THE ENFIELD HAUNTING

REDUX

A GHOST STORY

by
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NOTE:

THE ENFIELD HAUNTING was originally performed at the BRIGHTON THEATRE ROYAL, RICHMOND THEATRE and for three months at the AMBASSADORS THEATRE.
In reaction to the production and the response of the relatives of some of the real people portrayed I decided to write a new draft.
THE ENFIELD HAUNTING (REDUX) is a very different play.

Jane Villiers
Sayle Screen.

CAST

OLDER MARGARET - in her mid-sixties. Still damaged.
ESTATE AGENT - suit, mobile phone.

PEGGY - a fifty-five year old woman. A lioness.
REY - fifties. A kind working man.
JIMMY - thirteen years old. Troubled, strange.
MARGARET - sixteen-year-old bursting with hormones.
JANET - fourteen. Deeply troubled, deeply strange.
MAURICE - a seventy-year-old, middle-class man.
BETTY - his wide, a woman in her mid sixties.

Glimpses of GHOST

The play can be performed by eight, with the ESTATE AGENT also playing the GHOST and, more boldly, OLDER MARGARET also playing her mother, PEGGY.

PRODUCTION:

The Enfield Haunting requires some very specific and focused stage-craft. The 'events' are all designed to be achieved by precise timing, light and sound.

SCENE ONE

Before the play - the set is barely lit, a smoke haze hangs over the place.

2024. Imagine you had ripped a house in half. This is a north London council house. It has hardly been touched in years. It feels frozen in time. As the lights build, a modern mobile phone chirps. It is answered.

ESTATE AGENT
(off, into his phone)
Yo! - can I buzz you back, matey, just on a show.

Then we hear a key rattle in the lock. The first key hasn't worked. More rattling - finally, the door opens pushing against a pile of post. The ESTATE AGENT picks up the post as he comes in...

ESTATE AGENT
(enthusiastic, to his client who is still outside)
It's...

(looks around)
Certainly got scope for development.

The client come in. The ESTATE AGENT goes upstage to the KITCHEN and pulls open the curtains.

ESTATE AGENT
(about the garden)
Nothing a mow and a couple of afternoons won't put right.

He pops his head through a hatch between the kitchen and living area -

ESTATE AGENT
What we call an architectural feature!

He's trying to sell a pup. A WOMAN in her mid-sixties stops at the front door. She has inner tension.

ESTATE AGENT

Where would you like to start?

He pulls ancient newspapers off the table - trying to make the place look a little tidier.

ESTATE AGENT

So, we are in the lounge and the kitchen...

(he gestures)

Upstairs there are two bedrooms - one with a garden view, the other facing the street. Sunny. Bathroom and toilet downstairs. Easy to re-plumb. You'll want to do quite a bit, hence the pricing...

The WOMAN doesn't move.

ESTATE AGENT

Could all do with a facelift, but round here properties with back gardens, semi-detached, like this, near the school, sell like hot cakes. Most of them, anyway. Enfield is - we like to think - a go to, should I say 'come to' area, now.

The WOMAN walks into the middle of the room. The ESTATE AGENT watches her and then smiles...

ESTATE AGENT

It's been on the market for longer than we might hope, this particular property - no 284 - I like the ring of that, don't you: 2-8...

(he peters out)

... and so I am sure the vendor will look favourably on a reasonable offer.

The WOMAN looks up at the central hanging light.

ESTATE AGENT

Also, a period feature - probably make a few bob on eBay for that.

The ESTATE AGENT goes to an ARMCHAIR shoved up against an old gas stove. He is about to move it when the WOMAN gasps - she is OLDER MARGARET. Now 65, she has led a tough, complicated life.

OLDER MARGARET

Leave it...

The ESTATE AGENT turns.

OLDER MARGARET

If I was you. Don't touch the chair.

ESTATE AGENT

Er... oh, OK? Wow...

OLDER MARGARET
(about the house)

It hasn't changed.

ESTATE AGENT
(mystified)

Changed? Have you been here before?

OLD MARGARET nods.

OLDER MARGARET

The same feeling. Such a long time ago. But the same feeling.

ESTATE AGENT

What? What do you mean? I can't feel anything - it's just a house...

OLDER MARGARET

It's full of them.

ESTATE AGENT

Them?

OLDER MARGARET

Jimmy. Mum. Rey, even. All of them - they are all still here...

Suddenly, the overhead light flickers, an arching electrical sound, a gust of wind, and a powerful bang kicks us in the guts.
TOTAL BLACKOUT.

SCENE TWO

As close to *instant* as possible - SNAP UP ON - 1977. PEGGY (mid-50s) is re-repairing

a piece of her children's clothing: pyjama bottoms. She stands EXACTLY where OLDER MARGARET stood.

PEGGY is in her mid-forties but looks older. She is a lioness with deeply rattled nerves. But right now, she is happily humming to herself. A moment. Upstage, the garden door opens - we catch a shadow.

PEGGY
(without turning, calling)
You're back early!

PEGGY goes on stitching. Then, a man covered in a bed sheet looms over her.

REY
(cod-ghost)
Whooah, whooah!

PEGGY doesn't scream, but REY laughs - pulling the sheet off.

REY
I surprised you!

PEGGY
Afternoon, Rey.

She knows REY and his antics.

PEGGY
Should have left that in the laundry basket, Jimmy had one of his accidents, again.

She takes the sheet.

REY
Oh.

PEGGY
What did you want Rey?

REY
I wanted to make you laugh. To see you smile.

REY is a big man. He is uncomfortable in himself but very kind. He holds out a tin of QUALITY STREET sweets.

PEGGY

Rey?

REY

Got them for you.

PEGGY

Why? That’s kind.

REY

I am worried about you.

PEGGY

There's nothing to worry about!

REY

They not here? His Jaguar's not outside. Quite a motor that, I can tell you. That is not going to be cheap to run, not with the Sheiks taking their pound of flesh.

PEGGY

The children will be home any second now.

REY

I know. That's why I came around.

He puts the Quality Street carefully on the table but is uncertain what to do next.

REY

And to give you them.

PEGGY

That’s nice Rey. I really do have the nipper’s tea to sort.

She takes the sheet out to the kitchen.

REY

At least the rain has held off. They say it's going to be a scorcher. The weekend.

REY glances over his shoulder to check that PEGGY isn't watching him, looks at the ARMCHAIR and gingerly touches it with one finger - testing something. PEGGY comes back from the kitchen. She is carrying plates and cutlery.

PEGGY

What are you doing, Rey?

REY

Nothing. Just want to get to the bottom of things.

PEGGY

Things?

REY

What's going on here.

Upstage - beyond the kitchen window - a loud miaow and a glimpse of a black cat as PEGGY goes back to the kitchen.

PEGGY

(over her shoulder)

You'd be more use feeding that poor cat. Spider's in and out of our garden, hungry like she's starvin' to death. Miaowing night and day she's driving me crazy.

REY

I feed her, but I can't control her.

PEGGY returns with things for the table.

PEGGY

She's possessed - that's what Mr. Playfair reckons!

She laughs - but REY takes this as his cue.

REY

Listen to me, please, Peggy.

PEGGY

What did you want, Rey? Because if it's to give me a talking to I'm not at all sure I'm interested.

And she turns to go back to the kitchen.
REY clears his throat - this is his moment.

REY

I... we... think it's got to stop.

PEGGY

(turning)

What has got to stop?

REY

You know. What is going on. Here. Something bad is going to happen.

PEGGY tidies - doesn't go back to the kitchen.

REY

People are talking.

PEGGY

Well, we have been in the newspaper. On the front page. And on the TV. It's not surprising...

REY

I mean with Mr Playfair and Grosse here *every* night. Mrs Brook said they even brought a ventriloquist.

PEGGY

Well he didn't come to entertain us. He thought he could prove Janet was throwing her voice - which he couldn't, by the way.

REY

We reckon you've had more people in and out of here than King Cross Station.

PEGGY

They been coming less, now. And, I'm sorry but this has got nothing to do with you or anyone for that matter.

REY

It will when they send bus tours up and down Green Street tryin' to catch our Janet on the roof or something. Your girls - I don't know much about these things - but Margaret is... well, she and Janet are a pair of monkeys. You know that. Young girls can get up to all sorts.

PEGGY

You're right. You don't know much about young girls.

REY

They are making this up! And it's run away with them. They can't stop. You know that, Peg. I'm sorry, me and my big mouth: but you know it's true. And I want to help.

(PEGGY stares - her arms crossed.)

They are both lovely kids—all three of them are—but for months all the interest, and everything...

PEGGY

What did you come to say, Rey?

REY

That it's nonsense! Mr Playfair and Mr Grosse are just encouraging it. I mean, they are nice enough - I am not saying that they are not nice men - but they are just encouraging it! Mr Playfair is a funny fish - isn't he? Says nothing - just watches. The way he says:

(imitates)

"Don't let us get in the way, you just do what you normally do" Mr Grosse is different but the two of them, along with all the people who've been here - everyone has got themselves convinced that there's all sorts going on and there isn't. There just isn't, and you know that.

PEGGY

(enough of this)

Well thank you for the Quality Street. My favourites. I'll put them away for a rainy day. I'll knock if we need you...

REY

Peggy - please - I care, I do. I just don't want anything bad...

JIMMY (13, strange, with a terrible stutter) bangs through the front door. His school uniform is darned and re-darned. Without stopping, he lands in front of the TV - and puts it on - JIMMY SAVILLE'S JIM'LL FIX IT...

JIMMY

I h-h-ate them.

PEGGY comes to him.

PEGGY

Jimmy, darlin', who now?
(making light)
Who? I'll box their ears for you.

She puts her arms around JIMMY.

JIMMY

Get o-f-f- me, ma'am.

She kisses him, but he pulls away.

REY

Jimmy, son, please, your mother is talking to you!

PEGGY

It's alright, Rey - Jimmy just wants to watch the TV, don't you, dear?

PEGGY goes back to laying the table when MARGARET (17 - in school uniform that she has certainly grown out of - bursting with pubescent sexual energy) saunters in from the front door.

MARGARET

Why'd you run away like that Jimmy you little tit?

JIMMY goes closer to the TV, closing off the world.

MARGARET

F-f-ucking coward.

PEGGY

Oh dear, what happened now?

MARGARET

Stan Ward and some of the other lads said we was a bunch of liars and J-J-J-immy just ran away when he could've stood an' fought like a fuckin' man.

REY

You might want to watch your language, young lady.

MARGARET

And you might want to shut your gob, uncle Rey.

PEGGY

Margaret, please!

MARGARET

Only havin' a laugh - aren't I?

And she laughs - loudly, and then sees the Quality Street.

MARGARET

Well, will you look at these!

PEGGY
(taking them)

For a rainy day -

MARGARET

From uncle Rey? He's a right flirt, aren't you? You're a right flirt.

PEGGY

Will you stop this, Margaret, please? I'm sorry, Rey...

REY

Margaret, the sweets are for your mum. What she has to put up with you and your sister, and all the ghost hunters...

PEGGY

Please, Rey. Besides, Mr Playfair and Mr Grosse aren't coming tonight. It's a night off.

MARGARET
(darker tone)

Mum?

She is holding a brown paper envelope that was on the table.

PEGGY

I'll take that, young lady. Thank you.

She puts the envelope on the mantlepiece above the gas stove.

PEGGY

Rey, if you want to take up your nonsense with Mr Grosse, I'm sure you can pop in later in the week, now, please.

(sudden change, concerned)

Margaret, where's your sister?

MARGARET

Last seen floating six feet in the air in the middle of the playground...

PEGGY

Margaret, I've asked you to keep an eye on her...

PEGGY runs out the front door. JIMMY stares at the TV. MARGARET stalks. She goes to the kitchen and gets a glass of water.

REY

That good, son?

JIMMY ignores him - and turns up the TV's volume. REY takes the evening newspaper out of his back pocket. Checks the dog racing. MARGARET comes back, glancing at the brown envelope on the mantlepiece. Turns, looks at REY. He focuses on the dogs.

MARGARET

You staying for tea? Be fish fingers.

REY

(deciding)

No, actually - I wanted to have a word with you, Margaret. In particular.

(he finds this difficult)

This one looks good - 'Jackie's Jet' running tonight at White City. Good dog. You know Margaret, there's times, I reckon, when we can get an idea or something - well, like I get an idea that this greyhound is the one to put my money on, and so I bet certain that he's going to win but I'm wrong. What I am saying is I can get carried away, you know. We all can. Certain...

MARGARET

What are you on about about uncle Rey?

REY

(to JIMMY)

You want to turn that thing off, son, it's frying our brains.

REY goes to the TV, but MARGARET steps in front of him.

MARGARET

You touch that, an' we'll do you from the inside out.

REY

(frightened)

You don't frighten me, Margaret. I am trying to explain...

JANET appears through the upstage kitchen door. She stands staring at REY. The cat miaows in the garden. JANET is fragile, with heavy rings under her eyes. Her school uniform feels two sizes too big ...

REY

Jan' you gave me a fright. Your poor mother is worried sick. Where've you been?

JANET

School.

REY

I mean after...

JANET

After? After uncle Rey? After?

REY

I'll go and find your mum.

JANET

Homework. Got to do my studies, haven't I?

JANET sits at the table, takes out a school book and writes furiously. REY goes out the front door. For a moment, it's just the three children.

MARGARET

(imitating)

"Got to do my studies, haven't I?"

JANET

Leave me alone.

MARGARET

"*After* uncle Rey?" Spas'.

JANET scribbles in her notebook as MARGARET grabs the brown envelope off the mantle piece.

MARGARET

He'll come tonight.

JANET scribbles harder, and Jimmy cups his hands over his ears. Hearing PEGGY and REY come through the front door, MARGARET returns the envelope to the mantlepiece. PEGGY smiles.

PEGGY

There we all are. Safe and sound. Who's hungry?

REY

(about the TV)

Hard for anyone to hear themselves think -

PEGGY

(ignoring REY)

Who wants their dinner?

(to MARGARET)

You want to give me a hand, young lady?

MARGARET

Not my turn.

REY

Your mother is asking Margaret.

PEGGY

Rey, PLEASE.

PEGGY is in the kitchen. MARGARET brings things to the table, pushing JANET out of the way. JANET digs deeper into her homework, scribbling.

REY
I was never much use when it came to school. That tricky, Jan?

JANET ignores him. The TV continues loud.

REY
You look like you haven't had a good night's sleep, Janet, in ages. Must be five years since you moved in here. You were such a lovely little thing - skipping and playing. Leave her be Margaret...

MARGARET
Not doing nothing.

REY
You pushed your sister.

MARGARET
I need the pardonnez-moi, mum.

She goes to the loo near the kitchen door as
PEGGY appears from the kitchen.

PEGGY
Rey, I want you to go. I want to have tea with my children, if that's alright with you. What is happening here is nothing to do with you.

REY
But nothing *is* happening. It's Margaret and Jan' here, playing around. I told you.

Suddenly, there is a deafening bang - REY
spins, alarmed.

REY
Whoah -

There's another loud bang.

REY
That's plumbing! You got an air block in your plumbing!

Then the TV and the lights downstairs die.

JIMMY
Fer f-ucks sake, Jan'! Not the f-uckin' TV!

REY
It's nothin' Peggy - just someone playing...

JIMMY
Mum! Will you tell Jan' to leave the TV alone.

JAN is now writing faster and faster and talking to herself.

JANET
(quiet)
Not-me-not-me-not-me-not-me-not-me-not-me-not-me-not-me.

REY
Where's that monkey? Margaret, where you got to?

He rushes towards the upstage toilet, passing JANET, who is now starting to shake and growl. REY looks at her -

JANET
Grrrrgrrr...

REY
Jan' you want to stop that. Peggy, Jan's shakin'...

JANET
Grrrr.

JANET's eyes roll into the back of her head. She becomes 'transfixed'. REY is confused and frightened. He goes to JANET and then calls to PEGGY in the kitchen.

REY
(not convinced)
She's makin' this up. She's putting this on...

Then, MARGARET appears UPSTAIRS, and music blares from a Dansette - the Bay City Rollers 'I Only Want To Be With You'. Hearing the music, REY looks up.

JIMMY
(about the TV)
You know how to fix this, uncle Rey?

REY
You don't want to thump it like that, son.

He goes to the TV and thumps it. Nothing happens. JANET's growl and shuddering are now intense. MARGARET is dancing around. JANET and the table shake more—PEGGY grabs the plates and cups.

PEGGY
Jan' - Jan' dear. Will you stop this...

REY
(loud)
It's alright, Peggy. Everything is OK.
(he tries the light switch by the door.)
You little monkey, I know what this is!

He rushes upstage to a cupboard under the stairs. Suddenly, the music dies, and every light on the stairs goes out. Margaret collapses on the bed, breathless.

MARGARET
(whispered)
"I only want to be with you".

All the curtains in the house billow for a moment as JANET slumps. *Like every 'event' in the play - this must leave us wondering about what happened.*

PEGGY
Them Bay City Rollers will have my sanity to answer for.

She puts the things back on the table and goes to JANET.

PEGGY
Oh Jan darlin' ... come here, darling.

She tries to hold JANET but she rushes from the table to the ARMCHAIR. Then REY emerges holding two large ring mains fuses. They are white porcelain with brass spurs. He smiles, certain he is vindicated.

REY

(calling)

Someone been playing with the chuffing fuse! Margaret, do you want to come down here and have words with your uncle Rey...

PEGGY

Please Rey.

REY

No, no I am sorry but I *know* what I have just seen and I *know* that someone pulled this...

(he holds a fuse up. Calling)

Margaret, now listen carefully: I know a thing or two an' that is an effing dangerous thing for you to be playing with young lady.

(to PEGGY)

Pull that fuse, and the ring main—the TV, the lights, the works—will go down.

MARGARET is sitting on the stairs.

MARGARET

I was upstairs. Dancin', uncle Rey! What you talking about?

REY stares at her - trying to compute.

REY

No, no, you went *after* the TV. It was me who stopped the music.

(he holds up the other fuse)

I pulled this one out.

MARGARET

I was upstairs, mum. He's a liar.

JANET

Liar-liar-liar, panties on fire.

PEGGY

Now, come along, children. Enough of this. It's time for your tea. Rey, can you put the fuses back, please? Margaret, Janet, Jimmy, come along now.

REY

You are minxes you are!

PEGGY

Rey, that's not language I want to hear, that's not...

REY

Right, you are.

He goes back under the stairs as JIMMY and MARGARET saunter to the table. The moment REY puts the fuses back the TV comes back to life. The old volume - the news now. Something about the Yorkshire Ripper.

PEGGY

Who wants a nice cup of tea?

REY emerges from under the stairs as PEGGY starts to pour tea. JANET is still hunched in the ARMCHAIR.

REY

That's not for dinner time, that's not.

He switches the TV, off as MARGARET and JIMMY sit. PEGGY looks to JANET who is sat, her arms around her knees.

PEGGY

Jan' dear, you've got to eat. You have *got* to eat.

(JANET turns away.)

You goin' to make yourself ill.

MARGARET

Jimmy, would you be so kind as to fetch the ketchup?

JIMMY

You.

MARGARET

I fuckin' asked nicely I did.

REY
(loud)
Margaret, will you stop talking like that...

PEGGY
No Rey, no.

REY
Sorry, Peg. I never meant...

PEGGY
I just want to be with my family. Can you please now go home? Put your feet up.

REY
You took that fuse out Margaret!

PEGGY
(snapping)
REY!

MARGARET
I was upstairs, mum. I keep tellin' him the same thing. I was having a nice lovely little dance to stretch my body out.

REY
She took that fuse out! She knows she did!

A voice at the front door...

MAURICE
(off)
Hello - knockty-knock - anyone at home...?

JIMMY
(happy)
It's M-M-Mr Grosse!

And he runs to the front door.

PEGGY
We really should finish our tea!

MAURICE
(coming in)
There's my favourite Lieutenant!

He is holding three ''99' ice creams (vanilla whippy with chocolate flakes). His smile lights the place up. He is a kind, gentle man in his mid-sixties.

PEGGY
Mr. Grosse!? I thought you were taking the night off.

She removes her apron deftly.

MAURICE
We are! I am *not* here. I am an illusion.

He laughs warmly.

JIMMY
Mr G-Grosse, I- I - want to s-how you something.

MARGARET
He couldn't keep away - could you, Mr. Grosse?!

MAURICE
I was passing, matter of fact, young lady! I hope I'm not interrupting, but I will end up in the dog house if someone doesn't eat these 99s soon! Before they end up on Mrs. Hodgson's carpet.

PEGGY
But my ruffians are just about to have their tea!

MAURICE
Fish fingers *after* ice cream, Mrs. Hodgson is quite proper in some circles...

MARGARET
Proper? Like friggen' posh!

MAURICE
(laughing)
Well, most certainly. At the Ritz, for example, I am told that sometimes people eat their whole meal back to front.

REY

I never heard that, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

There are many *incredible* things that we have never heard of, don't you agree, Rey?

REY

For pity's sake, Mr Grosse! No-one has ice cream before their tea.

JIMMY

(over)

F-f-ish finger and ice c-ream t-ea!

MARGARET

(to JIMMY)

Why don't you ever shut your gob!

(she laughs, does 'posh)

Thank you so very much, Mr. Grosse...

She takes an ice cream.

REY

But Mrs. Hodgson's been slaving makin' the children their tea.

PEGGY

Can't do any harm, I suppose.

MAURICE

(to JIMMY)

Here you go, Number Two.

JIMMY takes his ice cream.

JIMMY

W-e h-had all sorts t-oday already, Mr Grosse. The TV went pop.

REY

Well, someone - someone in this room - fiddled with the fuse, didn't they? Which is not a thing children...

MAURICE

(interrupting)

That's alright. I'm sure I've got some fuses in the back of my car. I appear to have everything, including the kitchen sink!

REY is stunned - MAURICE seems *not* to have heard him...

REY

There's nothing wrong with the fuse!

JIMMY

(delighted)

Y-ou d-don't have the k-itchen sink in the car do you, Mr Grosse?!

REY

Someone pulled out the ring main!

But MAURICE ignores him and squats holding an ice cream in front of JANET who is hunched in the ARMCHAIR. He is focused and gentle.

MAURICE

This is yours, Janet.

PEGGY

What do you say?

MARGARET covers her mouth - and pretends to be JANET.

MARGARET

Thanks, Mr Grosse, that's proper kind!

MAURICE doesn't break his focus on JANET.

PEGGY

Jan - it's Mr Grosse, dear. He brought you a '99'. That's very nice of him, isn't it?

JANET takes the ice cream. Instead of licking - she stares at it.

MAURICE

There. That's good. We can have our tea after, can't we.?

(he groans as he stands)

Knees aren't what they were. Now, how are we all?

JANET

Nobody likes a nosey parker.

Everyone is aware of how strange JANET is, but they soldier on...

PEGGY

Pleasantly surprised to see you, Mr Grosse.

MAURICE

I saw the ice cream truck - heard it first, truth be told - and I thought, "I know exactly the people who would like an ice cream". Righto, Number Two, let's see if we can get that old goggle box working, shall we?

REY

(loud)

The TV *is* working!

PEGGY

Rey, for pity's sake.

JIMMY follows MAURICE out the front door as REY turns to PEGGY -

REY

But there is nothing wrong with the TV, Peggy!

PEGGY

I'm sure Mr Grosse knows a thing or two about TVs.

REY

Peggy, this is just...

JANET screams as MARGARET jumps on her in the ARMCHAIR...

MARGARET

Give us a push, Uncle Rey, and we will fly next door and into your bedroom. What about that Rey? Us into your bed...

PEGGY

Margaret will you behave and get off Janet -

MARGARET clambers off JANET

JANET
(to REY)
You think this is a zoo or something?

PEGGY
Janet, please.

JANET
He does - they all do coming in here - staring at us like we are animals.

REY
No Janet - dear - I want to help STOP this...

JANET
Reckon this is Enfield Zoo?

REY
(convinced he has to get through to her)
I'm your neighbour! I've lived here all my life!

MARGARET
Think we are baboons with them red arses hanging out?

PEGGY
(snapping)
Girls, you need to wash your mouths out, talking like that! I am not having this. And Rey, thank you - I know you mean the best.

REY
Peggy, please, I am sorry but...

PEGGY
Go home, Rey, have your tea. We're all a bit wound up here you know.

REY
But I care, Peggy, about you all.

MAURICE and JIMMY come back. JIMMY carries a toolbox, MAURICE carries three large silver boxes. JIMMY is full of energy.

MAURICE
Right, Number Two - put the tools there, and we can get these upstairs.

JIMMY puts the toolbox down by the TV;
PEGGY smiles - but is uneasy.

PEGGY

Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

(going upstairs, smiling)

All shall be revealed! All shall be revealed.

MAURICE and JIMMY have gone
UPSTAIRS. We see them move about - but
not much more.

REY

(careful)

But Peg', I thought you said Mr Playfair and Mr Grosse were taking the night off...

PEGGY

Never know with them, do we?

(she smiles)

An' Jimmy is more himself when Mr Grosse is here. I'll send Margaret 'round if there's any problems.

MARGARET

That'll be a treat, won't it, Uncle Rey?

REY

Margaret, I wish you would...

PEGGY

(direct)

Rey, it is time you went home. Really. Thank you for them sweets but please...

REY

Peg'...?

PEGGY

NO.

REY

I'll leave the kitchen door open. Peg' you know where I am if anyone needs me. For anything.

He goes. JIMMY thunders down the stairs.

JIMMY

Y-y-ou should see what Mr Grosse has got!

PEGGY

Well these fish fingers aren't going to eat themselves! Oh, Janet, you haven't touched your ice cream.

(she has dumped it)

Come along you three. Table.

JIMMY sits. PEGGY turns to MARGARET.

PEGGY

Girl, will you sit?

MARGARET saunters across to the table

MARGARET

I need the pardonnez moi, mum.

PEGGY

You will eat, Margaret. Sit. All of you. My darlings...

She goes to get the food. There's a pause. MAURICE is upstairs - moving around. PEGGY returns with fish fingers, chips and peas.

PEGGY

That's better, isn't it?

MARGARET

(whispering, intense)

Mum. It's Wednesday.

PEGGY

Here you go. Always feel better with something in your tummy.

JIMMY

If he comes, I'll sort h-h-im. I will.

MARGARET

Mum, please...

PEGGY

Eat your tea. Come along.

MARGARET

But mum, the cheques there!

(she points at the brown envelope)

You *know* he'll come tonight.

PEGGY

We don't know nothing young lady, now please eat your dinner. Oh Jan' you got to eat something, darling.

JANET

All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't feed Janet Hodgson again!

MARGARET

For fucks sake, Jan'.

PEGGY

Just eat your dinner. I'm going to have myself another cup of tea.

She sips as MAURICE comes down the stairs. He smiles, and the tension around the table seems to lift.

MAURICE

There we all are!

PEGGY

Can I give you a cup of tea, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

Oh, Guy and I have been coming here for nearly a year, Mrs Hodgson. I do think you can call me Maurice.

PEGGY

I can, but I won't, Mr Grosse, if that's alright with you.

MAURICE smiles.

MARGARET

We thought you weren't coming tonight? Thought we were on our lonely-own, Mr Grosse.

MAURICE

I couldn't keep away, could I? Besides, Mr Playfair has some Brazilian psychics visiting. He is picking them up at Heathrow.

(he looks at his watch)

Isn't that something! *As we speak*. As we speak. A 'synchronicity', if you will!

PEGGY

They coming here? I am not sure my nerves will hold with Brazilians on top of everything else.

MAURICE

No, they are attending a conference at the Centre. Guy is excited. This is all marvellous stuff for them. We mere mortals can only watch with awe but... well, it's fair to say you have generated a great deal of excitement. Now let's see if we can get that goggle box up and running, shall we?

(he turns the TV on - it works, of course)

All ship-shape.

SEX PISTOLS are now on the TV.

MAURICE

They cannot honestly claim that that noise is music can they?

He switches the TV off.

JIMMY

It blew up, like a l-and mine under a Panzer tank. K-kaboom. M...

PEGGY

Will you finish your dinner, Jimmy.

MARGARET

No, it friggen' didn't...

JIMMY

(shouting)

She w-asn't here. She was on the pardonnez moi.

MAURICE

(calming)

Two conflicting versions of events. One witness says one thing - with absolute conviction - another says absolutely the opposite. That's really quite typical, Mr. Playfair tells me!

(his focus goes to JANET)
Are you not hungry, Janet, dear? We should eat, really.

JANET
I'm full to busting. Lovely din-dins.

She leaves the table and returns the ARM-CHAIR her arms are wrapped around her knees.

PEGGY
Jan, you've not eaten anything.
(a whisper)
Nothing, Mr Grosse.

MAURICE smiles reassuringly.

PEGGY
Who'd like peaches and custard?

MAURICE
An all-time favourite in my house, Mrs Hodgson!

PEGGY goes to the kitchen. MAURICE turns to JANET.

MAURICE
How's Janet?

JANET says nothing. MARGARET covers her mouth with her hand and growls:

MARGARET
"I'm alright, Mr Grosse. Never been better!"

MAURICE
Most amusing young lady.

PEGGY returns with the peaches and custard.

MAURICE
Now. Upstairs, there are three cameras. With movement sensors. Ever so cunning. It's like our tape recordings. We are getting a scientific record of what is happening.

So now if something does happen Mr Playfair will get a photograph! Or even photographs. Once we've run them through a dark room.

PEGGY

Oh, I am not sure…

MAURICE

This equipment is the latest technology, Mrs Hodgson. The photographer—do you remember Gary, that chap from the Daily Mirror? Margaret, do you remember Gary?

(MARGARET blushes.)

Of course, she remembers Gary!

JIMMY

S-she t-ook a shine to Ga...

MARGARET

I'll break your fucking teeth.

PEGGY

Jimmy, you be careful what you say!

MAURICE sees all this but holds his smile.

MAURICE

Well, it was Gary who suggested we should give them a go. I picked them up this morning.

PEGGY

In the children's room?

MAURICE

Mrs Hodgson?

PEGGY

I've taken to us all sleeping in there. So I can keep an eye on everything.
I might need to get up in the night, you know. Never sure when I might need the...

MAURICE

The sooner we can get to the bottom of all this, the sooner we can all leave you in peace!

(about the cameras)

If you stay low—crawl—you won't trigger a thing, I hope. Now I ought to probably get my skates on. Everything is set up. And young Jimmy, son, don't you touch anything and eat your peaches before I do!

He laughs - looks at JANET, who is still hunched - staring at him.

MAURICE

Janet?

JANET

Ja-net. Ja-net. My name is Ja-net.

It's so weird, PEGGY steps forward.

PEGGY

So you going out? Somewhere with Mrs Grosse? As you've got a night off? Somewhere nice?

MAURICE
(surprised)

Oh, I don't expect so. No.

PEGGY SAW THAT.

MARGARET
(blushing, furious)

No, I didn't. Never. Mum...

MAURICE
(easy)

It's all haunted house nonsense. And utterly inappropriate for you, young lady.

PEGGY

But to go out! Put on something nice! Mrs Grosse must be missing you - with you being here night after night.

MAURICE

Betty, missing me? Oh, I am not sure, to be honest. Well.

Pause. Tender feelings that neither want to touch on. They need him to stay. He wants to stay.

PEGGY

Well, there is some tea in the pot. Why don't I make it fresh?

MAURICE

Before I go. That would be lovely.

BLACKOUT - in the scene change, children's voices sing: "Jack and Jill went up a hill..."

SCENE THREE

The ARMCHAIR faces a low table. On it is a large reel-to-reel tape recorder. MAURICE sits on a chair with a clipboard and pencil. JANET is sitting in the ARMCHAIR. A microphone is on a stand in front of her. MARGARET sits next to her. There is a cup of tea and a pot on the table. It's evening.

MAURICE
(warm)
Janet? Is there something you want to tell me, Janet?

JANET covers her face with her hand but starts to giggle. MARGARET leans forward.

MARGARET
(a whisper - an earnest apology)
It's too early, I reckon - Mr Grosse. For anything supernatural, you know.

MAURICE
(patient)
Thank you, Margaret. Janet?

JANET giggles and then grunts. It's an entirely normal grunt. MAURICE smiles and reaches for the cup of tea. Sips it.

JANET
London Bridge is burning down, burning down...
(she starts to giggle)
Burning the shit down. Blood and shit...

MAURICE
Please, Janet dear, we don't need anything like that.

JANET
What do we need, Mr Grosse?

MARGARET
(imitating)
"You what do we need, Mr Grosse?"

Just two kids giggling as MAURICE smiles indulgently.

JANET

Let's go play up at the allotments - let's go before anything bad happens here!

PEGGY has come from the downstairs bathroom. JIMMY is now in his pyjamas.

PEGGY

No, I think we all need to get ourselves up to bed. Perhaps one more cuppa, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

Oh, I am awash with the stuff, Mrs Hodgson - thank you.
(to JANET)
What did you mean? Something 'bad' could happen?

PEGGY

Margaret, do you want to run along and brush your teeth?

MARGARET

(sharp, a teenager to her mother)
Jan' goes first! I'm stayin' up, remember. You said.

PEGGY

Alright - Janet?

JANET

I want to go out mum. Please. I want to go out and play. Please.

PEGGY

But I think it is time you all went to bed. I really do. Janet, you need some sleep.
Mr Grosse is going to pack up soon enough, aren't you?

MAURICE

(calm, warm)
I am - I just wondered, Janet, what you meant by 'something bad'.

MARGARET

Things that go bump in the night.

MAURICE

Janet - could you explain to me?

MARGARET

Private things.

PEGGY

Margaret that is not for company.

MARGARET

Mum?

PEGGY

Now, please, those teeth won't brush themselves.

MARGARET

(loud)

Why can't you ever leave us alone mum? Ever.

She stomps to the bathroom—the door slams.

PEGGY

Mr Grosse, I am sorry. She's a growing girl, you know.

MAURICE

Oh, that's quite alright—normal family life, in my experience. Teenagers can be a trial.

JIMMY

Mr Grosse!

He points at JANET, whose hands clench the ARMCHAIR as her body arcs.

MAURICE

Janet?

JANET

Grrrgrrrrgrrrrgrrrrr...

MAURICE

Can you hear us, Janet?

MAURICE, PEGGY, JIMMY watch - is this for real?

PEGGY

Jan', dear?

JANET

GRREGGRAGGGGHH...

JANET's head slams back. Her eyes roll. MAURICE presses RECORD on the tape recorder - calm as the tension in JANET increases.

JANET

GGRHGHHHGHAGH....

MARGARET has reappeared and is watching from upstage. She is in her nightie.

JIMMY
(giggling)

Sounds like she's doing a poo!

MARGARET

Will you shut your fucking cake hole!

JIMMY

Mum!

PEGGY

Will you both just go upstairs. Now. Janet dear...

MAURICE
(absolute focus)

Janet, can you hear us? Is that you?

JANET

GREGHHHHHH.

MAURICE

Janet, I am here - you are safe. Can you hear me?

JANET slams back in the chair, her whole body arcing. Her growling noises are louder.

JANET
(incomprehensible)

GRAHHFUCKOFFOUTOF HERE HAEREGETOUTOFHERE.

JIMMY

W-what-she saying?

MAURICE

(stern)

Please, Number Two!

(focused)

Janet: it's Maurice Grosse here. Is there something you want to tell us?

MARGARET

Jan', you need a loony bin, you do!

Laughing, MARGARET crosses the room - leaning against the wall facing MAURICE.

JANET

IWANTYOUALLTOFUCKOFFOUTOFHERE...

MAURICE

Janet - can you try and slow...

MAURICE suddenly flinches - his hand goes to his head.

MAURICE

Good lord!

JANET

(incomprehensible)

GETOUTMYFUCKINGHOUSE...

PEGGY

Are you alright, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

(stunned)

Yes - yes. Did you see that?

(he holds up a Lego brick)

This just hit me in the head...

(he reaches from the microphone, looks at his watch)

Eight-thirty two, May 7, 1977. Investigator - Er... Maurice Grosse. I have just been hit in the forehead by a small yellow Lego brick. For the uninitiated, that's a toy...

JANET
(peaking)
IWANTYOUALLTOFUCKINGGO....

Then JANET slumps - exhausted.
MAURICE and PEGGY stare at JANET,
finally:

PEGGY
Jan', love, you alright?

MAURICE
Would you like some water, Janet?

PEGGY
What happened Mr Grosse? Are you alright?

MAURICE
Alright? Oh yes. No, this is marvellous!
(He is excited as he gets water for
JANET.)
Right there, in the middle of an 'episode', a flying object struck me on the head! This really is quite something. A Lego brick thrown with such power by our friend... here you are, Janet, dear.

JANET
(taking the water)
Thank you, Mr Grosse, much obliged.

MAURICE
You did very well Janet.

JANET drinks.

MARGARET
You reckon it's over Mr Grosse? Lucky you stayed for them cuppas, don't you reckon?

PEGGY
Well, I think it's bedtime, I really do. Margaret, will you please take Jimmy up? It's already late, and we've had enough fun and games.

MARGARET
Not fun and games, mum, it's friggen not.

PEGGY

There will be all hell to pay if I get another teacher telling me that one of you ruffians is falling asleep in class. It's bedtime!

MAURICE

Your mother is right; everyone needs some sleep. Up up and away to bed, yes?

MARGARET

Come along, Jim, you g-g-ood for n-nothing.

(turning back to MAURICE)

Reckon it's going to be quite a night, reckon there'll be lots going on tonight.

They go upstairs.

PEGGY

Jan' dear, let's get you into your nightie.

(he reaches for JANET's arms)

Oh, I do wish you would eat, Janet. I can feel your bones everywhere.

JANET

Skeleton. Rattle them bones, rattle my bones.

PEGGY

Come along, love.

They go upstage to the bathroom. MAURICE looks around the room. He is about to pick up the tape recorder when UPSTAIRS, the flashbulbs go.

MARGARET

(shouting)

The bed just flipped in the friggen air!

A camp bad crashes onto the floor. MARGARET and JIMMY scream and run shouting (and possibly laughing) out of the bedroom. MAURICE turns and runs up the stairs, followed by PEGGY.

MARGARET

The bed just flew up in the air!

MAURICE

It's alright. What did you see?

MARGARET

Someone chucking the bed around, Mr Grosse. Seriously - Number Two saw it, didn't you Jim'...

JIMMY

Like a bomb going off.

MAURICE

Someone, Margaret?

MAURICE enters the bedroom and switches on the light as PEGGY hug JIMMY and MARGARET.

MAURICE
(calling back)

There's no one here. There's nothing to be worried about!

He looks around to double-check.

MAURICE

Safe as houses. Maybe that poster of Danny Osman, or whatever his name is gave you a fright, young Margaret.

Smiling, he comes out of the room.

MARGARET

Donny, Mr Grosse. Not Danny. Donny.

PEGGY

Come along, both of you. Let's get to bed.

MARGARET

I'm frightened. Really. Serious, mum.

PEGGY

I'm sure you won't mind sitting downstairs just for a bit while everyone settles, isn't that right, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

I can't think of anything I'd like more. Now - low, like commandos.

PEGGY

Are you sure Mr Grosse about them cameras?

MAURICE

With what has happened already, tonight? ABSOLUTELY. Now, children, do as your mother says.

PEGGY

Come along.

PEGGY leads MARGARET and JIMMY into the bedroom.

MAURICE

(laughing)

Nothing to worry about! Sleep tight. Don't let the bugs bite.

PEGGY

(laughing)

Bugs in my house! Cheeky sod.

MAURICE goes downstairs. He has got this. However, when he turns into the living room, he sees JANET - in her nightie staring at him.

JANET

Daddy?

MAURICE

Janet?

BLACK OUT - the kids singing: "Jack and Jill went up a hill..."

SCENE FOUR

It's dark now, with just the yellow of the street lights. UPSTAIRS, PEGGY—now in her night clothes—switches off the light and settles in a bed with the children.

DOWNSTAIRS, MAURICE is now moving fast. He has taken off his jacket - he is driven. He has notepads on the table, along with the tape recorder. He wears huge headphones. He pulls the table under the overhead light. He is energized He rewinds the tape. He presses play.

JANET ON TAPE

GGRHGHHHGHAGH....

JIMMY ON TAPE
(giggling)

Sounds like she's doing a poo!

JANET ON TAPE

GREGHHHHHH.

MAURICE ON TAPE

Janet, I am here - you are safe. Can you hear me?

A crashing sound - JANET slamming back into the chair.

JANET ON TAPE
(incomprehensible)

GRAHHFUCKOFFOUTOF HERE HAEREGETOUT OF HERE.

MAURICE stops the tape - and rewinds. Adjusts the speed and presses play. The voice that plays is deeper and slower -.

JANET ON TAPE

FUCK-OFF-OUT-OF-HERE

MAURICE hunches forward - this is extraordinary. He rewinds - and plays the tape again.

JANET ON TAPE

FUCK-OFF-OUT-OF-HERE

The CENTRAL LIGHT above his head flickers - but MAURICE is too focused to notice. MAURICE the tape forward, and presses play again:

JANET ON TAPE

IWANTYOUALLTOFUCKOFFOUTOFHERE...

MAURICE ON TAPE

Janet - can you try and slow...

(having been hit by the Lego brick.)

Good lord! Yes - yes. Did you see that?

MAURICE rushes the tape forward - making that squeaking noise as the tape plays fast.

JANET ON TAPE

GETOUTMYFUCKINGHOUSE...

Overhead CENTRAL LIGHT flickers again.

UPSTAIRS - the FLASH BULBS catch JANET floating three feet above the bed.

DOWNSTAIRS - MAURICE plays the tape slower again... the words - slow and deep are unambiguous. They sound MALE:

JANET ON TAPE

GET-OUT-OF-MY-FUCKING-HOUSE.

UPSTAIRS - more flashes. JANET is thrown against the wall. More flashes - JANET is thrown out the bedroom door as PEGGY and MARGARET scream in shock.

DOWNSTAIRS, the CENTRAL LIGHT above MAURICE flickers - a scary sound of electrical arcing. He looks up at the flickering light and pulls off his headphones.

PEGGY

(shouting)

Mr Grosse - come, quick!

As MAURICE runs to the stairs the tea cup falls of the table and smashes. JANET been thrown onto the landing floor. PEGGY, MARGARET and JIMMY are trapped behind the bedroom door that slams shut.

MAURICE
(shocked)

Janet? Janet.

He kneels beside her and takes her pulse.

MARGARET
(screaming)

The door is locked, Mr Grosse!

MARGARET is pulling at the door - it won't open.

PEGGY
(shouting)

Where's Jan?

MAURICE goes to the door. He tries the handle - twists it - the door opens easily.

MARGARET
(flummoxed)

It was locked - Mr Grosse. Jammed.

PEGGY

Jan - Jan - Jan...

She rushes to JANET - grabs her

JIMMY

Mr G-r-osse, it tried to k-ill J-anet!

PEGGY

Oh my little girl. My little girl

MAURICE
(gentle)

Let's get her downstairs. Can you hear us, Janet?

She's unconscious.

PEGGY

I am going to call an ambulance, Mr Grosse.

MAURICE

Give me a hand there, Margaret; hold Janet's head. I don't think we need an ambulance, Mrs Hodgson - down we go.

MAURICE carries JANET, MARGARET takes her head. JIMMY helps, holding her feet. PEGGY follows her.

PEGGY

I never seen anything like that -

MAURICE

What happened, precisely?

MARGARET

I woke up. Jan' was like fifty feet in the air. But still asleep.

They arrive in the living room.

MAURICE

Let's put her on the sofa.

PEGGY

I thought it was going to kill her!

JIMMY

Jan's n-n-not g-goin' to die is she, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

Not on my watch, Number Two.

They lay JANET on the sofa.

PEGGY

Feel her head: she's hot - she's on fire!

(she turns, alarmed to MAURICE)

Mr Playfair talked about the fire - didn't he?

MAURICE

It's alright. Really. Get something to cool her down.

PEGGY

Yes - yes.

PEGGY rushes to the kitchen. JIMMY watches from the bottom of the stairs. He is ashen. MARGARET hovers.

MAURICE

What happened, Margaret?

JIMMY

Jan' j-jumped, Mr Grosse off her bed.

MARGARET

No she fucking didn't.

JIMMY

An' then t-t-he cameras went...

JANET stirs.

MAURICE

Well, you are most welcome back in the land of the living Janet.

JANET

I feel sick.

PEGGY returns with a soaked hand towel.

PEGGY

There she is!

JANET

Mum, I'm going to be sick.

PEGGY

Maggie fetch a bowl or something.

MARGARET rushes to the kitchen. PEGGY cools JANET's head with the soaked towel.

PEGGY

You are alright - nothing bad is going to happen.

JANET

I want it to stop. Feel sick...

MARGARET
(returning)
Jan' you OK? Fuckin' ell that scared the shit out of me, that did.

PEGGY
Margaret, please will you stop talking like that!

PEGGY takes the bowl. MARGARET goes to JIMMY; they sit at the bottom of the stairs.

MAURICE
(careful)
Can you remember what happened. Exactly.

JANET
I was asleep but also knew I was flying or something. Scary. I'm so tired mum. I feel like I could sleep forever...

PEGGY
Yes, let's get everyone back to bed. You sleep with me in the big bed.

JANET
Not going up there again.

PEGGY
You have to get some rest...

JANET
(near hysteria)
No! No! I'm not going upstairs again.

MAURICE
(deliberate)
Is something up there? Janet, is something in the room?

MARGARET
You bleeding heard her, Mr Grosse...

MAURICE
Thank you Margaret. Yes.
(reverting)
I am looking forward to seeing some of the photographs from tonight.

There will be a lot to think about. Mrs Hodgson, I tell you what - let's tuck Janet up down here. You get some sleep. I'll keep an eye on her.

JIMMY

I'm tired, mum.

MARGARET

He's as white as a sheet, mum.

PEGGY

(her hand on JANET)

She's cooler.

MAURICE touches JANET's head.

JANET

Mum, I'm sorry.

MAURICE

Yes - that is better. Let's keep her here. You three get some rest.

PEGGY

(settling JANET)

I'll fetch a blanket, not your fault, is it.

MAURICE

I've got something in the car, perfect for this.

PEGGY

Oh we got blankets.

MAURICE

Didn't Mr Playfair say that even objects can be - sometimes - the trigger? I'm sure that's what he said. Lets have a 'cordon sanitaire', yes?

(he smiles)

Keep everything upstairs *upstairs*. I'll bring in the blanket. It has nothing to do with anything. You go up. I'll be on guard duty downstairs.

PEGGY

I am glad you stayed, Mr Grosse; after all, I am.

MAURICE

So am I. What a thing. What a night. You three upstairs. I'll stay here with Janet. I'll just fetch that rug.

(he stops and turns)

Oh, I wonder if we could keep to ourselves that I popped around without Mr Playfair? I'd hate him to think that I was going behind his back or something equally bonkers. Now, Number Two lead the way - the only thing to be frightened of upstairs are some of the trousers worn by the young men in Margaret's posters!

He goes. PEGGY kisses JANET, who is now asleep.

MARGARET

Pardonnez moi...

PEGGY

Please Margaret - what now?

MARGARET

Mind yer own business. Private.

And she goes up to the loo as PEGGY and JIMMY go up the stairs.

JIMMY

Will dad come tonight?

PEGGY

Let's all get some sleep, young man.

JIMMY

Mum?

PEGGY

Mr Grosse is here. Be alright.

UPSTAIRS - They arrive in the bedroom.

JIMMY

D-on't g-g-o mum.

(PEGGY crawls to JIMMY)

It-s-s very quiet.

PEGGY

Shut those eyes.

DOWNSTAIRS - MAURICE returns carrying a red heavy wool car rug. JANET stirs.

MAURICE

Here we are, dear. Shhh.

(wraps the rug tenderly around JANET.)

There we are. Your rug, Janet. You sleep tight.

Then MAURICE gasps with emotion. He is a strong, gentle man, but raw feelings flood him for a moment. He is close to sobbing.

He doesn't see MARGARET, who is returning from the downstairs bathroom.

MARGARET

Owwww. Something just cut me fuckin' toe off!

MAURICE turns, shocked. He attempts to pull himself together.

MAURICE

Margaret?! What on earth are you doing?

MARGARET

I am bleedin' half to death.

MAURICE

(standing, rattled)

No, I mean creeping around like that?

MARGARET

This is bad, a bad cut—blood an' stuff.

MAURICE

Let me have a look. We seem to have lost the teacup to our poltergeist, and I was going to sweep up...

He moves towards MARGARET - she stares at him:

MARGARET

What were you doing? Mr Grosse? Just then, with Jan?

MAURICE
(not an easy or natural liar)
I was worried - I heard her sort of grunt in her sleep. Always frightened she might bite her tongue off or something equally horrible.

MARGARET
Well that would shut her gob at least!
(her foot)
This hurts like very badly, Mr. Grosse. Seriously bad.

MAURICE
First Aid kit required to get this injury cleaned up.
(MARGARET looks at him)
Awful to have to amputate.

He goes back out to his car. MARGARET hops across to JANET. Leans over - prods her.

MARGARET
Jan' - Jan'?
(troubled by JANET not reacting.)
Jan' - for fucks sake...

MAURICE returns, carrying a first aid kit. He stops in the doorway.

MAURICE
Are you torturing your poor sister? You have no idea what this is taking out of her. I do wonder if your tormenting her isn't what makes her what she is. Right, young lady, sit there. Let's have a look...

MARGARET
(turning)
What is 'this', Mr. Grosse?

MARGARET hops up to a chair. He kneels and looks at the cut on MARGARET's foot.

MAURICE
Not fatal, but going to be sore...

MARGARET

You are ticklin' me!

(direct)

D'you honestly think this house is haunted?

MAURICE

If it's not, I'm not honestly sure what Mr. Playfair and I are doing here night after night!

MARGARET

Mr Playfair thinks we are chancing it - doesn't he?

MAURICE

Oh I am not sure he does.

MARGARET

(not believing)

Mr Grosse, that lady, and the bloke: they certainly thought we were chancing it, didn't they?

MAURICE

(laughing)

That 'lady', as you call her, was chairwoman of the Society for Psychical Research. They are duty-bound to be sceptical. There are a terrifying number of lunatics out there claiming they are haunted. Granted, most don't get the front page of the Daily Mirror or on the British Bellyache Corporation, but usually things like this...

MARGARET

(interrupting)

They seen things like this before, they said? Them weirdos from the Psychical Research place? They said they seen a LOT of this stuff.

MAURICE

Well, some. Guy has seen a great deal more.

MARGARET

And what does he reckon is going to happen, clever clogs?

Looks at him - intent. She then smiles.

MARGARET

We - was Jan's idea - we were messin' when the toilet door got locked on the inside.

MAURICE

Yes, we knew, gave us quite a chuckle!

MARGARET didn't expect that.

MAURICE
And you hid my tape recorder and said the poltergeist had it.

MARGARET
We never!

MAURICE
So why were you and Janet whispering and laughing on the tape? The record button is the red one.

MARGARET
You know we had a right laugh with Rey today.

MAURICE
He’s lonely. He’s a nice man. You really shouldn’t torture him.

The dressing done, MAURICE moves away.

MARGARET
The newspapers reckon it’s real, don’t they? They certainly think it’s real.

MAURICE
One might argue that they *like* to say it’s real—you know, to sell newspapers. But, yes, indeed. There has been an awful lot of interest in what we’ve all been up to here at 284 Green Street! Now bed, young lady.

MARGARET
You think it’s real don’t you - you more than anyone?

MAURICE
Bed-time for you.

MARGARET stands, balancing her sore foot by holding onto a chair.

MARGARET
Do you like what you see?

She twists - a sort of uncertain sexiness.

MARGARET
The woman in front of you, Mr. Grosse.

MAURICE
(embarrassed)
Margaret?

MARGARET
Or Jimmy, do you like Jimmy?

MAURICE
Jimmy?

MARGARET
Well - you know - like a shirt lifter, being posh an'all.

MAURICE
(appalled)
No, really, no.

MARGARET
Oh cummon, Mr. Grosse you are here all the time - night and day - what do you want from us? We got nothing.

MAURICE
Guy and I want to help.

PEGGY is listening on the stairs.

MAURICE
We are trying to support you and your mother and Janet and Jimmy, through something that is extremely tiresome.

MARGARET
Bollocks.

MAURICE
(surprised)
And, of course, the case. We *are* trying to help. Now...

MARGARET
Are you? Really? Or do you just *like* bein' here? You know everything about us. We don't know nothing about you. There's something you not telling us, I reckon? No?
(He is stung. MARGARET laughs.)
I don't mean nothin' serious, Mr. Grosse. Fuckin' 'ell look at you!

MAURICE

Please, my dear.

MARGARET
(about her nightie)

Dad says if this was any shorter, it would put men in prison. What d'you reckon?

PEGGY comes down fast.

PEGGY

Margaret will you get yourself to bed immediately.

MARGARET
(shocked)

Mum...

PEGGY

NOW. I mean right now.

MARGARET runs fast up the stairs. Faced with PEGGY's fury, MAURICE goes to JANET and puts his hand on her forehead.

MAURICE

That's better. She's cooler - at first it was - is like she's on fire...

PEGGY

Margaret's right, you know. You know all about us - too much some around here say. You and Mr. Playfair - but I don't know nothin' about you. You got the car - the Jaguar, an' you certainly don't count your pennies, don't get me wrong, and you are very kind - and you live in Wembley.

MAURICE

Wimbledon. I'm not sure what there is to know.

PEGGY

Margaret's a girl. Just a girl. You should've sent her to bed straight away. Straightaway.

MAURICE

She had cut her foot, and I was cleaning it. I think I broke the teacup earlier. I'll replace it in the morning.

PEGGY goes - returns with a dustpan.

MAURICE

I can do that...

(PEGGY starts sweeping up the teacup)

You have been very kind, Mrs. Hodgson, really, and I'm s...

PEGGY

(still angry)

Oh I thought it was you being kind? I thought *you* were helping us?

MAURICE

It's a form of words.

PEGGY

But Mr. Playfair is *the* expert?

MAURICE

Oh yes. He's your man on ghosts and poltergeists, as you have seen.

PEGGY

Suppose he is.

MAURICE

Maybe I should pack up and call it a night. There'll be no traffic at this time of night.

PEGGY looks at MAURICE.

MAURICE

I was only passing this evening, you know, when I saw the ice cream van.

PEGGY

You, passing, Mr Grosse, in Enfield?

MAURICE

Well, it is quite a case this. Really something. Easy to become obsessed.

PEGGY has finished sweeping up. She goes to JANET - and strokes her hair. In the silence, MAURICE feels he has to explain.

MAURICE

Margaret is very young. I should have sent her up straight away, but Betty will be the first to tell you that I can have my blind spots. In all honesty, I am technical. After my time in the services, my career has been technical, scientific, and, I like to think, a bit of an inventor. Things either are or they are not. You make something with wings and a bloody great engine or two, and you have an airliner, or you don't. But here? Really fascinating...

PEGGY

I don't like the idea of experts from Brazil, or anyone for that matter, talking about us. What can they know that I don't know? Are we some kind of scientific test? An experiment?

MAURICE

Oh golly no. No. Mr. Playfair is genuinely concerned. They want to get to the bottom of what is going on.

PEGGY

The cameras and tape recording the children?

MAURICE

We have to make sure everything is recorded. This happened then. At this time.
If they could have a photograph of something extraordinary—maybe even *someone* extraordinary—it would change everything. I suppose we could know that after we die, there is still some, that our lives HERE and NOW were only the tip - that there's more.

PEGGY

More?

MAURICE

Guy is absolutely convinced that there are energies—lives still being lived, and a great deal more. So, we are here to help you, but also because there is a way of thinking—not something I... I well, can go along with—that something may be living *in* this house—some kind of unsettled spirit.

PEGGY looks at him, turns and fetches
JANET's schoolbooks.

PEGGY

Have you seen this?

She opens the schoolbook - and hands it to
MAURICE. He frowns.

PEGGY

She's not writing anything, just scratching. Scratching. Is she doing that at school? Have you heard what they are sayin' at school about us? The other children hate my kids. They say we are trying to *be* something. Margaret's old enough, but Jan'... What does it mean? What is happenin' to her? She's not eating, and look at this—she's just... I don't know. I don't know. I want it to stop.

MAURICE
That's what we are all trying to sort out...

PEGGY
Is something here - an unsettled spirit - in the house?

MAURICE
I'm not sure...

PEGGY
(change)
Or is it him - their father.

MAURICE mops his brow with his handkerchief.

MAURICE
I'm sure it's not...

PEGGY
He's not easy, Eddie, you know.

MAURICE
I don't think...

PEGGY
But look at Jan—look at her. She's not well. She's not well. That's what I worry about.
(she has to say this)
When Mr Playfair was talking to the couple from the society - I heard him whispering about the fire.

MAURICE
What fire?

PEGGY
The fire that came in the end.

MAURICE
Oh that! In Sao Paulo? Do you mean that? I don't think that was meant for our ears.

PEGGY
Well, I heard it. What did he mean? He said that the little girl was burnt up.

MAURICE

I don't think anything like that...

PEGGY

(interrupting)

But Brazilians have come to London! You said Mr Playfair was picking them up himself from Heathrow. He said - I heard him say that after everything - just like we have here - the things moving, lights going crazy, even Janet's talking - after *everything* there is the only the fire. Or that the fire comes.

MAURICE

Oh, only very rarely. Not usually.

PEGGY

But you said something - or something - is living in this house! That's not usual.

MAURICE

I only said 'maybe', Peggy. Really.

PEGGY

That little girl was burnt up. Mr Grosse: Janet was very hot tonight. You felt her.

MAURICE

But her temperature came down. Immediately. Look, what Guy was talking about was absolutely the very worst-case scenario. And that was in Brazil.

PEGGY

(raw)

But is that what's happening to her, Mr. Grosse?

PEGGY stares at him - she wants more.

MAURICE

Only in the most rare - most terrible instances and only sometimes the... well, the person to whom... combusts.

PEGGY

Jan'?

MAURICE

Definitely not.

(slight pause)

Definitely not. And not here, certainly not in Enfield. And we are here *specifically* to make sure things like that don't happen.

PEGGY puts the school book back on the
table near MAURICE's tape recorder.

MAURICE

Get some sleep. Go on, you go up. Janet is quite safe with me. I'll stay awake. You, most of all, need to keep up with your sleep...

PEGGY

I am not sure I'll ever sleep again.

(change)

I don't know what I would do without you. Both.

MAURICE

284 Green Street is certainly keeping me out of mischief.

PEGGY

But what about your own family? What about your family, what about Mrs Grosse?

MAURICE

Betty? Oh Betty loves the garden. And her whist.

PEGGY

So long as she doesn't think we've stolen you.

MAURICE

I think she is glad to have me out of her hair!

PEGGY

And your children? A boy, at least. I can tell. The way you play with Jimmy. He lights up when you are here with all the talk of the war and Panzers.

MAURICE

I hope I haven't exaggerated my experiences, but I suppose a little bit of war does leave an indelible mark on a man.

PEGGY

But you don't have any girls? No daughter?

MAURICE looks at her - this is an
important moment.

MAURICE

No. Sadly, no daughter.

JANET

Mum, sorry mum, I have been asleep.

(she looks at MAURICE)

Mr Grosse? What the heck are you doin' here?

PEGGY

He stayed to keep us safe, Jan'.

She puts her hand on JANET's forehead.

PEGGY

That's lovely and cool. Shall we sleep in the big bed, Jan' my darling.

JANET

OK.

PEGGY

Come along, Jan', let's get you upstairs.

PEGGY helps her up. The rug falls. JANET turns - looks at it.

MAURICE

I got that from the car, Janet. For you.

JANET

(easy)

I remember it, now. Singing 'Jack and Jill went up the hill...' driving along, in daddy's...

MAURICE stares at JANET.

PEGGY

You be quiet now, Jan' I am going to hold onto you - my love - all night. I am not letting you out of my sight. Give us hand, Mr Grosse and maybe you want to get your cameras downstairs. I just want some sleep.

MAURICE

Yes, of course.

They turn to go up the stairs.

PEGGY

We got to get something into you, sweetheart. You've got eat.

JANET

Got to eat. Got to eat.Got to eat.

Maurice picks the CAR RUG, folds it, neatly puts it on the sofa, and follows PEGGY and JANET upstairs.

PEGGY

Shhh now don't want to wake the others. Jan' you go in with me. Back to sleep Jimmy.

JIMMY

Mr Grosse - c-an c-an you tell us about the machine guns again...

MAURICE

That will save for the morning.

Suddenly MARGARET leaps up - screaming - the bulbs go FLASH-FLASH-FLASH

MARGARET

No, no, mum please - don't let dad to do that! Stop him. Stop him.

PEGGY

Maggie, Maggie, it's alright, darlin'.

MAURICE

(dominating)

EVERYONE BE STILL! Please...

BECAUSE: DOWNSTAIRS - a terrible rumbling ripping sound and the ARMCHAIR flies backwards and then there is an explosion and a TOTAL BLACKOUT. MARGARET screams. Finally there's silence.

PEGGY

(whispering - terrified)

What's happened? It's pitch black.

INTERVAL

ACT TWO

SCENE FIVE

On the rise - children's voice: "Jack and Jill went up the hill..."

The dimmest light reveals - UPSTAIRS: MAURICE, PEGGY, JANET, MARGARET and JIMMY. DOWNSTAIRS: darkness, dust, and smoke.

PEGGY

What's happened? It's pitch black.

MAURICE

I can't see any of the other houses, and the streetlights are all off...

PEGGY

Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

Yes?

PEGGY

Is that you holding my hand?

MAURICE

I jolly well hope so!

MARGARET

What's goin' on, mum?

MAURICE

It would appear that our friendly poltergeist has knocked out all the power in North London!

A match is struck, a candle lit

PEGGY

I keep it here in case I need something in the night and don't want to wake the children.

MAURICE

Good thinking. I've got an old torch in my toolbox downstairs. You alright, Mrs Hodgson, if I go downstairs?

PEGGY

I don't much like the dark.

MAURICE

No, me neither. Well. Wish me luck.

He sets off down the stairs.

DOWNSTAIRS: something large is in the middle of the living room. The air is filled with dust.

MAURICE

Hello? Anyone there?

He terrifies himself, bumping into the ARMCHAIR, which is not where he thought it was...

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Oh crumbs.

He stumbles and then finds his tool kit.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Ah, there we are - there we are.

He switches on the torch. The **GAS FIRE** is in the middle of the living room floor. It has been violently ripped out of the tiled surround, and some bricks have come with it. MAURICE goes nearer. He is both fascinated and horrified.

MAURICE
(to himself)

The fire. The fire.

A hissing sound.

MAURICE

Gas, oh my...

(he shouts loudly)

The candle - Mrs Hodgson - blow out the candle!

PEGGY blows out the candle. It's near pitch black.

Then, there's a TAP-TAP-TAP at the FRONT door. MAURICE spins.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Who's that? Who's there?

UPSTAIRS: The children all huddle around PEGGY.

DOWNSTAIRS: The TAP-TAP-TAP on the door is more persistent.

MAURICE

Who's there?

UPSTAIRS: JIMMY moans with fear.

MARGARET

Quiet - quiet Jim-boy.

JIMMY

Is it dad?

DOWNSTAIRS: MAURICE turns as there is now noise at the KITCHEN door. Finally, it opens. A torch dazzles MAURICE.

MAURICE

Hello?

He is dazzled by MAURICE's torch.

REY

(whispering)

Peggy? Are you alright?

MAURICE

For pity's sake -

REY

Mr Grosse, what are you still doing here? It's three in the morning.

MAURICE

Rey - ?

REY

Mrs Hodgson gave me a key for emergencies, and I'd say all the power going down in Enfield is an emergency.

(he swings the torch)

What is the gas fire doing there? What's happened here?

MAURICE

Rey, do you know where the gas main is?

REY

I do.

But he is fascinated by the iron stove in the middle of the room.

REY

I have to say - that is something I have never seen before, Mr Grosse.

MAURICE

No. Me neither. Now, we must turn the gas off.

REY

This is a very heavy thing, and the brickwork—will you look at that? Who did this, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

We have to turn the gas off before something terrible happens.

REY

I am not sure shouting is going to get us anywhere.

MAURICE

The mains? The shut-off?

REY goes upstage to the cupboard under the stairs as PEGGY comes carefully down.

UPSTAIRS: JANET sits stiffly between MARGARET and JIMMY. JANET is caught in the moonlight.

MARGARET
(whispering)
You alright Jan'?

JANET
I-don't-know. I-don't know.

She seems to be growling.

JIMMY
I-I-g-get mum.

JANET
(the growl changes to a bark)
LEAVE-IT-JIMMY-BOY-LEAVE IT.

MARGARET and JIMMY back away from JANET. She now sits alone.

DOWNSTAIRS: It's dark - only lit by torches. REY emerges from the broom cupboard, as PEGGY arrives in the living room.

PEGGY
(about the stove)
Heavens above! Oh my. What's happened?

REY
For future reference, the gas stop is next to the meter. Twist and then up. Though I very much hope there won't be a future reference.

MAURICE
I've never seen anything like this.

PEGGY
What happened?

REY
Don’t worry, Peggy - I can get this sorted as quick as anything...

PEGGY
Where are you going, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE is moving fast up the stairs.

MAURICE
(calling over his shoulder)
Don’t touch anything! Please! Do you hear me Rey?

REY
I thought they weren’t even supposed to be here tonight?

REY goes to the stove, PEGGY reaches over and stops him.

PEGGY
Don’t touch - you heard what Mr Grosse said.

UPSTAIRS: MAURICE rushes into the bedroom. JANET turns and stares at him.

MAURICE
Janet? Are you alright?

MARGARET
Jan’ it’s us! She’s gone weird -

JANET
(singing)
Jack and Jill went up the hill, Jack fell down and broke his crown! Jill came tumbling down but no one died of laughter.

MAURICE is stunned.

MAURICE
Where did you learn that?

JANET
(suddenly normal)
Blimey, Mr Grosse every-time I open my eyes you are there! You are like an old half - penny.

MAURICE

Janet - where did you learn those words?

JANET

We need our sleep - we do.

And she curls up.

MAURICE

(nonplussed)

Janet - ? Righto...

Troubled, but determined not to be sidetracked, MAURICE removes one of the cameras from it's tripod.

JIMMY

What you d-d-oing Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

It's alright Number Two.

(he's agitated)

You three please stay up here. Everything is alright...

He run back down the stairs with the camera.

MAURICE

OK. This is really important. Rey could you step over here, out of harm's way. Thank you.

REY moves. MAURICE photographs the gas fire. FLASH-FLASH-FLASH.

REY

That is quite a danger that is. You reckon you and I could lift it, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

(lining up another shot)

Don't touch it. Please. Not after an *event*.

PEGGY

If someone trips up, though!

MAURICE

Let me just get a proper record. Wow - this really is something. Gosh.

PEGGY

What time is it?

REY shines his torch at his watch.

REY

Five - six minutes past three AM.

MAURICE

Can you step here - please.

He is now trying to get photographs of the ARMCHAIR, without REY in the frame.

REY

When the power went out I thought - you were my first thought - I'd better get round and check how Peggy is doing. I'll sort everything the moment, his nibs here has finished.

PEGGY

That's kind but please. Let's leave this all to the morning...

And suddenly all the lights come on. Street lights outside, everything downstairs, the bedside light upstairs - JANET and JIMMY are so exhausted they lie slumped asleep on their beds. MARGARET is in the shadows.

REY

The sodding trade unions with their strikes! Blackouts and trains not running. They are going to break this country. I mean it.

REY, PEGGY looks at the living room, as MAURICE carefully paces between the gas stove and shattered the fireplace.

REY

What are you doing Mr Grosse?

MAURICE
Measuring...five, six... Six feet I'd say. I am measuring the distance our friend threw this thing. Incredible, really incredible.

REY
It's alright Peg' I'll get this cleaned up.

MAURICE
Rey please, don't touch...

REY
Oh come on Mr Grosse, we can't leave that in the middle of the room!

PEGGY
I have the kids to get to school - please, can we now just all stop. Leave everything where it is and I'll get the Council to come in the morning. Let's get some sleep. Please.

REY
How about a cup of tea - to calm us all down.

PEGGY
No, you have work in the morning, Rey.

REY
(pointing at the tape recorder)
That is quite a piece of kit, that is Mr Grosse? German?

MAURICE
I'm afraid so.

REY
Good is it?

MAURICE
It allows us to playback at different speeds - yes. You can hear things in a voice played slowly that you can't always...

REY
(interrupting)
And your camera is Japanese?

MAURICE
What is this Rey? What are you talking about?

REY
I am just saying.

MAURICE

Saying what, Rey?

PEGGY

Rey - for the love of God...

REY

I thought he was just passing, isn't that would you said, Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

I was, as it happens, but Mrs Hodgson kindly allowed me to record...

REY

Mr Grosse, this is a nice street.

PEGGY

Oh no. Don't start Rey, not now...

REY

An ordinary street. Ordinary people. I'm ordinary - not like you, Mr Grosse with your machines and your traveling and Brazil...

PEGGY

Rey what has this got to do with anything?

REY

I am explaining to Mr Grosse here why we don't want all his nonsense here.

PEGGY

Could you explain it in the morning?

REY

Peg' there'd be nothing to explain if Mr Grosse just went home.

MAURICE

Maybe I should come back in the morning, when everyone feels a little more like it.

REY

Don't you see - nothing is happening! Them girls, you and Mr Playfair and the rest, and this being on TV and in the papers and there's no stopping it. No one is saying the truth: this is all a load of old bollocks!

MAURICE

Rey, in case you haven't noticed the gas fire is in the middle of the room.

REY
The girls did that, I reckon. With you, or someone else, Mr Grosse.

MAURICE
That's impossible! And actually quite insulting.

PEGGY
If we are going to start raising our voices, Mr Grosse, and you Rey, you both know where the door is. I need to go to bed.

MAURICE
Rey tomorrow, maybe tomorrow, Mr Playfair can...

REY
He looks at me like I'm something the cat chucked up.

PEGGY
That's it. Enough. Mr Grosse is here to help. I have had enough. I really have. Go.

PEGGY is far too many hours sleep-
deprived to smile. The cat miaows loudly.

REY (CONT'D)
I will be found with that cat in a bag somewhere near the canal one of these days.

MAURICE sits, tired.

REY
But Mr Grosse, so, you tell us: what d'you and Mr Playfair reckon?

PEGGY
(snapping)
No Rey no. It's time to stop this...

REY
Sorry, Peg' but I need to know.

MAURICE
I am not the expert.

MARGARET is sat on the stairs listening.

MAURICE

Portals.

(REY isn't satisfied))

Energy. Windows. Between worlds.

REY

In Enfield?

MAURICE

To be specific: between the living and the dead.

REY

Fuck off! Excuse my language, Peggy, but I don't believe a word of it. ‘Portals’ ‘between the living and the dead’?!

MAURICE

Yes - yes, as it happens. Unresolved spirits. And sometimes those spirits use the energy of the poltergeist to... communicate.

REY

And you have proof of this? You or Mr Playfair?

PEGGY

Go home Rey.

REY looks at MAURICE for an answer.

MAURICE

(finally)

I don’t know. Maybe. One day. Maybe this case will prove everything.

REY looks at the gas fire, looks at MAURICE. Shakes his head. The cat miaows.

REY

They are monkeys them two. And you are leading them on.

(calling)

Come along then Spider.

Finally, REY goes. A moment.

PEGGY

I thought he’d never go...

MAURICE

He's certainly a character.

PEGGY

A little too much talk for my taste.

PEGGY sits.

MAURICE

Can I get you something, Mrs Hodgson - a cup of tea perhaps?

PEGGY

(staring at the room)

Looks like a bomb has gone off.

MAURICE

Incredible really.

PEGGY

This is taking it out of me, Mr Grosse. Really. When it started I thought... well I don't know what I thought. But the Police woman, and then everyone coming. At the start I thought there'd be some interest and then... I never wanted to be the centre of attention and all that.

(a tough woman, she's fighting emotion and exhaustion)

I'd better get myself up stairs. You reckon that's it for the night?

MAURICE

I have no idea. Honestly. It's so late, I'll just get my notes in order and everything. I'll stay until it's light, what do you say?

PEGGY

Thank you. It's Thursday morning, now, isn't?

MAURICE

Mrs Hodgson?

PEGGY

Don't think Eddie will be in tonight. He'll come tomorrow. He will want this - he won't forget to come for this.

She holds up the brown envelope, puts it in her dressing gown pocket.

MAURICE
You know Rey is clearly very fond of you.

PEGGY
Rey?!

MAURICE
Everyone needs a Rey sometimes in their lives.

PEGGY
I've got quite enough on my plate, without Rey! And you've seen the way he goes on.

MAURICE
The boy needs someone. And Margaret is... well she's turning into quite a young woman. A handful. It's probably none of my business.

PEGGY
No.
(she sets off to bed, then turns)
You are right it isn't your business Mr Grosse. Really.

MAURICE
The children are so frightened...

PEGGY
There's your sodding poltergeist running havoc here!

MAURICE
That's not what I am talking about.

PEGGY
(snapping)
I know. I know what you are talking about.

MAURICE
Rey could keep you safe. From Eddie. I don't think even Eddie would want a run in with Rey. He'd talk him to death.

PEGGY
No, Mr Grosse. I could turn heads. Before the babies. I could. When I was young Eddie couldn't keep his hands off me, and I'd do anything to keep him happy. He's their father. Whatever else.

MAURICE
Peggy, marriages fail. It is sad, terribly sad...

PEGGY

It didn't 'fail', Mr. Grosse, Eddie tore my heart out and spat it back in my face.

MAURICE

Why we don't talk to the Council. See if we can get you away from here? To another house? Or perhaps a flat? They can be lovely...

PEGGY

(interrupting, firm)

No, Mr. Grosse. This is my home.

MAURICE

But everything stopped when we got you down to the seaside for that break! The sea air did you all the world of good...

PEGGY

(cutting him off)

I didn’t come from somewhere like you and I never had the chance to meet someone like you. But Eddie? I knew what he was from the moment I clapped eyes on him and I couldn’t, I wouldn’t, turn away. And suddenly here I am with three children who are a handful on their own, Rey popping over mornin’, noon and night AND a poltergeist AND you two from the Society for Psychical Research or whatever the heck it's called.

(slight pause)

I'd like it all to have been different, but it's not. Some things you can’t change.

MAURICE

Peggy, that’s not true...

PEGGY

My life isn’t like yous. And them girl’s lives aren’t going to be yours. Look at Margaret. And Jan’... You really believe people like us can change what happens to us?

There’s an uneasy silence. MARGARET is fast asleep now on the stairs.

PEGGY

Hear how quiet it is now? This late.

MAURICE

I wonder, Mrs Hodgson did... Jan’ said something upstairs when I was fetching the camera.

PEGGY

What?

MAURICE

Jack and Jill went up the hill, to fetch a pail of water.

(slight pause)

It's a nursery rhyme.

PEGGY

I know that, what are you on about Mr Grosse?

MAURICE

Has she said it before?

PEGGY

How would I know? She say all sorts. They all do.

MAURICE

Of course they do. Just struck me.

PEGGY

Night then. We'll have a cuppa before you set off. Reckon you'll be here tomorrow night? Haven't seen Mr Playfair for a couple of nights now. Reckon he'll come?

MAURICE

Oh I don't know. You know, Peggy, it might be better if you don't mention to Mr Playfair that I came tonight.

PEGGY

You have said that a couple of times - even I may have got the message.

MAURICE

I promise we will sort all this out, Peggy. I promise you.

PEGGY

Yes, thank you. That's why you're here.

She turns and walks up the stairs. Sees MARGARET who wakes.

MARGARET

Mum - what's going on?

PEGGY

Let's get some sleep, shall we?

They go upto the bedroom, and get into bed.

DOWNSTAIRS: MAURICe listens, finally there is quiet. MAURICE sits - he's tired but very alert. In the distance, an ambulance whoops - getting closer, catching MAURICE's attention.

Then the car rug flies off the sofa into the air and just as MAURICE goes to grab it - for a ***millisecond*** an OLD MAN appears behind him in the kitchen -

MAN
(shouting)
GET-OUT-OF-MY-FUCKING-HOUSE

And he's gone - MAURICE turns, stunned.

The AMBULANCE siren is now loud, a telephone starts to ring. As MAURICE turns confused, he *hears* JANET...

JANET
(fragile)
Daddy - daddy...

MAURICE spins. JANET is walking towards him - weird with her arms out. Voices. The AMBULANCE whooping, now multiple ringing phones, makes this nightmarish.

MALE VOICE
Mrs Grosse? This is Cardiff Royal Infirmary. I am afraid we...

MAURICE'S WIFE - BETTY's VOICE echoes:

BETTY'S VOICE
(desperate)
Maurice, Maurice, come, something has happened - I can't talk...

JANET is now embracing MAURICE. She hangs onto him.

MAURICE

No Jan', no. Please. Janet?

JANET

Help me - help me - daddy help me.

(screaming)

Help me!

TOTAL BLACKOUT - silence.

SCENE SIX

A pause. Then... UPSTAIRS: PEGGY switches on the bedroom light.

PEGGY

(mystified)

Janet? Jan'?

MARGARET

(blurry with sleep)

Mum?

PEGGY

Is Jan' with you?

MARGARET

What you talking about --

PEGGY is now up. MARGARET also.

PEGGY

Shwe's gone - where is she? Fetch Mr Grosse.

She grabs her dressing gown as MARGARET rushes down the stairs.

MARGARET

Mr Grosse!

He turns - he is ashen - deeply shocked - haunted.

MARGARET

Jan's missing!

MAURICE
(shocked - fragile)

Missing? What do you mean?

MARGARET

She's not in her bed.

MAURICE

She was here. Just now.

He points. PEGGY and JIMMY are thundering down the stairs.

PEGGY

Jan! Has she locked herself in the toilet?

PEGGY runs up to the loo.

JIMMY

Mr G-grosse are y-o-ou OK?

MAURICE

What? Yes, I think so. Um - I just saw Janet...

MARGARET

What's going on? What's that doing there?

She points at the stove -

MAURICE

A portal has opened. I am sure of it.

PEGGY reappears.

PEGGY

She's not there!

MARGARET

Jan' can't have just gone.

PEGGY

Mr Grosse? Help us please.

MAURICE

Yes. Yes. Yes of course.

But he is still not properly engaging. He holds the CAR RUG looks at it - mystified - but does nothing.

PEGGY

Janet has disappeared. Just gone. Mr Grosse!

MAURICE

Well, she was here!

PEGGY

You mean she came down the stairs? Where did she go?

MAURICE

I don't know. I'm sorry.

PEGGY

What are you talking about? Janet has vanished...

MAURICE is troubled - desperate.

MAURICE

Something incredible has happened.

PEGGY

(commanding)

Maggie, go in the garden can you? Take Mr Grosse's torch. Jimmy you stay here boy, OK?

MARGARET tries to find the torch.

MARGARET

I reckon Jan is just messing mum - you know what she's like...

JIMMY

I want to be with you mum.

PEGGY

No you be a brave soldier I am going to the telephone box - I'll get the police.

(firm)

Pull yourself together Mr Grosse. Can you?

PEGGY is going to the front door when there is a loud thump at the kitchen door. Everyone freezes where they are.

PEGGY
(loud)
Jan'? Is that you?

JIMMY
I-t-ts d-dad.

More thumping and rattling.

MARGARET
(absolutely terrified)
Mum it's dad - it's dad. Have you got his money? It was there.

She points at the mantlepiece.

PEGGY
(calling)
Eddie, I got them ghost hunters here. You're not coming this time of night. The children are all asleep.

The door rattles hard in it's frame.

JIMMY
Mr G-rosse say some-t-hing please! Tell him.

MAURICE
(clearing his throat - feeble)
Er - I am here, Mr Hodgson! I will call the police.

But suddenly the door swings open. REY is carrying JANET in his arms. Street light floods in behind them.

REY
She hasn't stirred or moved a muscle or nothing.

PEGGY
Jan - Jan - where'd you find her Rey. Put her down. Here. Move Jimmy.

REY
She's asleep - she's alright Peg', look at her.

He puts JANET down on the sofa. PEGGY kisses her, takes her hand.

PEGGY
Where did you find her Rey? She alright? She's not responding, Mr Grosse.

MAURICE
Is she cold?

He puts CAR RUG over JANET.

PEGGY
Where was she, Rey?

MAURICE
Oh. She's very cold.

PEGGY
Cummon, my darling you're alright.
(she pulls JANET to her, embracing her)
Rey, where was she?

REY
I woke up an' she was there.

PEGGY
Where?

REY
(very uneasy)
Just felt something against me - thought the cat had come to pester me, but it wasn't Spider. I didn't hear her breathin' or anything, Peg.

JIMMY
She-must-'ave gone th-rough the wall, mum.

MARGARET
Maybe she was just sleep walkin'...

MAURICE
"There are more thing in heaven and earth", Mrs Hodgson, I...

PEGGY
(silencing them all)
Rey, I swear on everything that I hold sacred if you have had anything to do with this, I will not rest.

REY

No, no, Peg' I just woke up and...

PEGGY

With Jan' in bed with you! Rey is that what you are saying?

MAURICE

Peggy - Mrs Hodgson - I really don't think Rey had anything to do with this.

PEGGY

He just said Janet was in bed with him, Mr Grosse!

MARGARET

Mum - it's uncle Rey - he's not going to be grabbing Janet from her bed is he?

PEGGY

Margaret you said, didn't you, how Rey looked at you. You said it!

MARGARET

I was just messing around.

PEGGY

Rey - get out of here. Get out of here before I do something I'll regret.

MAURICE

Peggy please. For pity's sake - it's not Rey. Really - listen to me. Something is happening here!

Frightened by MAURICE shouting, JIMMY runs up the stairs.

JIMMY

M-r-Grosse-no-no....

MARGARET
(following)

Jimmy, it's alright... Jim...

But JIMMY doesn't stop. PEGGY now goes to JANET, wraps her in her arms - trying to stir her.

PEGGY

Jan', Jan'? Mr Grosse we need to get her to the hospital.

REY

I can run to the phone box

PEGGY

No, you get out of here, Rey - will you just get out of here Rey and never come back!

REY

Peggy, please. I would never do anything...

PEGGY starts hitting REY - all her emotion and tension now coming out in steady, dull, blows on his back.

UPSTAIRS: MARGARET screams.

MARGARET

He’s here!

Did we see the OLD MAN? We’ll argue all the way home as MARGARET and JIMMY run fast down the stairs, screaming. All overlapping.

MARGARET

Mum, there’s a man upstairs. A man!

REY

I... Peggy, you have to believe me - I didn't do nothing. I wouldn't want any harm to Jan' or any of you. She's just a child.

MARGARET

Please mum. Please, I'm frightened.

MARGARET and JIMMY go to PEGGY, who is breathing hard. Exhausted, frightened and angry.

MARGARET

I promise you, mum, there's a man upstairs.

PEGGY

No, this has got to stop now - Maggie. That's enough! I can’t take any more.

REY

You want me to go up there Peg'?

(he doesn't move.)

I'm not having it. Listen, come next door. You will be safe there. Nothing ever happens next door. Peggy -

PEGGY

I'm not leaving my house.

MARGARET

Mum, we can't stay here.

PEGGY

I'm not leaving Jan'. Jan' Jan, wake up. Mr Grosse what should I do?

MAURICE

I think it will all settle - I really do.

A **SHADOW** of the **OLD MAN** is in the kitchen - MARGARET screams and points.

MARGARET

Mum. He's there!

Everyone turns - but see nothing, but the overhead light is now flickering.

MAURICE

Please - Everyone be still. Can you hear that?

JIMMY

M-r-Grosse?

Upstairs the **BEDs** are moving - shaking, maybe jumping. PEGGY holds JANET - who is still unconscious.

PEGGY

Jan', Jan' darling...

MAURICE

Shhhh. Please Peggy.

PEGGY

She's not moved a muscle Mr Grosse...

MAURICE
(loud)
You need to be quiet. It's happening! It's happening!

Everyone listens, but suddenly, the night feels calm. The bed's are still. Nothing, but the distant AMBULANCE siren.

REY
(quietly)
Peggy. I NEVER touched Jan' or nothing like that. I just woke up and she was there.

MARGARET
Mum - we *have* to go.

PEGGY
I am not leaving Jan...

MARGARET
Mum, Mr Grosse - please. We *have* to go. I mean we *have* to. It's bad here. I can feel it.

MAURICE
Margaret?

MARGARET
I mean it. I mean totally truly.

REY
I reckon this is all just tricking us. Our heads - tricking us. Everyone is so tired.

MARGARET turns on him.

MARGARET
No Rey. We may have been joking around but this is not joking. This is real.

REY
What is?

MARGARET
EVERYTHING!

PEGGY
Mr Grosse?

MAURICE
Margaret, if this is another of your games -

MARGARET
It's not a Mr Grosse. I told you. You know that. Mum, please. Something bad is going to happen here. Please. We must go, mum. It's not dad. It's in the house. We must...

MAURICE looks at her - she's right.

MAURICE
I think maybe it is sensible. I think.

MARGARET
Mum?

REY
That cat's the only monster next door and I'll lock her in the kitchen.
(slight beat)
I can take Jan' -

PEGGY
No Rey, you keep your hands off Jan'. Mr Grosse?

JIMMY
(exhausted)
I'm not tired, mum...

MAURICE
(moving to JANET)
We all are exhausted Number Two - but let's get everyone to sleep. Yes. Yes.

He picks JANET up - wrapped in the CAR RUG.

REY
Can get into your head all this, can't it Mr Grosse?

JIMMY
Do we n-need our things?

MAURICE
I'll fetch them later Number Two.
(over his shoulder)
You know it might be best if we didn't mention to Mr Playfair that I was here tonight and the others - not at least until we've got the photographs developed and the tapes sorted. Lead the way.

REY ushers MAURICE carrying JANET and JIMMY out the back door.

MARGARET

Mum.

PEGGY

Margaret?

MARGARET

You know what we done?

PEGGY

Done?

MARGARET

Never meant this.

PEGGY

I don't know what's got into you. You are good children. The best. You'll be alright.

They go. The AMBULANCE's siren increases. The house is empty. After a moment MAURICE returns. He looks around. Nothing. He carefully dismantles the tape recorder, and microphone puts them back in their case. He goes upstairs. He stops in the doorway - looks. The beds are a mess. He goes in and collects the last two cameras and is coming back down the stairs when -

JANET UNSEEN
(a whisper)

Daddy.

MAURICE stops, turns.

JANET UNSEEN
(a whisper from another direction)

Help me daddy - please. Please.

MAURICE comes down the stairs - mystified.

MAURICE

Janet? Jan'...

The room is dark - the shadows are long.

JANET UNSEEN

(a whisper)

I'm frightened, daddy. Are you there?

MAURICE turns SUDDENLY - JANET is in the ARMCHAIR, wrapped in the CAR RUG. There is an intensity about her. The room feels like it is throbbing - pulsing. She is frightening. She changes:

JANET

(the weird - terrible voice)

I-WANT-YOU-TO-FUCK-OFF-OUT-OF-MY HOUSE.

(back to a frightened young woman)

Daddy - daddy - what happened...? I'm so frightened. I'm falling - I'm spinning - the lights are spinning. I want to stop. I want to stop. Aghhh.

(she jolts as though her head has hit some thing hard)

When did you... Dad....

(weird terrible voice takes over)

GO-AWAY-GROSSE-GO AWAY FUCKING SHIT MAN...

(back to girl)

Crack. My head. Cracked. My egg cracked, daddy. Spilt.

MAURICE

You are alright - we are here. We are here. I'll tell them we are here. Nothing bad can happen when mummy and daddy are here...

The sound of a hospital replaces the haunting ambulance. Now the pulse of life support equipment.

JANET

(tiny)

Jack and Jill went up the hill, Jack fell down and cracked his crown and Jill came spinning after. Then, Jill came down and cracked her skull daddy... help me daddy. Where's mummy? It's dark here. Don't leave me. Daddy.

Her breathing is ghastly.

MAURICE

Janet - Janet, darling. Betty, fetch someone - I'll call the nurse.

(calling)

Nurse? Nurse.

JANET

Jack fell down and broke his crown but no-one died of laughter!

(change)

FUCK-OFF-OUT-OF-MY-SHIT-HOLE. I AM A G-H-O-S-T.

MAURICE

Help us please. Help us, please.

(shouting - screaming)

NURSE! Please! Please nurse. My daughter needs you. Doctor! Please.

MAURICE is calling out to imagined nurses and medical staff. His voice - like JANET's - echoes through the theatre.

Then a **TOTAL BLACK OUT**.

SCENE EIGHT

The first light of dawn, an urban dawn chorus. MAURICE is asleep on the sofa. The CAR RUG is on the ARMCHAIR. There is the sound of a car. Feet outside. The doorbell goes. MAURICE doesn't wake. The doorbell rings again. MAURICE stirs, and then sits bolt upright - shocked by how deeply he's been asleep. The doorbell rings again - insistent now. MAURICE stumbles to the door.

MAURICE

(very surprised)

Betty?

BETTY

Maurice.

MAURICE

What are you doing here?

BETTY

Mr Playfair turned up at the house. He was surprised you weren't in - he wanted to introduce you to some Brazilians. They were ghastly - really weird. Maurice, he says they were hoping to see you.

MAURICE

Oh. Ah you see, I had to be here. The children's father comes on Wednesday nights - every second Wednesday - to get his social... He pretends he still lives here. He claims this is his address but he's a monster. He terrifies them.

BETTY

I lied for you. I said you were out with friends. I haven't slept. Worrying. Maurice, Mr Playfair said he hadn't been here - to the house for ten days now. He said there was a feeling that... well he said he felt you should all be cautious of what you really think is going on in this house.

MAURICE

He's wrong...

BETTY

He said the experts had doubts. When I realised he didn't know you were here I started to think. What have you been doing here Maurice?

He takes BETTY's hand and whispers with absolute intensity:

MAURICE

He's wrong. Guy is wrong. They are all wrong. Something extraordinary has happened. It happened last night. I spoke with Janet. I was with her.

BETTY

Maurice?

MAURICE

I was right. No, listen to me. The girl here is being used, that's clear. I know what you feel about him, but Guy can explain. I may even have a recording. Well at least earlier - but last night, when I slowed the tape down I heard the man.

BETTY

What man...? Maurice what are you talking about?

MAURICE

And then this morning... they had *all* gone next door to stay with the neighbour, you see...

BETTY
Maurice please, just come home. I am very worried about you, please.

MAURICE
Janet was trying to get through to me through her. I'm sure.

BETTY
What are you talking about?

MAURICE
Through a portal...

PEGGY comes through the kitchen door,
BETTY turns.

PEGGY
Mrs Grosse?

BETTY hurriedly wipes her tears away.

BETTY
(finding a smile)
Yes. You must be Mrs Hodgson? Sorry, I came because we were worried where Maurice had got to. I'm sorry, it's very early I know.

PEGGY
(gantel)
We wondered how you could do without him night after night.

BETTY
I hope he hasn't been getting under your feet too much... what a thing you've been going through.

PEGGY
Mr Grosse has been very kind, looking after us. Really. I think without him I might have...not know how to cope.

BETTY
Oh that's good.

PEGGY
It's Jan' I worry about. Mr Grosse, she can hardly lift her head this morning.

BETTY
(a discovery)
Jan'?

PEGGY

Yes - well Janet really. I had better get my children their breakfast. They've got matchsticks holding up their eyes...

BETTY

Maurice?

PEGGY catches BETTY's tone.

PEGGY

What's the matter, Mrs Grosse?

MAURICE

Betty - dearest. Please this will... I can explain.

BETTY

Maurice hasn't told you?

MAURICE

(desperate)

I had to see if I could. If it was possible. And I was right. Listen to me...

PEGGY

Do you want to tell me what is going on? You may not think I'm the brightest of women, but will you tell me, Mr Grosse, what the heck is going on?

MAURICE

Probably best if Betty and I go. And that none of this is mentioned to Mr Playfair,

PEGGY

So you keep saying, why's that, then? Mr Grosse?

BETTY

I'm afraid our daughter died last year. A motorbike accident. In Cardiff. Her 'boyfriend', Eric, lost control of the thing. It was the end of that terrible heat wave. The roads - there had been torrential rain - and the tarmac, oil heat and rain made the road like ice... He was killed instantly, but she was flung along the road. Janet hit her skull. We were in Jersey on holiday. By the time we got there, she was in a coma. And in the end, with medical advice, we decided that Janet...

PEGGY

Janet?

The kids are laughing in the garden. They sound like happy, ordinary children.

PEGGY
Mr Grosse? Is this why you've been coming here?

MAURICE
No. I wanted to help you.

PEGGY
I don't understand...

The kitchen door bangs as MARGARET, JIMMY and JANET burst through. They are still in their pyjamas - laughing about something. Seeing the adults, they stop. PEGGY looks at MAURICE.

PEGGY
Mr Grosse?

MAURICE
I meant - all I meant - I was trying - we wanted to help you. Peggy, I am sorry. You are the last person in the world I should have lied to, but I needed...

He goes to the ARMCHAIR and picks up the CAR RUG.

BETTY
Maurice, what is that doing here? That is our car rug! Janet loved that...

PEGGY
(interrupting)
I'm sorry but how long... last summer? Mr Grosse, you been here all this time, and you never...he never told me about this, Mrs Grosse. Never. Mr Grosse. I trusted you.

MAURICE
I know. I am sorry.

BETTY
Maurice we should go, now. Please.

But JANET starts to walk towards MAURICE.

PEGGY
Jan', no please - what are you doing?

MARGARET
She's not our, Jan' mum. She's not.

MAURICE
You will see Betty, I think...

BETTY
Stop this, Maurice. Stop it now.

PEGGY
Jan'?

And MAURICE wraps the CAR RUG around JANET, as she huddles into the ARMCHAIR.

JIMMY
Stop it - M-m-m-r Grosse.

MAURICE
It's alright, Number Two.

JANET seems to hunch up, wrapped in the blanket. There's an intensity about her.

BETTY
(shocked)
Maurice, what is she doing?

JANET
(the girl)
Mummy, you came! I cracked my egg. Mummy. Scrambled my egg.

MAURICE
Betty! I told you. Hold her. Janet *knows* you are here.

PEGGY steps forward.

PEGGY
This has got to stop. Leave her alone.

MAURICE
We are getting through!

JANET
Mummy - mummy.

Suddenly, BETTY steps forward and *slaps* JANET. Everything changes.

BETTY

You are not Janet. You are not my daughter. My - our daughter is dead! I'm sorry. Maurice, she is dead. We buried her.

MARGARET runs to JANET.

MARGARET

Jan' fucking hell. Fucking hell.

PEGGY

(furious)

No, no - you have got to go. I am not having that - what got into you? You just hit my daughter! Get out of here -

BETTY

I don't know what has been going on in this house, but your daughter is not my Janet.

PEGGY

Mr Grosse, you got to go.

MAURICE

Yes, yes. I never meant...

PEGGY

Both of you get out of here! Get out of here. This is my house.

JANET is rocking forward and back in the ARMCHAIR.

PEGGY

She'll be alright. Mr Grosse, take all your stuff and get out of here...

JANET is now rocking so hard the chair is thumping. It echoes around the theatre. Building, building...

BETTY

This is madness, Maurice. What have you done?

MAURICE

Get a cool towel - I'll get...

He turns to go to the kitchen.

PEGGY
I don't want you to touch anything, now get out. Jan'!

JIMMY rushes to JANET. Holds her.

MARGARET
She's burning Mr Grosse...

BETTY
Maurice - please come home. You've lost your mind.

JANET
(singing/screaming)
Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water, Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill skidded across the road on her fucking bum and cracked her skull... like a fucking egg.
(she turns to BETTY)
And no one died of laughter.

And JANET's 'possession' ends—a pause.

BETTY
(whispering, in shock)
"No one died of laughter" Maurice?

JANET
(changes back to JANET HODGSON)
Mum - we'd better get our skates on. Got to study 'aven't we?

MARGARET
That's right. We got to get some brekkie - haven't we. There'll be hell to pay.

MARGARET goes to the table, and JANET follows. Sits. They are all exhausted - operating on a haunted autopilot.

JANET
Jimmy. Jimmy come to table.

BETTY
Maurice, did you teach her that?

MAURICE
No, I never taught her that. I never told her anything about Janet.

BETTY
But we used to sing that in the car - when we were driving—all of us together. “Jack and Jill...went up the hill...

She picks up the CAR RUG - and holds it.

BETTY
“Jack fell down and broke his crown, and Jill came tumbling after *and no one died of laughter...*”

MAURICE
Yes.

MAURICE is now with BETTY.

PEGGY
I want you both to go. Mr Grosse, please take it all. I don’t want you here anymore.

But BETTY goes to JANET - and grabs her.
Kneels in front of her. She is holding
JANET’s wrists.

BETTY
I’m sorry, darling I...

MARGARET stands, JIMMY clamps his
hands over his ears.

BETTY
(ignoring everyone)
Janet, are you there? Janet...

PEGGY
Leave her alone. I want you both to go. I want you out of my house..

And suddenly - The OLD MAN’s voice
joins PEGGY’s voice shouting and echoing.
Wind blows hard.

VOICE
GET-OUT-OF-MY-FUCKING HOUSE. GET-OUT-OF-MY-FUCKING HOUSE.

TOTAL BLACKOUT.

SCENE EIGHT

LIGHTS UP. 2024. OLDER MARGARET stands where PEGGY was standing. A mobile phone is ringing. The ESTATE AGENT answers it in the garden. MARGARET is alone

ESTATE AGENT
(off)
Yes - yes....that's a reasonable offer.

MARGARET looks at the CEILING LIGHT. Then, easy, the ESTATE AGENT returns from the garden holding his mobile.

ESTATE AGENT
Hey, sorry - I had to take that - another house up the road...

OLDER MARGARET
Memories. It was all a very long time ago—a lifetime ago.

ESTATE AGENT
It's a story - isn't it? Famous...

OLDER MARGARET
(she turns)
I didn't mean to take your time, but I wanted to to come back and see for myself. It hasn't changed.
(she smiles)
Well, it's quieter now. It still scares me, though.

ESTATE AGENT
Not surprised. But listen, I reckon if we ever get it sold they'll gut the place - take what you want.

He picks up an old cup and saucer.

OLDER MARGARET
No - I'm alright, thanks.

ESTATE AGENT
What about 'the chair'...?

OLDER MARGARET
(firm)
Oh no. Really. No.

The ESTATE AGENT looks at her.

OLDER MARGARET

Long after, a man came to the door one Sunday. I'd popped over to see mum. She wasn't well by then. Jimmy had passed away - tumour in his brain. Rey, too, was killed in an accident at work. And Jan' had got so so ill she was put into the Maudsley Hospital in the end. It felt like it was only me and mum left.

Well, the man had heard about what had happened in the house—on the radio or something. They were still talking about No 284 four years later! Anyway, Terry Wilkins was his name. He'd heard what we'd been through. He was a nice man. He wanted to help us. He said his father—I think it was—had died in that chair five years before we ever moved in.

He had a horrible end. He'd been roaring crazy and angry - chasing anyone who came to look after him. He never stopped. But the worst thing: the old man's body wasn't found for months after he passed. You see why I don't much want that chair, or anything?

The ESTATE AGENT is now uneasy.

OLDER MARGARET

We didn't know anything when we moved in, but I reckon now, that it was Terry's dad all along. And I reckon he's still here.

<u>LIGHTS</u>