

Murdered Sleep
by BAC Young People's Theatre
With Phil Willmott

BALHAM TUBE STATION AT THE START OF THE BLITZ

THE AUDIENCE ENTER DIRECTED BY THE AIR RAID WARDENS, JIMMY AND ROBBIE ONEIL. THEY ARE GIVEN BLANKETS AND ENCOURAGED TO SIT ON THE FLOOR AND AROUND THE EDGES OF THE SPACE WITH THE CAST WHO ARE ALSO WRAPPED IN BLANKETS. WVS WOMEN OFFER THEM CUPS OF TEA.

OF THE WVS WOMEN CYNTHIA IS FUSSING, GEORGINA MORE RELAXED, ELEANOR NOT SURE WHAT TO DO AND FOLLOWING THE OTHERS. CYNTHIA SLIPS WHISKEY IN TO HER TEA WHEN SHE THINKS NO ONE IS WATCHING

PETER ARRIVES AND IS APPAULED AT WHAT HE SEES. HE CALLS OUT, SILENCING THE CROWD.

Peter: Listen everyone, please! Hang on a minute there's far too many people down here.

Mary: And who do you think you're talking to?

Jessica: Hello sweetheart.

Rachel: Can we have a bit of hush here my daughter's fiancée is trying to say something. You carry on love.

Cynthia: Is there a problem? I'm in charge here.

Peter: This board we've put down over the tracks, it wasn't intended to carry the weight of so many people. Look, can't you all go back to your Anderson Shelters?

Lisa: Not with them new doodlebug bombs. My auntie Vi says the underground stations are the safest place.

Peter: With respect, Madame. Your auntie Vi may not have the full facts.

Lisa: She was a nurse at the front in the last war.

Peter: That's as maybe but -

Patricia: Who the bleeding hell are you anyway? You don't own this tube station.

Rachel: My daughter's fiancée is one of London Underground's most respected transportation operatives.

Peter: (embarrassed) Please Mrs H! Please, everyone think of the risks down here. There's mains water and electricity supplies just above your heads. There's a sewer beneath us. If a bomb hit all that, anything could happen.

Cliff: Oh have a bit of sense mate. Hitler's not gunna bomb a tube station is he? I'm staying put.

Cynthia: I'm afraid we can't leave now all the tea things are already set up.

Peter: I'm sure we all appreciate the trouble you've gone to but -

Patricia: I don't see you getting your hands dirty, mate. Why aren't you off fighting for your country?

Peter: (Embarrassed) Problems with my back I... the authorities thought I could be more use... look.. (confidently quoting) "In the hour of conflict the workers and the soldiers each have their part to play shoulder to shoulder"

Betty: Blimey Pete! Where d'you read that? On the back of a matchbox.

Jessica: You leave him alone, take no notice darling.

Henrietta: It's Marx actually.

(Cat calls from the other girls)

Cynthia: If you've quite finished young man. I'll take over now.

PETER RETREATS INTO THE SHADOWS.

Quiet please (ignored). Can we have some hush please (gradually quiet) Thank you.

ELEANOR DROPS A SPOON WITH A CLATTER - CYNTHIA GLARES.

Eleanor: Sorry, sorry

CYNTHIA IS ABOUT TO SPEAK BUT IS INTERRUPTED

Georgia: We would like to begin by welcoming you all here to Balham Station.

SILENCED BY A LOOK FROM CYNTHIA

Cynthia: Yes, and on behalf of the ladies from the Women's Voluntary Services may I apologise that you had to queue for so long.

Suzy: It's like the bloody January sales!

Betty: Not so many bargains though, eh.

Cynthia: Yes, thank you, but you're here now and I hope we can all rub along nicely together and show Mr Hitler that the plucky folk of Balham will not be down hearted. Now I'm sure we're all going to have lots of fun. No need to stand on ceremony. We can all be quite informal. My name is The Right Honourable Mrs Cynthia Lonsdale. But you can call me Cynthia (smiles) and these are my colleagues Georgina (nods to group) and Eleanor. Say hello Eleanor.

Eleanor: Sorry, sorry, Hello All.

Cynthia: I'm afraid before we all start to get to know one another there are a few rules and regulations we must discuss. In case of emergency the exits are situated at the far left and the centre of the platform. (WVS WOMEN INDICATE)

Mary: Look Cynth, some of us even bought a platform ticket to get a place down here, we haven't come to listen to rules and

regulations. (Agreements from others.)

(Cynthia upset, loses place in her notes)

Cynthia: It's Cynthia actually. If you could all just try and concentrate for a little while longer.

Jessica: What do you think we are? A bunch of school kids?

Teresa: It wasn't like this on the common, we did as we pleased out there.

Rachel: Yes, and a lot of protection you were getting in a trench. We fought hard for the right to shelter down here.

Cliff: That's right, even old Winnie couldn't keep us out in the end. (murmurs)

Georgina: You shouldn't refer to our Prime Minister in such a flippant manner young man.

Cynthia: I'm sure Mr Churchill wants us all to be as safe as houses.

Peter: Let's hope they're still standing when we get out of here.

Teresa: I'm glad my kids are in the country.

Georgina: We've had instructions nobody must leave this shelter until we hear the all-clear siren.

(Jimmy and Rob about to speak)

Or until these handsome young men inform us it's safe.

Cynthia: I'd appreciate it if you could concentrate on sticking to the regulations Georgina, rather than sticking to anything in trousers.

Georgina: Not all of us have to be 25 going on 50

Eleanor: Ladies please! We could all be down here for hours. We

must try and get along.

Rachel: Here, here!

Eleanor: I don't know how the rest of you are feeling, but I'm scared. I mean after The Johnson house got hit I just keep thinking who's next? Mr Spencer told me, who heard it from Mr Peterson whose son's in the RAF, that the Germans have made a new bomb. A bomb that you can't hear if you're directly underneath. You.. .you can't hear it until it hits.

Susie: I wish my dad was here.

Teresa: My old man would know what to do.

Cynthia: Yes, well I'm sure we all miss our men folk. But whilst they're away fighting for king and country we must remain organised and vigilant. Eleanor, we're supposed to be uplifting spirits not escalating concern.

Eleanor: Well you've certainly been lifting your own spirits
(gestures to her tea)

Cynthia: Purely medicinal I can assure you.

Georgina: Look you're both right. We can't ignore the way we're feeling - we're all anxious and frightened but we're better off here than in our small, damp, waterlogged Anderson shelters.

Jenny: Or in the Goods Yard, almost sleeping on top of each other, and in such filth.

Cynthia: (Wanting to regain control) Which brings me to my final rule, which is 'No urinating within the immediate proximity.

(Groans)

No, I feel it is very important to point out that the toilets are situated along the tunnel and there is no need to let standards slip and desecrate our sleeping quarters.

Patricia: Just 'cause we aint all La-de-da doesn't mean to say

we're animals!

Georgina: Of course (Glares at Cynthia). I'd like to apologise for my colleagues last comment. It's rather close down here, isn't it?

Cynthia: (A little affected by her whiskey) Yes, well, who wants to sing a song? 'Run Rabbit Run' perhaps, or 'Booms a Daisy'? I know (SINGS) "I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts -"

THERE IS A HUGE EXPLOSION. ALL THE LIGHTS GO OUT. SCREAMS. THEN SILENCE.

Mary: Blimey Cynth. I didn't think your singing was that bad!

ROBBIE ARRIVES WITH A HURRICANE LAMP.

Rob: Don't worry everyone. Bomb must have hit a power line.

Moira: I wonder where it landed. Sounded very near.

Rob: I saw the flash. Looked like it was down on the river by the warehouses.

Lisa: Thank god for that. Not many houses down there.

Jenny: A bit close for comfort though.

Susie: I'm scared.

Rob: Well, let's wait until we find out exactly what's happened.

Patricia: Don't worry everyone, the O'Neil boys are in charge. You'll have nothing to worry about with my fine sons looking after you.

Jimmy: You tell 'em ma.

Rachel: Well, that's all we need.

Patricia: And what's that supposed to mean?

Rachel: As if things weren't bad enough.

Patricia: Excuse me?

Rachel: London's burning, all the decent men are away fighting and who's left in charge? - Jimmy O'Neill. Balam's answer to Al Capone.

Jimmy: I kinda like that. Hey Rob, what does that make you? Hop A-Long Cassidy?

Patricia: I want to know, what you mean Miss "High And Mighty Married A Local Councillor"

Rachel: How many times, Patricia O'Neill has that boy been in and out of police custody since the age of 15? And his good for nothing brother.

Patricia: Perhaps my youngest two, innocents as they are, have occasionally been led astray by your London ways but my eldest Callam, now he's a model citizen. I'm sure no one here would disagree with that. Just ask my daughter in law. (TO MOIRA) Tell them what happened to your husband Callam last week.

Moira: They made him a sergeant.

Patricia: They made my son a sergeant. His father would have been so proud.

Mary: Where ever he is.

Patricia: My husband is serving his country unlike your husband.

Rachel: Unfortunately my husband must selflessly dedicate his time to making sure juvenile delinquents are defended in court.

Henrietta: Only because it suits him.

Rachel: I beg your pardon, young lady.

Henrietta: I'm sorry I didn't mean to say that out loud. I only meant well... It looks good in the paper doesn't it? (As if quoting from a newspaper statement in a grand voice) "The current

judicial system is prejudiced against the working classes and this case proves that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor. If I were to be made MP I would push through legislation..."

Toby: (Laughing) Here! Here!

Rachel: I think you've said quite enough!

Jessica: Yeh, mouthy cow.

Mary: That's my daughter for you. When she sees hypocrisy she must speak out. It's her university education you see.

Rachel: Well, she's certainly taught you some airs and graces.

Patricia: My eldest, Callam, could have gone to university. They wanted him didn't they Moira?

Moira: I..

Patricia: If he hadn't married you, who knows where he might have ended up.

Mary: Oh I think he's made the right choice, all your three have. Where would we be with out labourers? Essential with all the rubble to clear. I say fair play to them if they can make a bit off the black market on the side. As long as there are others to inspire us with ideals.

Jim: Ideals? Is their money in that?

Rob: Shut up Jimmy.

Mary: Yes, great speeches, great ideals that's what keeps me going

Patricia: Really, like what?

Mary: You know... that line in that film we saw at the Ruby down the Junction last week, (TO HER DAUGHTER) Oh you know, Hen. you

know... that line... I said to you "remember that" didn't I because I knew I would forget it..

Henrietta: I can't remember

Mary: Oh come on love, it was Celia Johnson, and remember? she turned to... oh what's his name... Hen, oh this is going to drive me mad. It really moved me, I almost cried. Well I did at the end

Henrietta: Mum, you cried at Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs!

Mary: Well, it's better than all that stuff you keep going on about. Henrietta follows special films, don't you darling? You see she travelled extensively with her university education.

Patricia: [not interested] Oh yes?

Mary: (to Toby) Your sisters a clever girl isn't she.

TOBY HUGS HENRIETTA.

Mary: (showing off for the benefit of the other mothers) Now what's his name again? The one you and your filmmaker friends always talk about? begins with "B", Brunel wasn't it, love?

Henrietta: Brunel was an industrial engineer, you mean Bunuel

Mary: See, she knows everything

Jim: University of life, that's what I subscribe to, learn it on the streets

Mary: Henrietta studied down by the sea.. The university of Sussex. Had your old mum down to visit didn't you, love? And Toby. It was fascinating to meet all my daughter's friends. One of the lad's had been at a garden party with the little Princess Margaret Rose.

Rob: Well, that's all well and good but right now we need people who can put in a hard days work and get us through this war.

Mary: Oh, you wouldn't believe it looking at that young little face

of hers but my daughter has already experienced a war.

Henrietta: Mum, will you stop

Jimmy: Oh really now?

Mary: Yes my girl was off in Sweden fighting the... who was it again love?

Rob: I didn't realise there was a war in Sweden, Jim?

Jim: (ASIDE) There wasn't, just humour the old bat.

Henrietta: Mum, it was not Sweden, we discussed it only yesterday.,

Mary: It was Spain, fighting the fascists.

Betty: Same as usual then.

Henrietta: Fascists!

Mary: Oh yes. My geography goes to pot every now and again, I always get things mixed up. You sure it wasn't Switzerland?

Henrietta: I think I would know, mother.

Patricia: Well, of course they wanted my Callam to fight in Switzerland too but he was too busy what with a wife to support. Isn't that right Moira.

Moira: Yes, Ma O'Neil. He was too busy.

Mary: Doing the rag and bone round was he?

Pat: There's more to my boys than their flourishing mobile iron mongery.

Cliff: Like looting bombed out houses and dishing out dodgy silk stockings, pretending to be Air Raid Wardens.

Pat: That's enough from you. Just remember if certain people

didn't find you odd jobs for you to do you'd go pretty hungry.

Rob: (TO JIMMY) You never told me we had some silk stockings in.

Jimmy: Shut up idiot.

Toby: Hello Jimmy

Jim: All right there Toby, maybe you can help me out a bit later.

Mary: You're not involving my Toby with anything.

Henrietta: Mum, calm down. Do you want another cup of tea? Can I get you one Mrs O'Neil?

Patricia: I've got one thanks.

Henrietta: Anyone else?

Cynthia: My ladies will handle refreshments dear. We can't have the people helping themselves now, imagine what could happen...

Henrietta: Yes we couldn't possibly have the "people", looking after themselves, just imagine, they might think for themselves, or even worse, storm the tea caddy, without the upper-classes to guide them... (catches herself) Sorry.

Cynthia: [leaves] Well, if you'll excuse me I've got things to be getting on with.

Mary: That's my girl! Them Fascists didn't stand a chance. She organised parties and meetings with artists and writers, didn't you love? A right little society she set up there, talking and dancing through the night, Henrietta always staying up till last, a great hostess, I suppose she learnt that from having a pub landlady for a mum. Some of them were a bit odd I admit, and I must say I didn't like that nude sketch that artist did of you, even though you said he was important, but that's what they're like

you see, intellectuals...

Betty: That's disgusting

Rachel: She obviously takes after her mother

Mary: I beg your pardon?

Rachel: Not quite the blushing bride were you?

Mary: I'm not descending to your level Rachel Hamilton. I know you don't like to hear about my daughter's success.

Henrietta: Mother! Don't bring me into your ancient squabbles.

Mary: The Wandsworth Gazette wrote an article about her too, she even got her photo in the paper, didn't you... I was so proud, you looked so lovely ... like what's her name... Everyone in the snug said so.

Henrietta: [Very firmly] Mother, I really don't think anyone's interested

Rachel: I think that's so ironic... You know what irony is Mary?

Henrietta: Don't rise to the bait, Mum

Rachel: (Undeterred) It's ironic that the money that paid for your daughter's, sadly wasted, education was earned from other people's misery - namely the working classes that drank away their

sorrows night after night in your back street pub. (TO HENRIETTA)

You want to remember that miss when you feel like giving another lecture. Quite frankly, I've had quite enough of your red, commie talk. I don't like it. It's unpatriotic. If that's the way she carries on at The Magpie it's no wonder no decent person would be seen dead drinking in there.

Mary: We've worked hard to build a successful public house, every one knows that. Remember what work is - no my mistake, you've never lifted a finger in all your miserable life.

Henrietta: Please stop both of you.

Mary: (Ignoring her) And you stand there, acting like Lady Muck, pick picking at everyone else like you're some bloody judge and jury. Leave that to your husband and look to your own family before you criticise mine.

Rachel: I'll have you know, my Jessica and Elizabeth are doing a damn sight better than your children. Jessica is engaged to a lovely gentleman with real prospects, she's a primary school teacher and Elizabeth... works in the film industry!

Mary: Don't make me laugh - Jessica's marrying that tube driver - and Betty works in the cinema. Why pretend you're something that you're not.

Patricia: Like human.

Rachel: (In a fury) How dare you! I don't know how you can show your face around here when everyone knows your sons are delinquents!

Henrietta: Right, that's it, you're all as bad as each other. Sod the lot of you. (She leaves)

Rachel: Your daughter has a foul mouth and as for that boy of yours-

Mary: Toby, don't listen to the mean old lady.

Rachel: He's an idle lay about. Never done a useful days work in his life.

Mary: Actually he's a very deep thinker.

Rachel: Yeh, thinking about what to eat next. And as for your husband...

Mary: I didn't remember you having any complaints about him when you were younger. I had to wrench him out of your clutches - but you probably can't remember that far back.

Rachel: Well, all I can say is that my tastes matured.

Mary: Is that why you married a man twice your age?!

(Georgina approaches.)

Georgina: (Not catching the conversation) Oh good. You all seem to know each other. What fun we're all going to have! It's almost a pity the bombings will only be for a few nights.

Rachel: Yes what a pity.

Mary: Still plenty of time to wander down memory lane though eh, Rachel.

Georgina: Cup of tea?

Rachel: Anything stronger?

Georgina (Taken aback) I'll 'erm go and see...wait here

Mary: We wouldn't dream of leaving.

PETER PICKS UP THE LAMP AND CARRYS IT OVER TO WHERE HENRIETTA IS SITTING.

Peter: You alright?

Henrietta: Yes, fine thank you. I'm just cross with myself for loosing my temper back there. Everyone means well it's just... (BEAT) I don't think we've met.

Peter: I don't believe we have, Peter Hartner. Well, look don't let me interrupt you if you're deep in thought. I just wanted to make sure you were ok.

Henrieta: That's very sweet of you. And you're not interrupting. I was just wishing I could get someone round here to see a different point of view. But they don't want to hear anything that may dampen moral.

Peter: Everyone's just on edge. Their men are away and for the first time their fate lies in their own hands. Or at least there'll be no bloke to blame if it all goes wrong.

Henrieta: I don't believe in fate. I believe in grabbing any opportunity to make a difference. That's why I went to Spain. I wanted to find out about the problems other people had and the answers they were finding. (BEAT) I just seem to run into war everywhere I go. Don't get me wrong, I'm not anti war I just feel that we should try and see things from all points of view before settling on an opinion.

Peter: Right. Half the people here haven't really got a clue what is actually happening. Those WVS women think you can find an answer to all of life's problems in the bottom of a cup of tea.

Henrieta: They mean well.

Peter: Yeh, but it's good to get away from them every now and again.

Henrieta: I don't think they like me very much.

Peter: They're angry at this situation, not you.

Henrieta: I always say to myself I won't bother next time, try to talk to them I mean, but I can't help it, there is so much going on right now

Peter: I'm interested, I just never really meet people like you, who are educated. Especially down here in the Underground, the conversations are always the same. I join in all right, but I would like to meet someone who could talk about other things now and again. You do, and I admire that. (Pause) Until I know all the facts I just can't believe in this war I'm...

Henrieta: A Conscientious Objector?

Peter: Not quite, I've got a bad back, so I wasn't called up. I often wonder if I'd have had the courage to stand up for myself if I had been.

Henrietta: Things are changing. You don't have to feel out on a limb.

Peter: Yes, I wanted to talk to you about that.

Henrietta: Really?

Peter: Some commies handed me a pamphlet, and I sent off for the book, I was interested...

Henrietta: And have you' read it?

Peter: Well not yet, I flick through it on my tea break some days, some of the lads give me a hard time, but the union is quite strong down here.

Henrietta: They are strong everywhere

Peter: I heard about the Dockers who went on strike

Henrietta: Yes, they wouldn't load a ship with arms headed for the Soviet Union, because they were in effect attacking their fellow workers

Peter: I think that's amazing

Henrietta: So do I, [indicating to others in room, lowering voice] but Not many people here would agree. You have to be careful what you say: you can be accused of Un-English behaviour

Peter: [almost laughing] What?

Henrietta: Yes, I heard of an officer who was accused of being a spy for his Un-British behaviour. Guess what he did?

Peter: [wildly guessing] Sang the German national anthem?

Henrietta: No, he didn't flush the loo

Peter: [disbelief] No!

Henrietta: It's true

Peter: My old man better be more careful then!

Henrietta: Have you heard of the alarm and despondency fines?

Peter: The what?

Henrietta: I heard a woman was fined £20 and put for 3 months in jail for saying to some soldiers that they were bloody fools to wear the uniform.

Peter: Right.

Henrietta: So better be careful.

Peter: Yes Mum.

Henrietta: I'm sorry. It did sound a bit like that didn't it? Did you hear mine back there? She's always been like that, on the one hand trying to own my life, yet on the other hand encouraging me to get out and live it.

Peter: But that's good isn't it?

Henrietta: Am I doing it for me or her. Poor cow, stuck behind that bar all the time, all ginned up. God, she used to embarrass me so much if I brought friends in.

Peter: My old man did that to me all the time

Henrietta: She'd flirt with all the blokes I met, it was so embarrassing. Luckily they just saw her as a bit eccentric.

Peter: She's a very sociable lady

Henrietta: She's not stupid you know? but that's the act she put on for the men. 'Laugh at your troubles' that what she says. She thinks it makes her look more attractive too. She's trapped though. I can

spread my wings but she's got my brother Toby to think about.
(beat) What I'd really like now is a drink, and a pair of those
dodgy stockings.

Peter: When I'm sitting there on the front of my train I have such
daydreams, imagining I could just free the train off the tracks
and just keep on going... (Pause) How can I join the communists?

Henrietta: Here's your fiancée

Jessica: So Peter this is where you're been hiding. I've been
looking for
you... Betty says she can sneak us into see the new Jimmy
Stewart.

Henrietta: [dryly] Hello there.

Jessica: It's always you isn't it. If there's a man alone, you're in
there. You're so obvious. Peter, I think Jimmy needs you,
urgently. What have you been talking to her about?

Henrietta: Ideas, Nothing you'd understand.

Jessica: She's not to be trusted Peter, watch what you say to her.

Peter: She's got lots on her mind that's all.

Jessica: Pete, we could all have a lot on our minds if we wanted
but some of us have got better things to do. (Barks at Peter)
PETE! JIMMY NOW!

HE GOES.

JESSICA PICKS UP THE LAMP.

Jessica: Don't mind if I take this do you Hen. Its just people are
complaining. They don't want to have to look at your ugly face
any more.

SHE MAKES HER WAY WITH THE LAMP, OVER TO SUZY, BETTY AND
JENNY. THEY ARE SPRAWLED ABOUT GOSSIPING, READING MOVIE
MAGAZINES ETC.

Jenny: (To Jessica) What's the matter with you. You got a face like thunder.

Jessica: It's nothing. Leave me alone can't you?

Jenny: Sorry I'm sure. Did you pass on the message?

Jessica: Who to? Oh.. No I'm sorry. I got distracted.

Jenny: It was important. I've got to speak to him.

Jessica: Well he's busy isn't he. There's an air raid on. I don't know what you want to bother with him for anyway.

Jenny: It doesn't look like I've got any choice.

Betty: What you on about?

Jenny: No one. (To Change The Subject) You still thinking of dying your hair?

Suzy: What colour?

Betty: Bright blonde - like... Mae West

Suzy: Ugh! What do you want to do that for? I think it looks awful like that. My dad says you can tell a tart from the colour of her hair and the brightness of her lipstick.

(Betty takes out a bright red lipstick from her handbag and a compact, and applies the lipstick)

Betty: He'd better not see this then. Got it on the black market.

Suzy: You're outrageous, Bet.

Jenny: (Behaving oddly) Give me some of that (Grabs the lipstick and puts it on thickly)

Suzy: (Alarmed) Jen! What's got into you?

Jenny: Maybe her Dad's right? (Looks at herself in the mirror)
Tart! That's me. Bloody idiot more like.

Suzy: Can I have some? I wouldn't mind looking a bit saucy today. I quite fancy that Jimmy over there. I reckon he's got his eye on me.

Jenny: I'm sure he has Suzy. I'm sure he has.

Suzy: The only reason I haven't got a boy friend, is because I'm trying to focus on my career. You wait - you'll see me on the stage one day. That's the thing about me, my star quality. It runs in the family. Talent is handed down from mother to daughter. Singing. dancing..

Betty: Suzy, it's your step mum that works on the stage. Your real mum's a cleaner.

Suzy: She sings a lot too.

Jenny: What, whilst she's doing the ironing?

Betty: I think you'll be a very famous family one-day (laughs) I mean, imagine ...I can just see it now - Suzy's name in lights, with her mum's 'The Singing Family Mop - the forces sweethearts!

Jenny: That's enough Betty. It's not as though you're any better. In fact, I can just see you, an old lady, with your bucket and mop, on the cinema steps, pretending you're dancing with Fred Astaire!

Betty: That's if I live that long. You never know. We could all die tonight.

Jenny: Oh shut up Betty that's no way to talk. You can get in trouble for spreading low morale. Watch out one of the wardens doesn't hear you.

Betty: What do you mean one of those wardens? I can hardly imagine Jimmy or Robbie O'Neill carting me off to the police station to be locked up with the spies! Do you think that's why he's talking to that woman now? Maybe he thinks she's a spy! At

least I'll be locked
up stylishly, with my new stockings on like Hedy Le Mar. Being
arrested with bare legs, how uncouth.

Jenny: You'd know.

Betty: You can't beat the feel of real silk stockings. Jimmy gave
them to me on Sunday night, he's a right charmer. I only wish Rob
could be as generous as him.

Susie: What! Jimmy gave them to you? What about Rob? I
thought he was your boyfriend. God you don't half get about
Betty.

Betty: I'm not married to Rob, our relationship is very relaxed. If
Rob wants to give me silk stockings he's quite welcome. Chance
would be a fine thing though.

Suzy: But which one do you like best?

Betty: Well, Rob I suppose. I mean we're supposed to be going
out together.

Suzy: You've never had any taste.

Betty: He's alright. Isn't he?

Suzy: Better than some of the scrag ends we get at the cinema.

Betty: That's not saying much. I like his bum. Kind of Juicy.

Jenny: Betty!

Betty: Well, haven't you noticed.

Jenny: Actually no, we do not go round looking at your
boyfriend's bum.

Suzy: Well...

Jenny: Suzy!

Suzy: (To Betty) So what's the story with you and Jimmy then?

(Betty sees the jealous expression on Susie's face)

Betty: Oh I see how it is. Got a touch of the green eyed monster have we Susie?

Susie: (indignant) No! I just don't think that you should go around flaunting yourself with all these different men. You're getting yourself a reputation Betty which I don't think your parents would be too proud of!

Betty: (Slightly worried but trying not to show it) Look my parents are happily unaware of who I see. It's none of their business, and they're not going to find out any time soon..... are thy Susie!!

Susie: (she backs down but adds smugly,) Well anyway I've been asked out by Jimmy in fact. We were going to go dancing tonight only the bloody air-raid wrecked everything as usual.

Betty: You! Go out with Jimmy? Don't make me laugh. Anyway you must have got your facts muddled darlin' cause he was going to come and have a drink with Rob and me at The Magpie.

Susie: (getting worked up) No, no, no, he definitely said that he was coming dancing...

(Jenny snaps)

Jenny: Look will you both just shut up. Jimmy wasn't planning on meeting either of you tonight as he was on duty. I wish you'd stop being so petty all the time. I mean Christ neither of you have the slightest idea about what's important in life do you!

Betty: What is the matter with you tonight. And Jessica's hardly said a word. It's like a bloody tomb down here.

Susie: Oh don't say that Bet.

Betty: Let's have a bit of us girls pulling together. So Mae West too tarty? How about Hedy La Mar?

JESSICA: She is so irritating.

Betty: Who? Hedy?

JESSICA: She's so conceited.

Betty: Do you think she dyes her hair (talking about Hedy La Marr)

JESSICA: Of course she does, it's not the only thing she tries to colour, she's always forcing her stupid idealistic views on anyone that'll listen.

Betty: I never knew she had any (talking about Hedy)

JESSICA: It's not the only thing you don't know, she's as common as muck and I've heard her family have light fingers.

Betty: No!

Jessica: I saw her handing something to Jimmy outside the pub the other night.

Betty: Hedy La Mar!?

Jessica: No stupid, that Henrietta. I couldn't quite make out what, I think it was a parcel.

Suzy: Are you sure it was Jimmy?

JESSICA: Definitely Jimmy.

Suzy: The bitch... didn't I see her earlier with your Pete?

JESSICA: Yes.

Betty: I don't know what you see in him any way Jess. He's a bit quiet.

Jessica: He's a thinker, isn't he. That's hardly your style.

Betty: That's right. Where as that, Jimmy! Maybe he can get me a bit of chocolate. You never know.

Jessica: I don't know how you carry on like this behind Rob's back. He deserves better.

Betty: It's not really behind his back.

Jessica: That's exactly what it is.

Betty: All right, all right. Will this shut you up.

SHE PICKS UP THE LAMP AND MOVES OVER TO WHERE ROBBIE AND JIMMY ARE SITTING.

Rob: All right Betty?

Jessica: Hello Rob, hello jimmy.

Jimmy: And how can we help this beautiful young lady?

Jessica: I just wanted to say Hello. Oh and.. um.. thanks for the stockings.

Rob: What?!

Jessica: Well, I won't hold you up. I'm sure you've both got lots of air-raid-warden-ly duties to fulfil. (PECKING ROB ON THE CHEEK) Bye boys.

SHE MOVES AWAY LEAVING THE LAMP WHICH NOW LIGHTS ROBBIE AND JIMMY

ROB: What did she mean?

JIMMY: I think she meant thanks for the stockings. Which part of the sentence didn't you understand Robbo?

ROB: What the fuck are you doing giving my girlfriend silk stockings?

JIMMY: Your girlfriend? She never said nothing about being your girlfriend.

ROB: You know damn well that we've been seeing each other for the last month.

JIMMY: I thought that you were just good friends. She certainly never said anything about being your girlfriend. Relax, will you?

ROB: Relax! Jesus, this is the 3rd time that this has happened in the last year and six months: it was the exact same with Joanna and Nancy. One day I'm happy enough, getting on great and the next day they're thanking you for some ropey flowers and parading around in those bloody silk stockings.

JIMMY: Rob, I'm sorry but I didn't think you'd care so much. She's only a girl. Anyway she's the one who started it.

ROB: Betty?! She couldn't even start a car! Not to mind starting something with you!!!

JIMMY: She did. She called round our place last Saturday, all dolled up, smelling like summer. What was I meant to do?

ROB: She called round to see me. I'd have been there except I had to work late. - 'cause you went home early!

JIMMY: Yeh? Well she wasn't too worried to find that you weren't in. She even came in for a while to help me with one of my poems.

ROB: Jimmy! They're not your poems, you steal them out of that anthology of poems that da' owned.

JIMMY: So what's wrong with that?

ROB: It's dishonest.

JIMMY: Da' used to do it to girls, once upon a time.

ROB: Used not

JIMMY: Sure he did, that's how he got ma, sent her some fake shite poem and she swallowed it hook line and sinker.

ROB: It's still not right Jimmy. Betty (pause) She's a really nice girl, she's too good for you.

JIMMY: Look Rob, here's the way things are. In this life you've either got it or you haven't. I've got it. I'm a talented musician, poet and athlete -

R: Athlete?!

JIMMY: I'm in the prime of my life, I'm raking in a fortune. It's very understandable that women flock to me. I'm irresistible.

ROB: Christ are you actually serious!?

JIMMY: Yeh.

ROB: Jimmy, you lie, you steel, your dishonest, you've given the same poem to about 20 girls and about half the women in Balham are wearing your knocked off silk stockings, each one of them whistling the same shite tune that you wrote for them.

JIMMY: So?

ROB: So? Jimmy you hurt their feelings. (PAUSE) it's wrong.

JIMMY: Rob, look all I do is have a bit of fun, and if the girls have a bit of fun too, how bad can it be?

ROB: Jimmy, you use them.

JIMMY: Ah don't get so serious on me. Women: (THINKS) Women are there just to have a bit of a laugh with, sometimes it suits, sometimes it doesn't. That's the way Da' thought - that's how he always treated Ma. Didn't do her any harm. That's how Callam feels too, that's how I feel and that's how you should be.

ROB: Why?

JIMMY: Why? 'cause you're an O'Neil. Just like the rest of us.
That's just the way we're meant to be.

ROB: Jimmy, some day this is all going to come back to you and
you'll regret it.

JIMMY: So Betty liked the stockings eh? Women - they're so easy.

ROB: Some day you'll regret all of this.

CYNTHIA CROSSES TO THE BOYS.

Cynthia: Gentlemen, I wonder if I can deprive you of that lamp
for a moment. I want to check supplies. If Mr Hitler springs any
nasty surprises I'm going to make bally sure there's light
refreshments on hand.

JIMMY: You're a saint, Mrs Lonsdale. Now, look at you now with
the lamplight catching your hair. Who do you look like? Who does
she look like Robert?

ROB: I'm sure I don't know Jimmy.

JIMMY: I can't decide if it's Florence Nightingale, or some
beautiful angel from out of an oil painting that I'm thinking of.

CYNTHIA: Oh Mr. O'Neil you silver tongued lothario, you.

(PAUSE)

JIMMY: (UNCERTAIN) That's good is it?

ROB: (WEARILY) Oh yes.

CYNTHIA: I was wondering Mr. O'Neil about the little matter you
mentioned earlier. The possible provision of.. that you might be
able to aquire some.. I... I... I'd be very grateful.

JIMMY: The stockings, Mrs Lonsdale?

CYNTHIA: (FLUSTERD) The a... yes... quite so. In these dark times I
do think it's important for a woman to feel a little feminine

sometimes. Don't you. (SHE GETS FLUSTERED)

SHE MOVES OFF WITH THE LIGHT TO JOIN ELEANOR AND GEORGINA AT THE URN.

AS SHE DOES SO JIMMY WINKS AND CLICKS HIS TOUNGE AT ROB. ROB SIGHS AND ROLLS HIS EYES.

JESSICA MOVES NEARER TO THE WRVS WOMEN.

Cynthia: (STILL FLUSHED) Now ladies, we need to make sure that we run a tight ship here. It's up to us to keep morale up, and make sure everyone is as comfortable as possible. We all have our little talents, don't we?

Georgina: Some smaller than others...

Eleanor: So, what do you think we should do next, Cynthia?
Should
we make some more tea?

Georgina: God no! We're already stretching Balham's bladder control to the limit. There's more liquid sloshing around here than Brighton with the tide in.

Cynthia: (IGNORING THIS. TO ELEANOR) No dear, I don't think so. We may be down here for some time yet - You don't want us to fritter away our resources do you?

Eleanor: Oh sorry, sorry. No of course not. I didn't mean that -

Cynthia: (GOING ALL MILITARY) But we must be prepared. At any moment the foreigners may do the dirty on us and we must be standing by with a stiff upper lip and a cup of ear grey. Now gather round troops. We've got an operational problem. We've no power and at proximately 0200 hours the water for the tea's going to be cold.

Eleanor: (PANICING) Oh no. Oh no. What are we going to do? Everyone's relying on us. Oh no. It's all a disaster. I knew it would be. We're all going to die of thirst. And it's all my fault. I

should have thought. I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Cynthia: (BARKS THE COMMAND) Miss Mashal!

ELEANOR SPRINGS TO ATTENTION

Eleanor: (SOLDIER LIKE) Yes, Mrs Lonsdale.

Cynthia: The thing to do is not to panic. Once the hun sense panic they go in for the kill.

Eleanor: (WHIMPERS) Oh dear!

Georgina: (TO CYNTHIA) So what's the solution, Biggles?

Cynthia: Fortunately I foresaw this very eventually and have come equipped. Our gardener's lad has a little camping stove from the scouts. Eleanor you will set it up. Georgina, you and I will circulate amongst the civilians raising morale and spreading a general sense of calm and well being. Any questions?

Eleanor: But I mean I couldn't possibly... I wouldn't know where to start I...

Cynthia: (IGNORING HER) Jolly good.

SHE PLONKS THE CAMPING STOVE DOWN IN FRONT OF ELANOR.

(TO GEORGINA) Forward march!

CYNTHIA AND GEORGINA MOVE AWAY.

Georgina: (UNDER HER BREATH) I'm going to kill her! I'm going to kill her!

ELEANOR IS LEFT STRUGALING WITH THE CAMPING STOVE.
JESSICA IS WATCHING HER.

ELEANOR: (TO THE STOVE) Oh no. Oh no. Sorry, sorry.

JESSICA: Having a bit of trouble?

ELEANOR: Well actually, yes.

JESSICA: Want me to help you? My cousin Billy's got one of those?

ELEANOR: Oh would you, could you? I'd be frightfully grateful.

Jessica: Do you think we're in danger?

Eleanor: Well, my dear, obviously we're all in danger at the moment, but I would say that you are a very sensible young lady to be down here in the shelter. Cynthia, Mrs Lonsdale, says it's the safest place for us all to be until the bombing stops. But we must all be prepared.

Jessica: So what do you think might happen, then? What do you need to be prepared for?

Eleanor: Well, we have supplies of refreshments and blankets, to make everyone as comfortable as possible, and we have first aid supplies as well, just in case they're needed...

Jessica: First aid? How exciting - can I see?

Eleanor: Well, I don't know about that...

Jessica: (BEING POSH TO MAKE ELANOR LIKE HER) Just a peek a boo, miss Marshal.

Eleanor: (TAKING OUT THE FIRST AID BOX) Oh all right then. It is rather thrilling. What's your name, dear?

Jessica: Oh, I'm sorry - I'm Jessica. It must be so exciting to know that you could be called on at any moment to save someone's life - I wouldn't even know how to stop a nose bleed, never mind help the wounded. I wish I could be like you. I wish I could make a difference.

Eleanor: We're just here to help.

Jessica: But you are extraordinary! I think its amazing that you

are
all ready and able to help - I mean you must actually save
lives.

Eleanor: (Looks embarrassed) Well, I'm not sure about that...

Jessica: It all seems so glamorous somehow - even your
uniforms look so important. I wonder... No, you'll think
I'm silly.

Eleanor
No, go on - what is it?

Jessica
Could I try yours on? Just the coat and hat, I mean...

ELEANOR LOVES THE ATTENTION

Eleanor
Yes, I suppose so. (taking off her coat) Here you go.

Jessica
(Swinging around, striking poses) How do I look?

Eleanor
Very official.

Jessica
(Jessica notices the brooch) Eleanor? Is this yours? It's
beautiful.

Eleanor
Yes it is. It was a gift. I got it -

CYNTHIA CALLS ACROSS.

Cynthia: Eleanor! You're needed here!

(ELEANOR ROLLS HERE EYES TO JESSICA, BUT LOOKS GLAD TO BE
NEEDED.)

Eleanor: I'll be back in a mo.

REBECCA MOVES TOWARDS THE TEA MAKING TABLE

JESSICA WATCHES ELEANOR MOVE AWAY, WAITS FOR A MOMENT, THEN TAKES OFF THE COAT. AS SHE FOLDS IT AND PUTS IT DOWN, SHE UNPINS THE BROOCH. SHE POCKETS IT.

JESSICA: (To her self) Silly cow.

JESSICA SPOTS REBECCA WATCHING HER.

Jessica: (DIRECT) What you looking at?

Rebecca: I'm sorry I just wondered if there was any news. About how much longer we'll be here I mean?

Jessica: How should I know. I'm not a bloody mind reader.

Rebecca: I'll ask someone else.

REBECCA MOVES AWAY

JESSICA MOVES AWAY. AND NEARLY FALLS OVER CLIFF.

CLIFF: Can't you look where you're going?

JESSICA: Cliff, get that heap of junk working over by the tea urn? Or it's cold slop for breakfast.

JESSICA MOVES BACK TO THE GIRLS. CLIFF MOVES OVER TO TAKE ALOOK AT THE STOVE.

MOIRA COMES OVER.

MOIRA: So tea boy as well now are we?

CLIFF: Less of your lip.

MOIRA: Well, mother in law wants another cup. Honestly I don't know where the old bag puts it. Her saintly son's the same. 'hollow legs my husband.

CLIFF: There aint no tea till we can heat the water. This thing just needs cleaning.

HE STARTS FIDDLING WITH THE STOVE.

CLIFF: [film noir, Bogart-esque] So, what's a nice girl like you doing in a low-down dirty hole like this?

MOIRA: Looking forward to getting out of it. I hate sitting on the floor. It's so unladylike.

CLIFF: [HE BRUSHES HER CHEEK WITH HIS FINGER] That's what I love about you though, how unladylike you are.

MOIRA: Cliff ! Stop it - someone will see.

CLIFF: They're all in their own little worlds. No one noticed.

MOIRA: Don't you believe it. I know it's dark in here, but there's Callum's two brothers, just over there, *and* my mother in law. You blind in your good eye as well now?

CLIFF: [ignoring her tirade] Well, how about if we just sat for a while back to back while I mend this. Nobody could complain. I'd have me hands full. You could keep hold of the pieces that might get lost. I'd like to feel you against me. You've got a lovely back, you know.

MOIRA: Cliff!

CLIFF: Prefer your front.

BOTH COLLAPSE INTO GIGGLES, WHICH THEY SWIFTLY TRY TO COVER UP.

Careful, that Cynthia was watching us. She's got eagle ears that one. I was mending the sash at her place the other day and she could hear if I stopped for a woodbine from the other side of the house. [QUIET AND SERIOUS] I love you, Moira.

MOIRA: I know.

UNNOTICED BY THEM CYNTHIA IS GETTING NEARER.

CLIFF: When all this is over, you know what we should do, don't you? We should get a house somewhere nice, like in Kent somewhere, with a big garden and a nice parlour and no damp and doors that close properly. I

don't know what you O'Neils do to your bloody doors,
really I don't.

MOIRA: Wasn't me.

CLIFF: No. [changing subject] And cats, lots of them.

MOIRA: Tiger won't be very happy about that.

CLIFF: Tiger will love other cats to play with.

CYNTHIA HAS OVERHEARD ALL OF THIS. BRIMFUL OF
SENTIMENTALITY, SHE SCUTTLES OFF TO SPREAD SOME GOSSIP.
PETER COMES OVER TO THE URN TABLE. HE'S CARRYING A BOOK.

PETER: Cliff, you finished with that lamp, mate?

CLIFF: Yeh, just about.

PETER: D'you mind if I borrow it a moment.

CLIFF: Be my guest. (LOOKS AT MOIRA) We don't mind the dark
over here. (TO MOIRA) Back to back?

MOIRA: Back to back.

PETER MOVES OVER TO HENRIETTA WITH THE LAMP. SHE IS NEAR
LISA. AS HE DOES MOIRA AND CLIFF SETTLE BACK TO BACK IN THE
GLOOM.

PETER: (TO HENRIETTA) I found that book I was telling you
about.

HENRIETTA: Fantastic, is that it.

PETER: (A bit bashful) Yeah (holds it up)

HENRIETTA: The Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels, that's superb (starts rooting around in her own bag and pulls out an identical copy and opens) 'Working masses of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains'.

PETER: I have gotten to that bit yet.

HENRIETTA: They are the final lines, what sums up the whole Communist philosophy (hushes down a bit), this book is the reason why I want to go to Russia.

PETER: To Russia?

HENRIETTA: Yes, to Russia, to join the Communists there in their fight against the fascists. This is a pivotal moment in our history. Why don't you come with me, support our brothers (grabs his hand, Peter a bit taken aback).

PETER: Well, I don't know about that, I'm supposed to be driving the 17.49 to West Finchley.

HENRIETTA: Forget the trappings of capitalist dogma, Russia is where we should be, we are communist, we should be at the heart of a living communist society.

PETER: Well, I really just wanted to show you the book, the thing is that it's really my Uncle Andy. Some of the stuff in the book really makes sense, what they say about all people being the same and that no one should think they're better than anyone else, not like those bloody WVS women coming in here and thinking there above the rest of us.

HENRIETTA: Yes, that's exactly what it's all about, we have to unite, the common working people of the world, and together we can overthrow the bourgeoisie.

PETER: The bourg...

HENRIETTA: The despots and upper classes who would

rule us like children, but you and me we're not like that, we can think for ourselves and we don't want to be dictated to.

PETER: That's right, my Uncle Andy says that in Russia every man-

HENRIETTA: -and woman

PETER: and woman are all regarded equally, and that everyone pulls their own weight.

HENRIETTA: The only divisions are economic and once we are able to crush those forces then there is nothing to stop us all being equal. Or, we could set up our own division of the communist party here, I'll have to notify central headquarters of course.

PETER: Well, I don't really want to commit to anything, I mean I have my niece and nephew coming back after the war and there's my Uncle Andy of course, you see he's not very well. He's very sick at the moment and he gets me to read to him, that's why I know so much about politics and things.

HENRIETTA: That's what is so great about you Peter, you are a true communist, not only do you support the local community but you also care for your family. We need more good people like you to join our cause.

PETER: I do what I can, just getting on with things really.

HENRIETTA: And so modest as well. You would be a fantastic leader, people would really listen to you. Not like those patronising society women.

PETER: You're right you know, we don't need the likes of them telling us what we should do, these are my tunnels.

JESSICA IS APPROACHING

HENRIETTA: That's it Peter, you have the Revolutionary spirit burning in your heart, you can see now why we have to rise up against the oppressors and cast away our chains.

PETER: I'm going to tell them right now.

JESSICA: (BARKS) PETER HARTNER!

PETER: (MEEKLY) Yes, pookie.

JESSICA: Can you not stay away from other women's men, Henrietta? You Fergusons' ll steal anything. They're scum, her mother's a hussy and so are you. You do know that Peter and I are engaged to be married?

HENRIETTA: How dare you? This is really uncalled for.

PETER: Jessica, I think that you've misunderstood and I don't really think you should talk about people's family like that.

JESSICA: Well it's about time you took off the blinkers and had a look at what's staring you in the face.

Henrietta: There's no need to be jealous of me -

JESSICA: Too right there's not. What would I be jealous off? Living above a backstreet booser? Your little rendezvous with Jimmy? Or better still your well publicised trip to Spain? Tell me, everyone is curious, how did you pay for it?

HENRIETTA: I don't think I care to listen to anymore of this, thank you for showing me you book Peter, I'll take great pleasure in going over it with you sometime. (SHE MOVES AWAY)

JESSICA: (TO PETER) You come with me where I can keep an eye on you.

SHE DRAGS HIM AWAY.

THEY LEAVE THE LAMP.

LISA LEANS CLOSE TOWARDS IT TO READ THE LETTER SHE HAS JUST FINISHED WRITING.

Dear Sis,

I hope you are safe and well, I'm sorry it's been so long since my last letter and that your Nigel's cough is better. Thanks for the twin's birthday card. I can't believe they're 4 now. Doesn't time fly? Little Maurice is learning to read and write and Gloria won't be far behind. Oh they're so beautiful.

That handsome husband of mine is in the Royal Navy and I try to keep in touch, he's a brave, proud man fighting for his country, but I do miss him-sometimes I feel so alone.

JIMMY IS MOVING THROUGH CALLING SOFTLY

JIMMY: Betty! Betty!

LISA: (CONTINUING TO READ HER LETTER) The twins have been evacuated to Cornwall I went to the station to see them off. It was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. They just looked up at me as if to say "why, what did we do wrong". I tried to explain to them that it was for the best and safer for them to move away like all the other children. As I looked around I couldn't even convince myself. A sea of children stood before me all with name tags and gas masks- waiting to board the train to god knows what. I was determined not to cry for the twins sake. I don't know how I did it.

Apparently a woman called Mrs Evans chose my babies. I know its the only answer and at least they'll be safe. I write to them every day so they won't forget me. I'll be visiting them soon. I can't wait. I can't think about anything else.

SUZY RUSHES BY AND SCOOPS UP THE LAMP. SHE CARRIES IT OVER TO JIMMY.

SUZY: (TO LISA) 'scuse me. (REACHING JIMMY) All right Jimmy.

JIMMY: Oh, how are you? Didn't see you there for a minute.

SUZIE: I think you've been avoiding me.

JIMMY: Certainly not, how could anyone ignore such a vision of beauty. I was looking for that useless brother of mine.

SUZIE: I think Robbie's nice.

JIMMY: Lovey lad, lice and all.

SUZIE: You're very hard on him.

JIMMY: You don't know anything about the way things are, all right?

SUZIE: I'm sorry Jimmy, I didn't mean to upset you.

JIMMY: No, I'm sorry, I'm just a bit on edge I didn't mean to snap at you.

BETTY GETTS UP AND MOVES TO TALK TO SOMEONE. JIMMY SPOTS THIS.

(To Suzy) listen do you want to sit down over here for a minute.

SUZIE: Okay, if you want to, but you're gone all pale, are you all right?

JIMMY: I'm okay, well, I'm not sure, maybe I'm coming down with something, God know's there's sickness going around.

SUZIE: Who's over there, who are you looking at?

JIMMY: Oh, it's no one, well she's (stuttering pause,) I thought I saw my mother's nurse that's all.

SUZIE: You're mother's nurse, I didn't know your mother was sick.

JIMMY: Well she is, very sick, on her last legs in fact. But she likes to keep it a secret, lot of pride, that woman.

SUZIE: Oh Jimmy I had no idea, you poor thing, why didn't you say something?

JIMMY: I didn't want to trouble you, you know how it is (Suzie goes to give him a big hug but Jimmy stops her). Careful! if she sees us together she'll tell my mother.

SUZIE: But Jimmy why would that matter?

JIMMY: Well, she's a devout Catholic and her dying wish is that I marry a good Irish Catholic girl before she dies. If she knew I was seeing an English Protestant, well I might as well put a gun to her head and pull the trigger myself.

SUZIE: Don't talk like that Jimmy.

JIMMY: It's the truth, what can I say, just please, stay out of sight, for a poor old dying woman.

SUZIE: Of course, will she tell your mother?

JIMMY: Oh yes, she tells her everything. As a matter of fact I better just go over and make sure that she didn't see anything. Could I borrow some money, I'll give it right back to you at the end of the week, pay day Friday, it's just that I haven't paid her for caring for my mother in over a month and I know she's strapped for it. I wouldn't ask, just that I'm afraid she mightn't come back and things have been really bad this week with the scrap.

SUZIE: Yes, yes, how much, will a shilling do?

JIMMY: Two.

SUZIE: Oh, well here you go

(RELUCTANTLY TAKE TWO SHILLINGS OUT OF HER PURSE AND GIVES THEM TO JIMMY, AS HE GOES OVER WE CAN SEE THAT SHE HAS BARELY ANYTHING LEFT.)

JIMMY: I'll be back in a minute, I just want to make sure that she didn't spot anything.

SUZIE: Well, I might as well go and powder my nose then.

JIMMY: Perfect.

SUZIE: What?

JIMMY: Perfect, your nose. It's perfect.

SUZIE HEADS OFF. JIMMY TAKES THE LAMP OVER TO BETTY. WHO IS NEAR TERESSA AND LISA.

JIMMY: How are you Betty, all on your own?

BETTY: Well, look what the cat Dug up.

JIMMY: What way is that to greet your soon to be brother in law.

BETTY: Is that how you think of me?

JIMMY: Not at all, you're far too good for the likes of my brother.

BETTY: Is that right?

JIMMY: It is you know, he wouldn't know how to treat a lady like you.

BETTY: And you do?

JIMMY: I certainly do.

BETTY: So does this mean I'll be seeing more of you.

JIMMY: It does,

SUZY RETURNS

ahh, listen Betty, I really have to go now. You see the reason I'm down here, not up above looking out for bombs is, well it's a bit delicate. It's to do with Robbie.

BETTY: Sweet Robbie, oh I feel so bad now, he was the one who approached me first you know?

JIMMY: Not so sweet, there's this girl who's fallen in love with him, to be honest with you she's a few bricks

short of a buildings set, and he's rejected her, so now she's threatened to off herself. I found her outside earlier on jumping up and down on a U.X.B..

BETTY: Robbie never told me anything about that, I want to see this girl, who is she?

JIMMY: No, no, that really wouldn't help, she's in a very distressed state, it's just that she only wants to speak to me, being Robbie's brother and all.

BETTY: But why doesn't Robbie just talk to her?

JIMMY: That would be the worst thing, I'm just getting her to realise that she's probably better off without him.

BETTY: But isn't that Robbie over there?

JIMMY: Christ, I better get him out of here before he sees her, I'll be back in a minute.

HE GOES OVER TO ROBBIE AND BUNDLES HIM OUT.

Just do it, I'll explain later.

BETTY SHRUGS AND MOVES OFF LEAVING THE LAMP.

TERESSA AND LISA MEET IN ITS GLOW.

TERESSA: Lisa, Lisa, I've had a letter from Laurence.

LISA: Oh bless him, how is he? Is he fitting in well at the school? What does he say?

Teresa: (READS) Dear Ma and (pauses) Pa, Mrs Dawes has chickens and today we had chicken's eggs for our breakfast and Mrs Dawes makes bread for us to have and her hair is yellow like corn. At school I am learning to count really high because Mrs Dawes says that's why you sent me here..

Lisa: has HE wrote the letter himself?

Teresa: Yes, yes look,

Rebecca: How old is your little boy?

Teresa: He's five, he turned five the day before he left... (she continues)... I ran down the water river yesterday. I ran for ages but I didn't get tired and then we had bread and jam for our tea and I went to bed. I look at your picture every night and I still have the horse pa made for me. I like it here. I have a friend called Billy he has orange hair and orange spots. He cries all the time for his ma and pa. I told him I missed you and he stopped crying. Will you come and see me soon and we can go to the river and me and pa can race?

JIMMY RE ENTERS.

SUZIE SCOOPS UP THE LANTERN AND RUNS OVER TO HIM.

SUZIE: Was that Robbie that you just threw out?

JIMMY: It was.

SUZIE: Jimmy, why did you throw your brother out of the tube during an air raid, he could be killed.

JIMMY: You see, the nurse that I was telling you about. The one I thought I saw? Well it turns out, it wasn't her at all, In fact she's gone missing. I was just a bit worried that something might have happened to her, so I sent Robbie, he didn't want to go at first, so that's why I had to throw him out.

SUZIE: Oh, my poor darling, you've so much to deal with.

JIMMY: You don't know the half of it.

SUZIE: What?

JIMMY: Oh, it's just that the nurse is being very awkward about her money, that's why she's gone off. Do you have any more

money left, I hate to ask but it's just that...

SUZIE: I only have a few coppers left to tide my over till the end of the week.

JIMMY: I wrote you a poem you know?

SUZIE: Did you, oh Jimmy.

JIMMY: Our love is like a rose, your eyes so temperate and fair,
your beauty holds me to you, your lips your neck your golden
locks of hair.

SUZIE: Here, take what's left, I'm sure I can fit in an extra shift
at the cinema, with those words in my head it won't matter
where I am.

JIMMY: I love you. Once I've settled this with the nurse, maybe
I'll be able to tell my mother about us.

SUZIE: That'd be great, it would mean so much to me, thank you.

JIMMY: Now, I just need to have a word with Betty. Apparently
she saw a spy on the common.

SUZIE: No!

JIMMY: True. Big black coat and everything.

SUZIE: How come she never mentioned it before.

JIMMY: It was the shock. Delayed reaction.

SUZIE: Poor thing, I'd better go and see if I can get her a cup of
tea, nice and sweet.

JIMMY: Good idea. And while you're over there could you ask one
of the ladies how you go about joining the WVS. I have a cousin
you see wants me to write and let her know.

SUZIE: Of course Jimmy.

JIMMY: Good girl.

SUZIE MOVES OUT OF THE LIGHT TOWARDS THE TEA.

JIMMY GOES OVER TO BETTY WHO IS NEAR REBBECA

BETTY: What were you talking to that Suzie for?

JIMMY: Oh she's been comforting that girl I told you about. The one who was in love with Robbie

BETTY: Ahhh. How is she?

JIMMY: Torn up the poor thing, I think she's feeling a bit better though, just as well I got Robbie out before she spotted him.

BETTY: You O'Neill boys were cut from the same cloth, that's for sure.

JIMMY: We were not and don't you ever say anything like that again, I'm my father's son and that's it.

BETTY: All right, didn't mean to touch a nerve.

JIMMY: Never mind, do you want some chocolate?

BETTY: Rockafeller now are you?

JIMMY: Not quite, but I can at least manage to scrounge a bit of cocoa.

BETTY: Maybe I could talk to this girl too. You know, the one who's in love with Robbie. Do I know her?

JIMMY: I doubt it, she's not even from around here.

BETTY: Then where did Robbie meet her?

JIMMY: When he had to get the train to Brighton, it's a long story.

BETTY: Why don't you introduce me?

JIMMY: No, no, she's very sensitive.

BETTY: She was talking to Susie.

JIMMY: Ah but you see they're the same star sign.

Betty: What!

JIMMY: she's very into that kind of thing. Fate and all. I never used to believe in all that stuff myself until... until...

BETTY: What?

JIMMY: Well, until.... No you'll think I'm a sap.

BETTY: Go on.

JIMMY: Well, do you think it might have been fate that brought you round to our house. That night when Robbie was working late?

JENNY INTERRUPTS

JENNY: Betty, will you excuse us for a minute.

BETTY: What's going on?

JENNY: I just need a quick word with Jimmy. It won't take long.

BETTY: Is it a matter of national security.

JENNY: D'you know, I think it might be.

BETTY: I don't know what's got into you lately, Jen. All right see you later Robbie.

SHE MOVES AWAY AND SITS WITH JESSICA AND PETER. PETER WANDERS OVER TO SEE HOW CLIFF IS GETTING ON.

JIMMY: Hello beautiful

JENNY: Don't you "beautiful me"

JIMMY: [Laughingly] now look at that grumpy face. You know it's you I really want to be with.

JENNY:[Resignedly) No I don't think I do.

JIMMY: You're always so busy, working at the cinema, helping your parents...

JENNY: How convenient for you. 'gives you ample of time to be with all the other girls in town.

JIMMY: Where did you get a crazy idea like that, you're the only one for me~

JENNY: [Amazed at his front] Jimmy, why do you persist in lying to me? Anyway I saw you.

Jim: When? [trying to think where he slipped up]

JENNY: I've been watching you, playing off the girls in this shelter like it was a game of poker. A few weeks ago, I needed to talk to someone,... .no I wanted to talk to you. So I went looking for you. What do you think I found?

JIMMY: I don't know. But it was probably the drink. I can get a little carried away....

Jenny: You didn't look very drunk to me. 'practically making love out side the damn pub. Hands and legs all over the place. And on the same day that I found out about our... I felt sick.

JIMMY: It didn't mean anything, she could never hold a candle next to you.. Your the only one I can talk to. (THOUGHTFULLY) I don't know, for some reason you reach me. That other girl, ugh! Forcing herself on me like that. Me, a good catholic boy! I hope you stayed around to hear me give her a piece of my mind.

JENNY: What was her name, Jimmy?

JIMMY: Well, I...

JENNY: What colour hair did she have?

JIMMY: Hair?

JENNY: Yes hair. Was she tall, short, dark, blonde.

JIMMY: (STRUGALING) Dark. Dark Blonde. Like a sort of dark straw colour.

JENNY: You pig. You don't even know which girl it was do you? It could have been any number of girls.

JIMMY: That's not true. Look, it didn't mean anything.

JENNY: [Angry] That's it is it? It didn't mean anything. That's supposed to make me feel better and forgive you? Do you know how hurt and disappointed I was?. I really needed you that night[almost a whisper].

JIMMY: We could pop up to the ticket office and make up for lost time.

JENNY: For heaven sake. You can't stop can you? Why do you do this? I don't want you physically, I already know where that leads. I need your support.

JIMMY: I don't know if I can be much help in that department Jen, I don't even know what's happening in my own life.

JENNY: Well, let me tell you about a big event that's going to be happening in X months time.

SHE PUTS HER HAND ON HER BELLY.

PETER MOVES AWAY FROM CLIFF AND SETTLES BY HIMSELF TO READ HIS BOOK.

JIMMY: Oh!

JENNY: Isn't there somewhere more private we can talk.

JIMMY: There's still the ticket office?

JENNY: Come on.

THEY EXIT

LEAVING THE LIGHT ILLUMINATING REBECCA.

REBECCA: (READS)

Dear Mima,

Mrs Froster told me I should write a letter to you because it would make me feel better.

I had started writing to you yesterday but I didn't finish the letter in time for tea, so I put it in my shorts for the next day. Two of the older boys found it at break and told me they'd have to look through it for important information. They haven't given it back yet.

They laugh at me and put their fingers under their noses. I didn't understand what they were doing and had to ask Jonathan who sits at the desk next to me. He's always nice to me but he's got funny eyes. One goes one way and one the other. He said they were laughing at my name. I said I didn't think Brian was a very funny name. Then he told me that they were laughing at my surname.

When we had morning break there wasn't any milk left for me and the other boys said Germans don't deserve milk. I told them I wasn't German but half British half Polish like you told me I was. But they said that wasn't true and that I even look like a German. I'm not German, am I Mima? I even spelt my surname out loud to them because I thought it would impress them like it does Grandpa. It didn't seem to though. They just hit me around the ears. It hurt and I felt crying but then I remembered what Papa had said about little boys that cry and I made the tears stay inside my eyes.

They hit me again though.

If I didn't cry, does that make me brave like Papa? I want to be like him when I grow up and shoot all the Germans down like he does.

I wish you could be here. Mrs Froster isn't nice like you. She doesn't give us goodnight kisses like you do. My head hurts a bit from where the boys hit me.

I don't want to go back to school tomorrow, even though we are supposed to be going on a trip to the river. Big Tommy said he'd push me in and that I'd drown. I don't want to be pushed in.

I've counted that I've been here now for 5 days. That's nearly a week and I think a week is far too long to spend in the countryside. Will you come and pick me up on Sunday then? I really would like to come home.

Love from Brian.

SUSIE RETURNS WITH A CUP OF TEA.

SUSIE: 'Scuse me did you see where the air raid warden went? Tall redish hair?

REBBECA: No I'm sorry. I didn't notice.

SUSIE: Oh, well.

SHE PICKS UP THE LANTERN AND CARRIES IT OVER TO JESSICA AND BETTY.

Jessica: I can't stand that family

Suzy: Which one? They're all a pain in the arse.

Jessica: You know (Imitating a posh voice) I think the workers should unite...I sooo love foreign films... roll out the barrel!

Betty: What, the Fergusons? They seem a nice bunch to me. Full of life, like a drink, like a good time.

Jessica: You have no taste - you hang around with them just to annoy mum and dad

Betty: (Laughing) And it works

Suzy: Toby used to help out in the Music Hall where my Mum sang. She said he was trouble then-always acting the clown and never did any work

Jessica: And you look at him now, butter wouldn't melt in his mouth.

Betty: Do you know you can be as big a bitch as mum sometimes - you two are like peas in a pod. Don't end up bitter like her

Jessica: I don't know what you mean, besides I'll never end up bitter - at least I love the person I'm going to marry

Betty: You don't know who I'm in love with little sister, It's all too glamorous for your tiny little mind.

Jenny: At least I can get a decent man.

Betty: The ever faithful Peter (In mock surprise) Ooo isn't that Peter talking to...the light is sooo bad...ah I can see now...why it's (mock shock) Henrietta ...again...

Jessica: Where? (LOOKS ROUND TO DISCOVER BETTY IS JOKING) Very funny. I think I've put her in her place. For tonight anyway. Bitch. Mum's always said that family's trouble. She determined to turn my Petey against me.

Betty: My God - you are our mother!

Jessica: (Not listening) You know (thinking out loud) I could never work out how she could have afforded to go to Spain and her brother never keeps a job and the pub doesn't do that well. She's so goody-goody, friend to all, I bet she's doing something suspect behind their backs. I bet she steals from the till...and the customers.

Betty: You can't say that. Anyway she works for her Mum - she probably gets paid by her.

Jessica: (Thinking faster) You know thinking about it, it would make sense. She's always so friendly - and don't you hate that - she could be robbing you blind but you'd never suspect her because she's ...she's...educated. And you can never get a word in edgeways when she starts off on her political speils which is probably a distraction so that her brother can whip round and pinch wallets!!!

Betty: You do talk rubbish Jessy. You're just jealous that Peter has taken a shine to her.

Jessica: Now you're talking rubbish. I heard that a brooch has gone missing and I saw her and her brother hanging around the WRVS women. Well it would be easy just to pocket the brooch and hide it - wouldn't it? She probably wants to finance another trip to Spain!

Suzy: Come to think about it, mum never said why Toby left the music hall. Maybe he was stealing from there.

Jessica: (Turning to Suzy) Anything's possible with that family. I doubt that the mum is ever sober enough to know what's going on under her own nose.

Betty: So now not only are they thieves but they're alcoholics too - don't go around saying this stuff Jessica. We don't want to make enemies when we've no idea how long we'll be here. -and you have no proof.

Jessica: I don't need it - I know what kind of woman she is and if you're all too stupid to see it then don't blame me when you get robbed in your sleep!

Suzy: I believe you Jessica. Her eyes are too close together.

Betty: I give up.

GEORGINA COMES OVER.

Georgina: I'm sorry to interrupt girls but Miss Marshal has mislaid a brooch I don't suppose any of you have seen it.

THE GIRLS LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

Jessica: Well -

Betty: (FIRMLY TO SHUT HER UP) No, I'm sorry we haven't seen it.

Georgina: Well keep them peeled will you. The old stick is very upset about loosing it.

Betty: Of course.

Georgina: 'mind if I borrow the lantern for the big search.

Betty: No of course not.

GEORGINA MOVES AWAY AND MEETS CYNTHIA:

CYNTHIA: Any luck?

GEORGINA: No.

CYNTHIA: Well, I think we've asked everyone except Mrs O'Neil.

HANDING HER THE LANTERN.

GEORGINA: Good luck.

CYNTHIA: I was wondering if you could...

GEORGINA: No chance.

JESSICA APPROACHES THE TWO.

JESSICA: (TO GEORGINA) Excuse me, could I have a word?

GEORGINA: Of course (TO CYNTHIA, INDICATING PATRICIA) Chucks away!

GEORGINA MOVES OVER WITH JESSICA TO ELEANOR.

CYNTHIA TAKES A DEEP BRREATH AND APPROACHES PATRICIA.

NEXT TO HER IS A HEAP OF HER SONS' CLOTHING WHICH NEEDS DARNING. SHE'S WORKING HER WAY THROUGH THEM GRADUALLY.

Cynthia: Excuse me, you haven't seen a broach have you?

Patricia: (she carries on sewing paying very little attention to Cynthia) What?

Cynthia: (trying to be patient) Have you seen a broach. It belongs to one of my ladies, Eleanor and she is absolutely fraught about losing it!

Pat: Why, cost a lot did it? Surely she can go and buy herself another one can't she?

Cynth: Please don't be heartless.

Pat: Well it's true isn't it. All that matters to you rich folk are possessions. You can always replace those.

Cynthia: (DEEP BREATH) Mrs O'Neil. I'm very tired. I've got a lot of responsibility here and I'm just about at the end of my tether. I will not have you judge me for having money. You don't even know me. That broach is of sentimental importance to Eleanor and it can never be replaced, and I want everyone, rich or poor to help look for it and that includes you.

Pat: You know nothing of being poor. You swan around in your rich clothes in your rich house, thinking you can solve peoples problems by handing out cups of tea. Well you and the other WIVS women can sod off, and I'm not looking for any sodding broach either. I have my boys and that's all I need.

(Cynthia composes herself)

Cynthia: You're right, family is what matters, especially in times like these.

Pat: well where's yours then. Why don't you go and look after your own kids instead of fussing around us all the time.

Cynth: (quietly almost to herself) I don't have any.

Pat: Well you better get cracking and have some then that'll shut you up and give us some peace.

Cynth: I can't. I can't have children. Gosh, I can't believe I've told someone after all these years, and I don't even know your name.

Pat: Patricia O'Neill

(HER MOTHERLY NATURE SUDDENLY COMING OUT AS SHE TAKES PITY ON CYNTHIA)

Cynth: Cynthia Longsdale.

(THEY SMILE AT EACH OTHER BRIEFLY)

Would you like some whisky?

SHE PULLS OUT A SMALL SILVER HIP FLASK FROM INSIDE HER JACKET AND HANDS IT TO PATRICIA WHO TAKES A LARGE SWIG. SO DOES CYNTHIA THEN SHE PUTS IT BACK.

Patricia: So does your husband know then?

Cynth: No. We don't really talk much. I know all that he's waiting for is for me to have his son, then in his eyes I will have fulfilled my duty. When we met he was so... different.

ROBBIE COMES OVER.

Robbie: All right ma? Not too cold are you?

CYNTHIA, A LIITLE TIPSY AS USUAL, IS ON A ROLL.

Cynthia: Do you think it can ever be... like it was again.

SHE SCANS LOOKS AROUND THE UNDERGROUND AND SPOTS MOIRA AND CLIFF.

Look at that couple, the odd job man Cliff and his girl. What's her name? Moira. (SHE POINTS AT THEM) they seem so happy. So totally at ease with each other.

(PATRICIA LOOKS UP TO WHERE CYNTHIA IS POINTING)

Pat: What, they're not married, they're not even a couple!

Cynth: I'm practically certain that they are, you see....

Robert: Are you sure you haven't got the wrong girl?

(PATRICIA'S GETTING PANICKED WHICH GRADUALLY FADES IN TO ANGER AS THE TRUTH DAWNS ON HER)

Cynth: Well yes, I overheard them planning a future together. Talking about how in love they are. It was as if there was no-one else in the world except them.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM MOIRA LEAVES FOR THE LOO
GEORGINA APPROACHES.

GEORGINA: I'm sorry to interrupt. Cynthia, could I speak to you for a moment.

CYNTHIA: Of course. Will you excuse me?

GEORGINA AND CYNTHIA MOVE AWAY.

SILENCE BETWEEN ROBBIE AND PATRICIA.

ROBBIE: (CALMLY, DANGEROUSLY) Don't worry ma. I'll sort it.

PATRICIA: (QUIETLY) Good boy.

ROB PICKS UP THE LAMP AND MOVES OVER TO CLIFF.

ROB O'NEIL: Oi, I want a word with you.

CLIFF: Who, me?

ROB: Yes, you. Where's Moira?

CLIFF: Went to spend a penny, I think.

ROB: What's the meaning of you taking advantage of my brother's wife?

CLIFF: Look, Robert...can I call you Robert?

ROB: No, you bloody can't.

CLIFF: Look, mate, this has got nothing to do with you, this is between me and Moira.

Rob: I know your type, mister, you get off on taking other men's wives, don't you, just so you can show off to your friends. Well, I hope she was worth it because I'm going to punch both your lights out.

CLIFF: You can't do that.

ROB: Can't? Just give me one reason why not.

CLIFF: Because I'm blind in one eye.

ROB: *(pauses for a moment, then reluctantly)* That's a good reason, but you better explain the situation quickly or I swear I'll be blacking the other eye.

CLIFF: I'm no villain here. Moira was lonely, I was lonely. It just happened. I can't say I didn't want it. But I didn't push for it neither.

ROB: Hey! Watch it: That's my brother's wife you are talking about. Moira ain't no slag, in fact she's very shy.

CLIFF: You wouldn't be saying that if you were with us the other night.

ROB: What! Why you...

CLIFF: I'm sorry. That was out of line, I'll take it back.

ROB: So, Moira wants you?

CLIFF: Yeah. Why are you looking at me like that, is it so hard to believe?

ROB: Matter of fact, it is very hard to believe. Well, look at you.

CLIFF: Why, what's wrong with me?

ROB: What's right with you...you're not much of a catch, are you?

CLIFF: Look, I didn't mean to upset you or your family but you got to understand I was there when she really needed someone.

ROB: She should have come to us. We're her family, not to some lucky.

CLIFF: I beg your pardon. Look, Robert...

ROB: I told you not to address me by my first name - only friends and family can do that, which you are neither.

CLIFF: Will you shut up and listen to me...

ROB: If my older brother Callam was here, he'd beat the living crap out of you.

CLIFF: Yeah, I guess he would. He likes beating up on people, don't he, that brother of yours. Especially his wife.

ROB: What! Just what the hell do you mean by that?

CLIFF: Callum used to beat Moira.

ROB: *(looks at Cliff in disbelief, then grabs his shirt)* You liar. Callum never would...never could...he loves Moira with all his heart, he would never hit her.

CLIFF: Ask her, if you don't believe me. She'll tell you.

ROB: Then she's lying. You're both making this up, admit it, go on.

CLIFF: She has shown me the marks on her body, marks that will never heal.

ROB: No, no, no. You're lying, you got to be.

CLIFF: You're not stupid. (BEAT) My dad used to beat up my mum. I'll never forget the sound of... god help me. One day I jumped on my dad to stop him but my old man was a hard old mug, he threw me...I damaged my eye, then he hit my mum again. You can't understand what it was like.

ROB: My da' he... Callam too? You'd think he'd learn. You'd think after all we saw mum suffer when we were kids. What is it about the men in my family. Look I... I... Just make sure you take care of her, OK? Do a better job than my brother did - and you had better not put a hand on her, or you'll answer to me - got it?

CLIFF: Got it.

ROB: Good ...and by the way, my friends call me Robert.

THEY DON'T NOTICE MOIRA RETURN AND PICK UP A CUP OF TEA AND THE LAMP SHE MOVES OFF TOWARDS PATRICIA.

MOIRA: (TO ROBBIE) Forgot your mum's tea.

THE TWO MEN LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN PANIC.

ROB: Moira wait.

BUT IT'S TOO LATE.

SHE TAKES HER PLACE BESIDE PATRICIA.

MOIRA: Sorry about the delay with the tea. There was a problem with the hot water. Cliff sorted it.

PATRICIA: You're are a nasty piece of work, aren't you.

MOIRA: Sorry?

PATRICIA: I said, you are a nasty piece of work, aren't you.

MOIRA: What do you mean? Have I said something to upset you?

PATRICIA: You haven't said anything. It's what you've done, or been doing more like.

MOIRA: I don't know what you're talking about. Is it something to do with the sewing machine that isn't working, because if it is ... [seeing the look on Patricia's face] Oh no.

PATRICIA: I never liked you from the moment you set foot in my house. We've always said so, all of us. We've always said that our Calum could have done so much better than you. You can't even keep a tidy house. You're a nasty dirty little tart.

MOIRA: I'm not.

PATRICIA: I don't want to hear a word out of you. Our Calum out there, doing his bit ... we're the only thing keeping him going you know. A faithful wife and a loving family back here, rooting for him, supporting him When you're in a situation like that, what are the important things? Memories. Home and family and comfort and love ... You've ruined it, opening your legs to a one eyed odd job man.
You're disgusting-

MOIRA: Shut up! I've got a few memories, Patricia. They're nothing like the ones you're talking about. I remember being scared witless at half-past eleven every night, when your son'd come home, the worse for drink, and want to know why his boots hadn't been polished, why there was no housekeeping money in

the pot - which he'd taken to buy his beer - why the gate was slightly ajar when he came home, why I'd put his shirt over there instead of over here ... Didn't matter what the answers were, he'd hit me anyway. Our house is so tatty because Calum smashed it up, night after night. Some days I wouldn't be able to walk out of the house. There are only so many accidents you can say you've had before people start looking at you funny.

PAUSE

PATRICIA: I know.

MOIRA: Cliff is gentle and kind and loving, but most of all he's my friend. It's been a long time since I had one of those.

LONG PAUSE.

PATRICIA: Like father, like son. I thought I'd taught him better.

BOTH ARE SILENT FOR A MOMENT IN COMMON PAIN AND UNDERSTANDING.

I'm sorry for what I said about you. Will I get you some tea?

MOIRA: (WEARILY) Bloody tea.

THE WVS LADIES TAKE THE LANTERN AND APPROACH MARY.
PATRICIA CARRYS THE LAMP NEARER TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON.

Cynthia: Mrs Ferguson. I wonder if you've seen your daughter recently. I need to have a quick word with her.

Mary: Toby - would you find Henrietta for me.

(TOBY NODS AND GOES TO FIND HENRIETTA)

What's this all about? She hasn't been worrying people again with her talking again?

Georgina: Oh no, no. Nothing like that.

Mary: What then? Here she is.

Henrietta: What's happened - is there a problem?

Cynthia: Not a problem exactly - it's a rather delicate issue in fact.

Mary: What is this all about?

Eleanor: (TO CYNTHIA) No, look it doesn't matter. Please forget about it. (TURNING TO HENRIETTA) I'm sorry, sorry to have bothered you.

Cynthia: Nonsense. I'm sure we'll have this straightened out in no time and very amicably.

Toby: Henry?

Georgina: Well...

Cynthia: No, I'll handle this. I wonder, have you seen.. oh dear...this is rather awkward

Georgina: A brooch. Have you seen Miss Marshal's brooch? She thinks she's misplaced and wondered if you know where it could be.

Henrietta: Why would I know where it is?

Cynthia: Well....

EVERYONE IS BEGINNING TO LISTEN TO THE CONVERSATION.

Eleanor: I'm sorry to interrupt. You see I'm sure I had it on earlier this evening but now I can't seem to find it anywhere.

Henrietta: No, sorry I don't know where it is. I hope you find it (Gets up to go)

Cynthia: It's just that someone mentioned that...oh dear...well they-

JESSICA CROSSES OVER TO PETER AND CLINGS TO HIM

Georgina: - Thought they saw you with the brooch.
(Hopefully)Perhaps you found it and were returning it..

Henrietta: Do you think I stole it? I've never seen the brooch.
Who saw me? Why would they say this?

Cynthia: No, no. I just wanted to make sure that you didn't have
it. Have you seen a pretty broach, Toby?

Toby: (Annoyed) What?

Henrietta: I don't believe this. He was with me. And don't talk to
him like a child.

UNOTICED BY THE OTHERS TOBY WANDERS OFF.
JIMMY AND JENNY RETURN. HAND IN HAND.

JIMMY: (TO PATRICIA) Ma' Jenny and I have got something to tell
you.

PATRICIA: Not now son.

Cynthia: (To Georgina) Perhaps we need to talk to the constable.

Eleanor: No please. I'm sure it will turn up.

Georgina: I'm sure that won't be necessary. (To Henrietta)
Please don't make it worse. Where's the brooch?

Mary: I think you should go look bloody hard for the brooch
before making accusations. Who do you think you are, accusing
my kids of stealing? They want for nothing, they don't need
anyone's stupid broach.

Eleanor: It's actually a rather special br...

Mary: I don't care. Now I think you better take your snooty
snooping noses and stick them in someone else's business. If she
says she hasn't got it, she hasn't got it. Got it?

Cynthia: I think we understand.

Georgina: Maybe we all need a nice cup of tea and calm down.

Mary: Take your bloody tea and shove it right up..

Henrietta: Mum. They've made a mistake. Someone's made a mistake.

Mary: Well I'm sick of tea.

Rebecca: Excuse me. What did the brooch look like? It's just that...Listen, I don't mean to be rude but I'm really not sure Henrietta is the one you should be talking to.

Rachel: (sarcastically copying Rebecca's phrasing) Well, I don't mean to be rude, but I really don't think this is any of your business.

Lisa: Why do you always have to be so difficult, Rachel? I'm sure Rebecca is only trying to help.

Rebecca: I just wanted to let you know that I think I saw Jessica with a brooch.

JESSICA: What? You cow!

Rebecca: (Uncomfortably) She was putting it in her pocket. She's probably just forgotten it's there.... I'm sure it's not intentional..... Look, I really don't want to cause trouble.

Jessica: I think that's exactly what you want to do. None of us know anything about you. She turns up at of no where with your husband with a funny accent. Do you know what? I think she's a German spy.

Rebecca - How dare you suggest that. If you only knew... I'm not a spy, my husband is fighting on your side.

Rachel: Yeah pull the other one, your a spy and you've been caught- You might as well go back where you came from- it won't be safe for you round here.

Rebecca: This is ridiculous, just because I have a different surname it does not make me a spy. It does not make me a liar and my little boy should not be bullied at school by the ignorant children of people like you.

Rachel - You mouthy little madam (she shouts) Someone arrest this woman, she's a spy! You prostitute yourself to a foreigner, wheedle your way into decent communities and then you betray us - why don't you just admit it you stole the broach!.

Teresa: Stop this!

Lisa: You should all be ashamed of yourself. Can't you see the pain this woman's in. She's no different from me or you.

Rachel: We all know her type!

Rebecca: My family would never wish anyone harm.

Lisa: Look the woman stood here is a mother and like the rest of us mothers her children have been evacuated and her husband's god knows where. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Rebecca: My name is Rebecca, my husband is Polish he is fighting our war - look I'm not a spy. You have absolutely no idea do you? My husband is doing his part for the war, just like all the other men in this country and I can assure you that he is certainly NOT a Nazi. I'm proud of my surname and proud to be married to a Pole.

I met Mirek, my husband, about 7 years ago when I was working as an administrator at the University. He came over to study English. There were a few problems with his transfer which I helped to sort out and well, I suppose the relationship 'blossomed' from there. He finished his studies, we got married and started a family. God, I miss them so much.

(Rebecca visibly pulls herself together)

So, anyway, a couple of years ago, one of Mirek's old tutors asked him to return to Warsaw as a lecturer in English Studies. He thought it was too good an opportunity to refuse - so off we all went. To tell you the truth, I think he was just missing Poland. I can't blame him really. Warsaw was such a beautiful place - full of the most amazing palaces and lush green parkland. It's all been destroyed now though. Makes me sick to think of it. When the German troops were at the borders we didn't know what to do. Mirek's Jewish. We started hearing so many horrific stories about what the Germans were doing to intellectuals and Jews that we became desperate to leave. I ended up at the British Embassy begging for the papers to escape. We left at the dead of night with only the clothes we stood up in. We arrived here with nothing, nothing. But at least we got out. Mirek's family- mother, father, brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts cousins, all their children weren't so lucky. They had nowhere to go. I can't bear to think of what might have happened to them. We haven't heard from a single one of them.

(to Rachel) So next time you think of accusing me of being a Nazi spy, remember what I've just told you. Think of my husband's family, who haven't even got a filthy smelly underground station where they can hide from the terror.

Mary: (QUIETLY) Has anyone seen Toby.

JIMMY: I'll go look for him.

JESSICA: I took the brooch. (LOOKS AT HENRIETA) But if it hadn't been for that bitch none of this would have happened. But I am sorry, truly, here's your brooch.

MARY: You scheming little hussy, you set up my daughter didn't you? And you're not in the least bit sorry that you took the brooch, but you're just sorry that you've about to be found out.

PETER: You mean to say that you allowed Henrietta to take the blame

(PETER SEES HER IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT AND FOR ONCE JESSICA IS SILENT)

Well? Explain yourself.

JESSICA: Forgive me I didn't mean for it to happen this way, it was just there.

CLIFF: Now everyone let's stay calm, she's apologised so lets leave it at that, we've got to get through this war together,

PATRICIA: I say we should throw her out of the shelter.

ROBERT: Now ma. From now on our family is going to start to be a little more understanding.

TOBY RETURNS WITH JIMMY. TOBY IS CARRYING A GRAMAPHONE.

Mary: Toby. Thank God! Stay with me can't you. It's dangerous out there.

Cliff: Hang on a minute. Where did you get that from? That's my gramophone.

Jimmy: He pulled it out of the rubble. I'm sorry but.. Well, your house... it's been bombed I'm afraid. The far end of Dover Street's gone.

SILENCE.

MOIRA GOES OVER AND HOLDS CLIFF.

AFTER A WHILE PATRICIA GOES OVER AND PUTS A COMFORTING HAND ON HER SHOULDER.

TOBY PUTS THE GRAMAHONE ON.

WE HEAR A CRACKALY WARTIME RECORDING. EVERYONE LISTENS IN SILENCE.

THE LIGHTS COME UP SLIGHTLY.

THE CAST TAKE OFF THEIR BLANKETS AND COME OUT OF CHARACTER TO TELL THE STORY OF THE REST OF THE BLITZ

CULMINATING IN THE BALHAM TUBE DISASTER.

THE CAST, OUT OF CHARACTER, TAKE INDIVIDUAL LINES

For a while they stood in silence listening to the bright tinny voice -

Hissing from the gramophone -

Someone tried to start a sing a long -

But no one was much in the mood -

And after a while they curled up in their blankets and tried to get some sleep.

But the air was damp and heavy.

Blasts of stale air belched from the tunnels along the platform -

Sometimes icy cold, some times warm and clammy.

They sat, mainly in silence lost in their own thoughts -

Huddled like timid animals below ground -

Frightened of the journey up into the light -

Frightened of what they might find there -

Or rather not find there.

Sleepless nights -

Turned to sleepless weeks.

(BRIGHTER) After a few quiet nights some people stopped using the shelter.

The Granada cinema at Clapham junction started showing bombs through the alert.

One night an audience of 700 watched the feature -

Followed by the feature films of the previous week -

Followed by several shorts -

Followed by an amateur talent concert -

(THE CAST BEGIN TO GENTLEY HUM A SONG OF THE PERIOD)

And all for the regular price of 6d!

But on the evening of Sunday 8th September heavy bombing continued non stop for nine hours and Balham station was full again.

Many people lost everything.

The lawn tennis club was hit -

Puttocks garage -

The police station -

The Magpie public house.

On three nights between 14th and 16th of September Battersea had nearly 200 high explosive bombs dropped on her

Another 53 dropped on Wandsworth.

The strong moonlight on Sunday September 15th saw showers of incendiaries fall over Tooting, leaving smoking ruins and rubble filled streets.

On the Evening of 14th April people gathered as usual at Balham tube station.

At about 8pm a large high explosive bombed ripped into the high street above blowing a hole through the roof of the northbound platform.

Wall tiles became deadly projectiles as they shattered away from the walls into the faces of the crowd.

The impact severed electricity and gas mains just as experts had feared -

And the great sewage pipe that served the streets above split in two.

Within minutes a powerful swelling river of sewage swept through the tunnels bringing tons of sand and rubble with it.

The ceiling collapsed bringing gallons of water and debris down onto 500 people beneath.

Many people lost their lives that night, crushed by the debris or swallowed by the sewage.

It was four months before the last bodies were recovered.

(EACH CAST MEMBER HAS A SENTENCE ABOUT THE FATE OF THEIR CHARACTER)

(A BURST OF SONG TAKES US TO THE FINAL BLACKOUT)