

David Henry Wilson

WE'RE LOOKING FOR MARY PICKFORD

This play is fully protected by copyright, and all inquiries concerning publication or performance should be addressed to elaine@hopecorner.net

THE CHARACTERS:

LADY GARSTLEIGH

CYRIL, her elder son

JONATHAN, her younger son

AN OLD MAN

THE SET:

For Acts 1 and 2, the back wall is in two sections, the "door" stage right being about half the size of the "window" stage left. They are in fact solid and are joined together by a broad plank resting on two hooks. Against the "window" is a huge antique cupboard, and in the back left-hand corner of the room there is a genuine entrance. Towards the front of the stage, sideways on to the audience, are two very large cots.

The remainder of the set is as specified at the end of Act 2.

ACT ONE

LADY GARSTLEIGH is discovered in the midst of a furious argument with CYRIL. JONATHAN sits quietly on the left bed. The first few lines can be heard before the curtain rises.

LADY G: You'll clear it out.

CYRIL: I won't!

LADY G: Oh yes you will!

CYRIL: I won't!

LADY G: You'll clear it out!

CYRIL: I won't clear it out!

LADY G: You'll do as you're told, or you'll see what'll happen to you!

CYRIL: I'm not clearing it out.

LADY G: You'll clear it out!

CYRIL: I...

LADY G: You'll clear it out, out, out, out! Clear, clear, clear! Clear! Now don't argue!

CYRIL: I am not ..

LADY G (*with sudden quiet menace*): If you don't clear it out, I'll fetch Daddy's slipper. Then we'll see what we'll see.

CYRIL (*sulky*): To hell with Daddy's slipper.

LADY G: What was that? What was that?

CYRIL: (*still sulky*): Nothing.

LADY: Now you do as you're told. Perhaps Jonathan will help you. (*Complete change of tone as she turns to Jonathan - all oozy affection*): You'll help Cyril, won't you, darling?

JONATHAN: Yes, Mummy.

LADY G: There's a good boy. (*To Cyril*): I don't know why you can't be good, like Jonathan. You've always been the trouble maker. Always making trouble. Trouble, trouble, trouble. Always the trouble maker. I thought you'd grow out of it. That was always my hope, always my prayer. I thought: "Maybe when he's thirty ...", then "Perhaps when he's forty ...", then "It'll be different when he's in his fifties ..." - and now look at you, sixty-four years old, and still the same. Trouble maker. Trouble, trouble, trouble. You should have followed Jonathan's example. All these years the goodness has shone out of Jonathan, like a ... like a beacon ... a light in the darkness. For sixty-two years Jonathan has stood before you as a model, and you've ... you've ignored the example he set you, wilfully pursuing your own stubborn course of evil, and stubborn disobedience. Stubborn, and evil. And stubborn disobedience. A stubborn trouble maker. (*With a sigh*): I don't know what's going to become of you, I really don't. Night and day I've prayed that you'll change and become like Jonathan. (*Oozy*): Dear Jonathan. (*To Cyril*): I'll swear it was worry over you that sent your dear father to his grave, long, long before his time was due. Many was the night we would lie awake in our ... in our ... we would lie awake, worrying, wondering what was best for our darling son. For we loved you, Cyril, make no mistake about that, we always loved you, your dear Daddy as much as I. And we would lie awake worrying about you, and wondering what was best for you. And it was that worry - make no mistake about it, Cyril - it was that worry which led to the urinary infection that killed dear Daddy. Worry, and ... and shame, and anxiety. I remember it so well. Why, the doctor himself said to me, "Lady Garstleigh ... " I remember as if it were yesterday ... "Lady Garstleigh, " this dreadful V.D. has been caused by worry - nothing more, nothing less" .. And what was he worrying about? Answer me that, eh? What was he worrying about? Who was he worrying about? Whom was he worrying about? About whom ... about whom was he worrying? (*Throughout this speech, Cyril has stood, head bowed, shuffling uncomfortably from one foot to the other. Now he turns away completely from his mother.*)

Well may you hide your head, Cyril. Well indeed. And the hiding of your head is a sign of the deep guilt that burns in your br...in your heart. Guilt. (*Hissing:*) Assassin!

(*Jonathan lets out a sob.*)

Oh my precious, weep not, weep not. You were not guilty of dear Daddy's premature demise. It wasn't you. You were the apple of his eye - of both eyes. of our four eyes. Weep not, beloved.

(*To Cyril:*) You see how your dear brother weeps, even at the memory of his Daddy. And you, in your ingratitude, you haven't a single tear to shed.

CYRIL (*sulky:*) I was only three when he died.

LADY G (*hissing:*) Indeed! Indeed! And your brother was one, was one, do you hear? And he weeps. And you, who were three, were three...you haven't a single tear for him. Ingratitude.

JONATHAN: I wept, though, didn't I, Mummy?

LADY G: Yes, my precious, you wept. You are filled with the milk of human kindness. You're a credit to your Mummy and Daddy.

JONATHAN: Yes, I am.

LADY G: Yes, you are.

JONATHAN: I am. I'm a credit to my Mummy and Daddy.

LADY G: Yes, you are.

CYRIL: I don't see what he's done that's any better than what I've done.

LADY G (*meaningfully:*) Maybe you don't, maybe you don't. But he has goodness in him, and in you there's nothing but ... stubborn disobedience, wilfulness, trouble-making. It was apparent even in your babyhood. Do you think I'd intended to get married at the age of seventeen? Do you? To a man I detested - your dear sweet father, God rest his soul. Because of you! Where might I have been now, but for you? Queen of England, perhaps. Only you had to steal your way into my ... my life, destroy all the greatness at one fell swoop. I, who was beautiful enough to launch a thousand ships.

CYRIL (*still sulky:*) I didn't mean any harm.

LADY G (*vehement hissing:*) So you say! So you say! So you have always said. And the filth you discharged into your nappies - I suppose that was harmless, was it?

CYRIL: Jonathan did it too.

LADY G: Never!

JONATHAN: I didn't, did I, Mummy?

LADY G: No, my precious.

CYRIL: He did.

LADY G: Never. Jonathan's nappies were sweet-smelling as the spring. In russet mantle clad. Always clean and wholesome.

CYRIL: I remember all the muck...

LADY G: Your muck! Not Jonathan's. Yours.

CYRIL: And his.

JONATHAN: It wasn't mine, was it, Mummy? It was always his.

CYRIL: I wasn't wearing nappies when he was messing his up.

LADY G: That's enough!

CYRIL: It's just not fair!

LADY G: That's enough, I say. Jonathan never soiled his nappies...

JONATHAN: There!

LADY G: ...and you were always soiling yours. Deliberately. And that's all there is to be said, the subject is closed.

CYRIL: Just...

LADY G: Closed.

(*A brief battle of wills, before the subject is closed.*)

Right. Now, Cyril, you will clear out that cupboard, and throw away all your rubbish. (*To Jonathan:*) Of course if there's anything there that you want to keep, you may keep it, my love.

JONATHAN: Thank you, Mummy.

CYRIL: I'm not going to clear it out.

LADY G (*lips tightening:*) We'll see who's Mummy around here.

(*She goes out, and returns with a colossal running shoe.*)

(*To Cyril:*) Touch your toes.

CYRIL: I won't.

LADY G: Touch your toes, for the second time - two strokes.

CYRIL: No.

LADY G: Three.

(*Pause. Cyril in difficulties.*)

Three strokes, unless you obey right away.

CYRIL: All right.

LADY G: All right who?

CYRIL: All right, Mummy.

LADY G: That's better. One day, Cyril, one day, I pray, you will learn. And may that day come soon, at least before I leave this earth to join your poor, dear father in the Great Beyond. How can I go to him and tell him that he laid down his life in vain, for a dream, a chimera - that his wicked son Cyril might one day attain the saintliness, the holiness of his beloved son Jonathan? How can I tell him his sacrifice was in vain? Reform yourself, Cyril, reform, and bring joy to us all. Now clear out the cupboard. (*Exit majestically, left.*)

CYRIL (*after pause:*) Who does she think she is? Bloody Queen of England: Do this, do that. Who does she think she is?

(*He walks round, agitatedly, hands deep in pockets.*)

I've got my rights. She can't order me around. I'm a grown-up, not a ... not a child. Who does she think she is? And you're not much help, are you? Call yourself a brother! Brother! Fine brother you are! Yes, Mummy, thank you, Mummy. I didn't mess up my nappies, did I, Mummy?

JONATHAN: I've got just as much right to be nice as you have to be nasty.

CYRIL: Nice! Nice! And what about being nice to me? What about sticking up for me? I'm your brother.

JONATHAN: Yes, but you're not in authority.

CYRIL: Authority! And to think I've stood up for you all these years, defended you as if you were my own flesh and blood.

JONATHAN: I am your own flesh and blood.

CYRIL: Ha! Like mouse to lion. Many's the time I've defied the world for you, protected you, been beaten for you...

JONATHAN: You never have!

CYRIL: Time after time...

JONATHAN: You haven't.

CYRIL: Risking life and limb to defend precious Jonathan.

JONATHAN: Not once, ever.

CYRIL: And fine thanks I get for it.

JONATHAN (*smugly:*) You've always been jealous of me cos Mummy and Daddy loved me best.

CYRIL: Jealous? Jealous of you? What is there to be jealous of?

JONATHAN: Mummy and Daddy loved me more than you.

CYRIL: Who cares about Mummy and Daddy? I don't need any Mummy or Daddy!

JONATHAN: Yes you do. Everybody needs a Mummy and a Daddy - otherwise there'd be no one to dig you up from under the gooseberry bush. And Mummy and Daddy always loved me best. Cos I'm beautiful.

CYRIL: You're hideous. That's why they were both sorry for you.

JONATHAN: I'm not hideous, I'm beautiful - cos Mummy said so.

CYRIL: If you weren't my brother, I'd have you poured out of the potty straight down the drain.

JONATHAN: Well you'd better clear out the cupboard, or I'll tell Mummy what you've been saying.

CYRIL: You would, wouldn't you? That's just the sort of thing you'd do.

(Pulls open cupboard door.)

Bloody cupboard!

JONATHAN: Mummy! Mummy!

CYRIL: Shut up!

JONATHAN: Mummy: Mummy:

(Lady G. re-enters.)

LADY G: What is it, my precious? What is it?

JONATHAN: Cyril said that word again:

CYRIL: You...

LADY G: What! You vicious, corrupted creature. Touch your toes. Go on, touch your toes!

(Cyril, mouthing horribly, touches his toes. Lady G. whacks him with the running shoe. He lets out a great "Waaaaaaah." and careers round the stage, holding his behind.)

That'll teach you to use bad language here.

CYRIL: Waaaaah!

LADY G: Your poor dear father must be turning somersaults in his grave - he, from whose pure lips no vulgar sound e'er fell. You base...creature! Now clear out the cupboard: *(Exit majestically, left.)*

CYRIL *(slowing down:)* Waaah! Waah! Wah! Oh, spiked all over!

JONATHAN: Serves you right.

CYRIL: Who does she think she is? I hate her. I hate everybody. I hate the world. Hate, hate, hate, hate, hate, hate, hate. Hate.

JONATHAN: You don't know how to live, that's your trouble.

CYRIL: How to live? How to live? What living have you ever done? You just sit there year after year, like a lump of rock. You never do anything.

JONATHAN *(smugly:)* That's the way to live. If you don't do anything, you can't get into trouble. You're always doing things, and look what happens to you.

CYRIL: I'm a man of action.

JONATHAN *(chortling:)* Heughl, heughl, heughl: Man of action! Heughl, heughl, heughl! Man of action! Heughl, heughl, heughl!

CYRIL: I don't see what you've got to heughl about.

JONATHAN: Heughl, heughl, heughl, man of action, heughl! Ohohoho, heughl! Mummy, Mummy, heughly, heughly. Mummy!

(Lady G. re-enters.)

LADY G: What is it, my precious? Oh, you're laughing.

JONATHAN: Mummy, heughl, heughl, it's Cyril, heughl. He says...heughl, heughl...he says... heughl ...he's a...man of action! Oh, heughl, heughl, heughl!

LADY G: A man of action. Cyril! Ah, heughl, heughl, heughl, heughl!

JONATHAN: Heughl, heughl, heughl!

(Both of them shriek out their 'heughl' laugh, while Cyril stands bewildered, and alone. The laughter abruptly ends.)

LADY G: This is serious. And dangerous. I don't like it, Cyril, I warn you, you're making me very angry.

CYRIL: I haven't done anything.

JONATHAN: Heughl, man of action, and he hasn't done anything.

LADY G: You have upset Jonathan, that's what you have done, with your man of action game. Jonathan was sitting quietly and innocently, his soul at rest, in peace and harmony with the flights of angels, and then you had to destroy the peace. He might have had a seizure of the lung. If only your dear father were here, perhaps he would know how to handle you, for I declare I'm at my wits' end. (*In sudden self-reproach:*) I suppose it must all be our fault, originally. Maybe if your poor dear father hadn't had to go away so often on those business trips that kept him away from us night after night, then there might have been more discipline in the house. And yet, dear Jonathan thrived on the freedom, throve on the freedom, and flourished. Only you, with the evil character which you were born with, and for which none of us can in any way be blamed, only you failed to attain beauty and obedience, in the regular absences of your beloved father. I do not know what more I can do for you, Cyril, to bring you onto the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. I have scolded, beaten, and cajoled until I can cajole no more. I 'gin to be weary. (*Awearily:*) Clear the cupboard, Cyril, and trouble your poor, suffering, patience-on-a-monument mother no more (*Exit tragically, left*).

JONATHAN (*sniggering:*) Man of action, sneughl, sneughl.

CYRIL: One day I shall run away from here. One day you'll wake up and find me gone.

JONATHAN: Where?

CYRIL: Far away!

JONATHAN: Where?

CYRIL: Somewhere that I'm not known. Somewhere that mothers are killed at birth.

JONATHAN: Whose birth?

CYRIL: Someone's birth. My birth. Our birth. What does it matter? I'm unhappy in this house.

JONATHAN: It's your own fault. You should sit still, like I do.

CYRIL: I shall run away and make my fortune.

JONATHAN: I shall sit still and be happy.

CYRIL: Happy! Killed at birth.

JONATHAN: Anyway, you'd better clear out the cupboard, or Mummy will be after you again. You can bring me anything that's mine.

(*Cyril enters the cupboard, and emerges with a large teddy bear, which he takes to Jonathan.*)

Teddy! My Teddy! (*Enfolding it:*) So soft and cuddly.

CYRIL: Does he still squeak?

JONATHAN (*trying it out:*) Yes, oh yes, he does. Dear Teddy.

(*He goes into raptures over Teddy, while Cyril returns to the cupboard. Cyril brings hm a pile of albums.*)

...Oh, my cigarette cards! Look at my cigarette cards! Oh, look, Teddy! Famous footballers, and film stars. Ships. Flowers - look at the beautiful flowers, look! And in such lovely condition too, just like new. Oh I have looked after them well. Famous Men of History. Look, Royal Palaces. Royal Palaces! Mummy might have lived in one of those, if it hadn't been for Cyril. (*Cyril brings him a wizened horse-chestnut on a piece of string.*)

My conker! (*Puts cards aside.*) It's my conker! Oh Teddy, my twelve thousand eight hundred and forty-twoer. Unbeaten champion of the world. Cyril, I want a game. Come and play me, Cyril.

CYRIL: I don't think we've got any more.

JONATHAN: Oh we have, we have. You must find one, Cyril. Find one.

(Cyril finds a conker in the cupboard.)

Have you got one, Cyril? Cyril, have you gone one?

CYRIL: Yes.

JONATHAN: Come and play then. Watch me, Teddy. I'll have first go.

CYRIL: Why should you have first go?

JONATHAN: I'm having first go. I always have first go. I won't play otherwise.

CYRIL: I don't see why

JONATHAN: If you won't let me have first go, I'll tell Mummy.

CYRIL: Well it's not fair.

(Each conker is suspended from a piece of string, which passes through a hole bored in the centre. Each contestant in turn holds up his conker while the other shortens his string, and tries to break his opponent's with his own. In this particular game, Jonathan's conker has been baked whereas Cyril's has not. Alternatively, Jonathan's might be, say, a stone in disguise, and Cyril's a cooked potato. Cyril reluctantly holds his up.)

JONATHAN: Hold it still. *(He swings and misses.)* You moved! Cyril, you moved!

CYRIL: I didn't move!

JONATHAN: You did: You cheated. I'm having another go.

CYRIL: You're not. It's my turn!

JONATHAN: I am, I am, I am. Come on, or I'll call Mummy.

CYRIL: Oh all right.

(He holds it up. Jonathan misses.)

My turn.

JONATHAN: Go on, then. *(He holds his up.)* Go on.

(Cyril looks at him suspiciously. Jonathan remains bland. Cyril prepares, and swings. Jonathan moves his conker at the crucial moment.)

My turn.

CYRIL: You moved it.

JONATHAN: My turn, Cyril.

CYRIL: You moved it!

JONATHAN: Mu...

CYRIL: All right! *(Mumbling:)* One of these days...

(He holds his up. Jonathan swings, and Cyril's conker is shattered. If by chance he should miss again, he should simply say: "You moved", and Cyril, resigned, should remain still. Repeat till Cyril's conker goes.)

JONATHAN: Hurray! Look at that! Smashed it! Smashed it, Teddy. Twelve thousand eight hundred and forty-three!

CYRIL: It's not fair. *(He returns to the cupboard.)*

JONATHAN: Unbeaten champion of the world. As hard as ever. Look, feel it, Teddy, feel it.

(He hits Teddy very hard indeed with the conker.) Gosh, it's even taken a lump out of Teddy. The greatest conker ever created.

(Cyril brings him a knife in a sheath.)

Oh, it's my scout knife. Look, Teddy, my scout knife. *(He puts the conker aside, and draws out the rusty knife.)* My wonderful, sharp scout knife. Oh, feel the point, look, Teddy, look how sharp it is.

(He stabs Teddy, and twists the knife around inside the bear.)

Isn't it lovely and sharp, Teddy? Look, it can even cut you open. Isn't it wonderful, Cyril, it even cuts Teddy open. Cyril, look! Look how it cuts Teddy open. Cyril, what are you doing?

CYRIL: I'm reading. This.

(He approaches Jonathan, with an exercise book.)

JONATHAN: What is it?

CYRIL: It's a book.

JONATHAN *(by now highly excited:)* I know it's a book, I can see it's a book, but what's in the book, what's in it, Cyril?

CYRIL: It's got poems in it.

JONATHAN: Poems? Whose poems? Who wrote the poems, Cyril? I wrote the poems. Oh, it's my poetry book, it's mine, I remember, all my wonderful poems. Oh, give it to me, Cyril, I want to see all my wonderful poems.

CYRIL *(quietly:)* They're not all yours. When you'd finished with it, I had it, and I wrote some poems, so some of the poems are mine.

JONATHAN: I don't care about yours, I want to see mine. Mine are the beautiful ones. Show me, Cyril, I want to see my poems.

(Cyril gives him the book, but remains beside him.)

Ah, my poems. My beautiful poems. Oh listen, Cyril. The Ship.

"Oh ship that sails across the water,
Over the deep blue sea,
Oh ship, oh ship, so tall and proud,
Come sailing back to me."

Isn't it beautiful. Cyril? Isn't it? Oh I must read it to Mummy. Mummy, Mummy! Mummy!

(Enter Lady G.)

LADY G: Yes, my precious, what ... oh, what's happened here? This mess.

JONATHAN: It's Cyril. He's making the mess everywhere. But listen, Mummy, listen. I've found my old poems. Listen. The Ship.

"Oh ship that sails across the water,
Over the deep blue sea,
Oh ship, oh ship, so tall and proud,
Come sailing back to me."

Isn't it beautiful, Mummy? Isn't it wonderful?

LADY G: It's wonderful. It's beautiful.

JONATHAN: Here's another one, Mummy. Listen, Mummy. The Cat.

"The cat has eyes that shine in the dark,
And it has some very sharp claws.
And when it's happy it says 'purr',
And it also has four paws."

LADY G: It's beautiful. Beautiful.

JONATHAN: I wonder how old I was when I wrote them, Mummy.

LADY G: You were only young, my precious. Thirty or forty. So talented.

CYRIL: I wrote some poems too, Mummy.

LADY G: No, Cyril, you never wrote any poems. Only Jonathan wrote poems.

CYRIL: No, I wrote some too. They're in the same book.

JONATHAN: I'm the only one who wrote poems, aren't I, Mummy?

LADY G: Yes, dear.

JONATHAN: Cyril's telling lies again. Listen, Mummy. The Engine.

"Puff puff, puff puff,
So the engine says,
Puffing all along the track..."

LADY G: Go on, dear.

JONATHAN: That's the end, Mummy. I don't think I finished that one.

LADY G: Never mind. It's Schubertian. And it's very beautiful as it stands.

JONATHAN: Oh look, here's one, this is a long one, listen to this, Mummy.

"I want to be free, I want to be free,
I want to break open the door.
I want to see the air and the world,
I want to be born once more.
I want to be free to talk to the sky,
And take what the earth has to give.
I want to be free to drink up the sea,
I want to be free to live."

LADY G: Beautiful, darling.

JONATHAN: What does it mean, Mummy?

CYRIL: I wrote that poem. It was my poem.

JONATHAN: What does it mean? What does it mean?

LADY G: It was a lovely poem, Jonathan, you're very clever. Sweets to the sweet.

CYRIL: I wrote it.

JONATHAN: But what does it mean, Mummy? I want to know what it means!

LADY G: Now that's enough, darling, Mummy's very busy making treacle pudding, and I think that's enough poems for today.

CYRIL: That was my poem.

JONATHAN: What does it...

LADY G (*kissing Jonathan:*) You're a very clever boy, sweetheart. I'll hear some more later on.
(*Harsh tone:*) Cyril, I want it all clear by dinner time, do you hear?

CYRIL (*sulky:*) Yes, Mummy. But...
(*She has gone.*)

(*Returning to cupboard, mumbling:*) That was my poem. I wrote it. Queen of England!

JONATHAN: "I want to be free, I want to be free,
I want to open the door."

CYRIL (*gradually remembering:*)
"I want to see the air and the world,
I want to be born once more.
I want to be free to talk to the sky,
And take what the earth has to give.
I want to be free to drink up the sea,
I want to be free to live."

JONATHAN: What does it mean, Cyril?

CYRIL: Free to live.

JONATHAN: Cyril, what does it mean? I want to know what it means.

CYRIL: I thought you said you wrote it.

JONATHAN: Yes, I did, only I can't remember what I meant.

CYRIL: You didn't write it. That's my poem, which I made up out of my own head.

JONATHAN: No you didn't!

CYRIL: And it's ten times better than any of your rotten poems. My poem is beautiful.

JONATHAN: It's *my* poem, and I want to know what it means. (*Suspicion of tears.*)

CYRIL (*going to him, and speaking with quiet determination:*) Listen, Jonathan, listen. I'll tell you what it means. We're brothers, so I'll tell you, only you mustn't tell Mummy.

JONATHAN: Why not?

CYRIL: You mustn't, that's all.

JONATHAN: I always tell Mummy everything. She says I mustn't have any secrets from her.

CYRIL: Then I won't tell you what the poem means.

JONATHAN: Oh tell me, I want to know, I want to know!

CYRIL: Then promise you won't tell Mummy.

JONATHAN (*after slight pause:*) All right.

CYRIL: Cross your heart.

JONATHAN: Cross my heart.

CYRIL: That means you'll die if you tell her.

JONATHAN: I know, I know. What does it mean? Come on, what does it mean?

CYRIL: I'll tell you. Listen. Those cigarette cards you've got there...

JONATHAN: What about them? What about them, Cyril?

CYRIL: Well all the pictures are of things that really exist. Like the people on them - the footballers, and kings and things. They really exist.

JONATHAN: What do you mean?

CYRIL: They're out there, in the world. They're alive, like you and me.

JONATHAN: Like you and me?

CYRIL: Real people. Real people, who are different from us, but are just as real as we are.

JONATHAN: As real as we are?

CYRIL: As real as us, and as real as Mummy.

JONATHAN: They can't be as real as Mummy.

CYRIL: They are, only we've never seen them.

JONATHAN: I don't see what that's got to do with the poem.

CYRIL: The poem says I want to see all those people. It says I want to leave here, and see the world.

JONATHAN: What world?

CYRIL: Outside. All the people on the cigarette cards, all the flowers, all the trees, all the buildings. I want to see them.

JONATHAN: But you can see them on the cigarette cards.

CYRIL: It's not the same.

JONATHAN: How do you know they exist? I mean, how do you know they're real?

CYRIL: Because I remember!

JONATHAN (*getting quite excited:*) Remember? What do you remember, Cyril? Cyril, what do you remember?

CYRIL: You mustn't tell Mummy.

JONATHAN: I won't, I won't. What do you remember?

CYRIL (*looking cautiously around, and lowering his voice:*) I remember going out with Daddy.

JONATHAN: With Daddy:

CYRIL: You were only a baby, but I was big enough to walk, and I went out with Daddy. And I saw buildings, and people - many, many people, real people. I can see them. I've seen them for sixty years, but Mummy doesn't know I can see them. Mummy doesn't know I can remember. But I can. All those things are real outside, Jonathan, if only we could go out to see them.

JONATHAN (*still excited:*) But...but...what sort of things, Cyril? What sort of things?

CYRIL: I can only remember the buildings and the crowds of real people. And a place Daddy took me where there were women.

JONATHAN: Women?

CYRIL: Women.

JONATHAN: Like Mummy?

CYRIL: I think so. But they were laughing women, I remember them laughing. And one of them kissing me.

JONATHAN: I don't remember anything like that.

CYRIL: You were too young. She shut us up before you ever went out. She kept us in here. She stopped us from seeing the world.

(Slight pause as Cyril wrestles with his hate, and Jonathan tries to conceive new things.)

JONATHAN: It's not true, is it?

CYRIL: What?

JONATHAN: That there's other people, and things outside.

CYRIL: It's true. Only she's stopped us from seeing them.

JONATHAN: As real as us?

CYRIL: The same as us. Solid, so you can touch them. And beautiful colours everywhere, like in the cigarette cards, only real. And people. Miles and miles of people.

JONATHAN *(in conflict:)* Mummy knows what's best. Cyril, Mummy knows what's best.

CYRIL: Does she?

JONATHAN: Yes. Yes, she does. She does, doesn't she, Cyril? It's Mummy who keeps us happy.

CYRIL: I'm not happy.

JONATHAN: Ah, but that's your fault. That's not Mummy's fault, that's your fault, Cyril. Because you never sit still.

CYRIL: I want to get out of here.

JONATHAN: You never sit still like I do. I'm a good boy, that's why I'm happy. And you're bad. Anyway, I don't see how you can remember all those things when I can't remember anything.

CYRIL: I was three, and you were only one.

JONATHAN: Well I don't remember anything. Not even being one.

CYRIL: But you *were* one. And I was three. And Daddy took me out. And that's when I was alive. And other people were alive.

JONATHAN: Maybe they're all dead now, and that's why Mummy keeps us in.

CYRIL: I want to see.

JONATHAN: Mummy knows best. That's your trouble. You've always wanted to go your own sweet way, and you never obey Mummy like you should, so you're unhappy. You should follow my wonderful example. It's so simple, just to sit still and be good: That's why Mummy loves me. *(He picks up the knife and the teddy bear.)* I'm like a beacon. *(He stabs the teddy.)* Aren't I? Teddy? Nobody's as good as Jonathan. *(He turns the knife round inside the teddy.)* Anyway, Cyril, there's nothing outside here - Mummy would have told us if there was. England is everywhere, and we're everybody. Aren't we?

CYRIL: No.

JONATHAN: We are.

CYRIL: We're not. There's all the people on the cigarette cards. And there's my memory - it's all proof. *(Weightily:)* And if there's nothing out there, why is this door always bolted? And why has this window been boarded in?

JONATHAN: It's ... it's because there's nothing there.

CYRIL: It's because she doesn't want us to see.

JONATHAN *(doubtful:)* I'm quite happy. I know Mummy will look after us...

CYRIL: What is she hiding from us?

JONATHAN: I trust in Mummy. Mummy loves me, and I love Mummy.

CYRIL: Jonathan.

JONATHAN: What?

CYRIL: Wouldn't you like to see what's outside?

JONATHAN (*in real trouble:*) Ye...no...ye...yes...ye-e-es...but ...nooo...

CYRIL: Real things. Freedom.

JONATHAN: Freedom?

CYRIL: Wouldn't you like to go to bed when you want to, without being told every night that you have to go to bed? Wouldn't you like to eat when you feel like eating, instead of eating when you're told to eat?

JONATHAN (*twisting the knife in Teddy:*) Yes, yes, I'd like that. I think I'd like that. I'm not sure.

CYRIL: There might be streets of chocolate outside, if only we could go out and take a look.

JONATHAN: Streets of chocolate.

CYRIL: I don't know. There might.

JONATHAN: Do you remember streets of chocolate?

CYRIL: No-o-o, but it was a long time ago. We should go and see at least.

JONATHAN (*hesitant:*) I wouldn't mind ... seeing. But Mummy would never let us go, so what's the use?

CYRIL (*darkly:*) There is a way.

JONATHAN: A way? To see? Tell me, Cyril, tell me!

CYRIL (*slowly:*) We could get rid of Mummy.

JONATHAN (*low whisper:*) Get rid of Mummy? Do you mean ... do you mean ... kill her?

CYRIL: Yes.

JONATHAN: Oh, Mummy wouldn't like that.

CYRIL: We could do it without her knowing.

JONATHAN: I think she'd know if we killed her, Cyril.

CYRIL: Not if we killed her unexpectedly, when she wasn't looking.

JONATHAN: Then we could go and see the chocolate streets?

CYRIL: We could see everything.

JONATHAN: I'd like that. I would like that. (*Slight pause.*) If we kill her, though, we won't be able to have her back, will we?

CYRIL: No.

JONATHAN: So...so what would happen if we were unhappy?

CYRIL: We won't be unhappy. We'll be free.

JONATHAN: Free. Free. That would be nice, wouldn't it?

CYRIL: I want to be free.

JONATHAN: I think we ought to tell Mummy first, if we're going to kill her. She doesn't like surprises.

CYRIL: If we tell her, she might not let us do it. She might even kill us instead!

JONATHAN: Oh! I wouldn't like that. How are we going to kill her?

CYRIL (*indicating knife:*) With this.

JONATHAN: My scout knife. That's a good idea. Only I'm not going to do it, Cyril, not unless she wants me to. You'll have to kill her. I'll just sit and watch.

CYRIL: All right, as long as you don't tell her.

JONATHAN (*excited:*) I won't tell her! Oh it is going to be fun, isn't it? Mummy'll come in, all full of love for me and hate for you, and she'll be standing there completely alive, then suddenly she'll be standing there completely dead.

CYRIL: And then we'll be free.

JONATHAN: And then we'll be free. (*Pause. Inspiration:*) Cyril!

CYRIL: What?

JONATHAN: Suppose ... suppose we gave her a chance?

CYRIL: A chance?

JONATHAN: Oh it's going to be so exciting! I can't wait, I can't wait!
CYRIL: What chance?
JONATHAN: We ask her to let us go outside. When she says no, we try and persuade her. Then if she still says no, we kill her! Then all the time we're talking, you and I will know we're going to kill her, and it'll make it more exciting. Isn't that a good idea, Cyril?
CYRIL: No. We should kill her straight away.
JONATHAN: No we shouldn't. We must give her a chance.
CYRIL: It's a silly, stupid idea.
JONATHAN: It's not, it's not, it's not. It's a lovely idea. It must be, because it's mine.
CYRIL: We'll kill her straight off.
JONATHAN: Then I'm not going to play. And I shall tell Mummy.
CYRIL: You can't. You promised.
JONATHAN: I only promised about the poem. I can tell Mummy anything that happened after the poem. And I'm going to tell her.
CYRIL: No!
JONATHAN: I am! I shall tell her, unless you do what I want.
CYRIL (*after slight pause:*) All right. You can ask her, but I shall have the knife, and if she says no, I'll kill her.
JONATHAN: You've got to give her plenty of chance. You mustn't kill her straight off. Do you hear? Cyril, do you hear?
CYRIL: I'll kill her when I'm ready.
JONATHAN: No. No. You must kill her when I say so, and not before. I shall tell you when to kill her. It was my idea, so you must do what I want. Otherwise I shan't play.
CYRIL (*taking the knife:*) Call her in.
JONATHAN (*in a continual state of excitement:*) No, wait a minute. We've got to decide what we're going to say. (*He thinks for a moment:*) I know. I'll ask her to tell us about outside. That's what I'll do. Oh Cyril, isn't it exciting! And I only have to sit here and watch!
CYRIL: *You'll* have to ask her about outside. She won't answer me.
JONATHAN: Oh no, no, I'll ask her. I like talking to Mummy. She loves me so much, I can say anything I like to her. I'll ask her.
CYRIL: Call her in then.
JONATHAN: Where are you going to stand?
CYRIL: Over here, near the cupboard, so she's got her back to me.
JONATHAN: Yes, that's a good idea. Then I can see you, and she can't. Oh Mummy is going to get a surprise! Poor Mummy!
CYRIL: Call her in.
JONATHAN: Are you ready?
CYRIL: Yes. Call her.
JONATHAN: All right. Ahem! (*He composes himself.*) Mummy! Mummy:

CURTAIN

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Immediate continuation

JONATHAN: Mummy! Mummy! Oh hide the knife, quickly, Cyril, she's coming. Mummy! Mummy!

(Enter Lady G.)

LADY G: What is it, my precious? What's wrong? Look at this mess. Cyril, I warn you, by dinner time you'd better have all this clear or it'll be the worse for you. There'll be no limit to the whacks I'll whack you with.

JONATHAN: He's been ever so naughty, Mummy. He keeps talking to himself instead of working on the cupboard. And I told him you'd be angry, and he said he didn't care.

LADY G: By dinner time, Cyril. That's the last warning.

JONATHAN: Mummy, I'd like to talk to you.

LADY G: Yes, my dove, what sweet thoughts are running through your pretty head?

JONATHAN: Mummy ... promise you won't be angry with me.

LADY G: Of course I won't be angry with you, my darling. Why ever should Mummy be angry with you?

JONATHAN: Well I love you, Mummy, and I don't want you to scold me.

LADY G: I won't scold you, my pet. What can have put such an idea into your head? Cyril ...

JONATHAN: It wasn't Cyril, Mummy. This...this is my idea.

LADY G: But I've never scolded you...

JONATHAN: No, no, Mummy, something else. Mummy...I want to know ... what's outside.

(Pause)

LADY G: Outside? Outside what, my precious?

JONATHAN: Here. Outside here.

(Another pause)

LADY G: Outside here?

JONATHAN: Yes, Mummy.

(Another pause)

Outside here, Mummy.

LADY G: There's nothing outside here.

JONATHAN: But on ...

LADY G *(voice audibly harder:)* There's nothing! *(A little strained:)* Now, darling, why did you ask such a question?

JONATHAN: I wanted to know, Mummy. It came to me. It was a thought.

LADY G *(studying him:)* Your thought, or Cyril's?

JONATHAN *(very innocent:)* Oh my thought, Mummy, it was my thought. Cyril wouldn't think of anything clever like that. But Mummy...

LADY G: Yes, dear?

JONATHAN: What ... what sort of nothing is it?

LADY G: It's empty, my love, completely empty.

JONATHAN: Aren't there other people, like us?

LADY G *(very sharply:)* No! No, none! There are no other people. Jonathan, you must stop thinking about outside. Why have you suddenly started to think about outside? Why...

JONATHAN *(bursting into tears:)* Oh now you're angry with me! And you said you wouldn't be, and now you are, and I only wanted to know. You promised you wouldn't be angry, wah, wah!

LADY G: Oh dear. There, there, my precious, Mummy isn't angry. Oh dear, don't cry, darling, Mummy didn't mean it. Oh my precious, my jewel, don't cry!

JONATHAN: You promised.

LADY G: I know, I know. Mummy's been very wicked. Please forgive her. Forgive Mummy.

JONATHAN (*howling:*) I only wanted to know about outside!

LADY G: Yes I know you did. Dry your eyes. Don't cry, my lovely. Dry your eyes. Mummy'll tell you all about it.

JONATHAN (*recovering:*) Woop, woop. Tell me. Woop, woop!

LADY G: What do you want to know? You ask Mummy, and Mummy will tell you.

JONATHAN: Woop. I want to know about the trees, and the footballers, and the kings and queens outside. All the things ... woop ... the things in the cigarette cards.

LADY G (*to herself:*) The cards! The things in the cigarette cards. The world outside.

(*Sharply:*) Cyril, get on with the cupboard. If it's not ready by dinner time, it'll be the slipper ... twenty times. Do you hear?

CYRIL: I hear.

JONATHAN: Mummy, Mummy, don't talk to Cyril, talk to me. Cyril's bad. I want you to talk to me. Face me, Mummy. Turn your back on Cyril.

(*She does so.*)

LADY G: The world outside.

JONATHAN: Tell me about it, Mummy.

LADY G: It'll frighten you.

JONATHAN: I don't mind. You tell me, Mummy. I don't mind being frightened ... because I know you'll protect me.

LADY G: There's ... there's fire ... and devils. Monsters that gobble you up.

JONATHAN: And trees?

LADY G: Trees. Yes, trees, but not like in the cards. They have arms to snatch you with, and mouths to crunch you. They're eating trees ...

JONATHAN: And streets?

LADY G: Streets. Streets. Streets of ash and burning coal, my precious, that would fry up your poor little feet. Streets of ...

JONATHAN: What about people?

LADY G: People. What makes you think of people?

JONATHAN: Film stars and footballers and kings and queens - in the cards, Mummy, in the cigarette cards.

LADY G: The cards. I would have been a queen!

JONATHAN: What about them, Mummy, are they there?

LADY G (*after pause:*) I don't know.

JONATHAN (*very disappointed:*) Oh Mummy!

LADY G: I don't know. I don't know.

JONATHAN: Tell me.

LADY G (*after another pause:*) They were there.

JONATHAN (*very slowly, building up tension:*) Mummy . . . Mummy, whom Jonathan loves... Mummy... I want to go and see.

(*Her reaction is one of horror, mingled with sudden weariness. Her body sags visibly.*)

Will you let me go and see, Mummy?

LADY G (*with an effort pulling herself up again, and resuming her old authority:*) Certainly not! Put such ideas out of your head, Jonathan! What's come over you ... to go and see! This is not your idea at all ... (*Cyril is moving slowly towards her*) ... it's that evil brother of yours. (*She turns round and faces him. He stops in his tracks, the knife behind his back.*)

You're responsible for this. The corruption of the young.

JONATHAN: Mummy!

LADY G: You shall have the slipper. Tonight you shall have the slipper till your buttocks burst.

JONATHAN: Mummy!

LADY G: For years I've lavished my love upon you, and thrown the pearls on stony ground. Now you shall taste the force of a mother's authority.

JONATHAN: Mummy, look at me.

LADY G: Yes, my precious?

(*She turns back to him, and Cyril moves directly behind her, dagger ready.*)

JONATHAN: Mummy, do you love me?

LADY G: Oh, my darling!

JONATHAN: Because I love you.

(*Cyril stabs her in the back. She lets out a loud grunt.*)

I love you more than anything, Mummy.

(*Gritting his teeth, Cyril stabs her again.. She falls forward onto the bed, beside Jonathan.*)

(*Cyril holds onto the dagger, and falls with her.*)

There we are. Mummy dead. Didn't I do that well, Cyril? Wasn't I clever?

(*Cyril stands up.*)

She looked very surprised. (*He lifts up her head.*) Mummy! She still looks a bit surprised.

Mummy! It's Jonathan! She's ever so dead, isn't she?

CYRIL (*in a low voice:*) Now we're free.

JONATHAN: She didn't say anything when you killed her, did she? Just "Ugh!"

CYRIL: We're free.

JONATHAN: I knew she'd say no. It was much more exciting my way, wasn't it, Cyril? Cyril? It was exciting, wasn't it?

CYRIL: Yes, it was. I stabbed her. Right there. Twice.

JONATHAN: If you hadn't, she'd have whacked you with the slipper tonight. And if I hadn't made her look at me, you'd never have been able to kill her. It was all thanks to me.

CYRIL (*looking at the body:*) Queen!

(*Pause*)

JONATHAN: What are you going to do with her now, Cyril?

CYRIL: I'm going to put her in the cupboard.

JONATHAN: In the cupboard! Can I just put the knife in her, Cyril? I just want to see what it's like.

CYRIL: All right, go on, then.

(*Jonathan stabs the body.*)

JONATHAN: Oo, it goes in ever so easily, doesn't it? Just like Teddy. Oh, she's all sticky. I don't like all the sticky stuff, Cyril.

CYRIL: I'll put her in the cupboard.

JONATHAN: Yes, put her in the cupboard. Let her be all sticky in the cupboard.

(*Cyril picks up the body, and carries it to the cupboard.*)

(*Waving:*) Bye bye, Mummy. Bye bye.

(*Cyril dumps the body, and closes the cupboard door.*)

CYRIL: Free.

JONATHAN: No more Mummy.

CYRIL: No more Mummy.
(He wanders about, then sits down on the other bed. There is a lull.)

JONATHAN: She went "Ugh!"

CYRIL *(rather tonelessly:)* We're free now.
(Pause.)

JONATHAN: Ugh!
(Cyril looks sharply in the direction of the cupboard.)

Ugh!

CYRIL: Sh!

JONATHAN: What's the matter?

CYRIL: Sh!

JONATHAN *(whispering:)* What's the matter?

CYRIL *(also whispering:)* Maybe she isn't dead. I heard something.

JONATHAN: Oo, not dead. Will we have to kill her again?

CYRIL: Sh!
(He takes the knife and goes quickly to the cupboard.)

JONATHAN *(trying to restrain his excitement:)* Can you hear anything? Cyril, can you hear anything?
(Cyril dramatically flings open the cupboard door.)

There she is. Mummy! Mummy! Coo-ee!
(Cyril lunges with the knife, then quickly withdraws and closes the cupboard again.)

CYRIL: She's dead. I've killed her.

JONATHAN: Dead!

CYRIL *(wandering around again:)* Now we're free. *(Grandly:)* We're free to live.

JONATHAN: Goody. Now what shall we do?
(Cyril wanders round to his bed, then suddenly seizes the bedclothes and flings them onto the floor.)

CYRIL: That for a start.

JONATHAN *(shocked but delighted:)* Oo Cyril, you shouldn't do that, oo you shouldn't! Aren't you naughty! Mummy will be so angry.

CYRIL: She can't do anything. She's finished.

JONATHAN: Yes, I know. Isn't it exciting!
(Cyril picks up the bedclothes and throws them somewhere else.)

(Clapping his hands:) Oo Cyril!

CYRIL: You can do it.

JONATHAN: I can't.

CYRIL: Yes you can! We can do anything now were free.

JONATHAN *(doubtful:)* I'd have to move, wouldn't I?

CYRIL: It won't hurt you.
(With an air of great adventure, Jonathan begins to move off the bed, but as soon as one foot touches the ground, he springs back, half laughing, half scared.)

JONATHAN: Ooo I can't, Cyril. I might get into trouble.

CYRIL: You can't get into trouble. There's no-one to punish you.
(More heroics from Jonathan as he prepares. Finally, he jumps on to the floor, and stands rooted to the spot.)

JONATHAN: I'm here. Oo Cyril.

CYRIL: It's all right.
(Gingerly, Jonathan puts one foot out, and takes a step. Then another.)

You're all right.

JONATHAN: It's tricky ... but I'm doing it very well.

(Very self-consciously he walks all round the stage, finally reaching the cupboard.)

Mummy! Mummy! Wouldn't Mummy be cross if she saw me!

(He goes to Cyril's bedclothes, stops, and picks them up. With a great effort he hurls them at Cyril.)

Whee-ee-ee!

CYRIL: Ow! You shouldn't throw them. They're my blankets. You should throw your own blankets, you shouldn't throw mine.

JONATHAN: I'm free

(He sweeps all the articles from his own bed onto the floor.)

Whee-ee-ee! I like being free!

(He takes his bedclothes off, and throws them on the floor, very proud of himself.)

There! That's that done!

CYRIL: Anyway, who did she think she was, hitting me with that thing? I've got my rights.

(Pause.)

JONATHAN: It's ever so exciting being free, isn't it, Cyril?

(Pause. Slight loss of impetus.)

Free.

(He sits down on his bed, with a contented little sigh. Pause.)

What shall we do now, Cyril? Cyril, what are we going to do now?

CYRIL: We're going to live now, that's what we're going to do. I've had enough of being hemmed in by her. We're going to see what the world is like.

JONATHAN: That's a good idea.

CYRIL: We'll break down this rotten door, and this barricaded window, and we'll see what's really there.

JONATHAN: The chocolate streets.

CYRIL: And the buildings, and trees, and people.

JONATHAN: Real people.

CYRIL: I finished her off. She thought she could queen it over me, but I finished her.

JONATHAN: And all the film stars.

CYRIL: She thought I was scared of her, but I've been planning this. I just waited for the right moment, and then ... I finished her.

JONATHAN: Come on then, Cyril, break the door down.

CYRIL: Yes I'm going to. I'm going to break down all the barriers, and then we'll see what we'll see!

JONATHAN: Come on then!

CYRIL: I'm coming. Only wait! First we've got to be sure.

JONATHAN: What of? Cyril, what have we got to be sure of?

CYRIL: That she's dead. We've got to be absolutely sure she's dead.

JONATHAN: Yes, that's a good idea. Make sure she's dead.

(Cyril, gathering up his determination, goes to the cupboard and opens the door.)

Is she dead? She looks dead. Kill her again, Cyril, just to make sure.

(Cyril lunges with the knife, then closes the cupboard again.)

CYRIL: She's dead. I made sure this time. She's dead all right.

JONATHAN: She looked dead.

CYRIL: She is dead. I've finished her off for good.

JONATHAN: Now you can break down the barriers.

CYRIL: Yes, that's what I've been waiting for. Break down the barriers, and see the world. Show us the cigarette cards.

JONATHAN: They're on the floor. What do you want them for, Cyril? What are you going to do with them?

CYRIL I want to see something. (*He picks up the cards.*)

JONATHAN: What do you want to see, Cyril? Cyril, what do you want to see?

CYRIL: I want to see what we're going to see. I want to be prepared.

JONATHAN: That's a good idea.

CYRIL: We've got to know what we're looking for. You can't go out into the world without knowing what you're after.

JONATHAN: No we can't. What are we after, Cyril?

CYRIL: Trees. Look at these trees. Covered in green.

JONATHAN: They haven't got arms at all, have they? Mummy said they had arms, and mouths - but they haven't.

CYRIL: Mummy lied. She always lied to us. Kings and Queens.

JONATHAN: The queens are all beautiful.

CYRIL She thought she was a queen.

JONATHAN: Yes! Fancy Mummy thinking she was a queen. If she had been, she'd be on a cigarette card, not sitting in the cupboard.

CYRIL: Film stars. You see?

JONATHAN: Yes.

CYRIL: We're going to look for these.

JONATHAN: For the film stars?

CYRIL: A beautiful woman. Look, look here.

JONATHAN: Yes. Cor, I like her.

CYRIL: I'm going to look for her.

JONATHAN: Yes, we'll look for her. Do you think she is out there?

CYRIL: They're all out there. You just need the courage to go and break down the barriers, that's all. You need to be brave, and ... and ready to kill. Brave, like me.

JONATHAN: And me. We'll look for her.

CYRIL (*turning over the card:*) Mary Pickford. Mary Pickford.

JONATHAN: And chocolate streets. Cyril, why do you think Mummy never let us see the chocolate streets?

CYRIL: Because she hated us. (*Looking at cupboard:*) She hated us.

JONATHAN: She didn't hate me. (*Cheerfully:*) But she certainly hated you. Let's go out, Cyril. Break the door down.

CYRIL: Mary Pickford.

JONATHAN: Yes, she's nice. Break down the door, Cyril, and let's go.

CYRIL: The door.

(*He goes to the door and looks at it.*)

The door. It's a solid door.

JONATHAN: You can break it!

CYRIL: Yes, I can break it. Oh I can break it all right. Yes, I can break it. (*Returning to his bed:*) I can break it whenever I please.

(*He sits down.*)

JONATHAN: Aren't we going out, Cyril?

CYRIL (*appearing to indulge in some hard thinking:*) Not yet. No, not yet. There's time enough.

JONATHAN: What are we going to do then?

CYRIL: Sh! I'm working something out.

JONATHAN: I want to go and see the chocolate streets...

CYRIL: Sh!

JONATHAN: ... and Mary Pickford!

CYRIL: Jonathan.

JONATHAN (*sulky:*) What?

CYRIL: If we're going to be free, we shouldn't be together. I should go one way, and you should go another. That's freedom.

JONATHAN: All right. Break the door down, and then you can go one way and I'll go the other way.

CYRIL: And you won't hang round my neck and pretend I'm Mummy?

JONATHAN: Pretend you're Mummy? Pretend that you're my Mummy? Oh heughl, heughl, heughl: Ah heughl, heughl, heughl! Pretend that you're Mummy. Heughl! Mummy! Mummy! Heughl!

CYRIL: She's dead.

JONATHAN: Oh, yes. I forgot she was dead! You could never be my Mummy, Cyril, sneughl, sneughl. Oh no!

CYRIL: As long as you don't pretend I am, that's all.

JONATHAN: Break the door down, Cyril.

CYRIL: I'm going to! I'm going to!

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl. Man of action. Oh that was a funny joke! Man of action!

CYRIL: What are you talking about?

JONATHAN: You, a man of action.

CYRIL: You weren't laughing at that. You were laughing at me being Mummy.

JONATHAN: Oh you are funny, Cyril. I do like you, even though you are my brother. Will you break the door down now?

CYRIL: I am a man of action.

JONATHAN: But I'd never think you were Mummy, Cyril! You don't even look like Mummy!

CYRIL: I killed her.

JONATHAN: Are you going to wait another sixty-four years before you break the door down?

CYRIL: I can break the door down whenever I like.

JONATHAN: Anyway, we're probably better off in here. We're safe in here. It might not be so nice outside.

CYRIL: We're going outside.

JONATHAN: Yes, Cyril.

(Cyril jumps down from the bed, hesitates, then picks up his bedclothes and puts them on the bed.)

CYRIL: We'd better tidy up before we go out.

JONATHAN: You can tidy up. I'm staying here.

(Cyril methodically makes his bed.)

CYRIL: We'll have to come back here to sleep.

JONATHAN: Mummy'll make the beds.

CYRIL: As soon as I've finished this, I'll break the door down. *(He finishes making the bed.)* Freedom, Jonathan. The great battle is over. And now life begins anew. We are born again. One touch, one push, and a new world will be ours. As soon as I decide. *(Slight pause.)*

Mummy is dead, you and I are free, and now we can see what there is to see. *(Slight pause.)*

After all these years. *(He goes to the door.)* One small door, that stands between us and the new world. One more barrier to be pushed away, and then ... freedom. *(Pause.)* Liberty. *(He crosses to the cupboard.)* And she, who for so many years has held us back from the truth and the beauty of life, she is dead. In the cupboard. Killed by my hand, and my hand alone. *(Raising right hand:)* The Deliverer. *(To Jonathan:)* At first, it wasn't real, was it? At first, you couldn't feel it, could you? But now ... *(He goes to the window.)*... now, with a push of this strong,

delivering hand, I can burst this barrier open, and . . . and stride forth into the world. (*He strides back to Jonathan's bed.*) I forge my own Destiny, and no man directs my footsteps.

JONATHAN: I want my conker.

(*Cyril stoops, picks up the conker, and hands it to Jonathan.*)

CYRIL: With the strength of my arm, I have liberated my people from the bondage of slavery. With one thrust I have triumphed over the forces of evil. For mine is the kingdom, the power and ...

(*Jonathan brings the conker down with a sharp crack on Cyril's head.*)

... the OW!

JONATHAN (*examining the conker:*) Twelve thousand eight hundred and forty-four. Not even a crack.

CYRIL: You hit me on the head!

JONATHAN: It's a champion conker.

CYRIL: You hit me!

JONATHAN: Yes. (*Proudly:*) I hit you with my champion conker.

CYRIL: Give it to me!

(*He grabs the conker, but Jonathan holds onto the string.*)

JONATHAN: What are you doing?

CYRIL: Give me that conker!

JONATHAN: No I won't!

CYRIL: Let go!

JONATHAN: I won't let go, it's my conker.

CYRIL: You hit me!

JONATHAN: I can hit you if I want to. I'm free.

CYRIL: Give it to me: (*He snatches it away.*)

JONATHAN: My conker! (*Threat of tears.*)

CYRIL: I'm not going to be hit by a conker.

JONATHAN (*threat materializing:*) Give me my conker back!

CYRIL: No.

JONATHAN (*with a howl:*) But it's a champion!

CYRIL: I'm going to destroy it.

(*He walks round the room, looking for something with which to destroy the conker.*)

JONATHAN: Give it back to me! Mummy! Mummy!

CYRIL: I'll destroy it.

JONATHAN: Mummy! Mummy!

(*Sobbing, he jumps from the bed and runs to the cupboard, wrenching open the door. Cyril is on the other side of the stage. The body of Lady G. falls onto Jonathan, who backs away, dragging her with him.*)

JONATHAN: Ooh! Mummy, get off! Mummy, stop it! Get off! Ooh! Ah! Mummy!

(*The body falls to the ground.*)

Horrible! Ugh! Ah!

CYRIL: I'll finish her.

(*He dashes across, and plunges the knife into her back.*)

She won't attack us any more.

(*He drags her back to the cupboard and shuts her in.*)

Finished her. (*Wipes his brow.*) This time I've finished her for good. She won't trouble us again.

That's the last time she'll interfere.

JONATHAN (*in a small voice:*) Are we free now?

CYRIL: Yes. I've beaten her once and for all. We're free.

JONATHAN: Are you going to knock the door down?

CYRIL: Yes, and the window. She can't stop us any more. Not now that I've finished her off.

JONATHAN (*more cheerful:*) Good. (*Returns to the bed.*) Then we can go out. (*Slight pause.*) I didn't think she looked very well. Did you?

CYRIL: Who?

JONATHAN: Mummy. I don't think being dead suits her. She looked a bit sickly - like you. All those red patches. She's not as nice as Mary Pickford.

CYRIL: I've finished her.

(*He whips the bedclothes off again, and hurls them to the floor.*)

Free to do just as I like, and no-one can stop me. I decide.

JONATHAN: I'm ever so glad I haven't got into any trouble.

CYRIL: She thought she could whack me with Daddy's slipper and I wouldn't pay her back.

JONATHAN: I had been a little worried with all that moving about, but I haven't got into any trouble at all.

CYRIL: Well I showed her.

JONATHAN: None at all.

(*Pause.*)

CYRIL: I'm going to break down the door.

JONATHAN: That's a good idea.

CYRIL: And the window.

JONATHAN: Yes.

CYRIL: Everything. All the barriers.

JONATHAN: Mary Pickford.

CYRIL: And step out into the new world.

JONATHAN: But you'll have to tidy your bed first.

CYRIL: My bed?

JONATHAN: Because you'll be coming back here to sleep.

CYRIL (*grandly:*) The bed-clothes can lie there, Jonathan. Nobody can force me to pick them up. What I throw down, I throw down, when and how I like. I decide. I am a man of action.

JONATHAN: Heugh!

CYRIL: Of action and power.

(*He goes to the door.*)

I'm going to open it.

JONATHAN: Go on then.

CYRIL: There's nothing to fear. If you're brave, you can do anything.

JONATHAN: Open it! Open it!

CYRIL: I could have killed her any time I liked. Only I preferred to wait for the right moment. That's what matters.

JONATHAN: Open it, Cyril!

CYRIL: To choose the right moment. Then strike. And strike hard.

JONATHAN: I want to see Mary Pickford:

CYRIL: With the hand of righteousness.

(*He lays the hand of righteousness on the barrier.*)

With one movement of this hand I can reveal the new world.

JONATHAN: Reveal it! Reveal it!

CYRIL (*turning to Jonathan with a pathetic appeal:*) Jonathan!

JONATHAN: I want to see! I want to see! I want to see!

(*Cyril takes a deep breath, screws up his mouth, and makes a quick lunge at the barrier, which he pulls from its socket*)

CYRIL (*voice very high:*) Jonathan, I ...

JONATHAN: Open it! Open it! Open it!

(With another lunge, Cyril pushes the door into the right wing, turns, and pushes the remainder of the wall off left. Then he stands left, transfixed, as a soft, glowing light rises on the scene behind. The complete width of the stage is taken up by tall book-cases, all filled with books. There are books at the side of the stage as well, so that the enclosure is complete. A very old bespectacled man sits at a high desk, right of centre, engrossed in a volume. There is a long pause.)

That's not Mary Pickford.

CURTAIN

End of Act Two

ACT THREE

Immediate continuation. Cyril, eyes continually on the old man, slowly retreats to his brother's bed.

JONATHAN (*in a loud whisper:*) I can't even see any chocolate.

CYRIL: We ... we'd better tidy our things up.

JONATHAN: Why?

CYRIL: He ... we might get into trouble.

JONATHAN: Good idea.

(All this in whispers. Both of them very quietly pick up their bedclothes etc., and tidy up the room.)

What are we going to do?

CYRIL: We'll go...we'll close the...we'll...we...

JONATHAN: Shall we go and talk to him?

CYRIL: Talk?

JONATHAN: Yes.

CYRIL: To him?

JONATHAN: Yes.

CYRIL: Who is he?

JONATHAN: I don't know. I haven't seen him before. He's not a tree, is he?

(The old man clears his throat.)

CYRIL (*frightened:*) What was that?

JONATHAN: Ooh isn't it exciting!

CYRIL: Sh!

(Pause.)

JONATHAN: Let's go and talk to him.

CYRIL: Not yet.

JONATHAN: When?

CYRIL: Sh!

(Pause.)

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl, sneughl!

CYRIL: Sh!

JONATHAN: Imagine you pretending to be Mummy!

CYRIL: He ... he might be Daddy.

JONATHAN: Daddy? Mummy wouldn't like that!

CYRIL: I think ... do you think he looks kind?

JONATHAN: Yes, he looks nice. I think we should talk to him.

CYRIL: Perhaps ... another time.

JONATHAN: I want to talk to him now!

CYRIL: Sh!

JONATHAN (*quieter:*) I want to talk to him now.

CYRIL: Now?

JONATHAN: Now. We can ask him about Mary.

CYRIL (*hesitant:*) All right then. Come on.

JONATHAN: You go, and I'll wait here.

CYRIL: You're scared:

JONATHAN: Yes, I am. You go, and I'll wait here.

CYRIL: It ... it's dangerous.

JONATHAN: I don't mind. You go.

CYRIL: I ... I've done a lot already.

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl, you're a man of action.

CYRIL (*stung:*) All right.

(*He advances bravely towards the old man, but stops halfway.*)

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl!

(*Cyril takes the extra steps, and stands trembling and uncertain before the desk. The old man continues to read.*)

CYRIL: Erm ... good afternoon, sir.

(*Very, very slowly the old man raises his head from his book, and peers over his spectacles down at Cyril.*)

OLD MAN: Good afternoon.

(*Cyril rushes at top speed back to Jonathan, but takes the last three or four steps slowly and swaggeringly.*)

CYRIL: It's all right. It's quite safe.

JONATHAN: Did you talk to him?

CYRIL: Yes, oh yes. Had quite a long conversation, as a matter of fact. He's real enough, I can tell you that.

JONATHAN: As real as me?

CYRIL: Yes, he's as real as you. I wasn't in the least bit afraid. There's quite a lot for us to see out there. You should come.

JONATHAN: Oh I'm quite happy here.

CYRIL: That's what's wrong with you. Never want to move.

JONATHAN: I know where I am.

CYRIL: Where are you?

JONATHAN: Here.

CYRIL: I'm going to talk to him again.

(*He goes back to the desk and stands as before.*)

Erm ... my name is Cyril.

(*Very, very slowly the old man looks up again from his book.*)

OLD MAN: Cyril.

(*Cyril at once rushes back to Jonathan, changing to a strut at the end.*)

CYRIL: I'm back.

JONATHAN: Did you talk to him again?

CYRIL: Yes. He knew my name. Called me Cyril.

JONATHAN: Golly!

CYRIL: We're getting on very well. Of course, I have to make all the first approaches, but ... (*modestly:*) ... I've a natural gift for communication.

JONATHAN: I'm going to talk to him. I'm lovely, so he'll want to talk to me.

CYRIL: It's a bit dangerous, but the thing is not to be afraid.

JONATHAN: Dangerous?

CYRIL: Just don't be afraid, that's all.

JONATHAN: I'm not going if it's dangerous. I'd sooner stay here where it's safe.

CYRIL: Cissyl

JONATHAN: I don't care.

CYRIL: I'll tell you what. I'll go once more, then if it's safe, you can come.

JONATHAN: All right, you see if it's safe.

(*Cyril returns to the desk and stands as before.*)

CYRIL: Erm ...it's Cyril Garstleigh.

(*The slow look up from the old man.*)

OLD MAN: Garstleigh.

(*Back comes Cyril, full-pelt slowing to swagger.*)

CYRIL: It's all right. You can come. It's safe. I've cleared the way.

JONATHAN: I'm not coming if there's any danger.

CYRIL: There's no danger. There was a bit at first, but I've overcome it. He's quite tame. Come on.

JONATHAN (*hesitant:*) Well, slowly, then.

(*He gets down from the bed, and takes Cyril's hand.*)

Slowly, Cyril. And ... and I'm not going to stay long if he frightens me.

(*Eventually they reach the high desk, and stand motionless before it. The old man reads on. Lights fade on front section of stage.*)

CYRIL: Erm!

(*No response.*)

JONATHAN: Say something to him!

CYRIL: Erm ... this is my brother.

(*The leisurely peer over the spectacles.*)

OLD MAN: Your brother.

JONATHAN: Yes, I'm Jonathan. He's only Cyril, but I'm Jonathan, and I'm the one Mummy loves.

OLD MAN: You're Jonathan.

(*The old man's voice is very gentle, and there is a continual kindly twinkle in his eyes.*)

JONATHAN: Yes, and he's Cyril. We're looking for Mary Pickford.

OLD MAN: Mary Pickford?

JONATHAN: Yes. Is she here?

OLD MAN: I don't know. You can try the shelf under 'P'. Or maybe under 'M'. Mary Pickford.

JONATHAN: We don't want a book, we want her.

OLD MAN: Her.

JONATHAN: Yes. Her. Mary Pickford.

OLD MAN: Well I'm afraid you'll only find her under 'P' or under 'M'.

CYRIL: Erm ... what about trees?

OLD MAN: Trees. Under 'T'.

CYRIL: No, not books. Real trees.
 OLD MAN: Real trees?
 CYRIL: Real trees. Like...like we're real people.
 OLD MAN: Are you?
 CYRIL (*uncertain:*) Ye-es.
 (*Slight pause.*)
 JONATHAN: We've come from over there, you see. We want to look at the world.
 OLD MAN: That'll be under 'W' then.
 CYRIL: No, the real world.
 OLD MAN: I'm sorry, I don't understand.
 CYRIL: The real world.
 OLD MAN: Yes, I heard you. But I didn't understand you.
 JONATHAN: Well, chocolate streets, and ... and battleships, and kings and queens, and film stars.
 OLD MAN: Yes, they're here.
 CYRIL: The real ones.
 OLD MAN: They're here.
 CYRIL: Where?
 OLD MAN: There.
 JONATHAN: No, those are books. I know, I can see them with my wonderful blue eyes. They're only books.
 OLD MAN: Yes?
 CYRIL (*increasingly frustrated:*) We don't want to see books, we want to see the real things.
 OLD MAN: The real things.
 JONATHAN: The real things!
 OLD MAN: I can hear you without your shouting, and I recognize the words you're saying. You're definitely speaking English. But I don't quite understand what you want. Perhaps you'd like to explain it again.
 CYRIL (*morosely:*) Well we can understand what we're saying, and we can understand what you're saying, so I don't see why you shouldn't understand what we're saying. It's not fair.
 JONATHAN: I'm Jonathan.
 OLD MAN: Yes, I realize that. And your brother is Cyril.
 JONATHAN: Well we've come from over there.
 OLD MAN: From over there.
 JONATHAN: And we want to see what there is ... here.
 OLD MAN: And you're welcome to look around. You'll find all you want.
 JONATHAN: Well we want Mary Pickford.
 OLD MAN: Yes, I understand. You'll find her under 'P'. 'P' is for Pickford. Or maybe 'M' for Mary.
 JONATHAN (*whispering to Cyril:*) Show him the cigarette card.
 (*Cyril, very ungraciously, puts the card up on the desk. The old man very slowly adjusts his gaze.*)
 OLD MAN: Ah yes. So sad! So sad! I'm sorry. I would like to help you, but I'm afraid you'll only be able to find her under 'P' or maybe under 'M', and if you can't find her there, I don't think you'll find her anywhere.
 JONATHAN: Isn't he stupid! Do you remember him, Cyril?
 CYRIL: Remember him?
 JONATHAN: From when you went out that time with Daddy?
 CYRIL: No, he wasn't there. It was all streets, and people, and buildings and things. He wasn't there! It's all been changed.

JONATHAN (*to old man:*) You weren't there when Cyril was three, so why are you there now?

OLD MAN: When Cyril was three?

JONATHAN: Sixty-one years ago.

OLD MAN: Sixty-one. I have read about that somewhere. It rings a bell. No, no, the place eludes me. In any case, I've always been here, so don't worry about it.

CYRIL: You weren't here when my Daddy took me for a walk!

OLD MAN (*smiling:*) Or . . . or maybe you weren't here!

CYRIL: I was. I was everywhere.

OLD MAN (*wiping his eyes:*) Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. (*To Jonathan:*) Your brother ... he ... he's quite a comedian, isn't he?

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl, yes, he ... he is.

CYRIL (*very insecure:*) I ... I'm not.

OLD MAN: Most amusing! Most amusing!

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl, heughl! Pretending to be Mummy!

CYRIL: I don't see why you should laugh at me. I came here, and there were streets and people and things. I know there were.

OLD MAN: Yes, of course there were. But you didn't see me, eh?

CYRIL: You weren't here. And there were real streets. They weren't books, they were streets! And people! Real people. Real streets, real people, real ...

OLD MAN (*speaking with sudden and terrifying authority:*) That's enough!

(*Cyril is shocked into immediate silence, and Jonathan cowers away.*)

I've heard enough! Real! Who are you? Answer me! Who are you?

JONATHAN: J . . . Jonathan G...G . . . Garstleigh, sir.

OLD MAN: And you?

CYRIL: I...I...C...C...

JONATHAN: C ... Cyril. He ... he's Cyril.

OLD MAN: What are you doing here?

JONATHAN: W...w...we ... we've come...

OLD MAN: Why?

JONATHAN: T...t ... to see the w...w...world.

OLD MAN: How did you get in?

JONATHAN: Fr...from there.

OLD MAN? Where?

JONATHAN: Th...there, sir.

(*There is a short silence as the old man, lips tight and eyes hard, scrutinizes first one then the other. Cyril and Jonathan watch him with terror, both too frightened to speak or move.*)

OLD MAN (*to Cyril:*) Fetch me the encyclopaedia marked 'G'.

(*Cyril trembles violently, and cannot move.*)

Fetch it (*To Jonathan:*) Take him.

(*Jonathan manages to find the strength to take Cyril's hand, and together they go to the back.*)

Bottom shelf. G! G! G!

(*They bring the encyclopaedia to the desk.*)

Put it up here.

(*They obey. Cyril lets out a sob.*)

Quiet! (*He adjusts his gaze to the encyclopaedia.*) Now then, let's see. Garstleigh. Garst-leigh.

Lord Edward Garstleigh. Your father?

JONATHAN: Y...y...yes, sir.

OLD MAN: Playboy. Died of venereal disease in Home for the Aged. 29 years old. Wife and two sons. Lady Victoria Cynthia Gertrude Cholmondeley Twinkletoes Garstleigh. Your mother?

JONATHAN: Y...y...yes, sir.

(There is a long silence as he again gazes sternly upon them.)

OLD MAN: What happened to her?

(Cyril and Jonathan both look down, and shuffle around.)

I'm waiting. What happened?

JONATHAN: We ... we left her at home, sir.

OLD MAN: At home?

JONATHAN: Y...yes, sir.

OLD MAN *(referring to book again:)* The Happy Haven?

JONATHAN: Y...yes, sir.

OLD MAN: Why are you not there? Answer!

JONATHAN: We ... we left there, sir.

OLD MAN: Why? Why?

JONATHAN: We ... we came to look for Mary Pickford.

OLD MAN: Who is Mary Pickford?

JONATHAN: A f...f ... film star, sir.

OLD MAN: What has she to do with you? What have you to do with her? *(Leaning towards them, and speaking quietly:)* This is not your field. Do you understand? Not your province.

(Slight pause.) What have you done with your mother?

JONATHAN: M. ... m... my mother?

OLD MAN *(to Cyril:)* You

(Cyril's mouth opens, and his head trembles with the effort to speak, but no sound comes out.)

You look like a fish! *(To Jonathan:)* Did you love your mother?

JONATHAN: Oh yes, yes. I loved Mummy more than anyone. I did. I loved Mummy. It was Cyril who hated her.

OLD MAN *(To Cyril:)* Did you love your mother? 'Fish.'

CYRIL: I ... I ... I ... lo . . lo ... Mu ... Mu ... Mummy.

JONATHAN: He hated Mummy. He hated her. I was always the good boy, and he was bad, and Mummy loved me, and so did Daddy. It ... it's Cyril who's always naughty. I've never done anything wrong. I'm a little angel. Mummy says I shall go to Heaven, and ... and teach God how to be good. And Cyril will be roasted for ever and ever and ever, because he's so bad. Sir.

OLD MAN *(referring to book:)* Your mother died at the age of eighty-one.

JONATHAN: Yes, sir.

OLD MAN *(suddenly gentle and kindly once more:)* You must have been very sorry to lose her.

JONATHAN: Yes. Oh yes, I was. I cried ever such a lot.

OLD MAN: Farewells are always so sad.

JONATHAN: I'm very tender-hearted.

OLD MAN: Even though she was an extremely wicked woman.

JONATHAN: Yes, I know. But I loved her in spite of her faults.

OLD MAN: Very noble. Very noble. Even the wicked have a right to live and love. Indeed, which of us would have the right if the wicked didn't? Cyril, did you not weep when your beloved mother passed away?

(The kindness of his tone visibly reassures Cyril.)

CYRIL: Yes. Yes, I cried.

JONATHAN: He didn't.

OLD MAN: Sh! Sh, my boy! I see the tears in his eyes. And when she was dead, you came to me?

CYRIL: Y...yes, sir.

OLD MAN: As they all do. *(Referring to book:)* Cyril Garstleigh, aged sixty-four. Poet. You have suffered.

CYRIL: Yes. Yes, sir.

OLD MAN: Such is the burden. Such is the burden. (*Referring to book:*) Jonathan Garstleigh, aged sixty-two. Conservative. (*Pause.*) I still cannot understand why you're here now.

JONATHAN: It was Cyril's fault. I was quite happy where I was, but he made me come. I didn't want to. He made me.

OLD MAN (*to Cyril:*) Cigarette cards can be very beautiful. But they must never never be confused ... with books. Do you understand? You can't rely on them. Nor can you rely on memory. Nor even on what you see. (*With terrifying harshness:*) You can rely on nothing! Nothing is the heart of everything, nothing is the body, nothing is the soul. Nothing is all your past and future, nothing is your beginning, your end, your victory, your defeat. Nothing is your heaven, nothing is your hell. Nothing is your sorrow, your joy, nothing is your father, your son, yourself. Nothing is the gift of life. And our acceptance of that gift ... is divine. For he who takes the gift of nothing, and holds it, and will not throw it away, is level with the saints. (*With overwhelming directness:*) And he who takes the gift away from others ... is accursed.

(*There is a pause. He begins to laugh quietly, and wipes his eyes.*)

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear! I haven't enjoyed myself so much in years. I must speak more often. There is a certain ringing tone in my voice that is most attractive. A resonance. It's the sort of voice I could listen to for hours without ever growing tired of it. It's a gift, a natural gift.

(*Resuming the harsh tone, which he calls resonance:*) There is no going back. NO ... GOING ... BACK! (*Smiling to himself:*) It's so impressive. Rich and resonant! Don't you think so?

JONATHAN: Y... yes, sir.

OLD MAN (*resonant:*) He who takes the gift away ... is accursed. (*Quiet and sinister:*) Did you hear that, Cyril?

CYRIL: Y...yes, sir.

OLD MAN: Jonathan?

JONATHAN: Yes, sir.

(*Pause.*)

OLD MAN (*kindly again:*) Do you know why I wear these glasses on my nose?

JONATHAN: N...no, sir.

OLD MAN: Because they would look stupid on any other part of my body. Ha, ha, ha. Oh dear me!

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl! (*Nudges Cyril:*) Sneughl, sneughl!

CYRIL: Sneughl.

OLD MAN: Dear, oh dear, oh dear. Laughter is a part of it, you know. Yes, laughter fits into the scheme. Essential. Do you know why I sit here at this high desk all the time? Do you?

JONATHAN: Sneughl, sneughl, no, sir! Sneughl!

CYRIL: Sneughl.

OLD MAN: Nor do I. Nor do I.

JONATHAN: Oh heughl, heughl, heughl! (*Nudge.*) Heughl, heughl, heughl!

CYRIL: Heughl.

OLD MAN: Dear oh dear oh dear oh dear. Nor do I.

JONATHAN: Dear oh dear, heughl, heughl!

OLD MAN: Yes, yes, a sense of humour is a blessing. It helps such a lot. And yet ... (*Serious:*) ... and yet from the other side, it's as black as midnight. You see, I can't get down.

JONATHAN (*uncertain:*) Sneughl, sneughl.

OLD MAN (*very harsh:*) I can't get down!

(*Jonathan shuts up.*)

And you ... can't come up. Ha, you can't come up! (*Laughs.*)

JONATHAN (*with increasing uncertainty:*) Sneu ... sneu ... heughl, heughl. Heughl. (*Nudge.*) Heughl, heughl!

CYRIL: Heughl.
 OLD MAN (*to Cyril:*) Take this book back, will you? And bring, me volume H.
 (*Cyril goes, and is on his way back with volume H.*)
 Wait. Put it back. Bring me volume T instead.
 (*Cyril obeys, and is on his way back.*)
 Wait. (*To Jonathan.*) Go and get volume H.
 (*Jonathan obeys, and joins Cyril.*)
 Wait. Go back to the shelves.
 (*They do.*)
 Back here again.
 (*They come.*)
 Shelves.
 (*They go.*)
 Here.
 (*They come.*)
 Ah, power! Wonderful power! I'll have the T volume.
 (*Cyril passes it up to him.*)
 T. T, T, T, T, T. The...The ...H...no. Take it back.
 (*Cyril takes it back to the shelf.*)
 H.
 (*Jonathan hands it up to him. Cyril rejoins Jonathan.*)
 H. H, H, H, H . . . Happy Haven. Here it is. House of ill repute. Built by William the Conqueror as his country residence in the heart of London. No doubt where he took his conquerbines. Oh dear! He was a champion conqueror. Don't you ... don't you ... don't you concur?
 (*He collapses in silent laughter.*)
 Oh dear oh dear oh dear!
 JONATHAN: Heughl, heughl, heughl!
 CYRIL: Ours ... ours is the champion. (*He puts his hand in his pocket.*)
 JONATHAN (*looking at Cyril:*) Heughl, heughl, heughl.
 CYRIL: Heughl. But it is!
 OLD MAN (*returning abruptly to the books:*) Ancestral home of the Garstleighs. Closed up since the death of Lord Edward Garstleigh. Legend has it that the house contains a treasure, left by William the Conqueror in a secret passage, but no such treasure has ever been discovered.
 (*Cyril puts his arms round one of the legs of the desk.*)
 CYRIL: Please let us go home! Please!
 (*Very slowly the old man looks up from the book, and peers over his spectacles.*)
 OLD MAN: Where are you? I can't see you!
 CYRIL: I'm here! I'm here!
 (*The old man leans over the desk to see Cyril.*)
 OLD MAN: Ah there you are. Stand where I can see you, then, will you?
 (*Cyril steps back and sinks to his knees.*)
 CYRIL (*beginning to cry:*) Please, let us go!
 OLD MAN: Where do you want to go?
 CYRIL: Home!
 OLD MAN (*quietly:*) This is your home.
 CYRIL: No, there, over there, that's where we live.
 OLD MAN: It's closed.
 CYRIL: No, we live there.
 OLD MAN: No-one lives there. No-one lives anywhere, save here.
 CYRIL: We do.

OLD MAN: Look over there. Look. What do you see?
 CYRIL: I see ... lights.
 OLD MAN: And beyond?
 CYRIL: Darkness.
 OLD MAN: Even so.
 JONATHAN: We ... we did live there, sir. Because ... because my Mummy lived there.
 OLD MAN: And Cyril walked.
 CYRIL: Yes. Yes, I did!
 OLD MAN: And saw streets of chocolate, and kings and queens, and buildings, and battleships, and film stars.
 CYRIL: Yes!
 OLD MAN: Where are they now?
 CYRIL: They're there! I know they're there!
 OLD MAN: In the darkness.
 CYRIL: Somewhere!
 OLD MAN: Are you afraid of me?
 CYRIL: Yes.
 OLD MAN: *(to Jonathan:)* And you?
 JONATHAN: Er ... no. I think you'll love me in the end because I'm full of good qualities.
 OLD MAN: Name them.
(Jonathan stands with his mouth open, unable to speak.)
 Fish! Cyril, take this volume back, and bring me volume D.
(Cyril obeys.)
 D. D, D, D, D...Darkness. Darkness. Together with silence, the profoundest of human emotions. The beginning, the end. Creator and destroyer of dreams, and peace, and sorrow. A conjurer's cloth. The womb. The other world.
(He looks up from his book.)
 The other world. *(To Cyril:)* Do you understand?
(He gives the book to Cyril, who takes it, but stands looking at the old man.)
 There are no kings and queens, no streets, no people, except these.
 CYRIL: And Mary Pickford?
 OLD MAN *(sadly:)* Under 'P'. Or maybe under 'M'.
(There is a long pause, eventually broken by a piercing wail from Jonathan.)
 JONATHAN: I want to go home! Waaaaaah! Waaaaaah! Waaaaaah! I want my Mummy! I want my Mummy! Waaaaaah! Waaaaaah! Waaaaaah!
(Every suitable facial contortion to be employed.)
 Waaaaaah! Mummy! Mummy! Waaaaaah! Waaaaaah!
 OLD MAN *(fortissimo:)* Quiet!
 JONATHAN: Gloop! *(Pause.)* Snivel, snivel. Snivel, snivel, sniff. Sniff. I want ... sniff ... my Mummy. Sniff, sniff.
 OLD MAN: *(to Cyril:)* Take the book back. Then search in volumes 'M' and 'P' for Mary Pickford. When you have found her, bring her to me.
(Cyril goes to the book-case, and stands with his back to the audience.)
 JONATHAN: Sniff, sniff.
 OLD MAN *(to Jonathan:)* Go home.
 JONATHAN: H...h...home?
 OLD MAN: There!
 JONATHAN: Th ... there?
 OLD MAN: Go.
 JONATHAN: A ... alone?

OLD MAN: He'll follow.

JONATHAN: I...I'm frightened.

OLD MAN (*quietly*): Go! Before I kill you.

(Jonathan, very frightened, steps cautiously away from the desk. Slowly the lights go up on the beds, cupboard etc. When Jonathan has passed through the line of the wall, he runs to his bed, throws himself into a sitting position, and smiles an enormous smile.)

JONATHAN: I'm home! I'm home! Mummy! Oh Teddy, Teddy!

(He picks up the teddy, and covers himself with teddy kisses, making the noise of the kissing himself.)

Oh welcome home, Jonathan! Welcome home; And my cigarette cards! And my beautiful bed, and me. Lovely, wonderful, beautiful me. And my book of poems. All here to welcome Jonathan home. Mummy! Oh won't Mummy be pleased! Hullo, Teddy. Where's my conker? Oh, he took my conker. Mummy, Cyril took my conker. Wait till Mummy gets you, she'll teach you to steal my champion.

(He looks round at Cyril's bed, and sees it is empty.)

Oh! And my knife! Hullo, Teddy. *(More kisses.)* Home, home! I shall never move again.

Mummy! Mummy! Now sit still, Teddy. Mummy will come. All you have to do is sit. Oh life is so simple! Especially when you're a good boy like me. Mummy! I'm sitting still.

(Cyril brings a book to the old man.)

OLD MAN: Did you find her?

CYRIL: Yes, sir.

OLD MAN: Read it out.

CYRIL: What it says?

OLD MAN: Every word.

CYRIL (*reading*): Mary Pickford. A star, who was very beautiful. Faded.

OLD MAN: Even so. Return the book to the shelf.

(Cyril obeys.)

You have time.

CYRIL: For what?

OLD MAN (*smiling and nodding*): You may go.

CYRIL: Home?

OLD MAN: Home.

CYRIL (*with sudden panic*): Where's my brother? Where's my...

OLD MAN: Gone home. He's waiting there for you. At the Happy Haven.

CYRIL: He went alone?

OLD MAN: Yes.

CYRIL: But he couldn't go alone. He . . .

OLD MAN: He was more afraid of me than of the darkness. If you want to stay, you're welcome.

CYRIL: No, I want to go.

OLD MAN: Close the door behind you, then. I must get on with my reading.

(Cyril begins to go, but stops and looks back.)

CYRIL: Sir, who are you?

(There is a very long pause.)

OLD MAN: I'm me. Who are you?

CYRIL: Me.

OLD MAN: Even so. The door.

(Cyril steps over the wall line, and silently closes the door and window, placing the barrier in its sockets. When this is done, still deep in thought he goes to his bed and sits down. There is a protracted silence.)

JONATHAN *(impatiently:)* Mummy! *(Pause.)* Mummy! I've sat here for an hour, and she hasn't come. What's the use of being good if nobody sees you? Mummy! Mummy! Mummy!

CYRIL: She won't come.

JONATHAN: You frightened me. You weren't there a minute ago! You've got my conker.

(Silently Cyril passes it across to him.)

I'm going to tell Mummy anyway. You shouldn't have stolen it from me in the first place. And you've got my knife.

(Knife silently passed across.)

I hope Mummy whacks you into a pin-cushion with Daddy's slipper.

CYRIL: She won't come.

JONATHAN: Oh yes she will, then you'll be for it. Mummy! You wait. Mummy! It's your lovely Jonathan! Come here! I want you!

CYRIL: I forgot to bring the picture of Mary Pickford.

JONATHAN *(getting furious:)* Mummy, Mummy, Mummy!

CYRIL: I'll never see her again.

JONATHAN: Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy!

CYRIL *(also raising his voice:)* She's dead!

JONATHAN: Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mummy!

CYRIL: She's dead! Jonathan!

JONATHAN: She's not dead!

CYRIL: I killed her with your knife.

JONATHAN: She's coming. She's busy, that's all, and she can't hear me. If I shout louder, she'll come. MUMMY! MUMMY!

CYRIL: She is dead. I'll show you.

JONATHAN: Dead?

CYRIL *(standing up:)* She's in the cupboard.

JONATHAN: I want to see! *(Cyril makes a move.)* I don't want to see! *(Beginning to cry:)* I want Mummy. Snivel. I want Mummy.

(Cyril goes to the back wall, fingers the barrier, then raises his arms high up the wall, and rests his head.)

Snivel, snivel, sniff. She isn't dead. She's busy.

CYRIL: Someone's got to help us.

JONATHAN *(tears flowing freely:)* I'm not going on without Mummy. Mummy's the only one who loves me! Waaaaaah! Waaaaaah!

(Cyril turns with an air of decision and strides to the cupboard.)

(Screaming:) No! No!

CYRIL: Don't look!

JONATHAN: You mustn't! You mustn't! Cyril, don't open it! Don't open it!

CYRIL: Look the other way!

JONATHAN: I won't! I won't! You mustn't open it! You mustn't!

CYRIL: Turn round!

(Cyril pulls open the cupboard door. Jonathan turns the other way, and Cyril disappears inside the cupboard.)

JONATHAN: Cyril, close it! I'm frightened!

CYRIL (*from cupboard:*) Don't look.

JONATHAN (*still crying:*) I'm not, I don't want to see. I'll never open my eyes again. I'll never talk to you again. You leave my Mummy alone and come away from there and close the door. Cyril! What are you doing? I ... I ... I'll give you my conker. Cyril, I'll give you my conker. (*In agony:*) Oooooh! I want my Mummy! Cyril! Cyril, don't leave me! Co...co...come here, I want you! I ... I want to show you something. Cyril, I've got something to show you!

CYRIL (*from the cupboard:*) In a minute.

JONATHAN: Now! Now! I want you now! Oooooh! (*He beats the bed with his fists.*) Cyril! (*Wailing:*) I'm going to go away! And I'll never come back! Do you hear? Cyri-i-i-i-i-i-i: I hate you-ou-ou! I hate you-ou-ou-ou!

(*Cyril steps out of the cupboard. He is dressed in the clothes Lady Garstleigh wore before she was killed.*)

CYRIL: Look!

(*Jonathan turns round. There is a moment's silence.*)

JONATHAN: Mummy! Mummy! It's my Mummy!

(*He holds out his arms. Cyril goes to him. He offers his cheek for 'Mummy' to kiss.*)

Oh Mummy, I knew you weren't dead! My Mummy!

CYRIL: There, my precious, my sweet. Did you miss your Mummy?

JONATHAN: Oh Mummy, I love you, I love you.

(*Cyril is startled for a moment and stares at Jonathan.*)

CYRIL: Love?

JONATHAN: And you love me, don't you Mummy? Don't you?

CYRIL: Yes. Yes, my darling. Yes, I love you.

(*They embrace.*)

CURTAIN

The End