

SIDE: TIERNEY

Scene Ten

Morning. A grey sky. The door is closed over. DIANE is alone, doing some sit-ups. All is quiet. Then a figure passes the door. DIANE looks up, wondering did she see something. No one is there. A shadow appears in the doorway, a key turns in the lock and the door is gently opened. DIANE can only watch the door in horror. A big, heavyset man in his fifties has come in, carrying a plastic bag and a shotgun. He is filthy. He has what looks like a bamboo waste-paper basket with eye holes cut out over his head. DIANE stares at him, as though she can't believe this is happening. He takes his 'helmet' off.

TIERNEY. All on your own?

DIANE. No.

TIERNEY. No, you are, that was rhetorical. I'm your neighbour.

DIANE. What do you want?

TIERNEY. I brought you a few gifts. To say hello. I was wondering why you didn't go off with the other pair this morning. Where are they gone? St Thomas? *(Pause.)* There's nothing there. I could've told you, but you're never sociable.

DIANE. They're only down at the lake. They'll be back in a few minutes.

TIERNEY. I saw them going off up the road more than two hours ago towing a wheelbarrow. They're not at the lake.

DIANE. What do you want?

TIERNEY. This is my sister's house. I grew up here.

Short pause.

DIANE. Well, I'm sure you understand that all bets are off. I mean, we don't want to be here either, but we don't have a choice. Just take whatever you want and...

TIERNEY *(gives a little laugh)*. All bets are off, I like that. *(Produces a bottle of brandy from his bag.)* Have a drink with me.

DIANE. No, I'm... I'm fine, thank you.

TIERNEY. Mind if I grab a cup?

DIANE. Do I have a choice?

TIERNEY. Of course you do. Hey, welcome to reality – where anything is possible, right?

TIERNEY takes two cups and pours them both a drink.

Seen anyone else about?

DIANE. No. *(Short pause.)* Have you?

TIERNEY. Not for weeks. Nothing on the radio any more. Nothing on the TV. Nothing nowhere. *(Drinks.)* What do you think? Are we the last people left in the world?

DIANE. I don't know.

TIERNEY. They never saw this one coming, ha? No one ever thought nature was just going to eat us. *(Pause.)* Mm? *(Short pause.)* Jesus Christ, it's so quiet! *(Pause.)* Sometimes I wonder if I'm going insane! *(Laughs grimly.)* Probably lost it long ago. Here.

He offers her an open envelope.

DIANE. What is it?

TIERNEY *(shakes it a little)*. Pills. Tablets. All the kids from Port Argus and Mountstewart used to take them. I got them out of a pharmacy. They're a controlled substance you might say. If you take them with a drink they make the time pass quicker.

DIANE. No, I'm alright.

TIERNEY. They kill pain.

DIANE. No thanks.

TIERNEY. Okay. *(Pops a pill and shudders.)* I have to stop taking them. *(Pause. Regards DIANE.)* Why do you look so familiar?

DIANE. I don't know.

Pause.

TIERNEY. Look. I got food. I got drink. I got medicine. I got the lot. I've got a whole lock-up. I can get by for years. I've seen you going around with Romeo. But the girl's with him now. Your days are numbered.

DIANE. What do you mean?

TIERNEY. You're crowding them out. The girl wants him to herself.
What good are you to her?

DIANE. What are you talking about?

TIERNEY. Ah, wake up, will you? You're on the final countdown here, baby.

DIANE. No. Look, I think you've... You see, the three of us. We don't want to be trespassers but we're just trying to...

TIERNEY. Do me a favour and don't be stupid, will you? You think that girl was out there surviving by her wits and her charm? Anyone who's left out there is an animal! The people she was with ransacked the whole place over at the crossroads. They killed a woman who'd been hiding in the house up behind the gas station. I saw the body. Her mouth was wide open, like this – *(Does the dead woman's face.)* screaming into the floor.

DIANE. That wasn't Julia, she was with some bad people for a while but...

TIERNEY. Use your brain, missus, she's out for herself. I know!

DIANE. How would you know?

TIERNEY. Because... I've lived like that. I was one of the armies of the road. In the eighties, the nineties. Living on the streets over in Wolchurch – and Birhaven. Years, I lived like that before I came back. To look after my mother. You go from morning to night, morning to night, that's all you know about. That's all you know. I can see it in her. I know exactly who she is. It's not her fault, but she'll have to get rid of you.

DIANE. No, you don't know her.

TIERNEY. So you say.

DIANE. Well, I don't agree.

TIERNEY. Well... Hey, be a Christian. Watch where it gets you.
(Pause.) Look. What I'm saying is... If you... if you want to... you can come with me. *(Short pause.)* You can be safe. *(Pause.)* It's not easy for me to come here like this. I never even meant to. I never would have... But as time goes on... *(Drinks.)* When I lie down at night and... it's so dark. For some reason I see your face and I know I could... take care of you. And we could...

DIANE. Look...

TIERNEY *(suddenly shouts)*. I'm a gentleman, missus! But any plant, be it a weed or beautiful flower, needs the water and the sun!! We're all just the same! It's so cold on the other side of the lake. Don't you see what a waste it's gonna be when she gets her way? The two of them will be nice and cosy on their own here. And the wind will just blow across the water. *(Pause.)* Bluejays killed my dog. Maybe just as well.

Pause.

~~DIANE. I can't go with you. I'm sorry.~~

TIERNEY. Hey, I know who you are. Your photo was on those books my mother used to read. I read one. Am I right?

DIANE. I don't know.

TIERNEY. That's it. I knew I'd seen you. You wrote that book about the woman with the wart on her face, right?

DIANE. A long time ago.

TIERNEY. Well, I'll be damned. What about that? It's good to meet you.

Pause.

He takes some cans from his bag. They are white with a distinctive green stripe on them, but no writing.

No hard feelings. Here, these are pears. I'll leave them here.

DIANE. Thank you.

TIERNEY. And here. *(Leaves the envelope of pills on the table.)*
I have millions.

TIERNEY goes to the door. He stops and turns to DIANE.

What am I gonna do?

DIANE has no answer for him. He leaves. DIANE waits a moment then bolts the door. Turning, she considers the cans. She grabs the can opener and opens one of them. She sniffs it and puts it down on the table.

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