

can understand that. (Pause.) Don't forget your straw. (Pause.) Not the crawler you were, poor darling. (Pause.) No, not the crawler I gave my heart to. (Pause.) The hands and knees, love, try the hands and knees. (Pause.) The knees! The knees! (Pause.) What a curse, mobility! (She follows with eyes his progress towards her behind mound, i.e. towards place he occupied at beginning of act.) Another foot, Willie, and you're home. (Pause as she observes last foot.) Ah! (Turns back front laboriously, rubs neck.) Crick in my neck admiring you. (Rubs neck.) But it's worth it, well worth it. (Turning slightly towards him.) Do you know what I dream sometimes? (Pause.) What I dream sometimes, Willie. (Pause.) That you'll come round and live this side where I could see you. (Pause. Back front.) I'd be a different woman. (Pause.) Unrecognizable. (Turning slightly towards him.) Or just now and then, come round this side just every now and then and let me feast on you. (Back front.) But you can't, I know. (Head down.) I know. (Pause. Head up.) Well anyway — (looks at toothbrush in her hand) — can't be long now — (looks at brush) — until the bell. (Top back of

WILLIE's head appears above slope. WINNIE looks closer at brush.) Fully guaranteed . . . (head up) . . . what's this it was? (WILLIE's hand appears with handkerchief, spreads it on skull, disappears.) Genuine pure . . . fully guaranteed . . . (WILLIE's hand appears with boater, settles it on head, rakish angle, disappears) . . . genuine pure . . . ah! hog's setae. (Pause.) What is a hog exactly? (Pause. Turns slightly towards WILLIE.) What exactly is a hog, Willie, do you know, I can't remember. (Pause. Turning a little further, pleading.) What is a hog, Willie, please!

Pause.

WILLIE Castrated male swine. (Happy expression appears on WINNIE's face.) Reared for slaughter.

Happy expression increases. WILLIE opens newspaper, hands invisible. Tops of yellow sheets appear on either side of his head. WINNIE gazes before her with happy expression.

WINNIE Oh this is a happy day! This will have been

another happy day! (Pause.) After all.
(Pause.) So far.

Pause. Happy expression off. WILLIE
turns page. Pause. He turns another page.
Pause.

WILLIE Opening for smart youth.

Pause. WINNIE takes off hat, turns to put it
in bag, arrests gesture, turns back front. Smile.

WINNIE No. (Smile broader.) No no. (Smile off. Puts
on hat again, gazes front, pause.) And now?
(Pause.) Sing. (Pause.) Sing your song,
Winnie. (Pause.) No? (Pause.) Then pray.
(Pause.) Pray your prayer, Winnie.

Pause. WILLIE turns page. Pause.

WILLIE Wanted bright boy.

Pause. WINNIE gazes before her. WILLIE
turns page. Pause. Newspaper disappears.
Long pause.

WINNIE Pray your old prayer, Winnie.

Long pause.

CURTAIN

Act II

Scene as before. - *1.7.22 6.2 70.00, 1.7.22 6.2 70.00*

WINNIE imbedded up to neck, hat on head,
eyes closed. Her head, which she can no longer
turn, nor bow, nor raise, faces front motionless
throughout act. Movements of eyes as
indicated.

Bag and parasol as before. Revolver
conspicuous to her right on mound.

Long pause.

Bell rings loudly. She opens eyes at once Bell
stops. She gazes front. Long pause.

WINNIE Hail, holy light. (Long pause. She closes her
eyes. Bell rings loudly. She opens eyes at once.
Bell stops. She gazes front. Long smile. Smile
off. Long pause.) Someone is looking at me
still. (Pause.) Caring for me still. (Pause.)
That is what I find so wonderful. (Pause.)

Eyes on my eyes. (Pause.) What is that un-
 forgettable line? (Pause. Eyes right.) Willie.
 (Pause. Louder.) Willie. (Pause. Eyes front.)
 May one still speak of time? (Pause.) Say it is
 a long time now, Willie, since I saw you.
 (Pause.) Since I heard you. (Pause.) May one?
 (Pause.) One does. (Smile.) The old style!
 (Smile off.) There is so little one can speak of.
 (Pause.) One speaks of it all. (Pause.) All one
 can. (Pause.) I used to think . . . (pause) . . . I
 say I used to think that I would learn to talk
 alone. (Pause.) By that I mean to myself, the
 wilderness. (Smile.) But no. (Smile broader.)
 No no. (Smile off.) Ergo you are there.
 (Pause.) Oh no doubt you are dead, like the
 others, no doubt you have died, or gone away
 and left me, like the others, it doesn't matter,
 you are there. (Pause. Eyes left.) The
 bag too is there, the same as ever, I can
 see it. (Pause. Eyes right. Louder.) The
 bag is there, Willie, as good as ever, the
 one you gave me that day . . . to go to market.
 (Pause. Eyes front.) That day. (Pause.) What
 day? (Pause.) I used to pray. (Pause.) I say
 I used to pray. (Pause.) Yes, I must confess I
 did. (Smile.) Not now. (Smile broader.) No
 no. (Smile off. Pause.) Then . . . now . . . what

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difficulties here, for the mind. (Pause.) To
 have been always what I am — and so changed
 from what I was. (Pause.) I am the one, I say
 the one, then the other. (Pause.) Now the one,
 then the other. (Pause.) There is so little one
 can say, one says it all. (Pause.) All
 one can. (Pause.) And no truth in it anywhere.
 (Pause.) My arms. (Pause.) My breasts.
 (Pause.) What arms? (Pause.) What breasts?
 (Pause.) Willie. (Pause.) What Willie?
 (Sudden vehement affirmation.) My Willie!
 (Eyes right, calling.) Willie! (Pause. Louder.)
 Willie! (Pause. Eyes front.) Ah well, not to
 know, not to know for sure, great mercy, all I
 ask. (Pause.) Ah yes . . . then . . . now . . .
 beechen green . . . this . . . Charlie . . . kisses . . .
 this . . . all that . . . deep trouble for the mind.
 (Pause.) But it does not trouble mine. (Smile.)
 Not now. (Smile broader.) No no. (Smile off.)
 Long pause. She closes eyes. Bell rings loudly.
 She opens eyes. (Pause.) Eyes float up that seem
 to close in peace . . . to see . . . in peace. (Pause.)
 Not mine. (Smile.) Not now. (Smile broader.)
 No no. (Smile off. Long pause.) Willie.
 (Pause.) Do you think the earth has lost its
 atmosphere, Willie? (Pause.) Do you, Willie?
 (Pause.) You have no opinion? (Pause.) Well

nothing
 she has
 the same
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 not to be surprised

that is like you, you never had any opinion about anything. (Pause.) It's understandable. (Pause.) Most. (Pause.) The earthball. (Pause.) I sometimes wonder. (Pause.) Perhaps not quite all. (Pause.) There always remains something. (Pause.) Of everything. (Pause.) Some remains. (Pause.) If the mind were to go. (Pause.) It won't of course. (Pause.) Not quite. (Pause.) Not mine. (Smile) Not now. (Smile broader.) No no. (Smile off. Long pause.) It might be the eternal cold. (Pause.) Everlasting perishing cold. (Pause.) Just chance, I take it, happy chance. (Pause.) Oh yes, great mercies, great mercies. (Pause.) And now? (Long pause.) The face. (Pause.) The nose. (She squints down.) I can see it... (squinting down) ... the tip ... the nostrils ... breath of life ... that curve you so admired ... (pouts) ... a hint of lip ... (pouts again) ... if I pout them out ... (sticks out tongue) ... the tongue of course ... you so admired ... if I stick it out ... (sticks it out again) ... the tip ... (eyes up) ... suspicion of brow ... eyebrow ... imagination possibly ... (eyes left) ... cheek ... no ... (eyes right) ... no ... (distends cheeks) ... even if I puff them out ... (eyes left, distends cheeks again) ... no ... no

damask. (Eyes front.) That is all. (Pause.) The bag of course ... (eyes left) ... a little blurred perhaps ... but the bag. (Eyes front. Offhand.) The earth of course and sky. (Eyes right.) The sunshade you gave me ... that day ... (pause) ... that day ... the lake ... the reeds. (Eyes front. Pause.) What day? (Pause.) What reeds? (Long pause. Eyes close. Bell rings loudly. Eyes open. Pause. Eyes right.) Brownie of course. (Pause.) You remember Brownie, Willie, I can see him. (Pause.) Brownie is there, Willie, beside me. (Pause. Loud.) Brownie is there, Willie. (Pause. Eyes front.) That is all. (Pause.) What would I do without them? (Pause.) What would I do without them, when words fail? (Pause.) Gaze before me, with compressed lips. (Long pause while she does so.) I cannot. (Pause.) Ah yes, great mercies, great mercies. (Long pause. Low.) Sometimes I hear sounds. (Listening expression. Normal voice.) But not often. (Pause.) They are a boon, sounds are a boon, they help me ~~through the day~~. (Smile) The old style (Smile off.) Yes, those are happy days, when there are sounds. (Pause.) When I hear sounds. (Pause.) I used to think ... (pause) ... I say I used to think they were in

my head. (*Smile.*) But no. (*Smile broader.*)
 No no. (*Smile off.*) That was just logic.
 (*Pause.*) Reason. (*Pause.*) I have not lost my
 reason. (*Pause.*) Not yet. (*Pause.*)
 Not all. (*Pause.*) Some remains. (*Pause.*)
 Sounds. (*Pause.*) Like little . . . sunderings,
 little falls . . . apart. (*Pause. Low.*) It's things,
 Willie. (*Pause. Normal voice.*) In the bag,
 outside the bag. (*Pause.*) Ah yes, things
 have their life, that is what I always say,
things have a life. (*Pause.*) Take my
 looking-glass, it doesn't need me. (*Pause.*)
 The bell. (*Pause.*) It hurts like a knife.
 (*Pause.*) A gouge. (*Pause.*) One cannot ignore
 it. (*Pause.*) How often . . . (*pause*) . . . I say
 how often I have said, Ignore it, Winnie, ignore
 the bell, pay no heed, just sleep and wake, sleep
 and wake, as you please, open and close the
 eyes, as you please, or in the way you find most
 helpful. (*Pause.*) Open and close the eyes,
 Winnie, open and close, always that. (*Pause.*)
 But no. (*Smile.*) Not now. (*Smile broader.*)
 No no. (*Smile off. Pause.*) What now?
 (*Pause.*) What now, Willie? (*Long pause.*)
 There is my story of course, when all else fails.
 (*Pause.*) A life. (*Smile*) A long life. (*Smile
 off.*) Beginning in the womb, where life used to

begin, Mildred has memories, she will have
 memories, of the womb, before she dies, the
 mother's womb. (*Pause.*) She is now four or
 five already and has recently been given a big
 waxen dolly. (*Pause.*) Fully clothed, complete
 outfit. (*Pause.*) Shoes, socks, undies, complete
 set, frilly frock, gloves. (*Pause.*) White mesh.
 (*Pause.*) A little white straw hat with a chin
 elastic. (*Pause.*) Pearly necklet. (*Pause.*) A
 little picture-book with legends in real print
 to go under her arm when she takes her walk.
 (*Pause.*) China blue eyes that open and shut.
 (*Pause. Narrative.*) The sun was not well up
 when Milly rose, descended the steep . . .
 (*pause*) . . . slipped on her nightgown,
 descended all alone the steep wooden stairs,
 backwards on all fours, though she had been
 forbidden to do so, entered the . . . (*pause*) . . .
 tiptoed down the silent passage, entered the
 nursery and began to undress Dolly. (*Pause.*)
 Crept under the table and began to undress
 Dolly. (*Pause.*) Scolding her . . . the while.
 (*Pause.*) Suddenly a mouse — (*Long pause.*)
 Gently, Winnie. (*Long pause. Calling.*)
 Willie! (*Pause. Louder.*) Willie! (*Pause. Mild
 reproach.*) I sometimes find your attitude a
 little strange, Willie, all this time, it is not like

you to be wantonly cruel. (Pause.) Strange?
 (Pause.) No. (Smile.) Not here. (Smile
 broader.) Not now. (Smile off.) And yet . . .
 (Suddenly anxious.) I do hope nothing is amiss.
 (Eyes right, loud.) Is all well, dear? (Pause.
 Eyes front. To herself.) God grant he did not
 go in head foremost! (Eyes right, loud.)
 You're not stuck, Willie? (Pause. Do.) You're
 not jammed, Willie? (Eyes front, distressed.)
 Perhaps he is crying out for help all this time
 and I do not hear him! (Pause.) I do of course
 hear cries. (Pause.) But they are in my head
 surely. (Pause.) Is it possible that . . . (Pause.
 With finality.) No no, my head was always
 full of cries. (Pause.) Faint confused cries.
 (Pause.) They come. (Pause.) Then go.
 (Pause.) As on a wind. (Pause.) That is what
 I find so wonderful. (Pause.) They cease.
 (Pause.) Ah yes, great mercies, great
 mercies. (Pause.) The day is now well
 advanced. (Smile. Smile off.) And yet it
 is perhaps a little soon for my song. (Pause.)
 To sing too soon is fatal, I always
 find. (Pause.) On the other hand it is
 possible to leave it too late. (Pause.) The bell
 goes for sleep and one has not sung. (Pause.)
 The whole day has flown — (smile, smile off)

— flown by, quite by, and no song of
 any class, kind or description. (Pause.)
 There is a problem here. (Pause.) One
 cannot sing . . . just like that, no. (Pause.)
 It bubbles up, for some unknown reason, the
 time is ill chosen, one chokes it back. (Pause.)
 One says, Now is the time, it is now or never,
 and one cannot. (Pause.) Simply cannot sing.
 (Pause.) Not a note. (Pause.) Another thing,
 Willie, while we are on this subject. (Pause.)
 The sadness after song. (Pause.) Have you
 run across that, Willie? (Pause.) In the course
 of your experience. (Pause.) No? (Pause.)
 Sadness after intimate sexual intercourse one is
 familiar with of course. (Pause.) You would
 concur with Aristotle there, Willie, I fancy.
 (Pause.) Yes, that one knows and is prepared
 to face. (Pause.) But after song . . . (Pause.) It
 does not last of course. (Pause.) That is what I
 find so wonderful. (Pause.) It wears away.
 (Pause.) What are those exquisite lines?
 (Pause.) Go forget me why should something
 o'er that something shadow fling . . . go forget
 me . . . why should sorrow . . . brightly
 smile . . . go forget me . . . never hear me . . .
 sweetly smile . . . brightly sing . . . (Pause.)
 With a sigh.) One loses one's classics. (Pause.)

Oh not all. (Pause.) A part. (Pause.) A part remains. (Pause.) That is what I find so wonderful, a part remains, of one's classics, to help one through the day. (Pause.) Oh yes, many mercies, many mercies. (Pause.) And now? (Pause.) And now, Willie? (Long pause.) I call to the eye of the mind . . . Mr. Shower — or Cooker. (She closes her eyes. *Bell rings loudly.* She opens her eyes. Pause.) Hand in hand, in the other hands bags. (Pause.) Getting on . . . in life. (Pause.) No longer young, not yet old. (Pause.) Standing there gaping at me. (Pause.) Can't have been a bad bosom, he says, in its day. (Pause.) Seen worse shoulders, he says, in my time. (Pause.) Does she feel her legs? he says. (Pause.) Is there any life in her legs? he says. (Pause.) Has she anything on underneath? he says. (Pause.) Ask her, he says, I'm shy. (Pause.) Ask her what? she says. (Pause.) Is there any life in her legs. (Pause.) Has she anything on underneath. (Pause.) Ask her yourself, she says. (Pause. *With sudden violence.*) Let go of me for Christ sake and drop! (Pause. Do.) Drop dead! (Smile.) But no. (Smile broader.) No no. (Smile off.) I watch them recede. (Pause.) Hand in hand —

original
voice

and the bags. (Pause.) Dim. (Pause.) Then gone. (Pause.) Last human kind — to stray this way. (Pause.) Up to date. (Pause.) And now? (Pause. Low.) Help. (Pause. Do.) Help, Willie. (Pause. Do.) No? (Long pause. Narrative.) Suddenly a mouse . . . (Pause.) Suddenly a mouse ran up her little thigh and Mildred, dropping Dolly in her fright, began to scream — (WINNIE gives a sudden piercing scream) — and screamed and screamed — (WINNIE screams twice) — screamed and screamed and screamed and screamed till all came running, in their night attire, papa, mamma, Bibby and . . . old Annie, to see what was the matter . . . (pause) . . . what on earth could possibly be the matter. (Pause.) Too late. (Pause.) Too late. (Long pause. Just audible.) Willie. (Pause. Normal voice.) Ah well, not long now, Winnie, can't be long now, until the bell for sleep. (Pause.) Then you may close your eyes, then you *must* close your eyes — and keep them closed. (Pause.) Why say that again? (Pause.) I used to think . . . (pause.) . . . I say I used to think there was no difference between one fraction of a second and the next. (Pause.) I used to say . . .

clock
shook
(sudden
noise)

what
was she
moving?

(*pause*) . . . I say I used to say, Winnie, you are changeless, there is never any difference between one fraction of a second and the next. (*Pause.*) Why bring that up again? (*Pause.*) There is so little one can bring up, one brings up all. (*Pause.*) All one can. (*Pause.*) My neck is hurting me. (*Pause. With sudden violence.*) My neck is hurting me! (*Pause.*) Ah that's better. (*With mild irritation.*) Everything within reason. (*Long pause.*) I can do no more. (*Pause.*) Say no more. (*Pause.*) But I must say more. (*Pause.*) Problem here. (*Pause.*) No, something must move, in the world, I can't any more. (*Pause.*) A zephyr. (*Pause.*) A breath. (*Pause.*) What are those immortal lines? (*Pause.*) It might be the eternal dark. (*Pause.*) Black night without end. (*Pause.*) Just chance, I take it, happy chance. (*Pause.*) Oh yes, abounding mercies. (*Long pause.*) And now? (*Pause.*) And now, Willie? (*Long pause.*) That day. (*Pause.*) The pink fizz. (*Pause.*) The flute glasses. (*Pause.*) The last guest gone. (*Pause.*) The last bumper with the bodies nearly touching. (*Pause.*) The look. (*Long pause.*) What day? (*Long pause.*) What look? (*Long pause.*) I hear cries. (*Pause.*) Sing. (*Pause.*) Sing your old song, Winnie.

Long pause. Suddenly alert expression. Eyes switch right. WILLIE's head appears to her right round corner of mound. He is on all fours, dressed to kill — top hat, morning coat, striped trousers, etc., white gloves in hand. Very long bushy white Battle of Britain moustache. He halts, gazes front, smooths moustache. He emerges completely from behind mound, turns to his left, halts, looks up at WINNIE. He advances on all fours towards centre, halts, turns head front, gazes front, strokes moustache, straightens tie, adjusts hat, advances a little further, halts, takes off hat and looks up at WINNIE. He is now not far from centre and within her field of vision. Unable to sustain effort of looking up he sinks head to ground.

WINNIE (*mondaine*). Well this is an unexpected pleasure! (*Pause.*) Reminds me of the day you came whining for my hand. (*Pause.*) I worship you, Winnie, be mine. (*He looks up.*) Life a mockery without Win. (*She goes off into a giggle.*) What a get up, you do look a sight! (*Giggles.*) Where are the flowers? (*Pause.*) That smile today. (*WILLIE sinks head.*) What's that on your neck, an anthrax?

(Pause.) Want to watch that, Willie, before it gets a hold on you. (Pause.) Where were you all this time? (Pause.) What were you doing all this time? (Pause.) Changing? (Pause.) Did you not hear me screaming for you? (Pause.) Did you get stuck in your hole? (Pause. *He looks up.*) That's right, Willie, look at me. (Pause.) Feast your old eyes, Willie. (Pause.) Does anything remain? (Pause.) Any remains? (Pause.) No? (Pause.) I haven't been able to look after it, you know. (*He sinks his head.*) You are still recognizable, in a way. (Pause.) Are you thinking of coming to live this side now . . . for a bit maybe? (Pause.) No? (Pause.) Just a brief call? (Pause.) Have you gone deaf, Willie? (Pause.) Dumb? (Pause.) Oh I know you were never one to talk, I worship you Winnie be mine and then nothing from that day forth only titbits from Reynolds' News. (*Eyes front. Pause.*) Ah well, what matter, that's what I always say, it will have been a happy day, after all, another happy day. (Pause.) Not long now, Winnie. (Pause.) I hear cries. (Pause.) Do you ever hear cries, Willie? (Pause.) No? (*Eyes back on WILLIE.*) Willie. (Pause.) Look at me again, Willie. (Pause.) Once more, Willie. (*He looks*

up. Happily.) Ah! (*Pause. Shocked.*) What ails you, Willie, I never saw such an expression! (Pause.) Put on your hat, dear, it's the sun, don't stand on ceremony, I won't mind. (*He drops hat and gloves and starts to crawl up mound towards her. Gleeeful.*) Oh I say, this is terrific! (*He halts, clinging to mound with one hand, reaching up with the other.*) Come on, dear, put a bit of jizz into it, I'll cheer you on. (Pause.) Is it me you're after, Willie . . . or is it something else? (Pause.) Do you want to touch my face . . . again? (Pause.) Is it a kiss you're after, Willie . . . or is it something else? (Pause.) There was a time when I could have given you a hand. (Pause.) And then a time before that again when I did give you a hand. (Pause.) You were always in dire need of a hand, Willie. (*He slithers back to foot of mound and lies with face to ground.*) Brrum! (*Pause. He rises to hands and knees, raises his face towards her.*) Have another go, Willie, I'll cheer you on. (Pause.) Don't look at me like that! (*Pause. Vehement.*) Don't look at me like that! (*Pause. Low.*) Have you gone off your head, Willie? (*Pause. Do.*) Out of your poor old wits, Willie?

Pause.

check
front

WILLIE (just audible) Win.

Pause. WINNIE's eyes front. Happy expression appears, grows.

WINNIE Win! (Pause.) Oh this is a happy day, this will have been another happy day! (Pause.) After all. (Pause.) So far.

Pause. She hums tentatively beginning of song, then sings softly, musical-box tune.

Though I say not
What I may not
Let you hear,
Yet the swaying
Dance is saying,
Love me dear!
Every touch of fingers
Tells me what I know,
Says for you,
It's true, it's true,
You love me so!

Pause. Happy expression off. She closes her eyes. Bell rings loudly. She opens her eyes. She smiles, gazing front. She turns her eyes, smiling, to WILLIE, still on his hands and knees looking up at her. Smile off. They look at each other. Long pause.

CURTAIN