALAN You tell anyone!... Just tell and see....

JILL *Oh, stop it!*... I wish you could believe me. It's not in the least important.

Pause.

Anyway, I won't say anything. You know that. You know I won't....

Pause. He stands with his back to her.

Goodnight, then, Alan.... I wish – I really wish—

He turns on her, hissing. His face is distorted – possessed. In horrified alarm she turns – fumbles the door open – leaves the barn – shuts the door hard behind her, and dashes up the tunnel out of sight, past the barely visible figure of Nugget.

34

Alan stands alone, and naked.

A faint humming and drumming. The boy looks about him in growing terror.

DYSART What?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) He was there. Through the door. The door was shut, but he was there!... He'd seen everything. I could hear him. He was laughing.

DYSART Laughing?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Mocking!... *Mocking!*...

Standing downstage he stares up towards the tunnel. A great silence weighs on the square.

(*to the silence: terrified*) Friend... Equus the Kind... The Merciful!... *Forgive me!*...

Silence.

It wasn't me. Not really me. *Me!*... Forgive me!... Take me back again! Please!... PLEASE!

He kneels on the downstage lip of the square, still facing the door, huddling in fear.

I'll never do it again. I swear... I swear!...

Silence.

(*in a moan*) *Please!!!*...

DYSART And He? What does He say?

ALAN (*to Dysart: whispering*) 'Mine!... You're mine!... I am yours and you are mine!'... Then I see his eyes. They are rolling!

Nugget begins to advance slowly, with relentless hooves, down the central tunnel.

'I see you. I see you. Always! Everywhere! Forever!'

DYSART Kiss anyone and I will see?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes!

DYSART Lie with anyone and I will see?

ALAN (*to Dysart*) Yes!

DYSART And you will fail! Forever and ever you will *fail!* You will see ME – and you will FAIL!

The boy turns round, hugging himself in pain. From the sides two more horses converge with Nugget on the rails. Their hooves stamp angrily. The equus Noise is heard more terribly.

The Lord thy God is a Jealous God. He sees you. He sees you forever and ever, Alan. He sees you!... *He sees you!*

ALAN (*in terror*) Eyes!... White eyes – never closed! Eyes like flames – coming – coming!... God seest! God seest!... NO!...

Pause. He steadies himself. The stage begins to blacken.

(*quieter*) No more. No more, Equus.

He gets up. He goes to the bench. He takes up the invisible pick. He moves slowly upstage towards Nugget, concealing the weapon behind his naked back, in the growing darkness. He stretches out his hand and fondles Nugget's mask.

(*gently*) Equus... Noble Equus... Faithful and True... Godslave... Thou—God—Seest—NOTHING!

He stabs out Nugget's eyes. The horse stamps in agony. A great screaming begins to fill the theatre, growing ever louder. Alan dashes at the other two horses and blinds them too, stabbing over the rails. Their metal hooves join in the stamping.

Relentlessly, as this happens, three more horses appear in cones of light: not naturalistic animals like the first three, but dreadful creatures out of nightmare. Their eyes flare – their nostrils flare – their mouths flare. They are archetypal images – judging, punishing, pitiless. They do

not halt at the rail, but invade the square. As they trample at him, the boy leaps desperately at them, jumping high and naked in the dark, slashing at their heads with arms upraised.

The screams increase. The other horses follow into the square. The whole place is filled with cannoning, blinded horses – and the boy dodging among them, avoiding their slashing hooves as best he can. Finally they plunge off into darkness and away out of sight. The noise dies abruptly, and all we hear is Alan yelling in hysteria as he collapses on the ground – stabbing at his own eyes with the invisible pick.

ALAN Find me!... Find me!... Find me!...

KILL ME!... KILL ME!...

35

The light changes quickly back to brightness.

Dysart enters swiftly, hurls a blanket on the left bench, and rushes over to Alan. The boy is having convulsions on the floor. Dysart grabs his hands, forces them from his eyes, scoops him up in his arms and carries him over to the bench. Alan hurls his arms round Dysart and clings to him, gasping and kicking his legs in a dreadful frenzy.

Dysart lays him down and presses his head back on the bench. He keeps talking – urgently talking – soothing the agony as he can.

DYSART Here... Here... Ssssh... Ssssh... Calm now ... Lie back. *Just lie back!* Now breathe in deep. Very deep. In... Out... In... Out... That's it. ... In. *Out... In... Out...*

The boy's breath is drawn into his body with a harsh rasping sound, which slowly grows less. Dysart puts the blanket over him.

Keep it going... That's a good boy... Very good boy... It's all over now, Alan. It's all over. He'll go away now. You'll never see him again, I promise. You'll have no more bad dreams. No more awful nights. Think of that!... You are going to be well. I'm going to make you well, I promise you.... You'll be here for a while, but I'll be here too, so it won't be so bad. Just trust me...

He stands upright. The boy lies still.

Sleep now. Have a good long sleep. You've earned it... Sleep. Just sleep... I'm going to make you well.

He steps backwards into the centre of the square. The light brightens some more.

A pause.

DYSART I'm lying to you, Alan. He won't really go that easily. Just clop away from you like a nice old nag. Oh, no! When Equus leaves – if he leaves at all – it will be with your intestines in his teeth. And I don't stock replacements... If you knew anything, you'd get up this minute and run from me fast as you could.

Hesther speaks from her place.

HESTHER The boy's in pain, Martin.

DYSART Yes.

HESTHER And you can take it away.

DYSART Yes.

HESTHER Then that has to be enough for you, surely?... In the end!

DYSART (*crying out*) *All right! I'll take it away!* He'll be delivered from madness. *What then?* He'll feel himself acceptable! *What then?* Do you think feelings like his can be simply re-attached, like plasters? Stuck on to other objects we select? *Look at him!*... My desire might be to make this boy an ardent husband – a caring citizen – a worshipper of abstract and unifying God. My achievement, however, is more likely to make a ghost!... Let me tell you exactly what I'm going to do to him!

He steps out of the square and walks round the upstage end of it, storming at the audience.

I'll heal the rash on his body. I'll erase the welts cut into his mind by flying manes. When that's done, I'll set him on a nice mini-scooter and send him puttering off into the Normal world where animals are treated *properly*: made extinct, or put into servitude, or tethered all their lives in dim light, just to feed it! I'll give him the good Normal world where we're tethered beside them – blinking our nights away in a

non-stop drench of cathode-ray over our shrivelling heads! I'll take away his Field of Ha Ha, and give him Normal places for his ecstasy – multi-lane highways driven through the guts of cities, extinguishing Place altogether, *even the idea of Place!* He'll trot on his metal pony tamely through the concrete evening – and one thing I promise you: he will never touch hide again! With any luck his private parts will come to feel as plastic to him as the products of the factory to which he will almost certainly be sent. Who knows? He may even come to find sex funny. Smirky funny. Bit of grunt funny. Trampled and furtive and entirely in control. Hopefully, he'll feel nothing at his fork but Approved Flesh. *I doubt, however, with much passion!*... Passion, you see, can be destroyed by a doctor. It cannot be created.

He addresses Alan directly, in farewell.

You won't gallop any more, Alan. Horses will be quite safe. You'll save your pennies every week, till you can change that scooter in for a car, and put the odd fifty p on the gee-gees, quite forgetting that they were ever anything more to you than bearers of little profits and little losses. You will, however, be without pain. More or less completely without pain.

Pause.

He speaks directly to the theatre, standing by the motionless body of Alan Strang, under the blanket.

And now for me it never stops: that voice of Equus out of the cave – 'Why Me?... Why Me?... Account for Me!' ... All right – I surrender! I say it!... In an ultimate sense I cannot know what I do in this place – yet I do ultimate things. Essentially I cannot know what I do – yet I do essential things. Irreversible, terminal things. I stand in the dark with a pick in my hand, striking at heads!

He moves away from Alan, back to the downstage bench, and finally sits.

I need – more desperately than my children need me – a way of seeing in the dark. What way is this? ... *What dark is this?* ... I cannot call it ordained of God: I can't get that far.

I will however pay it so much homage. There is now, in my mouth, this sharp chain. And it never comes out.

A long pause.

Dysart sits staring.

Blackout

Glossary: reading the text

Author's notes on the play

xxii ***Chorus*** organised band of singers or dancers, especially in Greek tragedy representing interested spectators and employed to explain the actions, express sympathy with characters and draw morals.

xxiii ***blinkers*** leather screens on a horse's bridle preventing it from seeing sideways.

mimetically by copying or imitation.

Act 1, scenes 1 to 7

3 ***schizophrenic*** person suffering from a mental disease marked by disconnection between thoughts, feelings and actions.

catatonia state of inertia. Catatonic schizophrenia is a kind of mental illness in which the sufferer can stay in a state of absolute immobility for a long time.

bench in the British judicial system this is the magistrate's or judge's seat in a court. Hesther is probably a magistrate. A magistrate is usually an unpaid layperson appointed to try minor offences.

Polynesian inhabitant of islands in the central and west Pacific including Hawaii and New Zealand.

4 ***Spanish fly*** dried beetle formerly used in medicine and thought to have aphrodisiac qualities.

6 ***Doublemint*** brand of chewing gum.

Martini popular vermouth drink. This and the Doublemint gum are both featured in advertising jingles which were well known at the time that this play was first produced. Alan's repetition of these