

Spanner-in-the-Works

A dramatisation for Radio

setting a rooming house

time the present, early evening

cast

Edward male mid, late 20s
Deborah Edward's fiancée, mid 20s
Jeanette Deborah's sister, early 20s
Catherine female late 60s
Invalid male 70s, uses a zimmer

spanner-in-the-works

Scene 1

EDWARD'S BEDSIT, ABOUT 6.PM; HE IS STUDYING AT A TABLE

SOUND CLOCK TICKS,

EDWARD YAWNS, TURNS PAGE] Oh God [SIGHS, TURNS PAGE, WHISPERS] Oh Lord, Lord, I can't read this, I just can't read it, how can I in a room like this, it stops you from reading, you can't read, Product Manuals and Sales Manuals, oh God I'll never learn this... [SIGHS, TURNS PAGE, WHISPERS] But it doesn't make sense, I can't even see the words, what do the words mean. Maybe I need glasses, oh I'm finished I'm finished. [SIGHS, WHISPERS] Deborah [ALOUD] No I didnt, I didnt. [GROANS] Deborah, Deborah... [BREATHES HARSHLY] I didn't, I would never, I would never... [STOPS, A SERIES OF DEEP BREATHS, GETTING HIMSELF TO CALM DOWN. RISES FROM HIS CHAIR, WALKS A COUPLE OF PACES, LIFTS A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH] Here they are, and her young sister, Janet Janet, oh God... You horror, horror, what did you do what did you do what did you do, lordie lordie lordie... [TAKES DEEP BREATHS, REGULATES BREATHING, NOW CALMLY] I am not a bad man. Just a man, a young man, a youthful man. I acted in a youthful manner, led into temptation I fell, it was by the

wayside [PUTS PHOTOGRAPHS FACE DOWN]

SOUND CLOCK TICKING

EDWARD A youthful man. Subject to the usual damn trials and tribulations: I am subject to them... [GROANS] Damn photographs! [WHISPERS] Oh Deborah... I didnt I didnt. But your sister, oh she, she - dont trust her, oh dont trust her, oh God, God... [LIFTS JOURNALS AND MANUALS] But I can't read this damn stuff, it's a load of baloney [SIGHS, TURNS PAGE] And what happens if I fail their examinations, if I fail the promotion test... I dont care, I dont care, I hate the job, why am I doing it, it's horrible, I detest it. [GROANS] Oh god. But this room stops you from studying, Even the very wall, surely these bloodsuckers could have put up some wall paper to hide the cracks, why does the wall not fall down, it's got so many cracks in it, my God [STOPS]

SOUND A SLIGHT SCRAPING NOISE

EDWARDS What's that?

SOUND SLIGHT SCRAPING SOUND AGAIN

EDWARD It's a wee insect. [AWED] So tiny, so...amazing.. [MOVES NEARER TO THE WALL, WHISPERS] Probably thinks I'm going to eat it! But I could squash the damn thing. I could [PAUSE] It's just looking at me. [DEFENSIVELY] Well I'm looking at it. It's another world. They've got no worries at all, they scavenge for food and they have sex, feed their young, or eat their young, some of them do. [SIGHS, SITS DOWN AGAIN] Product Manuals and Sales Manuals. It's concentration, concentration, okay...

SOUND CLOCK TICKING

EDWARD QUIET ANGUISH] Oh Lord, I'm going mad. But it's mumbo-jumbo. Product Manuals, it's all just complete nonsense. How can I be expected to read the damn things it's all just...oh God [SIGHS] The wee insect's gone. I wonder where it went. Maybe it died, they only live for a few hours. But an hour to them is a year to us. Poor wee souls. Even an insect has a soul. Insects go to heaven too, if they lead good lives, they're every bit as important as humans [SUDDENLY] Oh God... Deborah, I didnt mean it, it was nothing, it was just stupidity, I'm just stupid, I'm always just stupid, you know that, you know it, you've said it, I'm completely stupid [NOW RIGHTEOUS] She's your sister! Imagine having a sister like that, she just came up to me, she did, she just came to me, so it wasnt my fault, not really. [SIGHS. WALKS TO BED AND SLUMPS DOWN ON IT FULL-LENGTH. TURNS ONTO HIS SIDE AND BEGINS SOBBING. NOW STOPS IT. CURLS INTO FOETUS POSITION. QUIETLY] If I was a baby, babies dont have... [STOPS] Oh God stupidity, I'm going mad [STOPS] I dont care. I dont. I'll just act accordingly. These things are sent to try us. People have sex with people. [SIGHS] Oh Lord, lordie lordie lordie.

SOUND CLOCK TICKING

EDWARD [RISES ABRUPTLY FROM BED] Damn clock ticking all the time, you feel like smashing it to smithereens. [RETURNS TO SIT AT TABLE, LIFTS CUP] Bloody cold coffee [SIGHS] Product Training Manual part 1. Part 1, section 3, section bloody 3,

another bloody paragraph and damn subsection... What's a subsection? Oh God [JUMPS UP FROM CHAIR] I can't do it, I can't bloody do it... [SIGHS]

SOUND SCRAPING NOISE

EDWARD AWED WHISPER] It's the wee insect again, it's staring at me! You would think it was. [THE CHAIR SCREECHES A LITTLE AS HE LEANS TO THE WALL] Squelch. [INTAKE OF BREATH] I've squashed it. I didnt mean to. Look, its blood is on my thumb. It's not blood, it's just a dark gooey stuff, it's not even liquid, it's dirt! My God is that what fills their body, dirt? Yet it's stained my thumb, and here it is on the wall. [TURNS PAGES OF JOURNAL] So bloody incredible... we just go about killing things... [SIGHS] These nuts and bolts are manufactured to British standard equivalence in supreme quality hardened steel, especially toughened and designed. In subsection 5 verse 3... that the insect you have murdered was probably about to copulate and be responsible for the birth of a million eggs, a hundred thousand of which would have survived to become fully fledged members of the beetle race. In effect you have committed genocide. Pardon? What was that?

SOUND EDWARD SHAVING

EDWARD I'm sick of shaving. Why cant I grow a beard. Other guys grow a beard... Not in my job, beards aren't desirable, customers dont like beards... [SUDDEN ANGUISH] oh God... [NOW CALMLY] Calm down, calm down. People have sex together, it's one of the things about life. Why do we worry so much, if it's just sex, a natural thing? [FINISHES SHAVING, WASHES THEN DRIES HIS FACE] I slept with my fiancee's sister. Horrible. But it happened. So what do we do do we kill ourselves; is the living breathing life to get squashed out of us! And it wasnt my fault, nobody could say it was. It was Janet started it, she came to me, she... [SIGHS, WHISPERS] oh God it was beautiful, just thinking about it too [ANGUISH] And Deborah will be here in an hour, oh Lord, what will I do what will I do. And I need to wash, my God the smell's on my body... [RAPIDLY UNDRESSES, GOES TO SINK] Where's the damn towel... ! [RUNS WATER. GASPS] Oh it's freezing! [GASPS. WASHING HIS GENITALS. NOW ANGUISHED WHISPER] Oh God no what's that! It's a red blotch on my left testicle. Oh God no. [RUNS TAP AGAIN, GASPS] it's just nonsense, I'm a damn fool, dad always said it and he was right, I'm a fool. I'm a plain ordinary bloody damn fool

SOUND LOUD KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

EDWARD CRIES] Oh God it's her! FLURRIED MOVEMENT] My towel! [KNOCKS INTO CHAIR AND FALLS] Ohhh! Ohhh... [RISES FROM FLOOR] Oh jees that was sore

SOUND LOUD KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

EDWARD WHISPERS] You can only forgive me Deborah, it was your sister but you can't blame me... [BREATHES DEEPLY]

SOUND HE UNLOCKS AND OPENS DOOR

EDWARD SURPRISE] Oh.

CATHERINE I'm your neighbour from up the stair son, remember? Me and my man moved in last week. You gave us a wee hand with our suitcases and bags.

EDWARD IMPATIENT) Uhhhuh

CATHERINE The housing association put us in after we got decanted out our own place for the structural renovations - the council said we had to get out for a month, maybe longer. Remember we told you?

EDWARD Excuse me [HE STEPS OUT FROM HIS ROOM]

CATHERINE Are you looking for somebody?

EDWARD GUILTILY] Who me? No. What do you mean? [PAUSE] Sorry, I dont eh...sorry, I've got a bit of a sore head, I'm studying for a test ye see, for my work, tomorrow morning.It's an in-house thing and it's really... Oh God if I dont pass, if I dont pass (SUDDENLY) What is it you want, is it something you want?

CATHERINE My man would like a word with you.

EDWARD Pardon?

CATHERINE He's awful worried about something. And he'll no tell me. I'm the last person.

EDWARD AWED WHISPER] Oh lord...

CATHERINE If you remember, he's an invalid.

EDWARD Oh aye, yeh, [ABSENTLY] he's got a walking stick or whatever it is one of these three angled triangular kind of frame things, contraptions, whatever you call them, triangular kind of frame things, three angled, and it's toughened steel to a very fine British Standard, the best nuts and bolts, sometimes they clang about if ye're trying to concentrate and ye're doing yer studying.

CATHERINE What is it son?

EDWARD Pardon? What is it he wants?

CATHERINE He'll tell you himself.

EDWARD It's just I'm so busy the now, all this stuff I'm having to memorize, for my work tomorrow morning, it's a test, an examination, a major one, I'm studying hard, and I'm so in trouble, just so in trouble missis I'm just oh god

CATHERINE What's wrong son?

EDWARD GUILTILY] Nothing. I'm just waiting for my fiancee. We're getting married. I love her. She's got a sister, Janet, I dont like her, I dont. But that happens. A man marries a

woman and he doesn't care for her sister, so what? Is there anything wrong with that, of course not. Why are you holding my hand?

CATHERINE If you'll just come up and see him, it's only for a minute, he wants to tell you something

EDWARD ABSENTLY] And I get my promotion and after that we'll take on a mortgage for a house of our own. We're getting married in a few months' time.

CATHERINE You'll just be a minute.

EDWARD WORRIED) Yes but...

CATHERINE My man just gets agitated, he gets things on his mind and they'll not let him go. [SHE CLOSSES DOOR]

EDWARD SURPRISE] You closed my door

CATHERINE THEY WALK UPSTAIRS] He never used to be a worrier. Us being stuck in this dirty old lodging house just makes it worse.

EDWARD It's not dirty...

SOUND CREAKING FLOORBOARDS AS THEY WALK UPSTAIRS

EDWARD Oh jees what's that I've stood on, my god it's like chewing gum, who would leave that on a floor. I've not even got my socks on. Or else a slug, I once stood on a slug, they're slidey

CATHERINE You were in a hurry

EDWARD SIGHS

CATHERINE OPENS CREAKS DOOR] Come in son

EDWARD Oh... yes.. [DOOR CREAKS AGAIN. EDWARD ASTONISHED] This is delapidated! It's worse than mine!

CATHERINE They're all the same son.

EDWARD But there's some nice touches here

CATHERINE A woman's hand

EDWARD Yes. [SNIFFS, AND QUIETLY] But what's that smell...? [SNIFFS]

CATHERINE TO INVALID] Here's the young man now

INVALID What's your name young fellow?

EDWARD SUSPICIOUSLY) My name?

CATHERINE He's the boy who gave us a hand up the stair with the suitcases.

INVALID Oh aye aye. What's your name young fellow?

EDWARD STILL SUSPICIOUS] Ed-ward Pritch-ard. [STRESSES LAST SYLLABLES]
Sorry, I'm just eh... (SIGHS)

INVALID You go away Catherine. Go a message or something. I want to have a word with him. I've got the zimmer here, I'll be okay. And if I need something the he can help me

CATHERINE I'll get my coat... [EXITS, DOOR CLOSES]

INVALID Sit down! (QUIET AUTHORITY)

EDWARD Yes. [SITS]

INVALID Not there. There

EDWARD MOVES TO ANOTHER CHAIR] Sorry. [SITS]

SOUND INVALID MANOUEVRES HIS WAY ON THE ZIMMER, TO A CHAIR AT THE WINDOW

INVALID I like sitting by the window

EDWARD POLITELY] Yes, you can see out

INVALID What was that?

EDWARD Nothing, sorry

INVALID See young fellow what it is, I've got a confession to make and I dont want Catherine to know. Poor old soul she's got enough on her plate, she works hard and she looks after me ye see, she looks after me. [BREATHES DEEPLY, LIKE SOMEBODY NEEDING OXYGEN]

EDWARD SNIFFS, AND WHISPERS] What a smell... [SHUDDERS]

INVALID What's your name young fellow? Naw, dont tell me, it's best I dont know. Now pay attention

EDWARD IRRITATED] Pardon?

INVALID You see before they invalided me out my job I was involved in what some folk call malpractice; some call it sabotage, industrial sabotage; other folk again, they'd call it something else all together. It was the spanner-in-the-works carry-on; I used to stop the line. Understand me?

EDWARD Ummm

INVALID That was what I did, wherever I was working, I brought things to a halt - I tried to anyway. That's the shape my politics took and that's the shape they were; and I can't help it and nor did I ever want to help it. But as a way of living my life it means I've aye had to do what my conscience tells me. There was never an inbetween.

EDWARD POLITELY] Mmmm

INVALID The last place I worked was a firm by the name of eh Gross National Products which, you probably guessed, is a made up name. I dont want to tell you the real one because you never know you might be a police informer.

EDWARD IRONIC] Pardon me

INVALID But never mind that never mind that - and never mind me either because I get nervous and I get agitatit.

EDWARD PUZZLED] Ah jih tay tit... Oh sorry I was thinking aloud

INVALID CHEERILY] Dont worry

EDWARD GUILTILY] I was just eh... I was telling a joke, to myself

INVALID Pat attention now, listen closely

EDWARD IRRITATED] Pardon me?

INVALID Back in the early days... FADE

EDWARD PAUSE. AMUSED WHISPER] Oh it's the early days now. but what is he saying, I can't even hear him, it must be nonsense, he's talking nonsense

INVALID FADE IN] ...as a way of living my life. What it means is I've aye had to do what my conscience tells me

EDWARD AWED WHISPER] My god

INVALID And then it happened!

EDWARD STARTLED] What?

INVALID Yes, and it happened to me as well.

EDWARD Beg pardon?

INVALID And it's caused a lot of pain and suffering, a hell of a lot if I'm being honest.

EDWARD But what did you say, I didnt hear what you said!

INVALID And it's caused me a lot of pain and suffering, a hell of a lot if I'm being honest.

EDWARD AGITATED] Pardon?.

INVALID I wasnt always pushing a zimmer about you know!

EDWARD POLITELY] No

INVALID Now what happened you see, I've got to fill you in, I was keeping a low profile because they were after me, I'm talking about the bigwigs, they were out to get me. And they were using a fellow who was a mucker, a pal. Mind you he was a waster the same man, if I'm to be honest about it, and ye dont like saying that about anybody never mind when he's your close friend.

EDWARD SNIFFS

INVALID Eh?

EDWARD I didnt say anything

INVALID But this guy was the sort that winds up changing colours, he joined the enemy, he was a turncoat. That happens a lot in this life: traitors. People go behind your back and in the most shocking way, Bad bastard that he was. [CLEARS THROAT, SPLUTTERS, USES HANDKERCHIEF TO SPIT INTO]

EDWARD Mmm

INVALID And to think ye took him into yer home and gave him yer hospitality. And his wife and mine became friends too and my Catherine, poor old soul, she used to look after their weans like they were her own. He was the very one they sent to get me. They chose him because they knew we were close. Ahh! It's a world of conspiracies out there. You probably dont know that yet but ye will soon enough. Wait till ye get to my age. But there's much more you've got to understand. Come and sit next to me so I dont have to roar.

EDWARD I'm fine here though.

INVALID But I want to tell ye a secret young fellow, and walls have ears.

EDWARD What?

INVALID I thought ye'd have kenned that by now, you being a student and all that.

EDWARD But I'm not a student. I'm a Sales Representative.

INVALID A salesman?

EDWARD Well yes

INVALID I thought ye were studying

EDWARD I am but it's for work. I dont know what ye would call it, mainly it's product memorising.

INVALID Mmm

EDWARD It's a Retraining Schedule for junior management trainees. Although I'm not a trainee. Really it's to do with grading and selection, if ye dont pass it ye stay where ye are. And that's like a demotion. In fact it is a demotion. [SADLY] This test isnt to pass onto greater things at all, it's just to avoid the pit.

INVALID The old woman says ye were a student.

EDWARD I wonder how she thought that?

INVALID She'll have keeked in the letter box and seen ye at yer lessons

EDWARD ANNOYED] I beg your pardon?

INVALID Were you studying at lunchtime today?

EDWARD GUILTILY] What?

INVALID That's how she does it, through yer letterbox.

EDWARD But that's scandalous. [PAUSE] I've not got a letter box.

INVALID Ah she's good. Ye would've neither heard nor seen her, but she'll have seen you. She never misses a trick.

EDWARD GUILTILY] What?

INVALID If only I'd had her for a partner at the 'spanners!' She would've been rare at it - better than me. And I would say I was one of the best though as a masculine model my limitations were there, they had to be. Masculine models and limitations...the masculine...the way we go about

EDWARD WHISPERS] Oh God, what have I done. Why is he staring at me, he's staring at me, is he talking? I can't hear him. But what does he know, what did she tell him, nosy old buggar, what did she see oh god what did she see. [ALLOUD] Sorry, I'm afraid I've lost touch with what you're saying, the models and limitations, These facets we are born with - faculties I mean - man. We are born with definite limitations. We attempt to set out and change the world then get bogged down in the microcosmic ephemera of getting to B from A. We go to college and take a look about. We think the road ahead is signposted... And then these things happen, unforeseen things, and they're to do with youth and being young and these drives and horrible urges and temptations you cant get out the way of even though you try and know it's against god's path, if ye're walking against it and the woman sees you and if oh lordie [WHISPERS] As though the conditions are set in advance. Ye find a lass

and set out as partners in the face of a hostile and aggressive world; and that includes yer parents. Because the harsh truth is that most parents hate their children, just like Romeo and Juliet, wherefore art thou, they hate them actively and discourage them from doing the things they want, if ye want to change the world ye're no allowed to, they dump ye down so ye have to take what ye're given, and then ye end up with things ye dont want but are just settling for and it isnt your fault, you are doing yer best, trying yer damndest to please and settle down properly with yer loved one in yer nest [SIGHS, MURMURS) Lordie Lordie. [COUGHES SLIGHTLY] I find this chair so relaxing, it's just so soothing, for my head and for my brains, giving them a rest like this, not having to worry about things, ye see my fiancee, she's about due to come.

INVALID Ah...! So ye've a fiancee, that's even better. That shows ye're responsible. I like to see responsibility in a young fellow. What's yer name?

EDWARD Beg pardon?

INVALID AMUSED) Ye're no going to tell me eh?

EDWARD I told you before.

INVALID Did ye?

EDWARD My name's Edward Pritchard.

INVALID Mine is Robert Parker, Bobbie - like the boy who used to play for Falkirk or was it the Hearts? - big right back if ye remember, rare big player. I think he got a cap for the Scottish under 21 team, maybe even the full national side. Before your time I dare say. [CONTINUES TALKING BUT HIS VOICE BECOMES SO QUIET IT IS UNINTELLIGBLE

EDWARD WHISPERS] Why is he staring at me? [PAUSE] He's talking. Why is it so quiet. I can't hear him. Why doesnt he speak properly

INVALID HIS VOICE BECOMES LOUDER] And that's why I need to make a confession, plus I've a feeling something is going to happen...impending doom...as if ye're going to get knocked down by a lorry or a bus or a taxi, as if ye think that, forms of retribution, do ye know what I mean?

EDWARD What?

INVALID These vehicles go careering down the road and they dont see ye if ye're an invalid, ye're walking that slow they fail to take ye in on their line of vision. And ye can't but take a stride without that very reckoning and ye're darting a look this way and that or else trying not to, ye just keep yer face fixed to the front and try not even to listen for the roar of the engine - the thing that's coming to mow ye down and whether squash you.

EDWARD My God! That sounds like an awful nightmare.

INVALID It's like they see ye as a pillar or a post.

EDWARD Surely no!

INVALID Aye! Come here till I tell ye. Ye're no a religious young chap, are ye?

EDWARD I believe in God if that's what ye mean.

INVALID Do ye? (DISAPPOINTED)

EDWARD Well I hope I do I mean I hope I do why, what's wrong with that... I'm not ashamed of it. I used to be an agnostic. But now I'm back to believing again and I'm glad. It's just how yer life changes but God will give ye support and get ye out of tight messes. I'm not a churchgoer right enough. My parents werent either. Actually my dad was a bit of an atheist.

INVALID INTEREST) Mm.

EDWARD He was interested in politics. But he didnt stop me going to Sunday School. Mum wouldnt have let him anyhow.

INVALID Was she an atheist?

EDWARD PAUSE, ANXIOUSLY) I've no been to church for years - apart from when my fiancee's grannie died last March. I felt a hypocrite. Did I though? Maybe I didnt. Maybe I just thought I should have felt a hypocrite

INVALID On ye go

EDWARD SIGHS] I've been involved in some things recently that I think really are sins, quite big ones, I dont mind telling you Mister Parker and I can only hope I'll be forgiven, I hope nothing's going to get held against me although if it does I'll no complain, if I've to get chastised for it. If I can only make up for it, maybe by doing my test properly tomorrow. Yes [PUNCHES RIGHT FIST INTO PALM OF LEFT HAND], if I can only manage that.

INVALID To do yer test properly?

EDWARD That's all, that's all I want!

INVALID Ye will, ye'll pass it.

EDWARD OVERJOYED] Will I?

INVALID Yes

EDWARD Awww great, great, that's wonderful news

INVALID Ye'll pass your test and ye'll get yer promotion.

EDWARD GUARDEDLY] How do ye know?

INVALID I just know

EDWARD So it's just you thinking it?

INVALID Ye will succeed young fellow. I'm convinced of that. Somebody that's as diligent a studier as you, he's the kind that deserves to succeed.

EDWARD Ah but I'm no that diligent, my concentration's nil... [SUDDENLY] Oh what's that out the window?

INVALID Nothing at all

EDWARD Oh I thought it was a shadow... [SWALLOWS NERVOUSLY]

INVALID Although with myself there's aye the wish that a young fellow like yerself could one day take up the cudgels where me and the muckers left off. But at the same time I know these battles have finished, just like the days they happened in are finished, and the kind of future that sorts itself out on the past isn't the kind of future we fought for. And I'm no a supporter of such things. None of us were, no in the slightest. Ye understand me?

EDWARD Pardon?

INVALID Ah ye will young fellow ye will. And now if you'll no come to me then I'll come to you. [GETS HIMSELF ONTO HIS FEET WITH THE AID OF THE ZIMMER, NOW COMMANDS EDWARD] You bring my chair.

EDWARD IMMEDIATELY] Yes

SOUND INVALID MANOEUVRES HIMSELF ACROSS. EDWARD GETS THE CHAIR. INVALID DRAGS HIMSELF ACROSS.

INVALID LEANS TO EDWARD] Now... [CLAPS HIS HAND ON EDWARD'S KNEE]

EDWARD I wish you wouldnt put yer hand on my knee

INVALID You're a nervous young fellow eh. Now [QUIETLY] my confession, afore Catherine comes back. When I worked in whatever ye call it, Gross National - which is twenty years ago now - the country was in a state of economic decline, everything was to pot. You're a bit young to remember that eh?

EDWARD SNIFFS, SNIFFS AGAIN, UNEASILY] Pardon...? [WHISPERS] Oh what a pong, it's dreadful

INVALID When the right wing had conspired to take over the chain of command throughout the west...

EDWARD WHISPERS] Oh my god it's disgusting

INVALID And stamp their way across the entire world without so much as a by-your-leave

SOUND DISTORT INVALID'S VOICE

EDWARD WHISPERS] Oh lord what is he saying I just can't hear him properly, it's nonsense, complete nonsense, it's higgledi-piggledi nonsense

INVALID NOW CLEARLY, DISTINCTLY]...in the Sahara region, and these armless and legless beggars in third world countries who have to get wheeled about in bogies in an effort to pay off loans to the I.M.F. and the World Bank.

EDWARD POLITELY) Beg pardon...

INVALID Like that method they have devised, an unheard of and strange method of spare part surgery, removing fresh limbs from a young person's body in order to weld them onto elderly sick people, millionaires. This extraordinary fluid that will liquidise the membranes

EDWARD Liquidise the membranes?

INVALID You've heard of it?

EDWARD PANIC] No

INVALID So what comes out is this dirty brown stuff, it reminds ye of old blood or something, rancid

EDWARD But we dont want to hear about that surely! Who does! No one! It's a horrible story like the one where the young man gets captured and mutilated by evil slavers, it's a horrible disgusting thing and people won't read about it and no wonder if it's horrible, who wants to read about horrors like that, that isnt a story, people want nice things.

INVALID I dont know that story. Evil slavers? What did they do it for?

EDWARD I dont think it was for anything I mean they had just captured him and then they did it and if it was just for something to do.

SOUND A BRIEF LAUGH, FROM NOWHERE, SUPPRESSED IMMEDIATE;Y

EDWARD WHISPERS, URGENTLY] What was that

INVALID I dont know that story. Evil slavers? What did they do it for?

EDWARD PAUSE, POLITELY] Pardon?

PAUSE

EDWARD WHISPERS] Oh lord

EDWARD'S CONCENTRATION NOW LAPSES AND HE BEGINS TO DAYDREAM

SOUND DOOR CLICKS OPEN, RATTLING SOUND OF CUPS AND PLATES ON A TRAY

JANET BRIGHTLY] I have some coffee and biscuits

EDWARD Janet, Lordie lordie

JANET I had my shower

EDWARD WHISPERS] She is luscious

JANET I had my shower

EDWARD Oh god

JANET Why dont you?

EDWARD I just use the sink, I dont have a shower

JANET Use the sink then... [LAUGHS QUIETLY]

SOUND RATTLING SOUND OF CUPS AND PLATES ON A TRAY, SET DOWN ON A TABLE

EDWARD WHISPERS] Where's her shoes, her feet are bare, look at them. My god she isnt wearing a bra, the curve of her breasts

JANET Are you sure you dont want a shower Eddie? you just look so tense, you are so tense...

EDWARD Oh the Lord is my shepherd

JANET My boyfriend's good at practical things but when it comes to paperwork he's useless, practically illiterate. But you're different. My sister's so lucky having you for a fiancee

EDWARD EMBARRASSED] Well when it comes to DIY work about the house you might as well call me illiterate.

INVALID PAUSE] I dont believe it young fellow.

EDWARD Oh...

INVALID If you put yer mind to it

EDWARD I'm better at paperwork...it's my job really, so that kind of thing, it's basically what I do, dealing with forms and all that kind of stuff, invoices and accounts, statements, promotional literature - all the jargon, you get able to see through it.

JANET SIGHS] Do you

EDWARD You develop a sixth sense, when people're trying to pull the wool over your

eyes, trying to con you I mean you can tell.

JANET Can you?

EDWARD Yes.

JANET I'm impressed

EDWARD Dont get the wrong idea, it's just part of the job... (SLIGHT DISTASTE) you're trying to do them before they do you...it's eh...nothing to be proud of I mean...

JANET I would be proud if you were my boyfriend

EDWARD EMBARRASSED] Well I mean...

JANET SIGHS

EDWARD AWKWARDLY] You're smiling...

JANET Yes...Oh Edward, why... [HER VOICE NOW GOES QUIET, BECOMES DISTORTED

EDWARD Pardon? What? WHISPERS] What is she saying? why isnt she wearing a bra and her feet naked, my god why is she smiling at me like that...

JANET DISTORTED LOW VOICE. NOW BECOMES CLEAR Why do you and Debbie not set up together in a flat?

EDWARD Beg pardon...Oh, well, basically it's eh not as easy as that I mean eh... You've got to be sure of things and eh Deborah has her own and eh... [COUGHS]

JANET STILL PUZZLED) What things?

EDWARD Pardon?

JANET What things have you got to be sure about?

EDWARD Oh a lot.

JANET Such as?

EDWARD It depends.

JANET Here, have a biscuit

EDWARD No thanks.

JANET Sure?

EDWARD AWKWARDLY) We're going for a meal tonight. Deborah's coming to get me,

I'll need to get ready

JANET Oh relax.

EDWARD What d'ye mean?

JANET QUIETLY] You're so very tense.

EDWARD Tense?

JANET WHISPERS] You take life so seriously

EDWARD It's just this damn promotional test I've got to sit tomorrow morning, it's driving me mad, it's just - and ye can't think about other things it is just so damn horrible.

INVALID It cant be as bad as that young fellow.

EDWARD Maybe not for you but for me, the idea of failing it! GLANCES AT WATCH) Oh God, Deborah'll soon be here, she's coming

JANET LAUGHS QUIETLY

EDWARD NERVOUSLY] And I've got to read up on the bloody stuff too, that's another thing, and people interrupting. Every bloody damn product, I've got to know it inside out, every last one. (GETS UP FROM CHAIR AND MOVES RESTLESSLY) Oh my god if I fail, if I actually fail the damn thing...

INVALID What'll happen? (MOCKING TONE)

EDWARD Pardon?

JANET LAUGHS QUIETLY

EDWARD I know it sounds daft, but I think I'm on the road out, I mean... [MOVES RESTLESSLY] I'm just no good at it. I'm not one of those guys that can walk into a factory and sell them a ten year supply of bloody useless detergent. You want to see some of them in action! God, they'd sell ye anything.

JANET I thought you were doing good. Debbie said you were.

EDWARD I dont tell her everything. (GUILTY) I mean I tell her most things but...

JANET CHUCKLES) Not everything.

EDWARD No.

JANET IRONIC] Just as well....

EDWARD See I started off well. It was easy. My figures were great. I won the regional

prize for two months running. Then gradually things went kind of sour. It's hard to explain. I just... (SUDDEN ANGUISH) I cant reach a closure anymore. And that's the real truth, if I'm being honest, I cant close a sale. And that means I'm a goner...

INVALID A goner!

EDWARD It's the one crucial ingredient for the selling game, the closure-knack, how to stop talking and point the customer's pen at the dotted line. I either blab too much or I else I dont say a bloody word, I get tongue-tied. I let them slip away... [PUNCHES RIGHT FIST INTO LEFT PALM]

EDWARD You see it's like I know too much, I bloody know too much. And that's the problem... when you're face to face with them, as individual human beings, the customers, your clients... (ENDS LAMELY)

INVALID What do you see?

EDWARD Pardon?

INVALID You're looking out the window

EDWARD SURPRISED] Yes

INVALID Is there a man strolling round the corner into the street below. Is he walking along the pavement? Is he in his mid thirties, dressed smartly; quite businesslike. Is he glancing up in the direction of this window?

EDWARD FEARFUL] Oh God

INVALID Are ye trying to hide behind the curtain?

EDWARD GUILTILY] No

JANET LAUGHS QUIETLY

EDWARD WHISPERS] Her clothes are too small for her, they're tiny, they just ride up her body

JANET QUIETLY] You're watching me

EDWARD I'm not, not really

JANET I can see you in the mirror, I dont mind

EDWARD SWALLOWS

JANET SHIVERS. QUIETLY] I'm cold

EDWARD What time is it? I dont know what time it is [WHISPERS] Janet...

JANET GETS INTO BED] Are you coming...

EDWARD I... Oh... [GETS INTO BED WITH HER]

JANET You're still wearing your clothes...

EDWARD ASTONISHED] But I'm just so relaxed... [SIGHS, MURMURS) Lordie lordie...

INVALID Are ye okay young fellow

EDWARD Beg your pardon? You're staring at me

INVALID KINDLY] I'm not

EDWARD QUIETLY] I just dont have the mentality for it.

INVALID What was that young fellow?

EDWARD Nothing.

INVALID Now listen, when the old woman comes back we've got to speak about other things, maybe the facilities in this place. She's a habit of sneaking up on ye. If she does then start talking about the facilities here; what we're supposed to do for grub and so forth because we're no allowed to cook in our room as far as I hear. That right?

EDWARD Yes. The landlord says food is messy.

INVALID So just talk about that. Because it's a real irritation to her. No me so much cause I'm no what ye'd call an eater, but the old woman gets all het up about it and ye cannay blame her, poor auld sowel, she's used to an oven and a cooker and what have ye. So if ye start talking about the facilities ye see that'll be good cause I dont want her knowing what I'm going to tell ye. I want that kept a secret between us two. [NOW BREATHES DEEPLY, AS THOUGH HE REQUIRES OXYGEN] A secret between us. Okay?

EDWARD Yes

INVALID Well now

EDWARD SNIFFS, WHISPERS] My god, the smell must be from him

INVALID What about these walls? Some walls have cavities

EDWARD Cavities...

INVALID There's insects eat their way through stone

EDWARD What?

INVALID Sit down here beside me

EDWARD Yes [SITS]

INVALID So like I was saying young fellow, this was an incident of a special kind; ye dont often get them quite like this and ye have to be aware of that and how this should be the case because if ye dont know it and ye dont understand it why then what ye find, ye find [NOW DISTORTED] and with these huge conglomerates like Gross National Products....

EDWARD I can't hear him, it's complete nonsense

INVALID And all terrible fuisty and dark, oh dark dark, and shadowy amind the crevices where lurk the insects....

EDWARD FEARFUL, WHISPERS] What...what is he saying, I can't understand what he's saying

INVALID Are you listening now

EDWARD Yes, yes, I'm trying

INVALID DISTORTED AGAIN] Yes and so wicked....wicked wicked but that's to be expected in dealing with these forces... driving him out of his mind ye could say.... destroyed....then too ye must know about the death, how it killed the apprentice.. like an accident...an ordinary boy doing his job....full of devilment as you might expect ye'd expect, we're all like that at one time or another...and feasible feasible, just no feasiblefeasible, just no feasible

EDWARD STRAINS TO HEAR] What...

INVALID CLEARLY] Because that spanner had just been tossed, and it had to be tossed there was no two ways about it. A very big spanner; one of the biggest seen in this country for a number of years, me and a couple of blokes working the gether, it was a team effort. And we reckoned it must have cost maybe one point seven five million for final rectification see young fellow because we had it worked so the upper managment bigwigs never found out it was deliberate no even that it was an accident.

EDWARD What was an accident...?

INVALID No young fellow, that's what I'm saying and ye'll maybe no quite understand coming from your generation, it's all past now, except maybe ye might understand and I hope ye will. Ye see now listen carefully. they never found out that it happened at all. Ye get it? They thought there was something wrong with the entire works, and I'm no talking about safety measures because safety measures dont make that much difference to major industry, they just reframe their legislation as well ye'll know, but just that a general improvement would need doing, right the way throughout all their factories - and I'm here meaning across the whole of what ye call the 'free world'.

EDWARD WHISPERS] This is a joke, it's a joke, what is he talking about

INVALID That's how it cost so much to put right ye see because ye're talking Thailand, Indonesia, India, Zambia, Kenya, Korea, Vietnam, Scotland

EDWARD WHISPERS] It's a hoax. Who's there? Somebody's watching

INVALID Denmark, the Irish Free State, Wales, Pakistan, Texas, Australia, Iceland, Sweden - wherever G.N.P. Plc. used to exist it no existing now of course because it was taken over by a big conglomerate back in the time of the conspiracy trials. Then it went itself in the Throgmortin Crash if ye mind, and ye had the Makgas Consortium stepping in

EDWARD Pardon?

INVALID Government funding and CNI money, headed by a noted patriot - though ye understand young fellow that the patriot's real name is something different to anything I might tell ye so what's the point in telling ye anything. Unless ye want to hear everything, but that sort of information isnt classified and if ye would rather hear than no hear then ye should go and check it out, ye'll find most of it down the Advocate's Library. What do ye think yerself?

EDWARD I..eh...just it's a world I dont know Mister Parker. I wish I did but I dont. I've never been able to get the hang of it. It's like the international news in the big newspapers, all these places and names ye can never remember, they go hazy as soon as ye look at them. My mind's good at some things but no at others. I wish it was different: I wish I could just bloody I mean it's concentration, it's just concentration, it's the same when I was at college and ye got all these graphs and what-dye-call-it statistical analyses and data-base spreadsheet things I mean and it was just mumbo-jumbo... (PAUSE) I dont seem able to concentrate, I just dont seem able to concentrate beyond about five minutes, at any given point...I think maybe there's something up with me. [SIGHS]

INVALID IMPATIENT, BUT KINDLY] Oh ye're better than that young fellow

EDWARD No, honest, I just do my job without hurting too many people, although ye've got to appreciate about the sales, what ye have to do, everybody, ye've got to gyp folk because that's the nature of the game, salesmanship, ye have to gyp people into buying stuff they dont need. Silly buggars. How come they buy all that junk! I've never been able to work it out. Even my own mother, with all her experience through having a salesman for a son, this rascal comes to her door a week ago and he sells her some insurance that's more or less useless, in fact it's absolutely useless, it's no good at all, if I'd had been there I'd have bashed him one on the jaw. I went through the policies myself. Rubbish! Absolute rubbish! And I mean

INVALID Ssh

EDWARD STOPS ABRUPTLY] Sorry

INVALID Were you the lad that helped me and the old woman up the stair with our bags and suitcases?

EDWARD CLEARS THROAT) Your wife says so but how do we know, we dont, when

ye come to think about it. She says it was me, but I wouldn't actually believe her if it was me, just because she's elderly, small and dainty, and acts like she's the epitome of truth and wisdom therefore she has to be a paragon, but how do we know the devil hasn't entered her soul and she's only there to draw us into evil ways? (PAUSE) I only mean it as an example I mean I don't really think it - I mean how could I! [UNCOMFORTABLE] Obviously I couldn't. I'm just being honest. I don't know anything about industrial sabotage and horrendous industrial injuries, I don't know anything at all, if somebody has to suffer a terrible agony that others might go free, that happens to other people as well. Our Lord Jesus Christ had to be crucified for the sake of the good of mankind, if that's what ye're talking about, somebody having to get killed instead of something else. Well there's other sins people have to atone for, it's not always just yer own. I think that's a mistake a lot of folk make, especially males like us, men, I think we're very often mistaken at the very root of our own existence as human beings, I'm only talking about men. Women are different.

INVALID I'm not following ye.

EDWARD You asked if I believed in God. I do, I really do. I stopped it for years but that was my father's influence and ye've got to grow up sometime, ye've got to get into the real world. It's a hard hard sell, everybody knows that. It's not my fault people suffer, ye help the one person are ye supposed to help them all? And then how are ye supposed to keep on living yer own life into the bargain? Cause nobody helps us. That's all I'm saying, it's not because we're selfish, we just don't have the power except maybe a wee miniscule slice, and then ye wind up getting squashed, just like a wee insect. That's what happened to a friend of mine, he poked his nose into things when we were at college, charity work for foreign countries I think it was, so then he got squashed.

INVALID Mm. You're misjudging yerself young fellow.

EDWARD Pardon?

INVALID I guessed that earlier on. But there again it's my own fault; I tend not to get things right either. And then ye see I've got to trust whoever she trusts. I rely on her for my character judgments. Of course it's this bloody zimmer contraption! If it wasn't for this I'd be able to give more time to things. I could do my own thinking, and that's what's important. (PAUSE) Ach... [SIGHS]

EDWARD What's wrong?

INVALID DEJECTED] Och...

EDWARD [PAUSE] Your carpet's all frayed at the edges. [AWKWARDLY] You would expect better facilities, I'm going to complain... Mmm... [WHISPERS] Oh God...

SOUND CLOCK TICKS. THE TICKING BECOMES LOUDER

EDWARD Oh Lord, lordie lordie.

SOUND CLOCK TICKING. STOPS COMPLETELY

EDWARD What was that! Mister Parker... Mister Parker! [WHISPERS] I dont understand it, I just dont! None of it. [SIGHS. PAUSE] Of course Deborah is precise and exacting, but I like that about her. It fits in with me, we're alike. I try to be like that myself. Deborah's a great lassie, really great. It's just she doesnt have the best of manners.

JANET LAUGHS] What?

EDWARD I dont mean manners like etiquette, it's just eh it's like a bad habit she has I mean eh it's just - ye've got to admit it she can have a nasty tongue, even yer own mother says it to me once, she says I wasnt to take what she said too seriously, she's just critical by nature. That was when I asked her to marry me I mean when she said no...!

JANET LAUGHS.

EDWARD Dont laugh at me.

JANET Oh Eddie, I'm not

EDWARD I was shattered. It never dawned on me, the very idea. It's not a criticism, it's just - you two are different.

JANET IRONIC] I know.

EDWARD You are. Even yer clothes, it's not a criticism I just sometimes wish she would - I dont know - just relax a bit, her style I mean. You call me Eddie! She never calls me Eddie.

JANET You never call yourself Eddie.

EDWARD Sometimes I do

JANET LAUGHS] No you dont

EDWARD With clients.

JANET I dont believe you

EDWARD I do. It's just not to Deborah. Can ye imagine me ever saying it to her. Or... [PAUSE, SNIGGERS] Debbie. Or Debs! Debs! It just sounds so stupid. Hullo Debs. She would never stand for it.

JANET Eddie...

EDWARD GUARDED] What?

JANET GETS OUT OF BED] Eddie

EDWARD WHISPERS] You arent wearing any clothes... [MURMURS) Lordie...lordie... [JUMPS UP FROM HIS CHAIR]

INVALID COMMANDS] Sit down.

EDWARD I cant, I just cant.

INVALID Yes ye can.

EDWARD I've got to go. What time is it? Damn clock, has it stopped!

INVALID I need to tell ye something. It's a kind of confession. I have to talk it through

EDWARD But ye've talked it through already.

INVALID No I've not.

EDWARD I thought ye had.

INVALID Talking it through in that certain way is a confession; that's what a confession is. I'll know when I've done it. Ye always do. Once ye've made it ye know ye've made it. Yer mind feels easy. I have make my peace. What's wrong with ye?

EDWARD AGITATED, PACES ABOUT] Oh nothing, nothing

INVALID You're agitated

EDWARD Sorry.

INVALID Sit down

EDWARD Yes

INVALID I'm no able to speak unless you're willing to listen, young fellow, ye're no always willing to do that.

EDWARD Yeh but Mister Parker I'm sorry eh it's just that my fiancee's due any minute.

INVALID She'll know where ye are.

EDWARD PUZZLED] Will she

INVALID The old woman will tell her

EDWARD Oh God. [SOBS] Oh God, I'm done for I'm done for... [SOBS]

INVALID What's wrong?

EDWARD Oh jees Mister Parker [GETS TO HIS FEET]

INVALID Ye're no greeting are ye son?

EDWARD I'm just in awful trouble, awful trouble.

INVALID If ye stop jumping about and just sit still a minute

EDWARD I'm in deep deep trouble.

INVALID Then maybe we can share it. Sometimes ye share a problem ye swop it, and in the swopping it gets lost. I've got troubles you've got troubles

EDWARD SOBS] Oh God

INVALID Dont get yerself into a state. Edward's a King's name, did ye know that?

EDWARD SOBS] I'm done for

INVALID At your age it cannay be too bad. It'll be a personal thing; personal things are easy. Tell me what it is. If you tell me yours I'll tell you mine's, that's what I mean by a swop. I'll take on your problem if you'll take on mine. Come on now young fellow, is it a deal?

EDWARD Yeh but...

INVALID Dry yer eyes now ye're too old for that

EDWARD I feel so horrible

INVALID We share what's troubling us, we get it out in the open. I start worrying about your problems, you start worrying about mine. Ye get it?

EDWARD What time's it?

INVALID Never you mind the time

EDWARD LOWERS HIS VOICE] I slept with my fiancee's sister this morning.

INVALID What did you say?

EDWARD NORMAL VOICE] I slept with my fiancee's sister this morning. I didnt mean to, it just happened.

INVALID Mm...

EDWARD I've never done it before, never, it just bloody happened it was just bloody out the blue, I think maybe it was me with my head full, all the worries I've had cause of this damn products test. Plus as well ye dont like saying it but maybe it was a set-up from her sister I mean I know they're the same flesh and blood but ye dont know, ye just dont know, what goes on between sisters. I once read a book and there were sisters and they hated each other oh how they hated each other, ye wouldnt have believed it...

INVALID Mm.

EDWARD What's wrong?

INVALID OMINOUSLY] It's a difficult one that.

EDWARD Is it?

INVALID Questions of personal loyalty, they're aye the worst. And she doesn't know yet?

EDWARD PANIC] What?

INVALID Yer wife's no found out?

EDWARD It's not my wife. It's my fiancée. I'm no married. Although I suppose they're the same really anyway, if ye're married or engaged. I am wanting to get married to her.

INVALID She's yer intended?

EDWARD Pardon?

INVALID Ye intend getting married to her?

EDWARD Yes. In fact I asked her already and she said no.

INVALID She said no?

EDWARD She said it was too soon.

INVALID OMINOUSLY] Mm

EDWARD Why? What's wrong with that? I thought it was fine to ask her but it wasn't, she just said no. It was a shock.

INVALID Oh well, aye.

EDWARD Ye don't expect the woman to say that. No after ye've done it all. Ye've had to get the courage and then worked yerself up to do it. It was a real shock to me.

INVALID Had ye planned it for a while?

EDWARD No, I just thought about it and then popped it out one night. I didn't think it would turn out like that. Her saying no. I suppose it's ego, ye don't think of it happening. Ye always think it's you, you've to make the decision. And that'll be that once ye've done it. Then ye find out it isn't. Other people have got their own minds... [PAUSE] They have ye know. It's something ye can forget in the sales business. Then another thing is inside their minds; what the other people all think about, ye maybe don't find out till ye've asked... Look at your mind, you've got all big things like the international news or else other people have got football, that's all they think about or else sex. And then women, they're completely different altogether, how can ye know about their minds? ye canna, they don't do things at all like we do and then their bodies. [PAUSE]

INVALID And have ye not asked her again?

EDWARD I'm not going to, not till I know

INVALID Till ye know what?

EDWARD Ye see I was wondering, and eh...I know this is a personal question Mister Parker...I'm only meaning how it's as though here we are meeting up with each other at a time when we need a way out of a problem, the both of us and eh...

INVALID DISMISSIVELY] Mine isnay really a problem.

EDWARD Oh.

INVALID It's different to that. But on ye go anyhow and say what ye were saying. About fate or whatever it was.

EDWARD I wasn't meaning fate, not exactly, because I know God doesn't arrange things just for our own individual benefit otherwise everybody would be rushing about higgledy piggledy and have their own wee world where it was all set up just for us. It's even a bit like blasphemy, to suppose he does. (NERVOUSLY) But ye just can't help thinking it sometimes, even though it's wrong. It's because we all look out from our own head and see the world outside so it makes it seem like we're in the middle of it all, we're like the sun and everybody else is the planets, that's what I sometimes think till then somebody does something and it's different.

INVALID Well now that makes sense

EDWARD Or it's like cats, my parents have a cat and it rules the roost. Cats hate other cats. It just has people and that makes it like the king so that is what I think; if it was only cats in the world then I would be the king because I'd be the only person, everybody else would be cats

INVALID PAUSE] Oh aye

EDWARD But ye find it isn't like that at all. My dad always said I was spoiled. Deborah says I was cocooned

INVALID Cocooned?

EDWARD Like ye're wrapped in cotton wool

INVALID Mmm

EDWARD If I was then I'm not now. The very opposite [SIGHS]

INVALID Is it yer job young fellow?

EDWARD No, it's life, it's life, ye just can't get out it. It's like ye're getting led along a country road, ye're going over a hill in the distance where the fields look rectangular with

their hedgerows and ye're going to a village to do a bit of business with a brand new customer and there's no avoiding it even although ye hate the very idea because the road leads ye there and ye know ye'll just to have to grit yer teeth, like ye always do when you meet these new clients. Ye're always gritting yer teeth anyway, that's what the job is, every day of yer life it's the same, ye're gritting yer teeth, even if the customers are old and valued and give ye orders for nothin. That's what yer bosses think. But they dont give ye orders for nothing. Nobody does that. Why do yer bosses think they do? They're wrong to think that, I dont know why they do it. Ye've always got to fight. For every last damn order ye're always having to do it, ye grit yer teeth and open the door, Good morning sir, how are you? And then them looking at ye. That's what they do. They open the door and see ye and ye're standing there and they just look at ye. It's like bad manners, that's what I think. So then if things have happened to ye along the way how do ye say yer Good mornings? because it's been a bad morning for you and maybe ye should say Bad morning sir? Ye've just got to pretend it's a good morning and sometimes if ye go in and it's a crowd of guys and they all just make jokes. Maybe ye get a blind panic settling in because that happens as well, to me it does.

INVALID CLEARS HIS THROAT LOUDLY

EDWARD There's all kinds of trials and tribulations. Ye see in some ways today has been awful bad for me.

INVALID Facilities young fellow

EDWARD CONTINUES] Awful bad. I'll no bore ye with the sorry details, it's just personal stuff mainly, and that kind's best not to get aired. My dad always says that. Ye have to remember I'm younger than you Mister Parker, you dont know what like it is nowadays. Folk dont talk about serious things, they only talk about stuff like television and football and sex, and then rock bands, that side of things, media personalities and high financiers, big fat-cats who work down the Stock Exchange, the ones who get the great big sums of money, they're just the same age as me and they earn a fortune and it just isnay fair, I dont think it is. It isnay just me that thinks it.

INVALID LOUDER] Facilities young fellow

EDWARD Pardon?

INVALID What ye were saying about the facilities in this place, just tell us about them.

EDWARD Deborah!

DEBORAH Hiya

INVALID He was telling me about the facilities Catherine. Some funny rules they've got in this place! (PAUSE) Eh young fellow? The housing authorities here...

EDWARD Oh yeh, yeh...and frayed carpets... [SWALLOWS]

INVALID PAUSE] Tell us again. [PAUSE] They're strict eh?

EDWARD Yes.

INVALID Tell her about what people do.

EDWARD NERVOUSLY] In their own minds do ye mean?

INVALID No. For food

EDWARD Pardon?

INVALID Food..

EDWARD D'ye mean the other tenants or just me myself?

INVALID Just how ye all get by for yer meals and the rest of it

EDWARD Well, some people I think just eat cold stuff; cheese and slices of pressed meat [DISGUSTED] Processed meat. Tins of beans unheated, they just open the tins and empty the beans onto the plate. That kind of thing. Bread and butter. Or chips and kebabs or maybe samosas and pakora from the carry-out shop.

INVALID Samosas and pakora Catherine

CATHERINE Mm.

EDWARD Other people buy an electric kettle and what they do is boil eggs inside the kettle, and they cook things preserved in salted water, like these wee frankfurter sausages ye can buy ready to eat, ye just boil them inside yer kettle and sometimes people heat up these wee fish done in tomato sauce - pil-chards. [STRESS 2ND SYLLABLE]

DEBORAH IRONIC] He's talking about himself.

CATHERINE PUZZLED] What does he mean?

DEBORAH He boils pilchards in his electric kettle and then he makes a cup of tea straight after, without rinsing out the kettle so it's all tomato sauce left inside - even vinegar sometimes.

EDWARD UNEASILY] Well it only happened once

CATHERINE STERNLY] It only takes the once

EDWARD What?

DEBORAH AMUSED] See!

EDWARD GUILTILY] It was only the one time I did it, honest.

INVALID AMUSED] Tomato sauce!

EDWARD CLEARS THROAT] Ye can maybe even cook soup in yer kettle, especially if it's really clear soup and not full of vegetables. I've done it. As long as the landlords dont find out, these bloodsuckers, what they dont know wont hurt them - they're absentees, they're just in it for the money, they dont care.

CATHERINE DISMISSIVELY] Well of course they dont, it's a capitalist economy. You see Deborah, if he was fit and healthy we wouldnt be in this state.

INVALID ASIDE] It's true young fellow

CATHERINE We would have a proper cooker with an oven and I could make proper meals. Even in a place like this. Ye see he was on the injured pensioner's income supplement from the social authorities but they took him off it and stopped paying him because his legs had become a condition, so that's us now until he gets better, if he ever will. And he's the only one that says he will, because the doctor says he'll no.

INVALID That's my legs forever. So they say. But I'm no letting them away with it. I'll just throw away my zimmer! Lift up thy legs and walk!

DEBORAH That's appalling! Isn't it Edward? Mister and Missis Parker. In this day and age it's a total disgrace.

EDWARD CLEARS THROAT

DEBORAH And are the authorities not going to do anything about it? Are they hoping we'll all just lie down and let them walk over the top of us? We arent a bunch of cowards altogether

EDWARD CLEARS THROAT] I'm sorry. I'll have to go back downstairs now. I've got my studies to attend to.

INVALID He's got his test tomorrow morning.

CATHERINE Did ye tell him about yer cousin Donald?

INVALID No.

CATHERINE Ye should have.

INVALID Och he's no wanting to hear about that old business. Eh young fellow?

EDWARD It's only because things are so rushed

CATHERINE Rushed?

DEBORAH He has a wee test tomorrow morning

EDWARD It's a big test.

DEBORAH Well...!

EDWARD But it's really important. I was thinking of setting my alarm early, so's I could get up and do an extra bit of studying.

INVALID Ye'll pass young fellow so dont worry.

EDWARD I was telling eh Mister Parker about it, he says I'll pass.

CATHERINE Bobbie's good at that kind of thing. Did you tell him about the spanners?

INVALID I was just starting

EDWARD QUICKLY] But there wasn't time because I have to be going because I have all the eh...

INVALID He's in a rush

DEBORAH QUIETLY] Are you alright.

EDWARD I thought ye would feel like something to eat...

DEBORAH Me or you?

EDWARD Pardon?

DEBORAH Do you want to eat?

EDWARD If you do.

DEBORAH WEARILY] Oh

EDWARD I mean eh...

DEBORAH IRRITATION] Oh Edward

INVALID So I'll maybe pop down later like we agreed.

EDWARD Beg pardon?

INVALID Maybe the back of ten, is that what ye said? when ye're knocking off for a coffee. Or else will you just come up here?

EDWARD Eh

INVALID Well I'll just pop down then

EDWARD Maybe I'll be going to bed early

INVALID Oh I'll just pop down and see.

CATHERINE You can't go up and down these stairs

INVALID It'll be alright.

CATHERINE SIGH] If it was up to him he'd be manning the barricades

INVALID She's exaggerating. [CHUCKLES] I'd just be following you!

CATHERINE Stubborn besom.

INVALID I'll only be going down the one flight of stairs.

CATHERINE Aye well ye're no supposed to go down any flights of stairs. You know what the doctor says.

INVALID What do they know. Scoundrels and rogues the lot of them. Nowadays they're just businessmen

DEBORAH Oh I agree with you there Mister Parker. But not them all

CATHERINE Of course not them all. That's what I tell him

INVALID Firms' men to the core! That right young fellow?

EDWARD WARILY] Mmm

INVALID See, he agrees with me. Tell them. [AMUSED] Go on

EDWARD Tell them what?

INVALID Anything ye want

EDWARD What do ye mean?

INVALID There's comes the time we have to move, we just cannay stand still, even when we want to. Ye see young fellow the world doesnay let us

EDWARD RISES FROM HIS CHAIR AND HE TAKES DEBORAH BY THE HAND

DEBORAH PULLS AWAY] What are ye doing?

EDWARD Sorry

DEBORAH Just dont do that

EDWARD I was only taking yer hand.

DEBORAH Well dont

EDWARD Sorry

DEBORAH I see what ye mean Missis Parker, it's just like ye were saying

CATHERINE SIGHS] But they're not all the same

INVALID IRONIC] Well thanks

CATHERINE You're just a stubborn besom

INVALID I'm no as stubborn as you

CATHERINE Of course ye are

INVALID No I'm not

CATHERINE Anyway, I'm not stubborn

INVALID Aye ye are

CATHERINE I'm not

EDWARD WHISPERS] I dont believe it, it's just sentimental

DEBORAH WHISPERS] What did you say?

EDWARD I've got to go... [OPENS DOOR]

DEBORAH ANNOYED SIGH] Apparently

EDWARD Sorry.

INVALID Mind now young fellow!

EDWARD 'Bye.

DEBORAH TO CATHERINE) Thanks for everything.

CATHERINE Oh that's okay

DEBORAH No but thank you, it was so good to hear ye say these things

EDWARD What things?

CATHERINE Cheerio

DEBORAH 'Bye

SOUND DOOR CLOSES

DEBORAH Dont take my wrist like that. Edward, ye're gripping my wrist too tight,

it's sore.

EDWARD I didnt mean it.

DEBORAH It's sore

EDWARD Sorry.

DEBORAH Dont ever try to lead me like that again either, it's degrading

EDWARD Sorry. Eh I was wondering, where did ye meet the old woman?

DEBORAH Missis Parker, I met her in the street.

EDWARD The street...?

DEBORAH Yes, what's wrong with that?

EDWARD Oh nothing I mean it's just a bit... strange. Not think so?

DEBORAH No...

EDWARD Oh

DEBORAH Why is it strange?

EDWARD Oh well I dont I mean I was just eh... Oh look, the bathroom door's open. [PUSHES OPEN THE BATHROOM DOOR, IT CREAKS] Every door in this damn house just creaks all the time, why dont they oil the hinges, it's easy, a good lubricant does the trick. I could give them a discount on one. Look, the place is filthy, it's full of laundry

DEBORAH People have got to wash their clothes

EDWARD yes but this is a public place, the bathroom's for everybody. It's horrendous. Ye can't use the place. Ye would be as well without a bath!

DEBORAH For God sake Edward.

EDWARD THEY CONTINUE WALKING DOWNSTAIRS] We shouldnt be forced to look at other people's dirty washing I mean it's a communal living area

DEBORAH You're in a funny mood.

EDWARD What do ye mean?

DEBORAH What were you and the old man talking about when we came in? Ye just switched subjects; one minute you were talking about fate and big business and then ye went to making tins of soup in the electric kettle. [PAUSE] It was peculiar

EDWARD We were just having a conversation.

DEBORAH (IRRITABLY) Men's talk.

EDWARD No, it was only...

DEBORAH What?

EDWARD It was a conversation

DEBORAH SIGHS

EDWARD That's all [HE FUMBLES FOR HIS KEY] Where's the key... [CONTINUES FUMBLING IN HIS POCKETS] Damn thing

DEBORAH SIGHS

EDWARD Sorry [CONTINUES FUMBLING] Oh God my key my key where is it oh God I've lost my key oh lord, lordie

DEVORAH Relax!

EDWARD I think I've lost the damn thing [FRUSTRATION] Oh God! [GRASPS HANDLE] Bloody thing.

DEBORAH Dont keep swearing all the time

EDWARD [THE DOOR CREAKS OPENS. HE IS AMAZED] It's opened. It wasn't locked. I must've forgotten to lock it.

DEBORAH (SIGHS) Come on [THEY ENTER AND CLOSE THE DOOR] Edward, where's yer socks and shoes? I saw ye weren't wearing them upstairs.

EDWARD (GUILTILY) I just didn't put them on

DEBORAH Why not?

EDWARD There they are there... [COLLECTS HIS SOCKS FROM FLOOR] I'll just put them on now. [SUDDENLY] There's my doorkey. [LAUGHS] Thank God. Look! What a strange world

DEBORAH These photographs are face down

EDWARD I wonder what happened, oh lord oh lord, I must have banged into them

DEBORAH Edward what's wrong?

EDWARD (FUMBLING PHOTOGRAPHS) I'll just put them back up

DEBORAH There's the one with us and Janet, the three of us

EDWARD Is it? Yes, yes it is

DEBORAH I havent seen her for a couple of days, normally she phones or I phone her

EDWARD Yeh...

DEBORAH EXASPERATED] Edward what is wrong with you?

EDWARD ANGUISHED] Nothing...

DEBORAH And your clothes all over the floor like that

EDWARD It was the old woman, I was washing, she came to the door and I had to eh just eh...and I was doing my studying for that damn test. So then I had to go up the stair just when I was getting into it. They may be a great old couple but for God sake some people just dont think, they just dont seem to have minds of their own I mean so therefore they dont think about other people, about what they've got on their plate with their problems. We've all got problems Deborah, each one of us, we've all got these damn bloody problems. But we dont go and get other people to sort it out for us, if we've got a problem, we sort it for ourself, that's what I think. Because we havent got the time to go and do it for other people, even although we want to [PAUSE] And that damn test with all thse damn Product Manuals and Sales, it's a load of mumbo jumbo, that's all it is. [PAUSE]

SOUND DEBORAH STEPS TO THE WALL

EDWARD What is it?

DEBORAH What's that... [STEPS TO THE WALL]

EDWARD What?

DEBORAH That on the wall, it's a stain. It's a curious one.

EDWARD Mm

DEBORAH Look at it.

EDWARD Oh yeh, yeh. I meant to clean it earlier on, I was tidying up, before you arrived, and then that old woman came for me and I had to go up the bloody stair.

DEBORAH Don't blame Missis Parker

EDWARD SUSPICIOUSLY] Missis Parker...

DEBORAH That's her name

EDWARD She's forceful ye know. She doesnt look it but she is. She dominates things.

DEBORAH Dont be silly

EDWARD I'm not. Obviously I'm glad to help out. Especially if it's an old person, ye help them at all costs, but at the same time...just if it's life, if it's yer life, what do we do, ye're on the line, ye cannay be everywhere and ye cannay do everything and yet ye're expected to, everybody expects it, ye have to be superman and just go and help everybody like wherever if it's a world catastrophe or whatever it is, I'm sick of it, ye're supposed to drop everything and go and

DEBORAH INTERRUPTS HIM] Edward

EDWARD I know it's bloody awful, everything's bloody awful. People just dont think nowadays. They dont I mean I notice that all the time. You're right what ye said.

DEBORAH What about?

EDWARD Oh just... Look at all that stuff, Product Manuals and Sales

DEBORAH IRONIC] Have you got time to go out for a meal?

EDWARD Sometimes I feel as if I'm just making no headway at all. [SUDDEN ANGUISH] Oh Deborah

DEBORAH WORRIED] What is it?

EDWARD SLUMPS ONTO CHAIR

DEBORAH What's wrong Edward

EDWARD Oh God... [MUMBLING) So bloody bad, just so...so...

DEBORAH STEPS TO HIM, SPEAKS TENDERLY] Dont worry.

EDWARD Awww... (HEAD IN HANDS)

DEBORAH You're pulling your ears...

EDWARD Sorry

DEBORAH GENUINE CONCERN) Are you alright?

EDWARD No, no, I'm not, I'm not feeling good I'm just...not feeling good

DEBORAH SOOTHING, STROKES HIS HEAD] There now, relax...just relax

EDWARD SUDDENLY MOVES FROM HER] No!

DEBORAH What's wrong? You're shivering...

EDWARD I'm sorry

DEBORAH Dont be silly

EDWARD QUIETLY] It's just so strange...

DEBORAH There there, just relax

EDWARD Just how yer life goes I mean I played for a good tennis club as a boy. I quite enjoyed it. I did. (QUIET CHUCKLE] We used to have masturbation contests.

DEBORAH AMAZED] What!

EDWARD ALSO AMAZED] I beg your pardon. It was just stupid I mean ye couldnt call it wicked, the kind of mischief ye get up to I mean boys, it's devilment...we all do it, it means nothing it's just... See Deborah ye've got your dreams, these dreams, when ye're wee, it's amazing the imagination ye have, all these dreams. I had millions of them. We all do. Then ye mess it up. Ye make a mess of it. Everything. Ye just... I dont know what we do we just seem to mess it all up.

DEBORAH COLDLY] In what way?

EDWARD It's just life though. I wish it was possible to help that old guy and his wife, I really do, it would be great to help them. [FORCED LAUGH] I dont even know what they want! I bet she's never done a bad turn in her life, that old woman. It's just so remote ye can't imagine it! Ye can tell by the way she looks at ye, right at ye, ye just dont know what to think, ye dont - her eyes, they get right inside. And ye're left with no secrets at all; she sees everything I mean for God sake how come? It's not fair. Honestly Deborah, I just feel so hopeless in comparison to somebody like that...

DEBORAH TENDERLY] Sshhh

EDWARD SUBMISSIVELY) Then what happens to her and her husband, it makes ye angry...

DEBORAH Sshh.

EDWARD SIGHS. BREATHEES DEEPLY, REGULARLY

DEBORAH Sshh.

EDWARD SIGHS, SLOW WHISPER] Standing by the fireplace, wears a t-shirt and tracksuit bottoms, her feet bare; no bra, no bra; and she's recently showered, the towel wrapped round her hair; staring at me, just staring, nibbling on her lower lip, that was she does my God it is just...oh lord... [SWALLOWS]

DEBORAH Sshh

EDWARD GULPS, ALMOST CHOCKING] My neck!

DEBORAH Sorry...

EDWARD BREATHEs REGULARLY AGAIN] But it's the fall of man, it's not just me

DEBORAH What?

EDWARD Samson and Delilah and Adam and Eve, it's all the same, ye do these things, Man, ye do them. What the hell do ye do them for, I dont know. Ye just take your punishment. Ye're due it. So if ye're due it ye take it, that's the way things are I mean. (SIGHS) God...if it was just possible to finish with all these stupid problems; if ye could just relax. I'd love to relax. But how can ye, these damn erections, ye're always on yer guard. So we're doomed, the whole lot of us. That's the trials and tribulations. (PAUSE)

INVALID WHISPERS, OMINOUSLY] That's a difficult one young fellow

EDWARD That's why we stray, it's not badness. There's sins and there's confessions. Look at what goes on in the world, it's terrible so it is, death and starvation and pollution, plus horrible evil crimes like genocide. And then blasphemy! Some say that's the worst. (HORROR) I do it all the time... (PAUSE) I dont even know I'm doing it. And it's worse than murder, because ye're going against the Lord. But the amazing thing is ye can still be saved! Even there, that's the great thing about it!

INVALID WHISPERS] He's diligent

EDWARD I'm not diligent. My concentration's nil...

DEBORAH BRIGHTLY] Here's yer coffee. Like a biscuit?

EDWARD SUSPICIOUSLY] Thanks

DEBORAH What were you saying?

EDWARD People try and dictate the terms of yer life and I mean it's not their life to dictate it's ours, so they should just bloody well leave us in peace to get on with it.

DEBORAH See that stain on the wall?

EDWARD SUSPICIOUSLY] What about it?

DEBORAH It's just like it's getting bigger

EDWARD What d'ye mean? [SHUDDERS] Then the time we went on the boy scout summer camp, and we played this daft game where we had to kid on we were out on army manouevres and Davie Finlay had cheroots from Holland he'd stolen off his uncle and we all smoked them, he said they were cheroots, that's what he called them. My God it was bad! Maybe the worst queasiness I've ever experienced - I mean if ye're talking about queasiness.

DEBORAH AMUSED] What?

EDWARD Sorry! It's just memories, they come and go. We dont have any control. The good Lord made us with memory boxes and inside each one of them ye've got the Voice of Conscience. And the Voice isnt yer own. As well as that it's in touch with everybody else's. That's how it catches ye out.

DEBORAH What are ye talking about?

EDWARD I used to believe that when I was wee. They told us at Sunday School. It's how ye know ye've done wrong; that's how ye can tell. If ye think of all the sins in the world. It's because of that ghostly communication we all have, that's how it works. Wash my sins away. You know me and I know you. We're all connected inside our heads or else is it souls, our souls are all connected. That old invalid up the stairs, he agrees, what's-his-name

DEBORAH Mister Parker.

EDWARD But I'm not like him at all, I'm just a damn fool

DEBORAH No you're not

EDWARD I am...

DEBORAH EXASPERATED SIGH] Dont be so silly

EDWARD CONFSSIONAL] That stain on the wall Deborah, it was me, it's the blood of an insect. I killed it. I squashed the life out it, poor wee soul, just in cold blood, like the way ye kill a beetle. Because that is what it is, a beetle, an insect's a beetle, so how ye kill the wee thing, we dont even care, like how ye kill a beetle, that's how we describe it. So it's a byword for all the death and destruction and the wanton brutality, throughout the entire world and it's just a horror. Even the way ye sell yer products to people, ye just gyp them into buying rubbish. That's what I do. It's just so terrible and wanton and goes against everything God stands for.

DEBORAH EXASPERATED] What are ye talking about. It's only a job! [HE STANDS AND BEGINS UNDRRESSING] What are ye doing?

EDWARD I need to wash.

DEBORAH We're supposed to be going for a meal

EDWARD Yeh I know but...

DEBORAH I thought ye washed earlier on?

EDWARD No eh...and then eh... [SNIFFS] The thing is ye see I dont get on with yer sister. I was meaning to tell ye that. I dont like saying it and I'm sorry. But I feel like I dont want to see her again.

DEBORAH PUZZLED] What do ye mean?

EDWARD Sorry... [OPENS DRAWER ON CUPBOARD] I just need a quick wash, just

to wash myself

DEBORAH Well go up to the bathroom and have a shower?

EDWARD It's too eh...

DEBORAH What do ye mean about Janet?

EDWARD AS THOUGH PREOCCUPIED] But it's so hopeless that bathroom, people's washing all hanging up to dry

DEBORAH EXASPERATED] Edward!

EDWARD I'll be quick [TURNS ON TAP ON SINK]

DEBORAH But it's disgusting washing in the sink like that!

EDWARD I'll clean it after.

DEBORAH That's where ye wash yer dishes!

EDWARD Aye but I dont have any dishes. Only one or two. It's just cups they give ye in this place. It's the same with the facilities, ye heard the old invalid guy. It's hopeless my god ye saw the bathroom, it's just...I dont know, hopeless.

DEBORAH Well do something about it if it's hopeless. [PAUSE] Edward, do something about it

EDWARD Yes...

DEBORAH Go and tell the landlord, that's what the old lady up the stair's going to do, she's going to complain to the landlord

EDWARD SURPRISE] Is she?

DEBORAH Yes

EDWARD Okay but where is the landlord? They're absentees. Who knows where they are, they maybe aren't even in Glasgow

DEBORAH EXASPERATED SIGH

EDWARD And something else...I dont like saying it... But what a smell! Ohhh. Did you not notice it? It was overpowering. I thought I was going to faint, I went dizzy. I didnt know what was happening. Then because he's an elderly man and he's an invalid we dont like to comment because like it's a natural thing we have to pretend there isnt a smell but oh my God, lordie lordie lordie I thought I would've passed out.

DEBORAH COLDLY] I didnt smell anything.

EDWARD PUZZLED] Ye didnt smell anything?

DEBORAH The home-care nurse comes in and bathes him every morning. His wife says he's spotless

EDWARD Spotless? He's not spotless

DEBORAH What are you talking about?

EDWARD He's not spotless, I've spoken to him...

DEBORAH So?

EDWARD TURNS ON TAP] Old people like that, they seem to be, like they're paragons of truth and virtue and all that justice and stuff. Well I dont believe a word of it and I'm sick of hearing about it, if they want to go away and fight they can go away and fight, I dont care. So-called justice - them and their old bodies and clothes. Who would wear clothes like that. Where do they get their clothes. Sometimes it just makes ye shudder [TURNS OFF THE TAP]

DEBORAH Edward, what is it?

EDWARD Maybe I should go up the stair for a shower. What time is it?

DEBORAH What's wrong?

EDWARD GUILTILY] Nothing

DEBORAH Look at ye! You're standing there naked.

EDWARD Oh God the towel, I'm sorry [GRABS TOWEL TO COVER HIMSELF]

DEBORAH Ye'll catch pneumonia

EDWARD Sorry

DEBORAH PAUSE] Edward... what's wrong?

EDWARD CAUTIOUSLY] Pardon?

DEBORAH What's wrong? There's something wrong. What were you saying about Janet? [PAUSE] What was it?

EDWARD What?

DEBORAH SIGHS] What were you saying about Janet? You said you didnt like her? You didnt like her? Is that what you said?

EDWARD I said that?

DEBORAH Yes. Why did ye say it?

EDWARD I dont know, I just said it.

DEBORAH But why?

EDWARD I dont know. It just came out.

DEBORAH But why?

EDWARD It was just how it came out

DEBORAH Tell me

EDWARD Och it doesnt matter.

DEBORAH It does matter, it matters very much [PAUSE] It matters very much.

EDWARD I dont think

DEBORAH For heaven sake Edward it matters if you dont like my sister.

EDWARD I dont not like her, not at all

DEBORAH Then why did ye say it?

EDWARD I didnt

DEBORAH ANGRILY] Edward...

EDWARD Not in these words

DEBORAH Yes ye did

EDWARD I didnt

DEBORAH So what were the words ?

EDWARD Not them anyway

DEBORAH QUIETLY] So tell me [PAUSE] What happened? Did ye have a fall-out?

EDWARD What?

DEBORAH I spoke to her on the phone and she was a bit off with me. Did ye have a sort of row?

EDWARD No.

DEBORAH She can be too quick at times, I know that. Ye shouldnt take what she

says too much to heart. She does like ye [PAUSE] She does, I know she does. [PAUSE] But she has a sharp tongue. And she's quirky, she's got that sense of humour. [AMUSED] She thinks you dont relax enough...

EDWARD GUARDED] Did she say that?

DEBORAH More than once. [TENDERLY] We dont have to go out for a meal, we could get a take away and just oh I dont know - turn down the lights! [CHUCKLES]

EDWARD But you were wanting to go out

DEBORAH I dont like dragging ye away from yer work

EDWARD Oh it doesnt matter

DEBORAH But it's important

EDWARD Ach...

DEBORAH Important for you. [PAUSE] What's wrong

EDWARD I need to get out I think, just a break...some fresh air.

DEBORAH Are you sure you've got time

EDWARD I'll just make time

SOUND HE OPENS A DRAWER, WITHDRAWS CLOTHES, DRESSES

DEBORAH SURPRISE] You're putting on a shirt and tie

EDWARD Sorry

DEBORAH No, it's up to you

EDWARD NERVOUS ATTEMPT AT HUMOUR] I thought I was going to work for a minute

DEBORAH Don't worry

EDWARD Sorry

DEBORAH Why are you saying sorry? dont say sorry all the time

EDWARD I'm not

DEBORAH WORRIED] Edward...

EDWARD I'm not [PAUSE] Oh God that old guy's coming down, he said he was coming down

DEBORAH Just leave him a note

EDWARD BRIGHTENS) Yeh

DEBORAH He wont mind

EDWARD DEJECTED] Yes he will

DEBORAH No he wont

EDWARD I better go and tell him

DEBORAH No you dont

EDWARD Coming down the stairs for nothing, an old invalid like that, it's no fair, he might fall or something - I dont want that on my conscience

DEBORAH Edward...!

EDWARD VERY HESITANT] I better just.. Oh God, Deborah...

DEBORAH What?

EDWARD Nothing, nothing, it's just, oh God... [PAUSE, HUSHED VOICE] What are you looking at/

DEBORAH PAUSE] It's that stain on the wall... Is it wider?

EDWARD What?

DEBORAH I think it's wider

EDWARD Let me see

DEBORAH Don't rub it

EDWARD I'm just...

DEBORAH It's on yer hand now

EDWARD PAUSE] Yes

DEBORAH Let me see... [PAUSE] Your hand's shaking . What is it? [PAUSE] It's brown and...

EDWARD HUSHED TONES] Maybe it's insect blood. Oh Deborah...

DEBORAH TENDER] Dont worry

EDWARD What am I going to do...the wee soul, it's just so awful and wanton how horrible everything is, the way we live our life, these brutalities, me too, how I've committed terrible sins that'll make me pay, even though I'm just an ordinary man in this vale of tears

DEBORAH Edward, take your hands away from your face. Let me see you [PAUSE] what's wrong with you? [PAUSE] You've not been eating properly. And now your stomach's in knots because of the work you've been doing. That's what it is

EDWARD MEEKLY] Yes

DEBORAH That stupid test

EDWARD PAUSE. SADLY] Oh Deborah... Deborah...

DEBORAH QUIETLY] What...?

end