

DIANE (*regaining her composure*). Sorry.

NAT. No...

DIANE. Thanks, Nat.

NAT. No...

DIANE *goes to get the map, bringing it to NAT.*

DIANE. Listen, I've been looking at this. We could get to St Thomas and back – in six hours.

NAT. Yeah...

DIANE. I mean, there's got to be a supermarket. There's got to be something.

NAT. Diane...

DIANE. We could be there in two, two-and-a-half hours. At the very least we'd have had a good...

NAT. Yeah, but...

DIANE. And even if we... if somehow we got... that we thought it was getting too late, there has to be somewhere that we could... I mean, what do we...

NAT. Shh! (*Holds his hand up to silence her.*)

They hear shouting in the distance. Different voices. Sporadic.

Blow out those candles!

They quickly douse the lights. The voices fall silent. There is a lot of flapping and scratching as the birds become excited coming and going from the roof of the house.

They wait listening. They only hear the birds. Then they hear a church bell off in the distance. Lights fade as they listen.

Scene Five

It is a bright afternoon. All is quiet. A girl of about twenty, JULIA, comes into the room, rolling a cigarette. She has a dressing over a cut on her head. She is wearing a pair of high-heeled shoes. She finds some matches. A tape is playing in a radio/cassette player. It is someone playing a piano. She smokes, taking a saucer as an ashtray. DIANE arrives, a blanket wrapped around her. She throws a cold eye on the scene. JULIA gets up and turns down the music.

JULIA. Sorry.

DIANE. Is that the radio?

JULIA. No, I found a few tapes upstairs in a shoebox.

DIANE. Tapes will wear down the batteries.

JULIA. Okay. Sorry.

She switches it off.

And I found some shoes. They're going to kill me, but they'll have to do.

DIANE. How are you feeling?

JULIA. You have no idea what it means to me to be here, Diane. I can hardly believe it. I haven't felt safe like this for so long.

DIANE. How's your head?

JULIA. It's sore. But I want to start pitching in with all the chores now. When I stop feeling dizzy.

DIANE. Should you be smoking if you feel dizzy?

JULIA. Probably not.

JULIA stubs the fag out.

DIANE. Where did you get the cigarettes?

JULIA. I found some tobacco in a drawer upstairs. It's kind of horrible actually.

DIANE. Is it okay if you don't smoke in the house?

JULIA. Yeah, sorry, I didn't think.

DIANE (*indicating a mattress and blanket on the floor*). Are you finished with your bed?

JULIA. Yeah. Oh sorry.

She goes to help DIANE tidy it away.

DIANE. Show me that dressing.

DIANE goes to JULIA and *maternally looks at her wound.*

I didn't do a great job. Let me put another one on.

JULIA. Thanks, Diane.

DIANE. Lie up here.

JULIA lies on the sofa. DIANE wipes her hands and gets the first aid kit. She goes to JULIA and carefully removes the dressing.

What did you say he hit you with?

JULIA. A bell.

DIANE. A bell?

DIANE gently dabs at the wound with some antiseptic.

JULIA. I know. He found it in the classroom where we were hiding. And this particular person, he'd been trying to... you know... trying to be with me for a few nights, I woke up and he was trying to, you know, get close to me.

DIANE. Where were the other girls?

JULIA. They were in a different classroom and in the office. I was in a kind of big closet off one of the rooms. I'd been asleep.

DIANE. How many were there?

JULIA. Two other older girls. But I don't think they would have helped me. I had to get out. I ran across a huge football field, he came after me, but he was drunk. The birds got him. I heard him trying to get back into the school, but I don't think he made it. I hope he didn't.

DIANE. The birds didn't come after you?

JULIA. No. I hid in the church for a few hours and then I started walking out down by the road, but because I had no shoes and my legs were really wobbly, I was like... Then when I saw the smoke from your chimney I just thought, God, this is a miracle!

Pause.

DIANE. But why did you leave Port Argus?

JULIA. It was insane there, Diane. The whole place was drunk. There was a fire in the library and everybody had to leave. We had tried to get into Mountstewart. But no one was getting in. They'd closed the whole place down. So we started fucking walking. We slept in a house out in the country like this for a night but it was too crazy. Birds got in.

She winces in pain.

DIANE. Sorry.

JULIA. No it's fine. Then we slept in a factory, but that was horrible. We were in the school then for two nights. They'd found a load of malt liquor in a truck and I was sleeping away from the others 'cause I knew that something was going to happen. Something bad.

DIANE finishes dressing the wound and starts tidying up.

Thanks, Diane.

DIANE. You're welcome. It really needs a stitch.

JULIA (*lightly touches the dressing*). Thanks for looking after me.

DIANE. Hey, anyone would do it.

JULIA. I don't know about that! Nat told me you have a daughter. Is that right?

DIANE (*nods*). Mm-hm.

JULIA. How old is she?

DIANE. Older than you.

JULIA. I hope you get to see her again soon.

DIANE. Well, We'll see...

DIANE is over where they keep their food.

There was a can of spaghetti here.

JULIA. What was it?

DIANE. There was a can of SpaghettiOs on top of that box there.

JULIA. I don't know.

DIANE. You didn't see it?

JULIA. No. I only had half a stock cube and some water all day.

DIANE. But it was right there.

JULIA. There's pasta in the other box.

DIANE. I know, but the canned stuff is... I'm always very careful with it, because we can mix it with other things. And we never...

DIANE is searching for it.

JULIA. Maybe Nat will bring some back from the gas station.

DIANE. Yeah, but that's not what I'm talking about.

JULIA. Diane, I swear to God... I was just looking for tobacco.

Diane. I didn't eat the spaghetti. I wouldn't do that.

~~NAT arrives in the doorway. He carries a few things, not much.~~

NAT. What's happened?

JULIA. Some food is gone missing. I was just telling Diane I didn't take it.

DIANE. I didn't say that. It's just, there was a can right here on top of the box and now it's gone.

NAT. I ate it.

DIANE. What?

NAT. I ate it.

DIANE. When?

NAT. Before I left. I had to or I couldn't walk all the way round the lake.

DIANE. Oh. Well. I'm sorry, Julia. I didn't know.

NAT is taking off his overcoat, hat, belt, etc....

JULIA. No. That's okay. I know. Do you want a glass of water, Nat?

NAT. What?

JULIA. Do you want a drink of water?

NAT. Hm?

JULIA. Do you want a drink?

NAT. Thanks.

DIANE. Here.

DIANE pours a drink of water for NAT. She hands it to JULIA who brings it to him.

NAT. Listen. (Pause.) There's nothing left up there. Your friends cleared it out.

JULIA. I knew they would.

DIANE. What are we going to do? Try St Thomas?

JULIA. We'll have to.

DIANE. What about we just get the fuck out of here?! Try to keep going!

NAT. There's nothing organised out there! You should have seen what they did over at the gas station. We could run into any kind of... (Indicating JULIA's injuries.) St Thomas is as far as we could make it.

DIANE. Well, let's do it.

JULIA. We found food in a place about four miles or five miles from here. It was a house with a shop.

NAT. Where exactly?

JULIA. On the way to Port Argus.

DIANE. How long would it take us?

JULIA. Three hours, four, maybe more, depending.

DIANE. We could do it.

JULIA. I could show you where it is.

DIANE. We could take the wheelbarrow. Or the other handcart. Take turns wheeling it through the traffic jams.

NAT. I don't know. I don't like the idea of no one being here.

NAT begins closing up the house.

JULIA. Why? Nat. Why?

NAT. I don't know. I just... No reason, I suppose.

JULIA. You and me could go, Nat. I can show you exactly where it is.

END