

WAYFARER'S REST

A Modern Fairy Tale

A Play in Two Acts by

Joseph McDonough

**Contact: Bruce Ostler/Mark Orsini
Bret Adams Ltd. Artists' Agency
448 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 765-5630**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ANA, maybe 60's

DYLAN, her son, maybe 40's

ELIZABETH, late 30's

SETTING

A cottage in a forest in rural England.

TIME

1940

WAYFARER'S REST

By Joseph McDonough

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

SETTING: A rustic cottage in a forest in rural England. 1940.
Autumn. Morning.

A desk covered and surrounded with books. A table with chairs. A battery-operated radio on the table. A tea kettle. A fire in the fireplace. A door and a window to the outside.

AT RISE: ANA, an old woman, a bit hunched, sarcastic and sharp, sits in a chair with her bare feet sticking out in front of her off the floor. She looks around and shouts.

ANA

Dylan! What's the matter with you?

(She listens.)

I can't be waiting all day now!

(She listens again.)

You want these abused old feet to just snap right off from the cold?

(DYLAN enters from a door to the outside. He is in his late thirties, perhaps in his forties, but has an almost childlike innocence.

He is bundled up in an old overcoat and carries a large pail of steaming hot water. He struggles to maneuver both opening the door and holding the pail.)

Here, mum. The path—
DYLAN

Don't spill it.
ANA

I won't. The path is slippery—
DYLAN

Shut the door.
ANA

I will. I had to be careful—
DYLAN

You trying to freeze the whole house now?
ANA

I've got it . . .
DYLAN

(He gets the door shut, still holding the large pail.)

Well put it down now. These feet are dying here.
ANA

Right, mum.
DYLAN

ANA

Gently . . .

(He carefully puts the pail of water
down in front of her.

ANA gingerly puts her feet in.)

Ahhhhh!

DYLAN

The path is actually frozen down by the spring. Biting cold for September,
isn't it?

ANA

Ohhhhhhh!

DYLAN

Some animal must've warmed up in the spring and splashed it all about
the clearing. Then the wind swooped in the path and froze it up.

ANA

Mmmm. Perhaps a bit more zest. Salts, I think.

DYLAN

A deer. Or a boar.

ANA

Salts?

DYLAN

A bear, maybe. Or dragons.

ANA

Salts, Dylan? Salts!

DYLAN

Oh—

ANA

A weak excuse for spring water, this is. It's not awful. But it just doesn't
soothe the feet complete anymore. It's lacking some zip, it is.

(DYLAN goes to a shelf and gets

some Epsom salts which he pours
into the pail.

ANA moves her feet around in the
hot water)

Ohh-- sweet mother earth! My arches and my bunions thank you!

DYLAN

And me? Me?

(He puts the salts away and hangs
up his coat on a hook on the wall.)

ANA

And you. I suppose.

DYLAN

Didn't I draft you your spring water?

ANA

Didn't I trudge through the mud? All the laborious way to the village?

DYLAN

You enjoy your daily trudge.

ANA

And the proper care of my failing feet is the least bit of work you could do
for your decrepit old mum.

DYLAN

You decrepit? You never change a day, mum.

ANA

Tell that to my feet.

DYLAN

You're the same to me.

ANA

You've got an easy go of it, you do. Enjoy your little life of leisure.

DYLAN

I've got work to attend to.

ANA

(Scoffs)

Work!

DYLAN

Education is the labor of a lifetime.

(He pulls a chair over to the desk.
He picks up a book.)

ANA

Education!

DYLAN

You can never know too much history. More solid times than these. The Romans— and especially the Greeks— they tried to comprehend a thing or two.

ANA

Ancient Greeks. There was a distinguished lot. Hmmph.

DYLAN

(As he reads)

But they couldn't quite . . . it's so hard . . .

(ANA watches him read.)

ANA

I left the eggs and bread on the table. Be a dearie and put them away.
Dylan?

DYLAN

All right.

(DYLAN quickly goes to the table and hurriedly
puts the groceries in a wood cabinet.

He runs back to the desk and sits down.)

ANA

And my newspaper.

DYLAN

But—

ANA

It's still on the table, isn't it? Isn't it? Oh, my wretched feet . . .

(DYLAN slowly gets up, finds the newspaper, gives it to her, then quickly returns to the desk.)

ANA looks at the headlines.)

Those Nazi bastards are bombing London again.

DYLAN

Don't tell me.

(DYLAN reads his book.)

ANA

London can have its mess. That's Mr. Churchill's problem. I've got my own miseries.

DYLAN

Mother—

ANA

I've just no stomach for war these days . . . there's precious little humor in it.

DYLAN

Mother, please—

ANA

And it's quite deceitful. Not to mention appalling. But what can you do?

DYLAN

I'm working—

ANA

There was a fellow I saw in the village this morning. A proud officer back from the war. He was missing an arm, he was. Still wearing his clean lieutenant uniform with the useless sleeve just dangling there and flapping about in the chill.

DYLAN

Mother, please— I can't bear to hear it . . .

ANA

He was making a shameless spectacle of sweeping leaves off in front of the shops. Using just the one arm, he was. With the broom handle jammed up against his chest for show. A few of the villagers were waddling up to him and sticking coins in his pockets. I thought, he's not sweeping leaves, he's soliciting alms! The little sneak. I looked up close. I could see it in his eyes. He needed the money, he did. But to pay off old gambling debts that had nothing at all to do with the war! Why doesn't he just carry a poor box instead of that broom? Hmmph! He wasn't half as bad off as the fellow I saw a fortnight ago. That one was missing both an arm and a leg. And the one arm he had left was half lame so he couldn't much lift it to wave hello. And he'd been blinded in one eye and his face was nothing you'd care to look at. Though you could tell it wasn't much of a face before the war anyway. Now there was a real cripple! Gave me that grey surrendered look. He was so disappointed to wake up each morning. Cried himself awake, he did. That one sad eye to peer into . . . hard to look away from that fellow. I'd have given that one a coin. But I didn't want to embarrass him. Let him be, I say. Let him go . . . go . . . away now . . . away . . .

DYLAN

His one eye . . . he looked straight back at you . . . ?

ANA

Well. Where's the funny papers?

(She looks through the newspaper.)

DYLAN

. . . what's it like for you when they look straight back? When they can see you looking?

ANA

Did you leave them on the table?

DYLAN

What?

ANA

Did you leave the comicals on the table?

DYLAN
No.

ANA
Go check.

DYLAN
I can see from here.

ANA
All I'm asking quite cheerfully, Dylan . . .

DYLAN
They're not there!

ANA
. . . if it's not so much agony for you, is go take a simple look on the table
or under the table—

DYLAN
Fine!

(He gets up, goes to the table and looks around.)

ANA
(Looking at the newspaper)
Wait, wait, here they are. Stuck behind the obituaries today. Keep them
in one place, you bastards!

(DYLAN stares at her, then slowly
sits down.

ANA looks down at the pail of water.
She wiggles her feet. She sighs.)

Damn water's getting cold. Dylan, would you be a dearie—

DYLAN
No!

(Pause)

ANA

At least turn on the wireless for me.

DYLAN

You do it for once—

ANA

See if we can pick up a station today—

(There is a loud knock at the door.

ANA and DYLAN stare at each other.

Silence.

There is another loud knock.

They both jump up.

ANA is standing in the pail of water.)

DYLAN

Should I—

ANA

I don't know—

DYLAN

Maybe you should—

ANA

No you—

DYLAN

They might go away—

ANA

Let's be quiet.

(They don't move.

They wait several beats.)

DYLAN

(Whispers)

They're gone.

ANA

(Whispers back)

Good.

(The door slowly opens and ELIZABETH enters.)

(She is in her late thirties or so and is dressed in expensive clothes and coat.)

ELIZABETH

Hello?

DYLAN

Hello.

ANA

Hello.

ELIZABETH

Sorry to bother you—

DYLAN

No bother—

ANA

We were just . . .

(ELIZABETH looks at ANA standing in the pail.)

Would you like a cup of tea?

ELIZABETH

Oh, no thank you—

ANA

Don't stand there like a half-brained idiot, Dylan. Take her coat.

DYLAN

Yes, come on in. Rest a while!

ELIZABETH

Oh, I'm not tired.

DYLAN

A visitor, mum!

ANA

I can see.

(To ELIZABETH)

We don't get many visitors.

ELIZABETH

But I really can't stay—

DYLAN

Please? Miss?

ELIZABETH

I'm married actually—

ANA

(Unenthusiastic)

Welcome to our pleasant home, missus—

ELIZABETH

Your home?

ANA

Yes.

(ANA steps out of the pail and extends a hand to ELIZABETH.)

ELIZABETH slowly takes ANA's hand and is escorted by ANA away from the door.

ELIZABETH is staring down at ANA's bare feet.)

Bad feet, you know. They ache all the time.

ELIZABETH

Oh.

ANA

Living forever and living well are two different things entirely.

(ELIZABETH laughs uncomfortably.

ANA looks at DYLAN.)

Well shut the door, you dunce, before she has to be on her way.

DYLAN

Oh, right, mum.

(DYLAN shuts the door.)

ANA

(To ELIZABETH)

If he wasn't a born genius, I'd swear he was funny in the head half the time. His social skills don't get used. No polish.

ELIZABETH

I really, really shouldn't stay.

ANA

Traveling through?

ELIZABETH

Pardon me?

ANA

The forest. Wandering through?

ELIZABETH

Oh, no. I'm staying nearby.

ANA

Shelter from the chill, is it?

ELIZABETH

Well, it is cold outside today.

ANA

So, sit down for a bit, missus—

ELIZABETH

Lady Willington, actually.

ANA

Sit.

(Pause)

ELIZABETH

I'd rather not.

(ELIZABETH lets go of ANA's hand and pulls away.)

ANA

Have some tea . . . before you go.

DYLAN

Yes—

ELIZABETH

No.

ANA

Oh—

DYLAN

Well—

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry. I don't mean to be any trouble . . .

ANA and DYLAN

No trouble—

ELIZABETH

. . . but you said this was your home?

ANA and DYLAN

Yes.

ELIZABETH

Oh. I see. Interesting. I wasn't aware of it. I was just walking through the woods here . . .

ANA

On a journey, are you? A searcher?

ELIZABETH

(Nervously chatty)

Well, no . . . but I adore the fall. Back home I used to take long, long hikes through the pine forest all the time. It's such a good place to, uh, hike.

ANA

Hike?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

ANA

Hike.

ELIZABETH

To clear my head. Clean out the silly, endless worries, if I can.

(Laughs)

Exercise both the legs and the mind, you know?

(Pause)

Well, I wasn't expecting to find your cottage. This cottage. I was told it was just miles and miles of trees and more trees. I saw others had made a trail— which is fine— I don't mind. You're all welcome to use— to hike through these woods. I was pleasantly startled to see this cute little chalet out here. And I saw the smoke coming from the chimney, so I deduced somebody must be inside.

(Pause)

ANA

Good thinking.

ELIZABETH

Well, you know, from what I've been told anyway, these woods— the whole forest— is actually owned . . . by my husband. It's been in the family for generations and generations.

ANA

Generations, yes.

ELIZABETH

I'm not trying to be legalistic.

(Pause)

ANA

(Sarcastically)

Good.

(ANA and DYLAN stare at her.

ELIZABETH looks them over.)

ELIZABETH

But Robert was quite adamant about the forest. Part of his ancestral heritage or some such business. The entire forest. This forest. And it was completely undeveloped. Pristine, as it were.

DYLAN

Pristine, oh yes.

ELIZABETH

Except for the old Willington manor house across the woods? Well, it's certainly not an issue— I'm just surprised to find somebody is, well, living out here. On his— our— property.

(She laughs uncomfortably.)

ANA

You're American, aren't you?

ELIZABETH

Why yes. Does it show? The accent?

ANA

Yes, and yes.

DYLAN

But it's a lovely accent.

(ELIZABETH smiles at him.
He smiles back at her.)

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

(Pause)

I'm from Pittsburgh, originally. Have you heard of it?

DYLAN

I'm not sure.

ANA

No.

ELIZABETH

In western Pennsylvania. My father owns a large steel mill business. And the Willingtons are commodity importers. So one day, Robert imported me, I guess.

(ELIZABETH laughs again.

Silence.)

Several years ago now . . .

(She becomes flustered.)

I thought should I knock or should I not? Knock or not, knock or not? This place looked so picturesque from the outside. Like an old gingerbread house. I so wanted to peek inside. Curiosity got the best of me.

DYLAN

(Confiding)

She makes me do all the work. The gutters, the windows. Patch up a hole in the roof. Keep the elements out. It never ends.

ELIZABETH

Oh.

(Pause)

Does anybody know you're living here?

ANA

You do. Apparently.

ELIZABETH

Oh, I don't mind—

ANA

Good for you.

ELIZABETH

I don't think it's a problem. It's a big woods, right?

(She laughs.)

ANA

We'd hate to be a problem now.

ELIZABETH

I'm sure it's not. Positive. I'll mention it to Robert tonight.

(ANA steps away from her and pulls
a towel off a hook on the wall.)

ANA

Robert's your husband?

ELIZABETH

Yes. Lord Willington.

ANA

I've seen you in the village before, have I?

ELIZABETH

Possibly. I've been to the pharmacy—the chemist.

ANA

The chemist, yes.

ELIZABETH

A few times. I have prescriptions . . .

ANA

Ahhh . . .

ELIZABETH

But I've only been here a couple of months. Robert thinks the manor house in the country is safer than London. With all that awful bombing, you know. It's downright frightening . . .

(DYLAN moves toward her.)

DYLAN

It's . . . it's terrible now, is it?

ELIZABETH

Yes, it is.

DYLAN

Oh.

ANA

I can imagine.

ELIZABETH

Everyone's afraid to go to sleep at night. We're all so frightened anymore. When it's dark, you think you hear the planes in the sky . . . in your room . . . constantly . . . you can't stop worrying . . .

DYLAN

Terrifying . . .

(ELIZABETH looks at him.)

ELIZABETH

You should see the faces in the street each morning. A shock of relief that they made it to another day. But then as the day runs on, into the afternoon—

DYLAN

(Quickly changes the subject)

Well . . . how do you like the old country home?

ELIZABETH

What? Oh— the manor house?

DYLAN

Yes . . .

ELIZABETH

Well . . . I guess there's a reason we haven't come out here much. It is definitely old to begin with. With that expected musty smell. It certainly has its share of rooms. Empty, mostly. All in all, it's quite a bit on the dull side, I would say. Lonely, you know.

DYLAN

Lonely . . .

ELIZABETH

So far away and nothing to do— Robert's other homes are . . . but, dull is good right now. Good for me.

DYLAN

Well, we insist you stay for tea then! We insist! Have some tea with me!

ELIZABETH

I really—

ANA

No. I think not. No, Dylan.

ELIZABETH

Oh—

ANA

She's rested enough. On with her travels.

DYLAN

But mother—

ANA

No.

DYLAN

Her home is dull—

ANA

No!

(Pause)

I need to warm up these feet of mine. And take my own rest. I feel as if I'm coming down with a cold. Or worse.

ELIZABETH

I'm so sorry—

ANA

A touch of the sniffles, missus.

ELIZABETH

It's going around. Last week my older daughter called from school—

ANA

The damn sniffles leads to the strep, don't you know . . .

ELIZABETH

Why, yes, I suppose—

ANA

. . . and that leads to a stretch of the bloody pneumonia. And if you don't take quick care of it, you're hacking and wheezing, coughing up bile! Then before you know it, the fairies of death come looking for you in the thick of night. And off you go— screaming, wailing, shivering in the coldest fear! The fairies got their bloody death-grip 'round your neck! And you don't know where they're taking you. And nobody hears when you screech out . . . no . . . don't take me . . . nooooo . . . !

DYLAN

(Whispers)

Mother! Please!

ELIZABETH

I'll let myself out.

(She moves quickly to the door.)

DYLAN

(To ELIZABETH)

My apologies.

ELIZABETH

No, no, I apologize for intruding.

(Smiles to ANA)

Take care of that cold.

ANA

I'll try.

(Pause)

ELIZABETH

(At the door)

This is a charming little place you folks have here. And Robert will be pleased— thrilled— to know that we have quaint caretakers out in the woods.

ANA

We're quite alone. But we're happy . . .

ELIZABETH

And we're . . . happy to have you here.

(DYLAN stares at her.)

DYLAN

Good . . .

ELIZABETH

Have a beautiful day, the both of you.

DYLAN

Thank you, missus.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth . . .

DYLAN

(Smiles)

Thank you, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Good-bye.

(ELIZABETH looks at them for a
beat then goes out and shuts the door.)

DYLAN

Good-bye, Elizabeth.

(DYLAN watches her through the window.)

ANA

Well, now. She's an odd one, she is.

FADEOUT

END OF SCENE

SCENE TWO

SETTING: The same. A week later.

AT RISE: ANA and DYLAN are both sitting in chairs.

They both are lowering their bare feet into pails of steaming hot water.

DYLAN

Ohhhhhh!

ANA

Ahhhhhhh! Didn't I say so? Didn't I?

DYLAN

Yes!

ANA

Still does a pretty fair job.

DYLAN

You were absolutely right, mum. Ahhh . . .

ANA

I'll tell you. This water was hotter when I was a girl. That's the sad fact.

DYLAN

My toes can almost wiggle again . . .

ANA

It's damn good fortune you didn't freeze them right off— with the cold playing tricks I can't understand.

DYLAN

I know—

ANA

Traipsing around in the forest with no boots on, you ape!

DYLAN

That beast might have had a fine breakfast of my feet . . .

ANA

Your own fault—

DYLAN

. . . if I hadn't thrown it my boots to snack on first.

ANA

Luck—

DYLAN

It was quick thinking deception, it was. I was a smart man to run away.

ANA

You can't outrun a dragon. They're quite the nuisance.

DYLAN

You can outrun a dragon who's too busy eating.

ANA

I always feared dragons. In the old days.

DYLAN

Don't I know it! That's why I ran!

ANA

Bloody lucky, you fool! Should never have wandered so far off in the forest.

DYLAN

I was hiking.

ANA

Are you hiking now, is it?

DYLAN

Getting some exercise.

ANA

Exercise is it? Well.

(Pause)

Must have been a damn hungry dragon who had the stomach to chew your smelly boots.

DYLAN

It was a pretty old one, I think.

ANA

They're all old.

DYLAN

Sick, I would guess.

ANA

They're all sick.

DYLAN

Maybe it couldn't bother me much anyway.

ANA

Dragons were scary when I was a girl. Dragons was worth having nightmares over. Keep your teeth clinking at night.

DYLAN

I lie awake anyway . . .

ANA

Dragon fire-- now that was excitement. Real fire. Actual danger. It was so romantic. Kept your blood thumping. Your toes a-tingle. Now, I've just gone and gotten settled, I have.

DYLAN

Well, my toes are feeling better . . . at least that.

(Pause)

ANA

We're sick too.

DYLAN

Maybe.

ANA

You notice all the trees when you were out?

DYLAN

Yes! Everywhere.

ANA

Branches snapping off left and right. Dead wood all around.

DYLAN

Not like when I was a boy. Maybe I'm not a boy anymore. I don't know
...

ANA

The world ain't what it used to be. It doesn't . . . shimmer . . .

DYLAN

No. Not at all.

ANA

Doesn't hum like it did . . . through your hair . . . down your neck . . . like
old days . . . what can you do? Eat your meals and mind your business, I
say.

(Pause)

DYLAN

I was clearing my head. Forgot how far out I was.

ANA

Clearing your head now, are you?

DYLAN

I was. I am.

ANA

And what would be in that head of yours that needs clearing out?

DYLAN

Thoughts.

ANA

One's head is no place for thoughts to be hanging around now, is it?

DYLAN

Painful thoughts.

ANA

Painful . . .

DYLAN

Horrendous thoughts.

ANA

Like what?

DYLAN

You wouldn't understand.

ANA

I wouldn't now, would I?

DYLAN

I would think not.

ANA

I know horrendous thoughts.

DYLAN

Not these.

ANA

I know painful thoughts. I've got a lifetime—

DYLAN

These are personal.

(Pause)

ANA

Personal now, are you? Well—

DYLAN

I've been thinking about the war, mum! The people trapped in the burning buildings. And that Hitler monster. And that cripple you saw. And the other one. All the cripples. Never dreaming things would turn out the way they did . . . and their mums and dads . . . and their children . . . they're living out there, not off in the past . . . I could touch them if I wanted . . . I can almost see their faces . . . their anguish. . . they can't understand why it's happening to them . . .

ANA

I know . . .

DYLAN

I can't bear to look at them, mother.

(DYLAN begins to cry.)

ANA

I know . . .

DYLAN

It's getting worse all the time . . .

ANA

My boy . . . my good boy . . .

DYLAN

I just wish it would stop . . .

ANA

What can we do?

DYLAN

I don't know . . .

ANA

There's nothing we can do.

DYLAN

Nothing.

ANA

It's a pity. But there's no comfort in pity.

DYLAN

No.

(Pause)

ANA

(Looking down at her feet)

Well, hot water never lasts.

DYLAN

I might get a knack for hiking.

ANA

Hiking. Hmmph.

DYLAN

It's good for the head.

ANA

And bad for the feet! The only decent reason to be walking through the forest is to be after food. Or firewood. Or flowers for your cheerful mum in the summertime. The woods is no place for horrendous thinking! You let your mind wander, and ponder . . . worry and weep . . . it's no good, Dylan . . . no good at all.

DYLAN

I need the exercise too.

ANA

Exercise. Well.

DYLAN

Need to get out a bit.

(Pause)

I'm not the boy I was. I'll take up hiking. I will!

(Pause)

ANA

Hiking I suppose it shall be then. I'll need to make you new boots.

DYLAN

Thank you, mum.

ANA

But don't go wandering willy nilly off the path . . .

DYLAN

I won't—

ANA

. . . like you were some stone drunk mule!

DYLAN

What's a couple of toes? Or a leg? Just a minor inconvenience, is all. I'd never feel a damn thing!

ANA

Your mother's own fool, you are!

DYLAN

Would I really miss 'em? Is that such a painful thought?

(There is a knock at the door.

They look at each other.

There is another knock.

ANA gets up and looks out the window.

ANA opens the door and ELIZABETH comes in.

ELIZABETH carries an old book.)

ELIZABETH

Hello! Good morning to you!

ANA

Oh. You again.

(Pause)

Most wanderers only pass by once.

(DYLAN jumps up and quickly
dries his feet.)

ELIZABETH

Am I interrupting more feet soaking?

DYLAN

Oh, no!

ANA

Yes.

DYLAN

Please do come in, Elizabeth! It's nippy out there!

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

DYLAN

Straighten up for her, will you, mum?

ANA

Will I now?

DYLAN

Sorry for the nakedness of my feet . . .

(DYLAN runs around and puts his
socks on. He finds some slippers
and puts them on.

ANA reluctantly picks up the pails
of water and moves them aside.

ELIZABETH steps further into the room.)

ELIZABETH

I don't mean to be any trouble.

DYLAN

No trouble!

ANA

Not much anyway.

DYLAN

Good to see you again!

ELIZABETH

And you.

ANA

Yes, I suppose.

ELIZABETH

I've been thinking so, so much about you folks since last week!

DYLAN

As have we—

ANA

Not that we're not busy ourselves here . . .

ELIZABETH

Robert— my husband— he said he'd never heard of your little cottage out here. And he vacationed at the manor quite a lot as a child. But— get this— you're welcome to stay!

ANA

How kind of him.

ELIZABETH

He's off to Liverpool anyway. Arranging very important business transactions. So much use for raw materials in the factories. All for the war effort. It affects us all. But it keeps him well occupied.

ANA

Ah . . .

(ANA stares into ELIZABETH's eyes.)

ELIZABETH

And then my children—

ANA

Three is it?

ELIZABETH

Uh . . . yes . . . three . . . inquisitive Rebecca is almost fourteen, Susanna my quiet angel is ten, and our curly-haired little devil, Robby, is seven— Robert has them safely off at a fine boarding school in— well, I'm not supposed to say where, but it's especially far from where the danger is. Thank goodness. And he wants them to receive a proper British education. He thinks I'm too much of a crazy Yank influence.

ANA

Yes.

ELIZABETH

They call it public school, but that doesn't really make any sense because public is supposed to be open to the public-- for everybody, right? At least in Pennsylvania, we call public public and private private--

ANA

You like to talk, don't you?

ELIZABETH

That's what Robert says. Guilty!

(DYLAN laughs.)

I'm antsy . . . so, having time on my hands this week, and the events of the day so distressful right now, I've been busying myself with some books I found in the manor—

DYLAN

Oh, I like to read!

ELIZABETH

Yes. So do I!

DYLAN

I read books every day!

ANA

He'd prefer reading about people to being with them.

ELIZABETH

I feel that way too sometimes. There's nothing like getting absolutely whisked away by a good book! Given my choice between a long but fascinating novel and a snooty, chatty neighbor, well quite often I--

ANA

Books are quieter. And to the point.

ELIZABETH

Yes. Right. And I found this one. Still in fairly decent condition . . .

ANA

What is it?

ELIZABETH

A local history of sorts.

DYLAN

Oh, I like history!

ELIZABETH

Printed in 1832.

DYLAN

What does it say?

ELIZABETH

It's quite dry in parts, but it tells about all the towns and hamlets that have sprung up around here. Many back to Anglo-Saxon times. And before. Romans. Celts. Prominent persons over the years. Many references to the Willingtons in more recent centuries as you might expect.

ANA

Of course.

(ELIZABETH flips through the book.)

ELIZABETH

But in the back here, there's a map sketched out.

DYLAN

Of what?

ELIZABETH

Oh the whole county, or parish or whatever you call it. But there are the Willington lands, there is the forest, and this little mark right here is noted as the “Wayfarer’s Rest”—

DYLAN

Let me see—

(She shows him.)

ELIZABETH

Your little gingerbread house!

DYLAN

There we are!

ANA

I don’t need some book to be telling me where I am.

ELIZABETH

It looks like this cottage was some sort of wayfarer’s home. A rest stop for travelers. At least as far back as 1832.

DYLAN

Yes—

ELIZABETH

Free shelter for the weary wanderer. What a noble idea.

DYLAN

It is noble!

ELIZABETH

Do you know when this house was built?

ANA

I wasn’t around then.

ELIZABETH

How long have you been?

ANA

A long time.

ELIZABETH

I mean in years.

ANA

Are you asking a lady her age?

ELIZABETH

Oh, no, I mean in the house.

ANA

Are you trying to cause us some trouble?

ELIZABETH

No—

ANA

You're not with the government now are you? Tax collector?

ELIZABETH

Of course not—

ANA

Are you making some sort of claim? On behalf of your husband?

ELIZABETH

He couldn't care less—

ANA

So it's you. You'd like to live here now, would you?

ELIZABETH

No—

ANA

You'd like to make this your own little gingerbread house in the woods?

ELIZABETH

I was only wondering how you came into possession—

ANA

Possession! Well!

ELIZABETH

How you came into residence here!

ANA

(Angrily)

We're just traveling though! Till we're unweary!

(ANA turns away and sits back down
in a chair.)

DYLAN

I'm sorry, Elizabeth—

ANA

Dylan!

DYLAN

We can't be rude now, mum.

ANA

Get some more water.

ELIZABETH

I didn't mean to upset you---

ANA

More water, Dylan—

ELIZABETH

I thought it would be interesting—

ANA

My feet ache again!

ELIZABETH

Just to chat about local stories—

ANA

Spring water, Dylan! Get me some spring water!

DYLAN

Yes, mum.

(DYLAN goes to the door.)

ELIZABETH

Spring water! Yes! That's in the book!

(She sits down in the other chair
next to ANA.)

It says there are springs in the forest that have ancient healing powers.

(DYLAN stops by the door.)

ANA

Does it now? Hmmph.

(ELIZABETH flips through the book
again.)

ELIZABETH

Let me find it. Something about . . . here it is . . . “magical healing springs
that have been said to cure the most horrible lepers, keep the odd forest
creatures strong, and on occasion even revive the dead . . .”

ANA

Healing springs. Wishful thinking.

ELIZABETH

Have you ever heard of this?

ANA

Don't believe what you read.

ELIZABETH

I'd like to find out.

ANA

You're not a leper now are you?

ELIZABETH

Not quite.

(Laughs.)

Are you?

ANA

No, I am not! And I can tell you most assuredly I have never been a leper of any sort!

ELIZABETH

Are there magical springs out there?

ANA

No.

DYLAN

Mother's right about that.

ELIZABETH

Oh-

ANA

Don't believe in magic myself. Don't tell me you do.

ELIZABETH

I don't know.

DYLAN

There's a hot spring around the side of the house here. Down at the bottom of the slope. You're welcome to take a look. But I'm afraid there's no magic left in it.

ANA

Feels good on your feet though. But not as good as it used to. Getting weaker all the time--

DYLAN

The minerals—

ANA

Minerals, yes—

DYLAN

They're washing away, I suppose.

ANA

People will say and write what they like. But from what I've learned, most of what people say and write is exaggeration. And the rest-- lies. There's been no raising of no dead at my spring, and there's no curing of people

here either. Don't come looking for that. It would be a fine trick if it were true . . .

ELIZABETH

Yes—

ANA

. . . but it's a lie.

ELIZABETH

Not that I actually believed it—

DYLAN

Sorry.

ANA

(Sticking out her feet in front of her)

And spring water or no, I'm still left with the sorest feet in all of England.

(ELIZABETH reaches out to one of ANA's feet.)

ELIZABETH

Sore feet?

ANA

The worst.

ELIZABETH

May I?

(Pause)

ANA

May you what?

ELIZABETH

Back in Pittsburgh, in my younger days, I was in nursing school at a hospital. I took massage instruction. Back before I met Robert and became Lady Willington. He put a stop to that. My poor patients. No more soothing foot massages . . .

ANA

Massage now is it?

ELIZABETH

My massage patients always asked for me a second time. Always.

(ANA considers it.

Pause.)

ANA

If you insist, Lady Willington.

ELIZABETH

Hold this.

(ELIZABETH gives the book to ANA.
She grabs one of ANA's feet.

ELIZABETH massages ANA's foot.)

ANA

Ahhhhhhhhh . . .

ELIZABETH

The key is to get around the arches . . . stretch out the muscle and
tissue without putting too much pressure on the bones . . .

ANA

Ohhhhhhhhhhh . . .

ELIZABETH

Robert loves a good foot massage after a long day at business running to
and fro . . .

(ANA looks into ELIZABETH's eyes
as ELIZABETH continues massaging.)

ANA

But not any more, huh?

ELIZABETH

Oh, well, no. He used to.

ANA

Pity.

ELIZABETH

Sometimes I wish I had become a nurse . . . I enjoyed working with people . . . helping them recover from their aches and pains . . . but I'm a lady now. And a mother . . .

ANA

Ah, motherhood, yes. Don't I know it . . .

ELIZABETH

Tell me . . . will I ever stop worrying about my children?

(ANA looks at her.)

ANA

A mother's life is a heartbreak, missus.

ELIZABETH

I suppose they never stop being your babies.

ANA

That's the best and worst part of it.

(ANA switches feet.)

Try the other one now.

(ELIZABETH massages the other foot.)

Mmmmmmmmm . . .

DYLAN

When you're done with her, how 'bout you give it a go with my feet?

(ELIZABETH stares intently at ANA.)

ELIZABETH

Another thing it says in that book— though I'm sure it's just based on wives' tales— is that the people one would meet in this forest are quite strange . . .

ANA

Strange, oh yes . . .

ELIZABETH

Wanderers who can never rest, hunters in search of what they cannot find,
criminals escaping other men or themselves . . .

ANA

You meet all kinds . . .

ELIZABETH

Romantic tales of lovers— love won and love lost . . .

ANA

If you go in for that sort of thing—

ELIZABETH

That book even has trolls . . . and witches . . . if you go in for that sort of
thing . . .

ANA

I don't believe in them myself—

ELIZABETH

You don't?

(ANA stops enjoying the foot massage
and looks directly at ELIZABETH.)

ANA

No. I don't.

ELIZABETH

You've never heard of a peculiar sort of people . . . with ways . . . to
understand questions . . . to see various things in a human heart . . .

(ANA yanks her feet away
from ELIZABETH.)

ANA

I don't get out much!

ELIZABETH

I just thought it would be so fascinating— exciting— to talk to one of
these funny people . . . I have my own questions . . . personal . . . the book
says—

ANA

This book's a lie!

(ANA stands. She goes to the fireplace
and tosses the book into the fire.)

Go home!

(ELIZABETH jumps up.)

DYLAN

Mother!

ELIZABETH

Please—

DYLAN

She's a guest!

ANA

She's a sneak!

DYLAN

Give her back her book!

ANA

A pasty-faced sneak!

DYLAN

The book, Mother! . . . Mother!

(ANA slowly reaches her hand
into the fire.)

She reaches around until she finds
the book, then pulls it out.

She holds the burning book which is charred
and clearly on fire.

ANA slowly blows out the flames.

She holds out the book to ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH steps back away from ANA,
afraid.)

ANA

It's still readable, I suppose. Mostly.

ELIZABETH

You . . . you had your hand in the fire . . . way in the fire . . .

ANA

Did I now?

ELIZABETH

But . . . didn't it burn you?

ANA

Your book, missus? Your book?

ELIZABETH

Keep it . . .

(ELIZABETH runs out and slams the
door behind her.)

DYLAN opens the door and calls after
her.)

DYLAN

Please come back again!

(ANA blows on her hand.)

ANA

Dylan, come back here!

(She rubs her hand.)

It hurts. My hand . . .

(DYLAN stares outside.)

ANA stares at her hand and continues
to rub it.)

Why is it hurting?

FADEOUT

END OF SCENE

SCENE THREE

SETTING: The same. Another week later. Afternoon.

AT RISE: DYLAN is alone at his desk. He is reading the charred book.

AFTER several beats, the door opens behind him.

Mother? DYLAN

(ELIZABETH enters.)

Hello? ELIZABETH

Oh! DYLAN
(ELIZABETH comes into the room
and stands shivering.)

You didn't knock—

She's gone? ELIZABETH

DYLAN
(Beams)
But . . . good to see you again! Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Gone for a while?

(DYLAN shuts the door.)

DYLAN

Are you all right?

ELIZABETH

Yes—

DYLAN

You look so cold—

ELIZABETH

I waited till she left—

DYLAN

Come over by the fireplace. Elizabeth.

(DYLAN pulls a chair over by
the hearth.)

Sit down.

(ELIZABETH sits.)

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

DYLAN

Warm up a bit.

ELIZABETH

I've— I've been waiting behind the trees for so long . . . it's sunny . . . but
in the shade . . .

DYLAN

Let me get you some hot tea.

(DYLAN goes to the tea kettle.)

ELIZABETH

Doesn't she usually go to town in the morning?

DYLAN

Mother is under the weather today.

ELIZABETH

Oh.

DYLAN

She slept in some, she did. But she can't go without a little walk. Usually to town.

ELIZABETH

And you?

DYLAN

Oh, I don't go to the village much . . . at all really . . . the walking is fine— I hike myself a bit— but the village . . . too crowded for me . . .

ELIZABETH

So I saw her leave? For a while?

DYLAN

Oh, yes.

(DYLAN offers her a cup of tea.)

DYLAN

Here you go, missus. Hot tea.

ELIZABETH

Thank you so much.

(DYLAN watches her drink.

Silence.)

DYLAN

How have you been? Your family?

(ELIZABETH looks up at him and smiles.)

ELIZABETH

Well . . . my children called me last night. On the telephone from their boarding school. So wonderful to hear their voices again.

DYLAN

Certainly.

ELIZABETH

It's been weeks now. Their spirits are up. Grades are good. All three. Though Suzanna struggles a bit with her spelling apparently. And Robby, I think, would prefer a childhood without arithmetic. But they're doing . . . well. The trio are well. Quite a relief.

(DYLAN turns slightly and tries not to look at her directly.)

DYLAN

Excellent.

ELIZABETH

Yes. Robert will be pleased to hear it.

DYLAN

And how is he?

ELIZABETH

Well, as well. I guess. He's busy, you know.

DYLAN

Yes, busy.

ELIZABETH

He's a good, likeable man . . . we're each of us secure . . . that's saying an awful lot these days . . . he does love our children . . . and they so adore him . . .

DYLAN

I hear that's important.

ELIZABETH

They're writing him letters, even little Robby—

DYLAN

Good for them—

ELIZABETH

They're growing up so quickly. My oldest, Rebecca, has a boy she's rather fond of. She confided in me on the telephone. Two years older than she is. Her first puppy love. I'm surprised she told me. She's a bit scared, I think. I so wanted to hug her . . . I just wish . . .

DYLAN

Yes . . .

ELIZABETH

I'll see her at Christmas.

DYLAN

Ah . . . good for you.

ELIZABETH

So . . . how are you and your mother?

DYLAN

Oh, the same.

ELIZABETH

Well . . . I wanted a chance to chat with you.

DYLAN

I'm not sure when she'll be back.

ELIZABETH

Alone.

DYLAN

Oh—

ELIZABETH

(Standing)

Nothing improper.

DYLAN

Of course not—

ELIZABETH

Or too private, I hope—

DYLAN

Oh, no. I haven't any secrets . . .

ELIZABETH

Your name is Dylan?

DYLAN

Yes. It is.

ELIZABETH

Well, Dylan, as you know, I've found myself strolling through these woods. To organize my thoughts. The scent of the trees, the wind—there's a refreshing comfort here. An attraction, if you will.

DYLAN

Attraction?

ELIZABETH

Spiritual, if you go in for that sort of thing.

DYLAN

Spiritual, yes—

ELIZABETH

Do you believe in the soul, Dylan?

DYLAN

The soul?

ELIZABETH

I do. To some degree.

(He turns fully away.)

DYLAN

I'm not sure. I don't really know.

ELIZABETH

I suspect that you do.

DYLAN

Perhaps I do. To some degree.

(She stares at him while he looks away.)

Silence.)

ELIZABETH

I was chatting the last few days with several of the friendly villagers. A few of the old timers said they were whispered stories when they were young.

DYLAN

What kind of stories?

ELIZABETH

Tales of the forest.

DYLAN

This forest?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

DYLAN

Anything interesting?

ELIZABETH

Some fascinating folklore.

DYLAN

The old folklore is not peculiar just to—

ELIZABETH

True. They're the legends of many forests, I suppose.

DYLAN

English. Welsh. Scottish.

ELIZABETH

Some of these stories blend together, from what I've read. Memories of memories . . .

DYLAN

Yes—

ELIZABETH

And of all the thousands of tales that have been told, and retold, from thousands of mouths, for thousand years or more . . . it's funny to wonder why some survive and live on and some die out. Is it because the surviving tales are true? Or is it because we so want them to be true?

DYLAN

I couldn't answer that.

(Silence.)

ELIZABETH

I think you have a kind and gentle spirit, Dylan. You do. That's a wonderful thing. A rare thing . . .

DYLAN

Thank you . . .

ELIZABETH

Can you look into my soul, Dylan? Can you look into the truth of me?

(Silence.)

Is that something that still happens? That you . . .

(Silence.)

The old villagers say there were inhabitants of these woods. Forest people. For centuries travelers in need would meet these strangers along their journey. You could ask these forest people questions . . . and if they looked straight . . . deep into your eyes . . . they could tell you certain truths. Any truths . . . with certainty . . .

DYLAN

I really don't know many truths—

ELIZABETH

They could know all about what's on your mind. Or answer questions for you. Past, present or future . . .

DYLAN

I . . . I don't think I can . . .

ELIZABETH

Can you answer questions for me?

DYLAN

I can't even answer questions for me.

(She steps toward him.)

ELIZABETH

Let's just try it. Just for fun? O.K.?

DYLAN

I-- I don't know . . .

ELIZABETH

Please.

DYLAN

I can't—

ELIZABETH

Oh, come on. I'll give you an easy one!

(She holds her hands behind her back.)

How many fingers am I holding up? Huh? Just try, Dylan. Please?

DYLAN

Well . . .

ELIZABETH

(Laughs)

You can do it . . . Dylan . . .

(He looks at her with hesitation.)

DYLAN

Two of them . . .

ELIZABETH

No—

(She brings her hands forward.)

DYLAN

. . . on each hand . . .

ELIZABETH

Well— yes!

(Laughs)

Oh, no. You cheated. You cheated, Dylan!

(DYLAN laughs.)

DYLAN

I-- I did not!

ELIZABETH

You saw me—

DYLAN

Yes, at the end-- but I knew it first. It was two on each for a total of four!

ELIZABETH

(Smiles)

All right, all right . . . cheater.

DYLAN

I didn't!

ELIZABETH

(Laughs)

Cheater!

DYLAN

(Laughs)

Oh, no! I'm an honest lad, I am!

ELIZABETH

All right then. Let's try another one!

DYLAN

Fine!

ELIZABETH

I'm thinking of a number between one and ten— no, too easy— between one and one hundred.

DYLAN

(Laughs)

Making it difficult are you?

ELIZABETH

Yes. Between one and one hundred. O.K. Tell me what number I'm thinking of.

(She stares at him and smiles.

He looks deep into her eyes and smiles back..

They are very close.)

DYLAN

All right. Thirty . . . Thirty—

ELIZABETH

Oh, I am so disappointed, Dylan . . .

DYLAN

You're the cheater! You just changed it! It was thirty seven— now it's seventy-four! Seventy-four it is!

ELIZABETH

Yes! Yes!

(She grabs DYLAN's hands.

She is about to embrace him, but stops, still holding his hands.

DYLAN stands motionless as they stare at each other.)

Answer me more, Dylan!

DYLAN

All right . . .

ELIZABETH

Am I happy?

DYLAN

Happy? I don't understand . . .

ELIZABETH

Am I a happy woman? Am I?

DYLAN

Right now you are—

ELIZABETH

I suppose so—

DYLAN

But it ebbs and flows . . .

ELIZABETH

Ebbs and flows, yes. I have worries. All the time. Constantly. I don't sleep.

(She grasps his hands very tightly.

He continues looking into her eyes.)

I cry a lot . . . more than I should . . . Robert thinks I'm . . . he says . . . well, I'm not a happy mother, Dylan.

DYLAN

No.

ELIZABETH

A happy wife?

DYLAN

No.

ELIZABETH

But I love my children? Do I?

DYLAN

Yes, you do.

ELIZABETH

I love them very much?

DYLAN

Yes.

ELIZABETH

And my husband?

DYLAN

Yes. But it ebbs and flows.

ELIZABETH

Ebbs and flows. . . does he love me?

(Pause.)

Dylan? Does my husband love me?

DYLAN

He used to.

ELIZABETH

Oh . . .

DYLAN

Not so much anymore . . .

ELIZABETH

Robert . . .

(She pulls away from him.)

DYLAN

I'm sorry. I'm very sorry, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

I was afraid that was the case. I knew it.

DYLAN

I shouldn't have told you.

ELIZABETH

No, no. I asked.

DYLAN

What do I know anyway? I could be just . . . well, anyway, I'm probably wrong—

ELIZABETH

Tell me more!

DYLAN

Oh, no--

ELIZABETH

I've got so much to ask!

DYLAN

I shouldn't—

ELIZABETH

Please— I lay wide awake each night— wondering, contemplating—

DYLAN

This isn't good!

ELIZABETH

I hear terrible crying in the air outside my window. I fear the worst. I can almost see it. Close enough to be afraid. I can hear the pain . . .

DYLAN

Don't ask me any more—

ELIZABETH

No, Dylan! Listen, please! I just want to feel safe again. Like I used to be. In the States . . . Bad things couldn't touch us in Pittsburgh. Not in our house. We were blessed where we lived. As a girl, I never thought I'd be hiding from war. I'm alone. I fear for my children. I can't even be with them. He won't let me-- there's so many things I'd like to know for sure . . .

(She runs to him and grabs his hands again.)

DYLAN

Don't!

ELIZABETH

Will I get back home? To Pittsburgh?

(DYLAN tries to look away.)

Please tell me!

DYLAN

I don't want to—

ELIZABETH

Just a few more questions, then I'll go. Will I ever go back to Pittsburgh?
Will I? Dylan?

(He looks into her eyes.)

DYLAN

No. You won't.

ELIZABETH

To the States? Will I go back?

DYLAN

Never.

ELIZABETH

What will happen to me?

DYLAN

Don't torture yourself, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

What do you see?

DYLAN

This hurts me too. It's quite painful when you're the seer, you know.

ELIZABETH

What? What is it?

DYLAN

Stop torturing *me*!

(He pulls away from her and looks away.)

Please stop it!

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry.

DYLAN

Don't just be thinking of yourself.

ELIZABETH

I didn't mean to hurt you. But you started to see something. Tell me what it is!

DYLAN

I don't see anything.

ELIZABETH

You did!

DYLAN

It's gone!

ELIZABETH

I need to know!

DYLAN

Stop it, missus! Please!

(She grabs his cheeks and pulls his face close to hers.)

ELIZABETH

Look at me!

(He stares at her and stops resisting.)

He is motionless, but keeps his eyes on her.)

DYLAN

It's a difficult chore, it is . . .

ELIZABETH

Are my fears going to happen?

DYLAN

It's a terrible, terrible burden being what I am. If I could just shut-off my mind, it would be a fine world, it would . . .

ELIZABETH

It's tragic, isn't it?

DYLAN

There's lots and lots of misery around, Elizabeth . . .

ELIZABETH

And what will my misery be?

(DYLAN starts to cry.)

Please tell me! Am I going to suffer? Please! Just let me know. Am I going to suffer?

DYLAN

Your children . . .

ELIZABETH

What about them?

DYLAN

They will suffer . . .

ELIZABETH

No!

(DYLAN looks away.)

Why?

(DYLAN weeps.

ELIZABETH shouts at him.)

ELIZABETH

What's going to happen to my children? Dylan!!!

DYLAN

(Softly)

Your children will suffer.

ELIZABETH

No . . .

DYLAN

That will be your misery.

ELIZABETH

No!

(She steps back away from him.)

DYLAN

I'm so sorry . . .

ELIZABETH

Softly)

What have I done . . . ?

DYLAN

I'm sorry . . .

(She runs out of the house.

DYLAN stands still and continues to weep.

ANA comes in carrying a small bag of groceries that she holds with just one hand. She clutches her other hand against her chest.

She watches DYLAN cry, then looks out the door.)

ANA

So you told her, did you?

(DYLAN continues to cry.

She watches him for a few moments.)

My poor boy. My poor boy.

FADEOUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE FOUR

SETTING: The same. The next morning.

AT RISE: DYLAN is scurrying about the room stuffing his clothes and some of his books into a large cloth sack. He looks around for something he is missing then goes off with the sack to check in another room.

Beat.

ANA comes in from outside. She slams the door shut behind her. She leans against the door. She is trembling and beginning to cry. Her hand is wrapped in a cloth bandage.

DYLAN enters with the sack and sees ANA. He hides the sack under the table.

Mum? DYLAN

Oh. ANA

What's the matter? DYLAN

(Pause)

You look—

ANA
It's nothing.

DYLAN
Good.

ANA
My hand hurts—

DYLAN
Still?

ANA
Worse.

DYLAN
Are you crying, mum?

ANA
No.

DYLAN
Oh.

ANA
Sniffles.

DYLAN
Again?

ANA
Bloody sniffles.

DYLAN
Where are the groceries?

ANA
The groceries—oh . . . I don't have any . . .

DYLAN
Are you going back out?

ANA
No!

Oh . . . well . . .

DYLAN

I was hiking.

ANA

Hiking is it? I see.

DYLAN

Just a bit. Horrendous thoughts, you know.

ANA

Yes.

DYLAN

If I could just know my own poor future, I would, Dylan. Just a hint would be lovely. To read my own sad eyes . . . or yours . . .

ANA

(THEY stare at each other for a beat.)

What are you doing?

ANA

Oh, nothing.

DYLAN

(More silence.)

That's what I always do.

Why did you have to go and tell her?

ANA

That again.

DYLAN

(ANA comes further into the room.)

DYLAN struggles to conceal the sack from her view.)

ANA

Yes again! I don't want no trouble! There's too much trouble about.

DYLAN

Don't I know it.

ANA

Who knows who she might up and gab to. Those Yanks are a sneaky lot they are. Snakes with happy faces.

DYLAN

Elizabeth isn't—

ANA

They're know-it-alls to the bone! I don't want her sending more folks this way. She will! Yank folk or English folk, it don't matter. Sticking their ugly powdered noses in my business. No good can come from it, Dylan!

DYLAN

I know—

ANA

We need to keep them away.

DYLAN

Why?

ANA

Let them bungle and mangle their business, not mine.

DYLAN

We shouldn't.

ANA

We should! I wouldn't have stayed here so long if I had a taste for their muck. This forest has enough of its own troubles just now.

DYLAN

I should like to drink from their muck, mother. I would like to know what it tastes like—

ANA

Oh, no—

DYLAN

I'd like to see . . . what it is I can't run away from . . . when I close my eyes . . . I thought it over last night . . .

ANA

It's her—

DYLAN

I should like to stand nose-to-nose with my nightmares, mum . . .

ANA

She did this to you! She snuck her way in here—

DYLAN

Elizabeth didn't—

ANA

She tricked you to looking . . . to talking, to thinking! Put those dark thoughts in your head. Didn't know what she was doing. You're just a boy—

DYLAN

I'm not a boy!

ANA

But you are—

DYLAN

I'm not!

ANA

Oh, yes.

DYLAN

No!

ANA

Then what are you?

DYLAN

I'm . . . I'm . . . I don't know what I am!

ANA

Oh, Dylan, you don't know what a boy is . . .

(ANA moves toward him and notices the sack.)

What is that?

DYLAN

What—

ANA

This.

DYLAN

Nothing.

(ANA goes through the sack and pulls out
a few of Dylan's things.)

ANA

Laundry, perhaps?

DYLAN

No.

ANA

Taking a little holiday, are you?

DYLAN

They're mine!

ANA

Hope it's someplace sunny.

DYLAN

I can do with my own things what I want!

ANA

Someplace beautiful.

DYLAN

Leave me alone!

(Pause)

ANA
Don't, Dylan.

DYLAN
I'm leaving.

ANA
Don't!

(DYLAN grabs the bag from ANA.
She cannot hold on to it with just
one good hand.)

DYLAN begins stuffing his things back
into the bag.)

Please . . . please, Dylan . . .

DYLAN
I'm sorry, mum.

ANA
I'm begging you . . .

DYLAN
I need to witness the world. I do.

ANA
You tried that once. Didn't last a day.

DYLAN
That was a long, long time ago.

ANA
Didn't I warn you? Came crawling back, you did. Bawling! On your
hands and scrubby knees you were!

DYLAN
I wasn't ready!

ANA
Like a beat and bloody pup back to his mum.

I'm older now! DYLAN

You're never old enough. ANA

I am. DYLAN

Dylan— ANA

No! DYLAN

I . . . I had a fright today . . . ANA

Don't— DYLAN

A dreadful fright . . . ANA

You can't change me— DYLAN

There was a smell in the forest today— ANA

I've made up my mind! DYLAN

A shocking, sickening smell . . . I followed it . . . ANA

Don't do this to me— DYLAN

The dragons are dead. ANA

Dragons— DYLAN

ANA

Dead, Dylan . . .

DYLAN

Which dragons?

ANA

I don't know. Many . . . all of them, maybe. They were seeping, stinking into the swamp. They were all dead. All that I could see. Not a sound from a one of them. And their fire was gone.

DYLAN

No . . . no, you're just telling me that . . .

ANA

It's true.

DYLAN

It's a ploy—

ANA

I'm afraid we might be next.

DYLAN

You're tricking me tricking . . .

ANA

The fairies of death are about.

DYLAN

You're just trying to scare me to stay with you . . .

ANA

(Softly)

Don't leave me, Dylan . . .

(DYLAN backs up to the door.)

DYLAN

I'm sorry, mum . . .

ANA

I don't understand it . . . any of it . . .

DYLAN

I have to go now!

(DYLAN runs out the door.

ANA runs to the door and shouts
at him.)

ANA

Dylan! . . . Dylan . . . I was supposed to live forever . . .

(ANA stands at the door, rubbing
her sore hand.)

FADEOUT

END OF SCENE

SCENE FIVE

SETTING: The same. Several days later. Night.

AT RISE: ANA is sitting alone at the table, wrapped in a shawl.

She is adjusting and readjusting the knob on the radio trying to tune in a station.

The reception is poor and inconsistent. She hears bits of music, bits of news broadcasts and lots of static.

Her whole arm is now affected and wrapped in a cloth sling. She holds her arm against her chest in considerable pain.

RADIO

... all lights off ... prepared for continued night time bombing ... under the apple tree, with anyone else but me ... in the basement and away from windows ... take a sentimental journey ... report any injuries immediately ... journey with you ...

ANA

Come on, come on, you bastards ...

RADIO

... no, no, no, don't sit under ...

ANA

One of you now ... tune in ...

RADIO

... of emergency throughout the country ...

ANA

Damn trees . . .

RADIO

. . . . a sentimental journey with you . . .

ANA

Worthless contraption . . .

RADIO

. . . accelerated strikes . . . with anyone else but me, with anyone else but me . . .

(The door slowly opens.

ANA hears it.)

ANA

Dylan? Are you back now?

(ELIZABETH enters.

She shuts the door and comes into the room without speaking.

She is disheveled and exhausted.

She will not look at ANA.)

Well, you is it?

(ELIZABETH doesn't answer.)

You don't knock anymore?

(ELIZABETH keeps her distance from ANA.)

Since you're here, there's a couple of things I'd like to ask you about.

ELIZABETH

Don't look at me— please . . .

(Pause)

ANA
Cup of tea for you?

ELIZABETH
No—no—

ANA
Biscuit?

ELIZABETH
Stay over there.

ANA
Missus?

(ELIZABETH stands still
and doesn't answer.)

You didn't happen to see Dylan out, have you?

(No response)

I've snooped around in the village. Kept my eyes alert. Listened.

(No response)

Almost a week now. No Dylan.

(No response)

You wouldn't be here to bring us trouble now, would you? Speak your mind if it's so. I ain't got a stomach for uncertainty.

(ELIZABETH looks at ANA for the
first time.)

ELIZABETH
I'm . . . so . . .

ANA
Weary, yes . . .

(ANA moves to ELIZABETH, still holding her lame arm.)

Take my shawl—

(ELIZABETH jumps back.)

ELIZABETH

Don't touch me!

ANA

Sit down, child—

ELIZABETH

No—

ANA

Over here by the fire—

ELIZABETH

Not by the fire!

ANA

No, no, not by the fire. Let me push the chair to you.

(ANA pushes a chair using her good arm.)

There now, sit down—

ELIZABETH

Stay away from me!

ANA

Sure, sure, Elizabeth . . .

(ELIZABETH slowly sits down.)

ANA watches her.

ELIZABETH looks up and stares at ANA.

ANA becomes quite uncomfortable.

Silence.)

Well now . . . I was thinking, I was . . . about how you was once a bit of a nurse, as I believe you said—

ELIZABETH

I'm not touching your feet.

ANA

No, no, though I wouldn't be turning down one of those massages if you were to offer me one.

ELIZABETH

I'm not. Ugly, ugly feet . . .

ANA

Well, as grotesque and despicable as my feet happen to be, my thoughts, missus, have drifted elsewhere, anatomically, and it is, in fact, my arm that I would most kindly ask you to take a glimpse at—

ELIZABETH

Your arm?

ANA

It's crippled.

ELIZABETH

Well uncripple it.

ANA

I can't.

ELIZABETH

Do it.

ANA

I . . . I don't know how. If I did, well, I'd certainly try. But I don't, so—

ELIZABETH

They used to kill witches.

ANA

Please—

ELIZABETH
You're freaks!

ANA
Please, missus—

ELIZABETH
Monsters!

ANA
Just tell me what's wrong with my arm!

(ANA shoves her arm in front of
ELIZABETH.)

What can I do for it? It hurts clear up to my shoulder . . .

ELIZABETH
Leave me alone!

(ELIZABETH pushes ANA away.)

ANA grabs her arm and cries out in pain.)

ANA
Go home, you! Leave us be! Back to your fancy manor!

ELIZABETH
It burned.

ANA
Oh . . .

(ELIZABETH stands.)

ELIZABETH
Not much of the manor left.

ANA
So soon . . .

ELIZABETH
Crumbled walls . . .

ANA

This quick?

ELIZABETH

. . . broken furniture . . . ashes . . .

ANA

I was thinking there was more time . . .

ELIZABETH

They bombed us . . .

ANA

Bombed, yes . . . it's that night already? I push it away . . . I don't dwell
. . . I just push it, push it . . . if you dwell . . .

ELIZABETH

I shouldn't have listened . . .

ANA

You poor thing.

ELIZABETH

If I hadn't been so worried . . .

ANA

Hard to stop worries . . .

ELIZABETH

If I hadn't come here . . .

ANA

What can you do?

ELIZABETH

If he hadn't had me believing that he knew the truth . . . if he hadn't told
me . . . those bastards . . .

ANA

If, if, if. If the world wasn't so damn full of ifs.

ELIZABETH

This goddamn war . . .

ANA

I catch what I can on the wireless—

ELIZABETH

The countryside was supposed to be safe from attack!

ANA

It's a mother's lot . . .

ELIZABETH

I wanted to be safe . . .

ANA

My poor boy . . .

ELIZABETH

Your poor boy? What about me? What about . . .

ANA

A mother's brutal lot we share.

ELIZABETH

I called them all home! I insisted! But I suppose you already knew that, didn't you?

ANA

I push it far away, missus—

ELIZABETH

Robert was so irritated. But I cried and shouted on the phone. He gathered the children and brought them to the manor for me. For me! A little holiday with their mother. Their silly . . . lonely . . . crazy mother. I'm sure that made you happy—

ANA

Not one bit!

(ELIZABETH begins to break down.)

ELIZABETH

Rebecca was in my lap! We heard the broadcast on the wireless-- Robert said we should go to the basement as a precaution. But I didn't want to get up! Rebecca was all cuddled with me! . . . Her legs were stretched out almost as far as mine. Still my baby! I'm kissing her hair . . . Robby and Suzanna are on the floor. . . hugging my legs as I sing them a lullaby . . . We're together again. I'm so happy. Robert is pleading with us. Take cover . . . inside the walls of the wine cellar . . . hurry . . . but I don't want the moment to end. Rebecca is getting too old to snuggle. How many more chances will I have to hold her like this? Just a few more minutes, Robert. Just a few more minutes . . . I'm at rest . . . it's so beautiful . . . perfect . . . we have time . . . more time . . . more time . . . until he yanks me off my chair . . . we hold the children's hands and tell them not to worry. There's nothing scary in the deep, dark basement . . . their hands are so warm and clasp me tight. We're on the staircase. Robert hums a lullaby with me. But I glance back around— there is light— shining upstairs— we left lights on in the house! The children are always doing that, wasting electricity-- but hadn't the broadcast said to turn them off? Yes-- Yes! We had been warned. I run back upstairs to turn off the lights. It will just take a minute. I'll hurry. We'll wait for you on the steps, mummy. I don't hear the planes, until . . . an explosion. It shakes the house. The lamp in the hallway I hadn't reached yet flashes off on its own. Another explosion. I run back to the basement steps. The staircase has collapsed. There's black smoke all around me. I listen for them . . . and listen . . . the walls are crackling . . . tumbling into the smoke . . .

ANA

You poor girl . . .

ELIZABETH

I don't hear them . . .

ANA

It's a miserable thing . . .

ELIZABETH

I feel the cook's hands on my arms . . . tugging on me, pulling me and dragging me . . . away . . . without my children . . . without my husband . . . we're outside and the manor is on fire . . . the flames are all around . . . spreading to the trees beside the house . . .

ANA

Oh . . . oh . . .

ELIZABETH

I don't think they made it to the wine cellar . . .

ANA

No . . .

ELIZABETH

My babies . . . I let go of their hands . . . I left them . . .

(ELIZABETH cries.

Silence.)

ANA

What can we do?

(Silence)

It's the way the world works, it is.

(ANA tries to put the shawl around
ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH shrugs her away.)

ELIZABETH

I brought them there . . .

ANA

Hush—

ELIZABETH

My fault . . .

ANA

Now, now, missus.

ELIZABETH

They were safe where they were . . .

ANA

And what place would that be? Are there safe places to be found now?

(Pause)

ELIZABETH

But if Dylan hadn't told me—

ANA

Dylan?

ELIZABETH

Yes—

ANA

Blame Dylan now, is it? No, no, you can't go blaming—

ELIZABETH

If he'd just kept quiet!

ANA

Did you ask him?

ELIZABETH

Why would he say such a horrible thing?

ANA

But you asked him, didn't you?

ELIZABETH

It wasn't right of him!

ANA

Why would you ask such a horrible thing?

ELIZABETH

It was cruel!

ANA

Why would you want to know?

ELIZABETH

I needed to know!

ANA

Why would a smart lady—

ELIZABETH

Because I have children! Children!

(Pause)

I . . . had

(Silence. ELIZABETH looks
away from her.)

ANA

You should rest some—

ELIZABETH

I didn't want them safe . . . I wanted them with me . . .

ANA

What was going to happen was going to happen.

(Long pause)

ELIZABETH

(Softly)

Can I stay tonight in your gingerbread house?

ANA

Let me get you some supper.

ELIZABETH

I'm not hungry.

(ANA puts the shawl around her.

ELIZABETH does not resist.)

ANA

You get some sleep now.

ELIZABETH

I can't sleep.

ANA

You try some.

ELIZABETH

I'll try.

ANA

Good now . . .

(ANA caresses ELIZABETH's hair.

ANA hums a lullaby.

ELIZABETH begins to cry again.

ELIZABETH grabs ANA's hands
and looks directly into ANA's eyes.)

ELIZABETH

They're gone? Robert? The children? All of them?

ANA

Yes.

ELIZABETH

They're not coming back?

ANA

I'm afraid not.

ELIZABETH

I see.

(Pause)

Do they forgive me?

(Pause.

ANA smiles at her.)

ANA

Yes.

ELIZABETH

Oh . . . thank you . . . thank you . . .

(ANA holds ELIZABETH as she cries.)

FADEOUT

END OF SCENE

SCENE SIX

SETTING: The same. A few hours later. Just before dawn.

AT RISE: A lantern on the table lights the room.

ELIZABETH is asleep in the chair by the fire.

ANA stands at the open door, looking out,
her arm still in the sling.

She has a sack filled with clothing and a few pots
and pans.

Smoke or fire are perhaps visible beyond.

ANA goes to the table, takes the radio and sticks it
in her sack. She empties out the tea kettle and stuffs
that into her sack.

She goes to the door and looks out again.

Then she goes to ELIZABETH and gently taps her
on the shoulder.

ANA

Missus?

(Pause.)

Wake up now.

(ELIZABETH partially awakes.)

ELIZABETH

Sleeping . . .

ANA

You need to get up.

ELIZABETH

Why . . .

ANA

There's smoke out.

ELIZABETH

Too tired . . .

ANA

In the distance. I think I can smell it.

ELIZABETH

Don't wanna . . .

ANA

The wind's blowing this way. Up now!

ELIZABETH

No!

(ELIZABETH pulls away from ANA and rolls the other way in the chair.)

ANA goes to the door and looks out again.)

ANA

That's dark with smoke.

(ANA looks up.)

No moon. No stars.

(ANA sniffs the air.)

She goes back to ELIZABETH.)

Elizabeth? Elizabeth!

(ELIZABETH stirs.)

What? ELIZABETH

We need to go. ANA

Go? ELIZABETH

Tonight. ANA

I don't wanna . . . ELIZABETH

Put your shoes on, child. ANA

Where are we going? ELIZABETH

I don't know. ANA

Home? ELIZABETH

Home it is. ANA

Pittsburgh? ELIZABETH

Your shoes . . . ANA

(ELIZABETH sits up, a bit
confused.)

. . . . here.

(ANA offers the shoes.)

ELIZABETH

I want to go home.

ANA

Shoes first.

ELIZABETH

I want to go to Pittsburgh.

ANA

It's a long hike.

ELIZABETH

I've been away . . .

ANA

You'll need these.

(ELIZABETH takes the shoes.)

ANA goes back to the door
and looks out.)

ELIZABETH

But I can't . . .

ANA

No Dylan.

ELIZABETH

No . . .

ANA

My ungrateful boy.

ELIZABETH

Can't go there.

ANA

We'll see about Pittsburgh, missus. Come on now.

ELIZABETH

Too late.

ANA

That direction I think. We'll just start walking I suppose.

ELIZABETH

Never . . .

ANA

The sky is clearer that way. See?

ELIZABETH

No Pittsburgh . . .

ANA

I should like to see the States. Yes, I would. I'm not much of a world traveler. But seeing the condition the world is in now, there must be other parts that are . . . easier to be forgotten in, I think. Timeless. With maybe some bold skies that shimmer. Or water even. Something pretty. Do they have beaches in Pittsburgh? Missus?

ELIZABETH

Huh?

ANA

Are there beaches in Pittsburgh?

ELIZABETH

No.

ANA

It's warm?

ELIZABETH

Warm?

ANA

Sunny all the time? In Pittsburgh?

ELIZABETH

About like here.

ANA

Oh.

(Beat)

It's beautiful though?

ELIZABETH

Not particularly.

ANA

You wouldn't want to consider any other place would you?

ELIZABETH

(Slowly)

They have steel mills . . . smoke . . . and a candy store with a soda fountain that hums . . . tall chairs at the counter . . . my mommy would smile at me and lift me up . . . up . . . to reach the licorice on the shiny counter . . . what do you want Lizzie? Ask politely Lizzie Gallagher and Mommy will get it for you . . . anything you want . . .

ANA

I hear California's lovely.

(ELIZABETH looks at her.)

ELIZABETH

California?

ANA

That might be the precise place for me. I've overstayed myself here. I'm done with these poor old trees. Seeking some variety, I am. Let's try California.

ELIZABETH

Too far away . . .

(ANA turns back inside.)

ANA

You don't have your shoes on.

ELIZABETH

I don't want them.

ANA

We don't have much time. Move now.

ELIZABETH

No . . .

ANA

We're leaving your creaky old gingerbread house.

ELIZABETH

I'm too sleepy . . .

ANA

Going to have to pull you out, am I?

ELIZABETH

Too tired . . .

ANA

Put your shoes on! Now, missus!

ELIZABETH

You wear them!

(ELIZABETH throws her shoes
at ANA.)

ANA ducks out of the way.)

ANA

Well. Aren't you the pouty child?

ELIZABETH

Leave me alone!

ANA

The surly lady of manners herself.

ELIZABETH

Why are you doing this to me? I want to sleep!

ANA

Sleep. Hmph!

ELIZABETH

It's late . . . middle of the night, isn't it?

ANA

The forest is burning! Burning!

ELIZABETH

What?

ANA

Don't you smell it?

ELIZABETH

Fire?

(ELIZABETH jumps up.)

ANA

See for yourself.

(ELIZABETH goes to the window.)

ELIZABETH

I didn't know—

ANA

These brittle old woods are blazing up fast, they are—

ELIZABETH

You didn't tell me!

ANA

I have been telling you, missus! Haven't I been collapsing both my lungs at telling you?

ELIZABETH

I was sleeping—

ANA

It'll reach here by morning I should think. Too many dead branches . . . lots of pine all around . . . it's a despicable night. I know those trees . . . I named each one . . . I'd feel their breath as I passed by . . . singing ancient songs . . . whispering me warnings of the weather. Centuries now

. . . I loved each year . . . I want to cry with my trees . . . it's not my woods tonight.

(Pause)

We need to be on our merry way.

(ELIZABETH thinks about it.)

ELIZABETH

(Softly)

I can't.

ANA

Can't?

(ELIZABETH collapses onto the chair.)

ELIZABETH

Can't go out there again . . .

ANA

Stop it—

ELIZABETH

My mind . . . no . . .

ANA

Just stop it now!

ELIZABETH

Why does it have to be tonight? I'm not ready!

ANA

Come with me to another place. It's not so frightening. You can rest there.

ELIZABETH

No! You're tricking me!

(DYLAN comes through the door.
He is dirty and intensely focused.)

Mother! DYLAN

Dylan! My boy! ANA

The forest is on fire, mum! DYLAN

Don't I know it! ANA

(DYLAN sees ELIZABETH.)

Elizabeth! DYLAN

(He goes toward her. She looks away.)

The woods are burning! The fire will be heading on this way.

(She doesn't respond.)

We should get out soon. Shouldn't we?

I've no air left in me from telling her, Dylan. ANA

(DYLAN looks at ELIZABETH. She won't look at him.

Silence.)

I am sorry, Elizabeth. I'm sorry . . . DYLAN

(Pause.

He begins to speaking to her, very softly at first.)

I've been all the way to London, Elizabeth. I made it. I've been waiting and waiting to tell you. I wish you could have seen it too. There were a

terrible number of persons there . . . but now I've seen them . . . I walked and walked to see them all, Elizabeth . . . my legs so sore . . . a kindly lorry driver gave me a lift . . . "Headed to the city, mister? Rest your bones, fella. Hop in!" He had a soft voice and a tickling little laugh. Oh, you should have heard it. I turned to thank him and looked into the depths of his wet eyes. Then I could see— but I didn't want to— he had killed a woman. It was strong on his mind. Strangled the poor girl. And buried her in his garden. Many years ago. But the thought never left him. No one else knew it— except me now. I could know these things— why me? I turned away from those eyes and jumped out of the lorry. I ran as fast as I could through this street and that street of London. What was I doing there? What had happened to me? I was afraid to look at anyone. But then I bumped into sweet-smelling housewives with grocery sacks and happy children on bicycles— giggling, shouting, humming people on the sidewalks. I glanced away from their beautiful, horrible faces. And I ran on and on, maybe in circles, until I was exhausted and it was night. And black. And mostly quiet. Except for wind, and birds . . . a clock . . . and I strolled, relaxed, at peace, at last, for hours. The sky lit up brilliant and orange. I floated along the street completely alone. It was lovely out as the bombs exploded around me. I could see no one. A chimney above me crumbled and the bricks crashed down onto the sidewalk, splashing up dust on my shoes. A bobby jumped out from a doorway and pulled me into the blackness. "You're gonna get yourself killed, you nut!" But I couldn't see him. He yanked me into a basement. It was warm down there. I could hear chatter and whispers. And cries. Babies. Old women. And the deep, husky sobbing of men. The bobby lit a lantern. The shapes of dozens of people appeared in the flickering light. All crammed together, on top of each other, in the tiny room. The light danced across their naked faces. So many of them! Dozens--no-- hundreds! They were all around me! I couldn't turn away. They were all looking at me— quizzically, questioning me as if I had an answer for them. "What's it like up there?" "My friend is gone." "Is the beautician's shop at the corner still standing?" "Did you see a little boy? He's wearing a green coat! Just six years old and his name is . . ." I stared straight back at them. Right into their eyes. I knew them all. Their faces begged me, their eyes all implored me . . . the fidgeting postman whose wife will soon leave him . . . the coughing mother with cancer lurking in her lungs . . . and . . . and the puffy, bleeding old woman . . . who will yet fall in love again next year. I shouted to them. The corner beautician's is gone! Everything inside it destroyed! But the boy in the green coat will be found with a neighbor. He's just six years old! And yes, his name is Michael! And he's safe!

(DYLAN is overwhelmed and trembling.
ELIZABETH is now looking at him.)

ELIZABETH

Safe . . .

ANA

My boy . . .

DYLAN

They all tried to touch me, mum . . . grab me . . . kiss me . . . all their hands— scratching! Asking more questions, demanding more answers—

ELIZABETH

Yes . . .

DYLAN

Elizabeth? I couldn't stop those people. I didn't know what to do! I ran back upstairs . . . out into the street . . . and another street . . . and home . . . to tell you.

ANA

Just in time to go, Dylan.

(He looks at ANA.)

DYLAN

Look at my face, mum. On my arms. On my legs. When they were clawing at me. They scratched me. I was bleeding--

(ANA holds his hands.)

ANA

No . . .

DYLAN

Bleeding, see? I've got cuts on me. All over. Wasn't sure if blood was spilling out or the air was rushing in . . .

ANA

Well . . . you bleeding and me a cripple . . . the world's become a humorless place, it has.

(ANA goes to the door and looks out.)

DYLAN

Cuts, they're curious. They hurt for a while. But then you think they stopped.

(He turns to ELIZABETH.)

Then you walk some more . . . and they start to hurt again . . .

(ELIZABETH nods.)

ANA

Carry my sack for me, Dylan.

DYLAN

I think . . . I think I can peek at the faces now. They're frightening . . . but sometimes they smile at you . . .

ANA

Carry my sack for me.

DYLAN

I'll go with you, mum. I should like to try London again.

ANA

Hurry!

DYLAN

Elizabeth?

(Pause)

You must come with us.

(ELIZABETH doesn't answer.)

ANA

Let's go!

DYLAN

Please, Elizabeth . . .

ELIZABETH

Too exhausted . . .

ANA

Stop dawdling! This box of sticks will burn quick, it will.

(As she looks out.)

And seeing as how the fire is blowing in from the south, I'm suggesting we aim fast to the north!

DYLAN

Elizabeth? You don't want to burn, do you?

ELIZABETH

But I just got here!

DYLAN

No, no . . .

ELIZABETH

But my head is too full . . . !

(There is the sound of explosions
in the distance.

They all look up.)

ANA

North, I say.

(She looks outside, searches all
around and sniffs.)

We'll be hiking north! Due north, Dylan!

DYLAN

But we can't leave, Elizabeth, mum!

ELIZABETH

I'm . . . too tired, Dylan.

ANA

Let's be on our way, now.

ELIZABETH

Be safe . . .

I'll stay with you, Elizabeth.

DYLAN

Don't be stupid now!

ANA

I won't leave her here, mum!

DYLAN

No, don't stay for me . . .

ELIZABETH

I insist.

DYLAN

Dylan, no—

ELIZABETH

I won't leave you by yourself.

DYLAN

(There is the sound of another
explosion. Much louder.)

Please! I can't stay here any longer!

ANA

I'm sorry, mum.

DYLAN

Please . . .

ANA

No, mum . . .

DYLAN

Dylan!

ANA

No!

DYLAN

(Pause)

I'll be all right.

(Pause)

ANA
You'll join up with me?

DYLAN
Soon.

ANA
Soon?

(She goes to him, puts down
her bag and gives him a hug.

He is still at first, then hugs
her back.)

My boy . . . my boy . . . my boy . . .

DYLAN
She needs to rest, mum . . .

ANA
Rest? There's no more resting here, there's not. You hurry!

(She picks up her bag.)

No resting and no thinking! What else can we do? Nothing. Run smart, I
say. Stay ahead of the flames. That's all. Due north.

(ANA goes out. DYLAN watches
her for a bit then turns and looks at
ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH slowly turns and looks
at him from across the room, too far
away for him to see into her eyes.)

[THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER. IN ORDER TO PROTECT AGAINST COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT, THE ENTIRE PLAY HAS NOT BEEN POSTED HERE. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE A COMPLETE SCRIPT OF THIS PLAY PLEASE CONTACT MY AGENT, MARK ORSINI, at morsini@bretadamsltd.net OR YOU CAN CONTACT ME DIRECTLY AT joemcdonoughplays@gmail.com. THANK YOU.]