

## REAL STORIES

JULIETTE a reasonably fit lady in her late 50s, though given to massaging the small of her back

BOB her husband, has a rolling gait, or slight limp; noticeable but not to an extent that impairs movement; also in his late 50s

### 1 int the spare bedroom. It is mid evening

There are four family photographs of children on the mantelpiece. This room also shows evidence of children; grandchildren are the most likely occupants of this room. At the same time there is no clutter.

JULIETTE is sitting on the edge of the single bed, fully awake. It is clear that she is in the middle of an interesting thought. Her forehead reveals this; her eyes flicker shut, open; she shakes her head, then opens her eyes, raises her eyebrows and sighs. For a moment she is very contented. Now she peers at the door, then looks away.

JULIETTE rises from the edge of the bed. She is not hesitant. She walks to the window and holds the right side curtain, peering out. She turns and looks at the door. There is no emotion when she does so.

JULIETTE nods slightly and comes forward to the door, and exits. She pulls the door closed behind her in a deliberate fashion. She is never hesitant. She continues along the hallway

### 2 int the hall

JULIETTE continues along. She pauses at a framed picture on the wall. It is a print of a landscape, probably early 19th century, or else later Scottish, eg D Y Cameron. She peers into the picture. perhaps and into the kitchenette. She is lost in thought.

JULIETTE passes the open doorway into the double bedroom. This is a lived-in bedroom and this factor is apparent. The double bed can be seen and though it is made and tidy there is a man's jersey lying flatly upon it, neatly folded. She enters the kitchenette

### 3 int the kitchenette

JULIETTE walks to the electric kettle and feels it to gauge the temperature. Both hers and BOB's tea-mugs are stationed next to the kettle, each prepared, tea-bags inside. Her attention is distracted by something on the wall. She stares at it. Her eyes flicker shut then open, lost in thought. She rocks slightly on her heels.

JULIETTE opens her eyes and feels the kettle again. She notices that it is not switched on. She switches it on. She checks the tea-cups.

### 4 int living room.

BOB sits on his armchair. The television is on, volume normal. He is reading the newspaper. He glances at the door. He gazes at the television, then at his newspaper, and he resumes reading.

The door opens. JULIETTE enters carrying a small tray with the tea and a wee plate of biscuits.

BOB smiles briefly. JULIETTE lays the tray down on the coffee-table between the armchairs. BOB indicates the clock on the mantelpiece, and nods at the tea-tray. He exaggerates his relief, but not unkindly

BOB

I was wondering what had happened!

JULIETTE nods in acknowledgment. BOB continues looking at her, expecting her to speak or comment, and explain her delayed appearance. But JULIETTE is not going to explain anything. She is nonchalant, relaxed; for her it is nothing.

BOB continues to look at her then to the coffee-table and the plate on the tray. There are about half a dozen assorted biscuits. BOB gestures at them.

BOB

Is it any one?

JULIETTE smiles maternally as she sits down on her own armchair.

BOB shrugs

For me to take?

JULIETTE does not respond. BOB leans to take a shortbread finger. BOB does NOT realise that JULIETTE is observing him sideways. She sees that he takes the shortbread finger and nods – nods to herself - closes her eyes a moment. She knew he would take that one.

JULIETTE reaches and takes one of the biscuits, and her tea. There is a magazine by the side. She notices it, but looks to the television, nibbles on her biscuit.

BOB holds his biscuit in his left hand, and raises the newspaper a little, at the same time watching television

JULIETTE gestures at the television

Is it a good story?

BOB

Yes

JULIETTE vaguely surprised

Oh.

BOB

Quite

JULIETTE nods, gazing at the screen, then she loses interest; her attention drifts to the window, her eyelids flicker; she smiles.

BOB  
Okay? [louder] Okay?

JULIETTE smiles politely

BOB, cheerfully  
Ye were away

JULIETTE nods politely. Then she sighs vaguely

BOB, cheerfully  
Okay...

JULIETTE looks at him

BOB  
You were sighing!

JULIETTE  
I was just thinking of something

BOB  
I know!

JULIETTE nods. BOB expects her to speak but she does not

BOB cheerfully, but accusatory  
*Ye're always thinking of something!*

JULIETTE defensively  
Well...

BOB smiles, encouraging her

JULIETTE deprecatory

*Oh it's just stories, I just think of stories*

BOB is less cheerful but still encouraging. JULIETTE smiles but does not continue

BOB

Yeh...

JULIETTE nods

I just like to think of them

BOB less cheerful

I know ye do

JULIETTE

*They're just stories*

BOB sighs

JULIETTE

Nothing for you to worry about

BOB just looks at her

JULIETTE

*They're only stories*

BOB

well I know they are

JULIETTE

*So it's not anything*

BOB

No...

JULIETTE

Dont be so worried all the time

BOB

*I'm not*

JULIETTE

Yes ye are, I see yer face

BOB

*Well it's just my face*

JULIETTE

I know it is and I just have to see it

BOB sighs

JULIETTE

Then ye sigh

BOB

*Well it's a sigh, people sigh*

JULIETTE

I know they do

As if it is BOB's fault. He says nothing, but watches her surrepticiously. JULIETTE closes her eyes, returns into her own world

3 int living room – twenty minutes later

BOB and JULIETTE in the same armchair, both watching television. At the same time JULIETTE browses the magazine opened on her lap. The tea-tray is still on the coffee-table.

JULIETTE glances at the tea-cups; hers is finished. Now BOB reaches for his tea-cup and lifts it, sips a moment, he holds the cup balanced on the edge of

the arm of the chair. JULIETTE glimpses him do this. BOB does not notice. JULIETTE is seeking an excuse to leave the room. She glances at the the mock-fireplace then back to the television. Then her gaze drifts to the window. Her eyelids close a moment. She is away in a story of her own. A smile crosses her face, then she sighs. She glances sideways to BOB. She notices his tea-cup is on the tray.

BOB's attention is on the television.

JULIETTE glances away from him, then back again; she sighs just loudly enough for him to notice. Now she rises, points at his empty tea-cup on the tray, smiles a question to him

BOB

Yes

JULIETTE nods, lifts the empty cup onto the tray. BOB smiles but uncertainly, watching her.

JULIETTE also smiles but in a vague way. She carries the tray to the door. BOB watcher her. JULIETTE exits. The door closes behind her. BOB stares at the closed door. He looks to his newspaper, then to the television

#### 6 int the bathroom.

JULIETTE is washing her hands at the bathroom sink. There is a mirror above it. JULIETTE is in her own head once again, her lips moving, smiling. She sees in the mirror and sees herself, peers into her eyes, showing ONLY curiosity, as though wondering what kind of a woman she is.

#### 7 int the hallway

JULIETTE exits the bathroom and walks along. She pauses at the D Y Cameron landscape for a moment. Then she continues. She glances at the closed living room door and listens. The sound of voices on television. She enters the kitchenette

8 int the livingroom. Next morning about 11 am

BOB on his own, sits on a wooden dining chair near to the window; he can look out the window, He also holds a book. He has been reading but his concentration has wavered. He is interested in what is happening outside. His head moves as he follows whatever action is occurring. BOB glances sideways as though to make a comment but does not. He returns to looking out, shakes his head slowly, as though marvelling at something.

From the hall outside the room door there is the clicking sound of another door opening. BOB stares at the door. A few moments later is the loud noise of an old vacuum cleaner. BOB stares at the door, then slowly back out the window

9 int the hallway; outside the bathroom door

The cistern empties. BOB exits the bathroom. BOB stares at the closed door of the spare room. He believes that JULIETTE is in there. He puts his hand to the door as though to chap it, or even open it. But thinks better of it. BOB steps back from it and walks on. He does not notice the lanscape print. BOB glances at each door. The living room door is ajar; he pushes it open and enters. JULIETTE is sitting on her armchair. BOB is surprised

10 int the livingroom.

BOB

Oh

JULIETTE smiles politely

BOB

I didnt think ye were here

JULIETTE smiling. BOB hesitates a moment then walks to his armchair. He sits, lifts his newspaper, points at the window

BOB  
Is it still raining?

JULIETTE  
Mm, yes

BOB  
*It's supposed to go off*

JULIETTE nods politely

BOB  
*Ye never know what it's going to do*

JULIETTE  
Oh it will go off. After

BOB  
Yeh...I hope so

JULIETTE smiles. She has a magazine on her lap unopened.  
BOB watches her a moment longer, expecting her to speak. When she does not he lifts his newspaper. She gazes into the mock-fireplace, sees her knitting at the side of the chair but does not lift it.

8 int the livingroom. afternoon

JULIETTE and BOB sit on their armchairs; the tea-tray is there and a plate of cut sandwiches. They are both eating. BOB speaks, but is hesitant, uncertain, and shaking his head, bewildered

BOB  
But stories are stories

JULIETTE

Yes

BOB

*You're saying things that aren't true*

JULIETTE

*They're stories*

BOB

Yes but

JULIETTE

Stories are stories

BOB

*But if they're not real life*

JULIETTE

*Why should they be, if they're about when I was a girl*

BOB is silent

JULIETTE

Why should they be. I was never the hero and now I can be, if it is my stories and I tell them to myself

BOB looks at her

JULIETTE

And none of my pals either, they were never the hero. It was always somebody else.

BOB

Well that was life

JULIETTE matter-of-factly  
*It's not a life that I like*

BOB frowns  
*Yeh but if it's life*

JULIETTE gazes at him for a moment before replying

JULIETTE  
*I dont know why it worries you [PAUSE] I'm just saying them  
myself and they're about my life. I dont think what's wrong  
with that, if there's anything wrong with that, I dont think there  
is [SHRUGS] If you do, I dont*

BOB is defensive. She glances at him

BOB  
*I dont think there's anything wrong*

JULIETTE nods  
I dont either

BOB sighs  
*It's only if they're not true and they're from real life, that means  
they're real stories*

JULIETTE shrugs

BOB  
It does

JULIETTE  
I dont know why I should I worry about them just to suit other  
people. *I've done enough worrying without having to worry about  
that as well.*

BOB

*Well I'm not saying you should worry*

JULIETTE

I hope not

BOB

*It's up to you what ye do*

JULIETTE

It is

BOB

If you want to stay in that spare room all day

JULIETTE

*Well it's my spare room as much as yours, I could shut the door tight and put a bolt on if I want.*

BOB

But why?

JULIETTE

Why nothing, just if I wanted

BOB stares at her. JULIETTE turns side on from him. BOB continues to stare at her. She ignores him. Soon BOB looks to the television. Then he glances at her. JULIETTE is staring at the mock-coal fire, lost in thought, oblivious to him.

### 9 int the kitchenette early evening

They are eating the evening meal at the pull-down table. Each concentrates on the meal. Now it is clear that BOB is aware of the immediate situation but JULIETTE is not. While BOB observes JULIETTE she is deep in thought.

BOB

*Do you want to go to the children's tomorrow?*

JULIETTE

Yes

BOB

I think it would be nice

JULIETTE

It will be. I spoke to Julie on the phone.

BOB surprised. They continue eating. Then BOB finishes, but is leaving about a third of his food. BOB rises and shovels the food into the bin. He watches to see if she will comment but it is possible JULIETTE does not notice. If she did notice she seems to regard it as unimportant

BOB

*I'm not that hungry*

JULIETTE

What did you say?

JULIETTE concentrates on BOB. BOB shrugs. JULIETTE is trying to gauge what he is referring to.

BOB

I just eh...

JULIETTE is watching him. BOB makes space at the draining board, sets his plate there. He turns to leave, and looks to JULIETTE. JULIETTE is eating, not bothering about him.

BOB

*We'll have a cup of tea after eh?*

JULIETTE

Yes

BOB gestures at the used cutlery, pots and pans etc

BOB smiles

*I'll wash up later so please, don't touch anything*

JULIETTE smiles, absently. BOB continues out the kitchenette. JULIETTE continues eating.

10 int living room, evening

JULIETTE and BOB in their separate chairs. JULIETTE is smiling to herself, looking in the direction of the window. BOB is watching her, then watching the television, then glancing at the newspaper on his lap. BOB is wanting to speak to her, but is avoiding coming out and saying something that breaks her concentration. But eventually he blurts out

BOB

What you thinking of?

JULIETTE looks at him

BOB smiles

*You're thinking of something*

JULIETTE smiles, self deprecatory

Oh, just something

BOB smiling

What?

JULIETTE

Oh just when I was a girl

BOB stops smiling; he is now anxious. JULIETTE smiles to him and he tries to smile back to her

JULIETTE  
*What's wrong?*

BOB  
Nothing

JULIETTE  
You just look anxious

BOB  
*I'm not*

JULIETTE sighs, and speaks absently  
We had great times

BOB frowns at her, baffled

JULIETTE  
My pals, I had good pals. We just got up to mischief

BOB petulantly  
Yes when ye were a girl

JULIETTE is serious now  
We did things that were good

BOB stares at her, trying to understand what she means

BOB  
*But that's just imagination*

JULIETTE is baffled by his comment

BOB

*It is. [PAUSE] What is it you're saying about?*

JULIETTE

About when I was a girl

BOB

Yes but what?

JULIETTE smiles, then frowns a moment, then raises her eyebrows

Bob irritated

*It's just yer imagination. That's all it is. It's not real life*

JULIETTE does not look at him. After a moment BOB lifts the newspaper

11 int the living room, later

BOB is alone. The television is on but the MUTE signal is indicated. BOB has the newspaper beside his chair. He is staring away from the television though his armchair is angled towards it. He looks at the empty armchair next to him, then to the window

12 int hallway outside the bathroom

The cistern emptying, door opens. BOB exits, he sees the door to the spare room and looks to the bottom, sees the light on under it and knows JULIETTE is there. BOB continues along the passageway, pauses by the D Y Cameron landscape, without noticing it. BOB turns and goes back to the spare room and chaps the door

BOB calls

Want a cup of tea?

The door opens. JULIETTE sees that it is BOB, before she replies

JULIETTE

Yes, that would be nice

BOB looks inside. JULIETTE stands aside to allow him to do it.

BOB

Would you like a biscuit to go with it?

JULIETTE

Yes, thanks

BOB

Will ye come ben or what?

JULIETTE does not respond

BOB shrugs

Or do you want it here? [PAUSE] *I'll bring it here.*

JULIETTE says nothing. BOB hesitates then leaves, and goes to the kitchenette.

### 11 int the kitchenette

The kettle of water is heating. BOB has set out the two cups and is staring out the window. He is agitated, glances at the door. He is wondering if JULIETTE will appear. She does not appear. BOB hears the water approach boiling point and prepares, his hand holds the handle, ready to lift it off when the bubbles begin popping

### 12 int the hallway

BOB carries the tea-tray with one cup of tea and a plate of biscuits for one. He chaps the spare room door. He studies the closed door, waiting.

BOB is set to chap the door again when it opens, surprising him slightly.

BOB  
Tea!

JULIETTE stands square on and makes to take the tea-tray from him. BOB wishes he could walk straight into the spare room but he cannot do this. And anyway, JULIETTE is still standing there.

#### 13 int the living room - bedtime

BOB is closing the curtains, switching off the television. He is slow moving. He reaches to the coffee table and collects his cold tea-cup and the empty plate. On his way to the door he will put out the light.

#### 14 int the hallway outside the kitchenette

BOB comes from the kitchenette, puts off the kitchenette light, walks along to the bathroom. Before entering the bathroom he glances at the spare room door, sees the electric light under the bottom. BOB enters the bathroom.

#### 15 int the spare room

JULIETTE is sitting by the window, eyes open, but not looking out the window; she is looking to the side, at the wallpaper.

SOUND the cistern emptying in the bathroom. JULIETTE is disturbed by this. She stares at the door as though wondering who else is in the house.

BOB

I just thought if you told me a story, if it is just stories

JULIETTE smiles politely

BOB  
why not

JULIETTE  
*Oh that won't work*

BOB  
But why not?

JULIETTE smiles; she thought it absurd. BOB is frowning. JULIETTE feels obliged to respond

JULIETTE  
Oh it would be silly

BOB irritated  
Why would it be silly, it wouldn't be silly

JULIETTE smiles

JULIETTE  
I couldn't do it. Except once

BOB waits expectantly

JULIETTE  
You would think I was just saying the stories because I was wanting to keep the real ones secret.

BOB frowns

JULIETTE absently

You would think there were 'real stories' I was keeping secret from you

BOB stares at her

JULIETTE

You would. You would think that was where the solace lies.

She looks at him, shakes her head, looks away. BOB is staring at her, and waiting. But JULIETTE continues looking away from him.

BOB walks to her, he smiles uncertainly.

JULIETTE

You can believe it if you want

BOB annoyed

Believe what?

JULIETTE

Just what you want, I dont care.

BOB is staring at her. Now JULIETTE turns and looks at him, very coldly

BOB gestures hopelessly

What?.

JULIETTE looks away, she is waiting for him to leave. BOB waits a moment then he does leave.

The door clicks shut behind him. JULIETTE glances at the door, then gets up and goes to the door, tests the handle to make sure it is closed. JULIETTE stands at the door, sighs, closes her eyes, then gives a shiver. She gazes at the snib, but does not use it. Now she returns to where she was sitting before.

16 int the spare room - ten minutes later

JULIETTE turns suddenly to stare at the door. She seems to have heard a noise from outside. Now she relaxes, looks ahead, smiles to herself

17 int kitchen, lunch

BOB

*It's nice soup*

JULIETTE nods politely, sitting down to face him

BOB

But you never cared about my job.

JULIETTE

No

BOB

You said it was dreadful for goodness sake it wasn't dreadful

JULIETTE

Dreadful to me

BOB

But not to me and I was doing it

JULIETTE smiles

Bob

It wasn't dreadful to me

JULIETTE

I used to dash about to get things right. It was funny how I did that, dashing about

BOB

But that was us, that was us

JULIETTE

It was just so silly, just dashing about. I was trying to get things right for you.

BOB

Well because I was working, I was out at that damn job

JULIETTE

Oh it was dreadful

BOB

Yes it was dreadful but not to me, I just coped, I had to

JULIETTE smiles

BOB

I had to cope

JULIETTE

Oh but I was daft back then, I was, I was young.

BOB

I was young too

JULIETTE chuckles

I used to go all your messages. I did all the things for you. You always had things needing doing and I used to do them for you.

BOB

*Well what's wrong with that? If I was working and you were home,  
you were just here in the house*

JULIETTE frowns

BOB shakes his head  
I was away... in that awful job

Now BOB looks at her

Bob  
I was. It was me that was working

JULIETTE is staring away, not listening.

BOB absently  
I was working... [SHAKES HEAD, DRIFTS OFF

JULIETTE smiles to herself. BOB is also in his own head, and he continues eating the soup.

#### 18 int the spare room

JULIETTE is sitting by the window, eyes open, but not looking out the window; she is looking to the side, at the wallpaper. She smiles.

JULIETTE stops smiling suddenly, stares at the door.

#### 19 int in the lobby outside the spare room

BOB stands, unsure about chapping the door. He stands with head lowered, one hand holds a rolled newspaper. He sighs quietly

#### 20 int the spare room

JULIETTE is facing the window, lost in thought, smiling, shaking her head slowly as though in wonder at some extraordinary detail; she puts her hand to her mouth and starts giggling.

JULIETTE stops giggling immediately, sighs, stays at the window

20 int the living room

BOB and JULIETTE on their chairs in front of the television. JULIETTE is relaxed, browsing through her magazine. BOB has the newspaper opened on his lap but is gazing at the television. It becomes clear that BOB is in an agitated condition. He glances at JULIETTE and back to the television, then to her again; he sighs

BOB

You didnt mind going messages for me

JULIETTE doesnt respond

BOB

You did, dont say you didnt

JULIETTE

I liked getting out the house

BOB almost triumphantly

Yes

JULIETTE continues browsing the magazine. BOB is gazing at her. Now JULIETTE smiles to her self

JULIETTE quietly

I put on a change of clothes

BOB

I know ye did! Then ye went outside to go the message

JULIETTE surprised

Yes

BOB is awaiting more.

JULIETTE murmurs

A hat or a scarf or a nice veil, I would have them tucked in at my elbow or else under my coat.

BOB frowns

JULIETTE glances at him

I waited till you were out the road, then I sneaked out

BOB

You didnt have to sneak

JULIETTE stares at him

BOB

it was a message for me ye were going

JULIETTE

Sometimes it was like ye just dreamt them up to get me.

BOB is baffled by this

JULIETTE

I used to wonder what they were

BOB

What?

JULIETTE

If it was to do with business at all, ye said it was business

BOB

Well it was business, it was always business

JULIETTE

I used to wonder about it, if it was rascally

BOB worried

What?

JULIETTE murmurs

*People rule your life, as if they're never going to be content and always wanting to need everything, just to need everything and if it is you ye try to give them it and if it is children or else husbands...*

BOB

*That's not fair*

JULIETTE

You were never going to be content. I think ye told me

BOB

No I didnt. I didnt. I would never have said something like that

BOB stares at her. JULIETTE browses her magazine

21 int the kitchen

BOB is making tea, and there is a plate of biscuits already on a tray. He pours in the boiling water to each mug. Then his attention is distracted towards the

window. There is nothing in particular going on out there, but he just stands there staring out

22 int the lobby, outside the spare room door

BOB carries the tray along to the spare room, whistling as he goes. He chaps the door. He waits a moment tyhen chaps again and openes the door

BOB

*It's me*

BOB enters. JULIETTE is glaring at him. BOB does not notice this; he remains cheery. JULIETTE stops glaring but stares at him curiously.

BOB

Tea and biscuits!

JULIETTE seriously

You always smile

BOB smiles

BOB

No I dont

BOB carries over her tea and presents her with the plate of biscuits.

JULIETTE

*Ye know why it's no good shutting myself inside here, because you're always hovering about outside the door*

BOB

What?

JULIETTE

It preys on my mind about ye, if I allow it.

BOB

*That's terrible saying that*

JULIETTE

And with that look on your face like a smirk. I think *it's* creepy.

BOB

*Beg pardon, it's you that's creepy*

JULIETTE

*That's why I put it into my stories. Stories about you. You come into them.*

BOB

*Dont say that it's just not fair*

JULIETTE glances in his direction

BOB

*It's not fair*

JULIETTE

*So if you're creepy, that's not fair*

BOB

*I'm not creepy at all, that's horrible*

JULIETTE

Oh yes you are, and your friends too, if you would call them that. Not real friends, I would never think that, the kind of ones you

know, I would go crazy with them for friends, if it was me, I wouldnt want friends like them but you did

BOB

I didnt. I did not. It was just work friends, colleagues, they were just colleagues

JULIETTE

Always being stuck with these kinds of people and no space and no time for yourself. That was what you had to put up with but you did and maybe needed it, if ye did, because you didnt have t, so I am glad you got it because it is what ye deserved. And being filled with these new anxious feelings, morbid feelings.

BOB ameliorating

*It's you that's putting them there*

JULIETTE studies him

BOB gently

*It's you*

JULIETTE smiles, but the smile is to herself. BOB is hurt. JULIETTE notices that he is hurt. JULIETTE glances to the door. BOB takes that as a hint that he should leave, he steps to the door but now JULIETTE begins talking

She knew fine what was happening. But she didnt care. She was finished with it all. Him and his bad thoughts. She didnt care what happened to anybody.

JULIETTE

I used to like my nephew. He was a nice boy. But I never see him now and it doesnt matter.

BOB

He was my nephew, my brother's boy

JULIETTE

Blood doesnt matter for nephews

BOB

*I'm just saying*

JULIETTE

*But if it's a worry, if it's a child, it's just the bad thoughts. People are children, boys too*

BOB

*Oh but he's fine now*

JULIETTE matter-of-factly

Nobody could have forced me. I would have stopped up all my senses. My eyes and my ears and smell and touch, everything just that was mine. When I was a wee lassie about ten years old and this after the war, I went to play with my dolls with a wee boy who was my wee pal I told you about whose daddy was a docker down Charlie Connell's yard. This was the night his grannie died. She had got took funny when they were listening to the wireless and Billy and me didnt notice because we had out his toy soldiers made of cardboard boxes his daddy had cut up for him and I had my dollies and we were playing at wars, his was the British Army and mine was the Germans and all his uncles were there in the house it was just after my daddy had got killed I mind because my mother's greeting still hadnt let up and she was down the stairs that was how I was up because I would do anything no to be there with her it was awful.

BOB is staring at her

JULIETTE

I could tell worse things if I wanted. I could. I could start making it so's ye hear the very very worst things imagineable, because it is like you are just a wee schoolboy who has never been out in the world, as if ye had come from a well-off family with a nice big house over in the southside and apple trees in the garden.

BOB

*That's nonsense, plain stupidity.*

JULIETTE in the same atter-of-fact tones

And Billy McDevitt's uncles were there in the house with me just after my own daddy had got killed and my mummy scarcely even wondered where I was was I out or in and that was me just by myself ten years old, and I just didnt have anywhere to turn and just seeing them how they were and there they were and just there, they were, and I was so scared with all the noises hiding there behind the coal-bunker with the wind outside howling round the chimney tops till you thought they were going to come crashing down onto your head through the window.

JULIETTE smiles. BOB stares at her

JULIETTE

You listen to me and all the things.

BOB

I listen to it all

JULIETTE

*You listen tp everything. It is like you've never heard anything like what I can tell ye and never ever think anybody ye know could ever say such things*

BOB

*It's not true. It was when ye were a wee lassie*

JULIETTE hardly hearing him

As if it was me to blame. I could imagine you there with your hand on your forehead close to staggering under the news, the burden of that just. [SMILES] It makes me smile. I just want to stay here for as long as I like and if you're outside,

BOB

*It's only because I'm listening*

JULIETTE

*I know ye are. I can hear ye listening, ye're just there and listening and ye're seeing the wall-paper too, I know ye are*

BOB

There's nothing wrong with the wall-paper

JULIETTE guarded

Except if ye're sitting there

BOB

Yeh, worried because if ye're just sitting there maybe on the side of the bed staring in at the wall-paper and I know ye do that and ye're seeing the shapes from the design

JULIETTE glances at him suspiciously

BOB

*I know that because it's a thick wall-paper and that causes shadows turning in on themselves; ye see that, and it's not nice, it isn't*

JULIETTE staring at him

BOB

Because with the the world there or part of it, the bits that hide underneath where folk are dead and dying, getting killed and there they are all bleeding with their bits and pieces oozing out there on the grass, the dirt, and nobody to see.

JULIETTE closes her eyes, putting her fingers to her ears, and she begins rocking gently on the edge of the bed

#### JULIETTE

I would have had a career. I would have worked in an office. That was what I should have done, if I had got the chance and been a career-woman. I would have been better than him and I wouldnt only have had terrible folk to know because I would have been different. And I wouldnt have been with him. I wouldnt have been with anybody maybe, maybe no anybody at all. I would just have kept my own door. Oh and I would have had it nice, and I wouldnt have had him. Not him and not nobody except if I wanted one *I would just take one, I would have, that's men, looking at ye. But I* wouldnt want one, I wouldnt. I would just have had my own friends. And made a man up if I wanted one. I would have. All clumsy and sweating [SHAKES HER HEAD]. My man would have been small, small boned; he wouldnt have made a noise, he would just have been there when I wanted, and when I didnt he wouldnt, because he would know. And he would respect me. He would just admire me and maybe liked me and loved me, he might have. He wouldnt have thought things. He would have been good to me. You think of men who respect a woman. They would be there. That is what I always think, and I believe it.

JULIETTE continues to sit there with her eyes closed and her fingers in her ears. Eventually she sighs and opens her eyes, taking her fingers from her ears. BOB has vanished. JULIETTE notices but does not react.

end