

GREENVOE

BY GEORGE MACKAY BROWN

ADAPTED FOR THE THEATRE BY ALAN PLATER

REVISED - 4TH APRIL 2000

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GREENVOE

CAST LIST:

Bert Kerston
Samuel Whaness
Rachel Whaness
Skarf
Bella Budge
Ben Budge
Ivan Westray
Olive Evie
Joseph Evie
Alice Voar
Margaret Inverary
Ernie Kerston
John Corrigall
Timmy Folster
Agatha Fortin-Bell
Colonel Fortin-Bell
Inga Fortin-Bell
Elizabeth McKee
Prosecutor
Ellen Kerston
Scorradale
Mansie Anderson
Tammag Brown
Leonard Isbister
Dod Corrigall
Andrew Hoy
Sandy Manson
Hector Anderson
Simon McKee
Tom Kerston
Sander Voar
Gino Manson
Elizabeth McKee (when young)
Fred Somerville
The Stranger
Dewas Singh
Shirley Voar
Charlie Brown
Simon Anderson
Simon McKee (as a boy)
Policeman
Fordyce
McIntosh
Worker
Aloysius
Matron
Willy Kerston
Controller
Peedie Skarf (a dozen years on)
Voar children
Kerston children
Children in school
Workers
Security Men

GREENVOE

THE SETTING

Obviously we shouldn't even attempt a realistic setting: the bedrock reality lies within the characters and George's wondrous words.

For the purposes of this version, I've assumed the village and the island are assembled from a series of wooden rostra on which tables and chairs can stand as required. All this plus minimal props.

Thus, when the village and the island are destroyed, we simply dismantle and stack away the rostra.

Action will be continuous with no stopping for scene changes. The aim is absolute simplicity with the narration passed around like the baton in a relay race. After all, this is an island of story-tellers.

I've indicated moments where music seems appropriate but obviously there could be more.

Finally, this document shouldn't be treated as a gospel. It's no more than a basis of negotiation while we grapple with the practicalities.

Alan Plater
26 June 1999

St Magnus Festival 2000

Greenvoe

by George Mackay Brown

adapted by Alan Plater

music by John Gray

first performed on Saturday 17th June 2000 at the Stromness Town Hall, Stromness, Orkney

Director	Penny Aberdein
Asst Director	Graham Garson
Musical Director	Tim Geddes

Cast:

Bert Kerston	Willie Harper
Samuel Whaness	Erik Spence
Rachel Whaness	Phyllis Brown
Skarf	Dave Grieve
Bella Budge	Doreen McLellan
Ben Budge	Walter Leask
Ivan Westray	Graham Garson
Olive Evie	Maggie Hay
Joseph Evie	Jim Chalmers
Alice Voar	Carolyn Bevan
Margaret Inverary	Carole Taylor
Timmy Folster	Tommy Wylie
Agatha Fortin-Bell	Cynthia Chaddock
Colonel Fortin-Bell	Chris Macrae
Elizabeth McKee	Allison Dixon
Prosecutor	Terry Delaney
Ellen Kerston	Kristen Wylie
Scorradale	David Fidler
Mansie Anderson	Jim Chalmers
Tammag Brown	Terry Delaney
Leonard Isbister	Tommy Wylie
Dod Corrigan	Chris Macrae
Andrew Hoy	David Fidler
Sandy Manson	Willie Harper
Hector Anderson	Magnus Dixon
Simon McKee	Sweyn Hunter
Dewas Singh	Alex Hearn
McIntosh	Terry Delaney
Aloysius	Alex Hearn
Matron	Cynthia Chaddock
Controller	Maggie Hay

...continued...

Details of first performance of *Greenvoe*.....continued

Children:

Ernie Kerston	Finlay Harnden
John Corrigan	Ross Harnden
Tom Kerston	Ben Chaddock
Sophie Voar	Niamh Delaney
Sander Voar	Stuart Bevan
Shirley Voar	Louise Leask
Sam Voar	Ciaran Delaney

Musicians:

Julia Robinson Dean	violin
Yvonne Gray	oboe
Nigel Pendrey	cello
Tim Geddes	keyboard

Stage Management: Pete Folan, Jude Barnes, Barbara Smith

Set design Les Burgher, Marian Ashburn

Costumes Laura Grieve

Props: Pat Presland, Margaret Sutherland

GREENVOE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Dawn.

A light on BERT KERSTON.

BERT:(NARRATION) The village of Greenvoe. The island of Hellya. On the first day.

He goes down the harbour steps, starts to stow creels on his boat, the ELLEN.

A light on SAMUEL and RACHEL WHANESS, reading from the scriptures in a cottage above the pier.

SAMUEL: He maketh the deep to boil as a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things; he is a king over all the children of pride...

SAMUEL and RACHEL kneel.

SAMUEL: (TOGETHER) Lord, protect us in our goings this

RACHEL: day and always, and be thou merciful unto us.

There is an explosion of noise as BERT starts his outboard. He steers his boat out of the harbour as SAMUEL embraces RACHEL then makes his way down the steps to stow the creels on his boat, the SILOAM.

A light on SKARF watching all this. He shivers against the morning cold, shakes his head.

SKARF: No. Not this morning. I was out all Saturday for one lobster and two crabs. And I haven't got any petrol. I might make a start on the history. Joseph Evie will sign my unemployment paper.

He goes into his cottage, sits down in front of a spread of books, starts writing.

SAMUEL starts the motor on the SILOAM and leaves the harbour.

Across the way there's a loud clucking as BELLA BUDGE feeds her chickens.

BELLA: Cluck cluck cluck! Kitty kitty kitty! Kitty cluck kit!

BEN BUDGE yells at her from inside the cottage. He's in bed.

BEN: Bella!

BELLA: What ails thee, Ben? (TO CHICKENS:) Kitty cluck!

BEN: Make less goddam noise. You make more row than the Calcutta bazaar.

BELLA: Kitty cluck! Kitty cluck!

BEN: Come in and light the fire. It's cold. I want my goddam breakfast.

IVAN WESTRAY walks up the harbour steps.

IVAN:(NARRATION) Mr Joseph Evie, postmaster, merchant, county councillor, takes the wooden shutters from the window of his general merchant's store.

JOSEPH does just that, watched by MRS OLIVE EVIE, taking time off from watching the rest of the village.

IVAN:(NARRATION) The first bluebottles rise from the slices of melon and boxes of liquorice allsorts.

IVAN goes into the shop.

IVAN: Twenty woodbines.

OLIVE: She's a well-like lass.

IVAN: Who?

OLIVE: Miss Inverary the new school-teacher.

IVAN: Is she?

OLIVE: And who is crossing over on the ferry today?

IVAN: President Nixon and Mao Tse-Tung.

JOSEPH: There are parcels for the mainland.

IVAN leaves the shop with JOSEPH.

They cross with BELLA BUDGE, and go down to the harbour with the parcels against:

BELLA: A quarter pound of bacon, please.

OLIVE: What way is your brother?

BELLA: Lean bacon. The last bacon was nothing but fat. He's fine.

OLIVE: Watch an old man when he starts to shout for food. They get ravenous in the end. The death hunger.

BELLA: My brother Benjamin Andrew James is quite well. A writing pad with lines. After breakfast he is going to write to our nephew, Tom, in Canada. Tom has a very good job in Vancouver, B.C. A box of matches.

BELLA leaves the shop. JOSEPH returns. OLIVE looks out across the harbour.

OLIVE: You know why Ivan Westray's up so early? The laird's grand-daughter is coming for the summer. From that boarding-school in England. Dear me. A young girl like her won't find much to set her up in Greenvoe. The Voar woman with a new illegitimate bairn. Scorradale the publican open every weekend till four in the morning. The Skarf preaching socialism and atheism to all the young. Some place to come to!

JOSEPH: It's a lovely morning, Mrs Evie.

OLIVE: There's something not right going on at the manse. I didn't see the minister's old mother all day yesterday. There's something very queer about that woman.

JOSEPH: The lupins are up early.

OLIVE: That new school-teacher would give anything for a man.

JOSEPH: We're out of fisherman's stockings, I see.

MISS MARGARET INVERARY rings the bell in the doorway of the school.

ALICE VOAR appears in the doorway of her cottage, seeing five children off to school: SOPHIE, SIDNEY, SANDER, SHIRLEY, SAM in that order, some still finishing their breakfast.

ALICE: Run, Sidney. Sophie, you'll be late. Now, Sander, hurry. The clever peedie Shirley, on with you. Sam, the teacher has a strap.

She restrains peedie SKARF.

ALICE: No, peedie Skarf, you can't go till you're a big boy. Run in, see if the bairn's sleeping.

She sees OLIVE watching her.

ALICE: The learning's a grand thing, Mrs Evie.

She goes in.

OLIVE: Seven children, all to different fathers. Fancy.

JOSEPH: I think we will have a week of fine weather.

As SKARF comes into the shop.

OLIVE: You're not at the fishing today, I see. That was the worst thing you ever did, Skarf, going to work with your uncle at the lobsters. You with all that brains. You could have been a high-up by now, a professor maybe.

SKARF: Loaf, gallon of paraffin, four candles, half pound margarine, two clothes pegs, a black ball-point. I'll pay on Saturday. And I need my unemployment paper signed.

JOSEPH checks in the ledger.

JOSEPH: I find you owe three pounds eight and threepence.

SKARF: All will be paid. The Lord moves in mysterious ways.

JOSEPH: I can't extend credit indefinitely.

SKARF: And the hawks don't fly south in the winter. I'll take the ninepenny biro now.

SKARF takes his pen and goes.

In the schoolroom, INVERARY conducts the children, including the VOARS, in SPEED BONNY BOAT.

CHILDREN: (SING) Speed, bonny boat, like a bird on the wing,
'Onward,' the sailors cry,
'Carry the lad that's born to be king
Over the sea to Skye.'

INVERARY: That was very nice. Ernie Kerston, take your finger out of your nose.

ERNIE does as he's told.

INVERARY: Now I'm going to write the next verse on the blackboard. Those who can write, copy it down in your exercise books. Now tell me, who has a boat like the boat in the song?
Hands up.

Lots of hands go up.

ERNIE: My dad.

INVERARY: No, Ernie. Your father has a fishing boat but it isn't exactly like a bird on the wing, is it? Think hard. John Corrigan?

JOHN: Ivan Westray.

INVERARY: Very good.

They resume work in silence, a silence broken by a loud coughing and clearing of tubes as TIMMY FOLSTER emerges from his hovel. He makes his way to the shop.

TIMMY: National assistance day, Mr Evie. I see this is the last order in the book. I hope you have a new book for me.

JOSEPH: I do indeed. And four pounds, six shillings and sixpence.

TIMMY: Timmy requires a loaf and a pound pot of raspberry jam, a half pound of margarine, three tins of cat food, a bottle of methylated spirits.

JOSEPH: Now, Timmy, I'm going to speak seriously to you. You always sign a declaration in my book that the meths you buy is for your primus stove.

TIMMY: And my tilley lamp.

JOSEPH: Well see you use it for that purpose only.

TIMMY: Of course, Mr Evie. What else?

As TIMMY signs the book, there is the loud, aggressive honking of a car horn signalling the arrival of COLONEL FORTIN-BELL and his niece, AGATHA.

Simultaneously the CHILDREN spill out of school for lunch.

INVERARY: Everybody back promptly after lunch!

ERNIE: Dinner, miss.

IVAN helps INGA FORTIN-BELL from the boat. AGATHA rushes to embrace her.

AGATHA: Inga, darling!

The CHILDREN gather, at a distance, to watch these strange apparitions who hug and call each other 'Darling'.

SKARF and TIMMY have a look too.

AGATHA: Isn't this lovely? All the village has come out to welcome you.

IVAN: Fifteen bob.

INGA: Thank you very much, Mr Westray.

She pays. There's a bit of eye contact between her and IVAN.

AGATHA: You must be utterly worn out, you poor darling.

She turns to the crowd.

AGATHA: Thank you, one and all, for turning out to welcome Inga to the island. It was jolly nice.

SKARF: Bloody parasites.

He goes back indoors.

Everybody disperses, apart from IVAN who's unloading boxes on to the quayside and INVERARY who makes her way to the shop where OLIVE is ready for her.

OLIVE: The Westrays were never right in the head. Clever but tainted. His grandfather and his uncle both died in the Edinburgh asylum.

INVERARY: I'd like a pound of eating apples, please.

Isolated in a pool of light we find MRS McKEE, sitting in a rocking chair, staring at a china teapot on a table in front of her.

The PROSECUTOR circles her as he speaks.

PROSECUTOR: Let us consider this china teapot with a willow pattern design in blue upon it. Mrs Elizabeth McKee keeps it at present on the top shelf of her china cabinet, in a very prominent position. This teapot originally belonged to Mrs McKee's aunt, a Miss Annabella Chisholm who at the time of her death resided in the town of Perth, Scotland. By the terms of Miss Chisholm's will, all her moveable possessions - I repeat, all of them - were bequeathed to Mrs McKee's younger sister, Flora, Mrs Flora Alder, lately resident at number two, Marchmont Square, Edinburgh. This afternoon, therefore, I will ask the tribunal to make this china teapot the subject of scrupulous examination.

Cross-fading to BEN BUDGE, who's sitting at a table writing a letter with a stub of pencil.

BEN: Dear Tom, I take pen in hand to acquaint you with our news.

And there's a stillness in the village confirming his view.

BEN: Your aunt is worried about you. Eddie Ainslie from Quoylay came back from a Pacific trip last week and blazed it all over Greenvoe that you are down and out in Vancouver, B.C. It soon came round to your Aunt Bella's ears - she hears every cat's fart of news.

BELLA crosses to read over his shoulder what he has written.

BEN: Now if you are hard up and out of work, we could send you your passage money. We get the pension every week but we can live fine off the egg money and as you know all we have will be yours after we are gone. Now for the village news. A new school-teacher came at the beginning of May, a Miss Inverary from Edinburgh, a prim prissy bit of a thing. Ivan Westray the ferryman is casting his eyes on her and if he does to her what he did to the croft lasses at the other end of the island, I guess we'll soon stand in need of a new school-mistress. Ellen Kerston is expecting her sixth.

ELLEN KERSTON makes her way from her cottage to the shop.

BEN: She's a Quoylay girl, married to Bert Kerston the fisherman, a little runt of a man, awkward in drink. The rain came pissing down at the weekend and our thatch is leaking.

He pushes the pad to one side.

BELLA: My, you write a good letter, Ben.

ELLEN arrives at the shop. RACHEL is already there. OLIVE is serving them. JOSEPH is sorting letters and parcels from a mailbag collected earlier from IVAN.

ELLEN: A pound of raisins when you're ready, and twenty woodbines for Bert Kerston.

But OLIVE is in mid-conversation with RACHEL.

OLIVE: Timmy Folster should be put in the County Home. When he was in here this morning I saw a louse crawling up his coat.

RACHEL: My my.

ALICE comes into the shop with PEEDIE SKARF.

ELLEN: Rachel.

RACHEL: Ellen.

ELLEN: I'm sorry for what Bert Kerston called you and Samuel on Saturday night.

RACHEL: It's all right, Ellen.

ELLEN: 'Whited sepulchres' was it? But he was drunk at the time.

RACHEL: Never mind, Ellen.

ELLEN: It was the drink speaking. You're not a whited sepulchre anyway.

RACHEL: Don't worry about it, Ellen.

ELLEN: I gave him whited sepulchres when he got home.

ALICE: He called me a whore the same night. And I never took a ha'penny from a man in my life.

ELLEN: I'm sorry, Alice.

OLIVE: When is your time? It's not good for you, having all them bairns. One every year. I'm telling you as a medical woman. I was a nurse and midwife before I married Mr Evie. Children can kill you.

INVERARY rings the school bell.

The CHILDREN spill out from school and disperse in many directions, playing games as they go.

OLIVE crosses to JOSEPH.

OLIVE: What's in the mail?

JOSEPH: Nothing.

He has everything hidden from her.

IVAN goes into the schoolroom with a box of books.

IVAN: Books. Three shillings.

INVERARY: The Education Committee pays. Would you like some coffee?

IVAN: I'd rather have a dram.

She pours him a dram from a decanter into a heavy crystal glass, and a cup of coffee for herself.

IVAN: Well then. Have you thought about it? Have you made up your mind?

No answer. She sugars her coffee.

IVAN: I'm not going to hang on for ever. What do you take me for? Some bloody kind of statue?

She stirs her coffee.

IVAN: When was it we first met? A long time ago.

INVERARY: The dance at the community centre. The second Friday in May. Just after I came to the island.

IVAN: A long time. Seven weeks. I have this hurt and this hunger inside me. You put it there. I want to know what you are going to do about it.

INVERARY: I'm sorry.

IVAN drains his glass, crosses to the door.

INVERARY: Truly sorry.

IVAN: Light that green lamp and set it in your window at ten o'clock. Then I'll know I can come. That is the arrangement.

He puts on his cap and leaves.

INVERARY sips her coffee. Young JOHN CORRIGAL appears in the doorway.

JOHN: Please, miss, Charlie Brown hit me in the playground.

INVERARY: Did he now? Well, everybody gets hurt one time or another. We must learn to be patient. I'll speak to him in the morning. Here.

She gives him one of the apples she bought at the shop earlier.

He goes. She brings out the green lamp, looks at it, leaves it handy in case she decides to light it later.

Evening.

SCORRADALE:(NARRATION) The bar of the Greenvoe Hotel only opens in the evenings. The window is never cleaned but by rain. The billiard room at the back is never used for billiards, only for quarterly meetings of the district council. Visitors sometimes stay in the guest rooms upstairs - bird-watchers, folk-lorists, Americans - but never for more than one night.

SKARF raps on the bar counter.

SCORRADALE: Coming.

He gives SKARF his pint: obviously his regular opening order.

BERT KERSTON sneaks his way towards the hotel carrying a lobster.

He is restrained by ELLEN'S powerful right arm.

ELLEN: Where do you think you're going?

BERT: Bill Scorradale wants to buy a lobster. He has a guest coming to the hotel tomorrow.

ELLEN: Bill Scorradale can buy his lobsters from the Fishermen's Society in the ordinary way. You're coming with me to the telephone and you're going to phone the Society stating that you have that lobster, plus those in your pockets and you'll ask what the current price is. And tell them to address their cheque to Mistress Ellen Kerston, enemy of alehouses, Greenvoe, Hellya, Orkney.

She marches him into the darkness.

They cross with SAMUEL who is carrying a basket of haddocks which he places in his doorway, where RACHEL is waiting.

SAMUEL: The Lord has blessed us with beautiful fish today, Rachel.

RACHEL: Praise be, Samuel.

RACHEL takes four haddocks from the basket.

RACHEL: I shall take these three to Alice and this one to Timmy.

SAMUEL: This isn't business, Rachel, giving our hard-earned goods away to the idle and the improvident.

RACHEL: The miracle of the loaves and fishes is never finished, Samuel.

IVAN arrives in the hotel bar as SKARF begins to read from his notebook. SCORRADALE places a dram on the counter for him.

SKARF: Darkness and silence, darkness and silence. The light of the intellect had not yet touched our island. The bone of the whale lay high on the beaches that knew as yet no footprint of man. Somewhere, somehow, sometime, a frail skin boat blundered on the beach at Keelyfaa. Men stepped on to the rock. How did they live? How did they speak? How did they think? No one can tell. But beneath the meadow of the farm of Isbister, we have found their bones and we know the solemn state in which they passed into the kingdom of death. Of the villages where they passed their days, nothing remains.

IVAN drains his glass. SCORRADALE refills it.

SKARF: A merry race came, after thousands of years, from the Mediterranean coasts, in wooden ships with men and women and dogs and children and - very precious, guard it, watchman - the jar of seed corn. They drove the people of the dark kingdom from their little pastures and fishing grounds, and they prepared to build a thick, high fort, a keep, a primitive castle with a moat. And the Broch of Ingarth is still there though all that is left is a green mound and a few stumps and stobs of stone.

SKARF pauses to take a breath and a drink from his glass.

IVAN: What time is it?

SCORRADALE: Ten o'clock. Closing time.

Though clearly he has no immediate plans to close the bar.

IVAN steps outside.

In the schoolroom, INVERARY takes the lamp and a box of matches. She strikes a match, hesitates, then blows out the match.

IVAN returns to the bar as SKARF resumes his narrative.

SKARF: Came from east-over-sea, from Norway, a tall blond people, in beautiful curving ships with dragon-prows. They landed, ship after ship after ship, on the unsuspecting islands. They took their axes from their belts. In all the confusion, only one clear fact is stated concerning our island. It is recorded in the saga that Sigurd, the first earl of Orkney, gave the island of Hellya to Thorvald Gormson. He was a good farmer and he was given the name Thorvald Harvest-Happy out west in Orkney...

SKARF closes his book.

SCORRADALE: Well now. I had no idea all them things happened here in Hellya.

IVAN: Give The Skarf a pint.

SCORRADALE: It's after closing time.

IVAN: And I'll have a double.

SCORRADALE serves the drinks.

SCORRADALE: And Ivan, don't forget I'm expecting a guest from the mainland tomorrow. I'll want you boys to observe the licensing laws while he's here and make less noise than usual.

Outside there's a sudden burst of song from TIMMY in his shack.

TIMMY: (SINGS) Ramona, I hear the mission bells above,
Ramona, they're peeling out our songs of love!

BERT yells from his bedroom window.

BERT: Be quiet, you bloody weed! I have to be at the creels in an hour.

The lights go out in the village.

MANSIE ANDERSON enters, carrying a lamp.

MANSIE:(NARRATION) Inside the stable of The Bu farm, three miles from Greenvoe, are gathered these men. Tammag Brown of the Glebe, Leonard Isbister of Isbister, Dod Corrigall of Skail, Andrew Hoy of Rossiter, Sandy Manson of Blinkbonny and the novice, Hector Anderson of The Bu.

As he announces them, they enter. All carry lamps, except HECTOR. SANDY opens a suitcase, brings out a parchment, a horse-shoe, a black blindfold and half-a-dozen sackcloth sashes and a long apron. He hangs the horse-shoe on a nail on the wall.

LEONARD helps HECTOR off with his jacket.

LEONARD: It's all right. Nothing'll come at thee.

The men put on their sashes. TAMMAG lights the stable lantern. All other lamps are extinguished. MANSIE kisses the horse-shoe. He is now the Harvest Lord. He addresses HECTOR.

MANSIE: Here is the first station, The Plough. What are you seeking here, man, among the master horsemen?

HECTOR: A kingdom.

MANSIE: The lad that mucks out stable and byre - that's what you are - what kens he of any kingdom?

HECTOR: Once I lived there. Now I'm an outcast. I desire to return.

MANSIE: What hinders you from that place?

The lantern is extinguished.

HECTOR: Darkness.

MANSIE: In a deeper darkness you must seek it again.

HECTOR is blindfolded.

MANSIE: There are many stopping places along the road. What estate do you first desire to enter?

HECTOR: The ploughman's estate.

MANSIE: Are you prepared therefore to undergo a terrible thing, the three-fold darkness, to arrive at this state?

Silence.

THE MEN: Answer. Answer.

HECTOR: I am willing.

MANSIE: Kneel down.

HECTOR is thrust into a kneeling position by the men and the horse-shoe is placed in his hand.

MANSIE: Take the sign of the horse with thee in all thy goings. Here is the door. Knock, Ploughman.

HECTOR knocks on the floor with the horse-shoe, three times. Then there is total darkness and silence.

SCENE TWO

And a little music link eases us out of the darkness into the early morning light as SAMUEL and BERT come out of their cottages and make their way to their boats.

SAMUEL:(NARRATION) On the second day.

He turns, registers with polite dismay that BERT is having a pee against the wall. As BERT finishes and turns away from the wall, his foot catches TIMMY'S empty meth bottle. He picks up the bottle.

BERT: Look at that! To think we slave our guts out and pay our national insurance to keep bloody scum like Timmy in methylated spirits. I hardly got a wink of sleep for him all night.

SAMUEL: He knows not what he does.

BERT: Because he's always pissed, that's why.

They move off and we hear the boats starting up.

SKARF settles down to his writing with a glass of water. He's hung over. He drops an Alka-Selzer in the glass, watches it fizz.

The manse. MRS McKEE sits in her rocking chair, looks up, startled as son SIMON pops in.

SIMON: All right, old thing?

McKEE: I'm perfectly all right, Simon.

SIMON: It was a very silent breakfast. I don't think you said a word after the grace.

McKEE: I expect it's the weather.

SIMON: I'll...get me into the study then.

McKEE: Off you go. I'm going to be quite busy this morning.

SIMON goes. McKEE waits.

In the schoolroom, the KIDS intone the Lord's Prayer.

KIDS: For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

INVERARY: Now, children, I've decided I've been far too lenient with you since I arrived on the island. For example, arithmetic. Tom Kerston. What is nine times four?

TOM gives this a lot of thought then:

TOM: Three hundred and sixty five, miss.

INVERARY: That's what I mean. You'll find that life does not consist of singing and story-telling. You have to realise that life is about hard work. We shall have two full periods of arithmetic.

ERNIE KERSTON'S hand goes up.

ERNIE: Please, miss, what about Gino Manson?

INVERARY: Gino will tend the fire, the same as usual.

GINO smiles, happy with the prospect.

ERNIE: Is that because he's not right in the head, miss?

INVERARY: It's because I say so, Ernie Kerston. Now, with me...

She beats time with her stick and leads them into:

ALL: Six times one is six
Six times two is twelve
Six times three is eighteen
Six times four is twenty-four...

The chanting continues then fades as the focus shifts to the FORTIN-BELL dining room. AGATHA and the COLONEL are loitering over breakfast. The COLONEL is reading The Times. INGA is at the window, looking out through binoculars.

COLONEL: Terrible weather, my girl. Go back to bed with a hot water bottle and a good read. That's what I would do. Punch arrived yesterday. It can be jolly amusing.

AGATHA: Inga has other plans. We're going to arrange the welfare clothes for the children.

INGA: I think I'll go for a walk. I'd like to watch the ferryboat arriving.

COLONEL: Extraordinary.

The manse.

MRS McKEE sits in her rocking-chair as the PROSECUTOR resumes his work. He holds up an old newspaper. The audience becomes the jury.

PROSECUTOR: I draw the jury's attention to a copy of The Lowland Courier, dated 3rd May 1916. I quote. 'The engagement is announced between Alan McKee, fourth son of Mr and Mrs John McKee, 5 Rural Place, Tirlfals and Elizabeth Alder, elder daughter of the late Mr Thomas Alder and of Mrs Alder, 23A, The Meadows, Edinburgh.' A happy announcement, I'm sure we would all agree, even though Second Lieutenant Alan McKee, to give him his true title, was destined to go to France within days. A mere five weeks later, there takes place another happy event...

A little gentle piano music.

MRS McKEE reacts as she sees herself when young, centre-stage, in a party dress.

PROSECUTOR: The twenty-first birthday party of Elizabeth Alder's friend, Miss Millicent Brae at 359, Melbourne Street, Leith. There is sherry in the parlour that makes young Elizabeth feel slightly wicked. There is turtle soup, smoked salmon, roast turkey and after dinner, there is dancing.

A violin joins in with the piano. They play a waltz.

FRED SOMERVILLE approaches the young ELIZABETH. He's in the uniform of the Royal Flying Corps.

PROSECUTOR: Fred Somerville, on leave from the Royal Flying Corps, asks Elizabeth to dance.

They dance.

MRS McKEE watches, fiddling nervously with her handkerchief. She knows what is coming.

PROSECUTOR: No harm, you may think, in dancing with a young man who is living in the shadow of death. And indeed, what we see is innocent enjoyment. But later, after the music has stopped, this brave young officer drives Miss Elizabeth Alder to her home at 23 The Meadows, Edinburgh. I ask you to observe what happens at the gate.

The music stops. FRED and ELIZABETH stop dancing. They embrace and kiss.

PROSECUTOR: Take special note of this embrace. It is not the man who is kissing the woman, is it? It is the woman who is kissing the man. And it is not just a goodnight kiss. It is a kiss of what I would call utter voluptuousness and it lingers - how should we put it? - for as long as the butterfly clings to the blossom.

Then a change of tone. FRED and ELIZABETH break away and exit.

PROSECUTOR: This is the same Elizabeth Alder whose name, a mere five weeks previously was publicly announced as being betrothed to a young soldier who, at that very moment, for aught she knew, might have been lying dead in some shell-crater of the Somme.

MRS McKEE weeps.

Sharp blackout and the sounding of the ferryboat's siren.

Then we see the STRANGER, coat collar pulled up, hat pulled down, making his way from the harbour to the hotel. IVAN follows him, in a yellow oilskin, carrying the man's luggage: suitcase, brief-case, typewriter and tape recorder.

He arrives at the hotel where SCORRADALE is waiting, wearing his best mine host manners.

As the STRANGER signs the book:

SCORRADALE: Terrible weather. I hope the gentleman wasn't sick on the crossing.

IVAN: He wasn't.

SCORRADALE: That's good. You'll find Greenvoe is a remote community but humble and hard-working. The trout-fishing at the loch is very good this year. Would the gentleman like ham and eggs for tea?

The STRANGER says nothing, indicates he'd like to be shown to his room. There's an exchange of looks between SCORRADALE and IVAN, who then turns on his heel and leaves.

The BUDGE cottage. BEN is talking to TIMMY. BELLA is outside collecting eggs.

BEN: Timmy, you want to quit drinking that goddamn meth. It'll rot your guts.

TIMMY: Timmy would never do that.

BEN: You were seen coming out of Evie's emporium with the goddamn bottle sticking out of your pocket.

TIMMY: For the primus stove. And the tilley.

BEN: Timmy, you're a goddamn liar.

BELLA enters with a bowl full of eggs.

BELLA: Fifteen. There's two for you, Timmy.

TIMMY: Thank you, Miss Budge.

He takes one in each hand.

BELLA: And stick to tea. It warms you in the cold weather and cools you in the summer.

BEN: I've known bums that drank brasso and eau-de-cologne. There was a Glasgow man that would buy a half-pint of milk from a corner shop and get a piece of rubber tubing and fix it to the gas mantle. He would bubble the gas through the milk for half-an-hour.

BELLA: Mercy.

BEN: Then he would drink it. He would be drunk as a monkey all day.

TIMMY: Timmy would never do a thing like that.

BEN: Because there's no goddam gasworks in Greenvoe. Now bugger off down the gangway. I'm in the middle of writing a letter to Tom in Vancouver.

TIMMY heads for the door.

BEN gets a coughing fit.

BELLA and TIMMY look on, concerned.

ELLEN KERSTON goes into the shop.

ELLEN: Half-a-pound of tea and a pound of margarine, Mrs Evie.

OLIVE: Not so loud. Mr Evie is in the back, writing up his council minutes.

She makes it sound as if he's making up the Sermon on the Mount.

ELLEN: (*QUIETLY*) To be paid for on when the lord and master returns from the fishing.

Evening.

ELLEN waits at the pier for BERT.

ELLEN: How many?

BERT: Not one. Not one bloody lobster. Not even a crab.

She sniffs. He's been drinking. TOM and ERNIE come out to give support to their mother. Probably not for the first time.

ELLEN: You sold them on the mainland, didn't you? And then you drank the money?

BERT: I've been fishing all day.

ELLEN: Your father has been to the fishing and yet he has not been to the fishing. He is a fisherman and yet he doesn't care about fish. He is a father and yet he doesn't care about you.

BERT: You're trying to set the bairns against me now.

ELLEN: I'm saying no more. My mother used to say, 'Never speak to a drunk man - wait till he's sober.' I'll wait.

BERT heads for the cottage. ELLEN follows with TOM and ERNIE.

TOM: I'll tell you something, mam.
 ELLEN: What's that?
 TOM: Nine times seven is sixty-three.

They go in.

The WHANESS cottage.

SAMUEL: It was a huge wave, Rachel. A mother wave from the floor of the ocean and it raised me high above the water. And I saw three seapinks in the cliff face of Red Head, growing out of a crack in the rock.
 RACHEL: I thought you knew better than to go under them crags in a westerly swell. A man of your age.
 SAMUEL: It's come to this. I no longer like the sea or the things of the sea.
 RACHEL: Tell me, Samuel. Were you not disappointed? You might have been walking this instant beside the rivers of heaven.
 SAMUEL: No. I'm glad to be where I am, woman.

In ALICE'S cottage, the children are all in bed. She leads them in their prayers.

ALICE & ALL: God bless Sidney
 God bless Sophie
 God bless Sander
 God bless Shirley
 God bless Sam
 God bless Skarf
 God bless Sigrid
 God bless Mother, Amen.

In the bar of the Greenvoe Hotel, SKARF is reading to SCORRADALE and IVAN.

SKARF: We have passed beyond the age of anonymity now. We have a man with a name, Thorvald Gormson, the first laird of Hellya. He has fifteen children. One of his sons, Sven, was a monk at Birsay and later became abbot in Eynhallow.

BERT comes into the bar.

BERT: I'll have a pint. (*THEN MUTTERS:*) They can say what they like. I've been a good provider.
 IVAN: Hush, man.
 SKARF: Thorvald Gormson died at the age of seventy-eight in the season of Lent. For nineteen days after Ash Wednesday, obedient to the laws of the church, Thorvald Gormson ate smoked sillocks and drank well water, with a devout heart but a hollow belly. Then, one evening, a dozen whales were driven on to the beach at Keelyfa. The next day Thorvald sent for his chaplain. 'Tell me, Father,' said he, 'is a whale fish or isn't it?' 'A whale, in my opinion, is a fish,' said the chaplain. 'I'm very pleased to hear it,' said Thorvald. 'Then it is permissible to eat a whale in Lent.' The chaplain wasn't so sure about that. 'The whale's flesh is red like butcher-meat. I really know very little about it. I will send word to the canon. He will know for sure.'

Very quietly, SIMON McKEE enters the bar. He wears coat and cap and carries an umbrella.

The men become aware of his presence.

SCORRADALE: What can I do for you, Mr McKee?

SIMON: It's my mother.

SCORRADALE: Another cold, is it?

SIMON: The changeable weather.

SCORRADALE: Dry one day, wet the next.

SIMON: Then at breakfast this morning, in between her coughing, she said...toddy. Apparently her mother used to give it to her when she had a bad cough.

SCORRADALE: And you require the makings of a todody?

SIMON: Well...you know your trade.

SCORRADALE puts a bottle of whisky on the counter. SIMON looks at it.

SCORRADALE: A bad cough, you say?

SIMON: Extremely persistent.

SCORRADALE puts another bottle on the counter.

SIMON: If you could put brown paper round them, in case Mrs Evie is watching from her window...

SCORRADALE wraps the bottles.

SIMON: Much obliged, Mr Scorradale. Good night, men.

And he goes.

BERT: And the bitch goes on at me about my drinking!

He bangs his glass on the counter.

SCORRADALE: Keep your voices down. I have a guest.

IVAN: I didn't much care for the look of that guest I brought over this morning. Same again all round.

SCORRADALE organises the drinks.

SKARF: After that incursion from the realm of superstition and obscurantism, I will continue. The canon arrived at the Hall to give his judgement on the whale. 'A whale is a fish and yet it is an animal,' he said. 'A whale is a fish and may be eaten at Lent,' said Thorvald Gormson. 'It is not as simple as that,' said the canon. 'On the whole I would say a whale is a beast, a salt-water ox, that feeds on the pastures of the sea. Why do you not consult your son who is abbot in Eynhallow? He is a far more learned man than I am.' So Thorvald summoned his scribe to write a letter to his son, saying that he felt all might be well with him if he could fill his belly with good food instead of roots and husks and buttermilk. He begged him, without vain circlings about the matter: is

not a whale that lives in the sea a fish...?

IVAN: Is it ten o'clock?

SCORRADALE: Yes. Closing time.

IVAN: One minute.

He goes outside to check whether there is a light in the schoolroom window. There isn't. But there is a light in the STRANGER'S window. He is writing in a notebook.

IVAN returns to the bar.

IVAN: Your guest is working late. Same again.

SCORRADALE serves up another round as SKARF continues.

SKARF: The letter was despatched, and Thorvald Gormson sank into a further decline. Candles were lit. His chaplain administered the last rites. Then he held a feather to his lips. It did not move. The lamentations were long and loud. Then, as they were preparing a great funeral pyre on the beach, a letter arrived from Thorvald's wise son, the abbot of Eynhallow. It set forth twenty good reasons why the whale might be considered a fish, and twenty more reasons, equally cogent, why it might be considered an animal. But the question might have to go to a council of the entire Church, or even before the Chair of Saint Peter itself. The abbot sent his blessings to his fleshly father. But the abbot hoped with all his heart that the Laird of Hellya did not seriously consider the devouring of whale meat in the season of Lent...

SKARF closes his book.

The stable. The men assembled as before. HECTOR is blindfolded and holds the horse-shoe.

MANSIE: We have come to the second station, the station of the seed. What are you seeking here, Ploughman, among the master horsemen?

HECTOR: A kingdom.

MANSIE: The man with a new bride, who has ploughed a field in March, what does he know of kingdoms?

HECTOR: Beyond the blood of beasts, further than axe and fire, there it lieth well, in the light, a kingdom.

MANSIE: What hinders you from this kingdom?

HECTOR: Blindness. And it is a long road through the new furrows.

MANSIE: Are you willing to enter the earth womb? Can you suffer the passion of the seed?

THE MEN: Answer. Answer.

HECTOR: I am willing.

MANSIE: Take him, earth. Receive the Sower.

They stretch HECTOR out on the floor, lay a straw seed basket on his chest and stand over him like mourners at a grave. Darkness. Silence.

SCENE THREE

Cheerful top-of-the morning music, maybe with a touch of sitar as DEWAS SINGH stands on the jetty.

SINGH:(NARRATION) On the third day. A letter from Dewas Singh to his Uncle Pannadas in Edinburgh. My dear Uncle Pannadas. As you have commanded me, I have obeyed by travelling on the ferryboat to the island of Hellya with a full bag of assorted draperies and fancy goods, of a gaudiness and shining quality to take the eye of the ladies.

IVAN walks up to SINGH.

IVAN: Fifteen bob.

SINGH: That is more than last year.

IVAN: And another fifteen to go back. Unless you decide to stay.

SINGH: Let us be reasonable.

IVAN: Your move, Johnny.

SINGH kneels down, dips into his bag, brings out a silk scarf.

SINGH: Silk scarf, value two pounds. This pays for the ferry, yes?

IVAN: I never wear a scarf.

SINGH: Pyjamas, Paisley pattern, so lovely.

IVAN: I sleep naked.

SINGH holds up a silk headsquare.

IVAN: What's that?

SINGH: Headsquare, silken, delicate, for ladies.

IVAN: That'll do.

He takes the headsquare.

They shake hands on the deal.

SINGH crosses to the shop.

JOSEPH is behind the counter, studying some papers. He doesn't look up as SINGH approaches.

JOSEPH: I need nothing. I want nothing.

SINGH, ever resilient, opens his bag and spreads its contents around the shop in spectacular display.

SINGH: But look upon this cascade of loveliness, silken stockings, brassieres, tablecloths, runners, chair covers...

JOSEPH: This is a shop. We sell clothes.

SINGH: You sell wool and cotton stock, worthy enough for peasants and fishermen, but I bring you the trappings and appurtenances of paradise.

JOSEPH now looks him in the eye.

SINGH gets the message, and is starting to pack up when OLIVE walks in on them.

OLIVE: Haven't I seen you before?

SINGH: A year ago, with my uncle.

OLIVE: I remember, you're studying medicine.

SINGH: English literature. In Edinburgh.

OLIVE: And are you married now?

SINGH: No.

OLIVE: What a wonder, a well-set-up young man like you. English literature? What good will that be in India? Will it help the natives in any way? Will it keep them from starving? Will it deliver them from the worship of idols?

While she's going on SINGH lays out various items for her inspection. She takes this as an invitation and dives in on her own account, like a terrier, holding things up to the light, even sniffing some of them.

OLIVE: Not that I'm against education, of course. Stick to your books. How many wives are you allowed?

SINGH: I plan to marry one only.

OLIVE holds up a scarlet headsquare.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* And then, dear uncle, after much mountainous labour, a mouse is born. She chooses an article of great ugliness.

OLIVE: This will do for the agricultural show in August. It will go nicely with my blue coat. How much?

SINGH: One half-guinea.

OLIVE: Five shillings.

SINGH: Eight-and-six.

OLIVE: Seven shillings.

SINGH: Seven shillings.

OLIVE looks in her purse.

OLIVE: Oh dear. I only have six shillings in my purse.

She gives him the six shillings.

SINGH: Oh dear. Good morning.

SINGH leaves. OLIVE holds up the headsquare.

OLIVE: Isn't this pretty?

JOSEPH: Silk and scarlet covers many a harlot.

SINGH moves towards the jetty as INGA appears in riding gear.

SINGH: Bargains for you, nice girl.

INGA: I have to see the ferryman. Westray!

IVAN appears. They meet, talk.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE)* Ferryman and horsewoman look at each other. There is a quickening in the air between them. I imagine a rose straining to open in an evil summer fog. I move on quickly.

He crosses to the KERSTON cottage, opens the bag on the doorstep where ELLEN launches into her monologue.

ELLEN: Fifteen years ago, he was full of the grandest talk you ever heard. He was going to get a government grant, he was going to have a seine-netter with a crew of six men, they would fish halfway between here and Norway. 'And as for you,' says he to me, 'you're not biding another winter in this croft, in all the cow-shit and gutter. When you want eggs in the future, you'll order them from a shop on Mr Kerston's account.' Oh, look at that. Lord, what bonny!

She holds up a silk dressing-gown then puts it back, reluctantly.

ELLEN: And now I wish to God I was back among my Dad's beasts in Quoylay. I do that. Instead of married to that thing. I tell the bairns, 'Your father will be home soon. The great skipper is still at the dragging-in of his burdened nets,' and what happens? He comes home drunk. And fishless.

She picks out some socks and a silk tie.

ELLEN: I can't resist these peedie white socks. And a tie for the eldest, he's courting one of the lasses at The Glebe. I'll tell you this, Johnny, I'm right glad you've come, you've fairly cheered me up.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* And I had not spoken one word.

ELLEN goes indoors.

SINGH picks up his bag and moves to WHANESS cottage, where RACHEL stands in the doorway.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* Mrs Whaness is as last year. She will buy nothing. And, to be sure, our silken splendour would offend the simple harmony of her being. But she gives me two pamphlets.

RACHEL gives him two pamphlets.

SINGH: Thank you.

RACHEL goes in. SINGH looks at the pamphlets.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* The evils of drink and the menacy of Popery.

He throws them away, but politely, then moves on to SKARF who greets him amiably with a handshake.

SKARF: My good Indian comrade.

SINGH: Another fisherman who does not fish?

SKARF: No petrol for the boat. But thank God for National Assistance. The sun of socialism warms me, however feebly. I can smoke. I can eat potatoes and margarine. I have leisure to write. I have a tale to tell that will harrow your blood.

SKARF gives SINGH his tobacco tin so he can roll himself a smoke. Then he opens his notebook and reads.

SKARF: For several centuries after the death of Thorvald Harvest-Happy the island of Hellya drops out of history. Not even a ballad survives to give us a glimpse of the life of the common people. We know, of course, that in Orkney important changes were taking place. The kingdom of Scotland slowly wrested the islands from the grip of Norway. The new Scottish earls were incomers who looked upon the islands as a mine with thin veins of gold branching through them. The worst of these predatory nobles was Robert Stewart, a bastard half-brother of Mary Queen of Scots, and a true child of the Renaissance. Palaces were built for him in Birsay, Kirkwall, Scalloway, Hellya. It was well to be born strong if you were a man, ugly if you were a woman. For the men quarried and set the stones for the earl's palace. And it was this beautiful girl or that who was coldly summoned by a horseman to comfort his lordship on a winter night. Every bride on the island yielded her virginity to the earl before her husband was allowed to touch her. Islanders who incurred the earl's wrath suffered correction on the instruments of torture provided by a well-briefed architect. Here in the palace was a blasphemous parody of the divine cosmos, with shrieks and fire underground, banqueting and love on top and no sign of a Christian chapel in all these exquisitely ordered harmonious damned stones. The common people suffered and were silent.

He closes the book.

SKARF: And now you must go away, darkness. I have more work to do.

SINGH: Thank you for the entertainment.

SINGH gets up, moves on.

ALICE stands in her doorway. In her hand she has a rose in a jam-jar.

ALICE: Will you come to see me tonight?

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* But I look away, uncle, I tremble but I look away from that unfolding petal-fall.

SINGH moves away from ALICE'S.

The school bell rings and he is besieged by children singing:

KIDS: Chin chin Chinaman
Slanty eyes
Come out of your wash house
I'll give you a surprise

SINGH holds up his hand for silence.

SINGH: I am not a Chinaman. I am an Indian pedlar and undergraduate. You may call me Johnny.

TOM: Give us a present from your bag, Johnny.

SINGH: Wait.

He reaches into the bag and brings out a yellow handkerchief.

SINGH: We will have a race. This is the prize. For the first one to run to the end of the pier to Mr Skarf's boat and back here.

There are one or two false starts. SINGH calls them back.

SINGH: Wait! Wait! All in a line.

They form an untidy line.

SINGH: One, two, three, go!

And off they go. They all exit, except SHIRLEY VOAR.

SINGH: Do you not run?

SHIRLEY: No. I dance.

She does a graceful and exquisite dance, with a little music to help her - maybe a reprise of our early morning theme.

SINGH is entranced.

SINGH: Who taught you to dance?

SHIRLEY: My mother.

ALICE watches from a distance.

SINGH: You are, without doubt, the most beautiful dancer on the island of Hellya. Here is your prize.

He gives her the scarf. She puts it on. He makes his retreat as he hears the kids returning.

He moves to the doorstep of the manse where MRS McKEE is waiting.

McKEE: I'm afraid I have people inside. Millicent Brae, my very best friend, though you wouldn't know her. She died in 1929, the year of the great crash. In a sanatorium in Switzerland. The prosecutor seems to think it was my fault simply because we went riding in the rain.

SINGH: But I have such beautiful things in my bag.

McKEE: And I'm babbling on. I'm sure you're simply dying for a nice cup of tea.

They go in.

He spreads out his wares while she pours the tea.

McKEE: I'm afraid I'm not allowed to use my best china teapot. Apparently it's evidence.

She gives him his tea.

McKEE: And how dare they say I was unfaithful to my husband? A silly kiss after a party?

She picks up a red silk dressing gown.

McKEE: For Simon, my son.

SINGH: It is the very latest fashion.

McKEE: Simon is going on holiday in August. Perhaps Greece, perhaps Majorca.

SINGH: Such an article can be worn on the beach, prior to or subsequent upon sea bathing. Many eyes will admire from sand and rockpool and dune. Two pounds five shillings sixpence. To you, dear lady, two guineas.

McKEE finds the money in her purse.

McKEE: Oh dear. Simon in Majorca. The Spanish wine is very cheap. It's his little weakness. They say that is my fault, too. But he was ill at the time. It was for his own good.

SINGH: Dear lady, these shadows are unreal. Understand what you are. A pilgrim in search of enlightenment.

McKEE: But I know I must soon be lost among these memories of mine. I long to be with the dead. And yet I am very much afraid.

SINGH: You have not found silence, peace, the song of Krishna. You must suffer it all over again - birth, desire, hunger, remorse, death.

McKEE: So.

SINGH collects up his things, leaves.

He makes his way to the hotel. The bar is empty. He goes up the 'stairs' to find himself facing the back of the STRANGER, who is busily typing.

SINGH: You must excuse me. I am looking for Mr Scorradales.

No response.

SINGH: I bring success, good fortune, many profits.

No response.

SINGH: I have here socks in a wide range of styles, also gloves.

The STRANGER turns, stares at SINGH: blank, hostile, uncomprehending.

SINGH turns away.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* And there he was, dear uncle. The bureaucrat. Western man arrived at a foreseen inevitable end. He rules the world with information. Yet men must dance to some music, answer to some utterance. But this creature and I, we live on different stars.

SINGH returns to the bar. There he finds SCORRADALE, who doesn't see him immediately.

SCORRADALE has a row of whisky bottles on the counter. He's filling them from a barrel. Then he sticks on one from a selection of labels.

SINGH watches for a time then:

SINGH: Good afternoon, Mr Scorradales.

SCORRADALE leaps out of skin.

SCORRADALE: How long have you been standing there?

SINGH: A few minutes. I did not wish to interrupt your most important work.

SCORRADALE: What did you see?

SINGH: I saw you filling the bottles from the cask. I saw you sticking the labels to the bottles.

SCORRADALE: You saw nothing.

SCORRADALE opens the till, brings out a couple of fivers.

SCORRADALE: Ten pounds.

SINGH: What is this money for?

SCORRADALE: This money is for seeing nothing. And come in and have a drink this evening. If you have anything left in your bag, I'll take it off your hands.

SINGH, utterly bemused, crosses to BEN and BELLA, who is admiring a table runner.

BELLA: So pretty.

SINGH: Calcutta. Hand made.

BEN: Calcutta be buggered. Birmingham.

BELLA: It will be perfect for Tom's homecoming.

BEN: I was in Bombay. What a bloody dump.

Then he's overcome by a coughing fit.

SINGH moves into a circuit of the outlying farms: a deliberately stylised sequence, this.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* I stumbled into the interior, towards the farms. First, the farm of Glebe, where Mr Tammag Brown gave me home-brewed ale and his wife and daughter bought generously of knickers, slips and stockings.

TAMMAG gives him a tankard to drink from. SINGH spreads the garments all around.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* Then The Bu farm. Mr Magnus Mansie Anderson, his apple-cheeked wife and an immense family of tall shy daughters and shy tall sons and dogs and cats and a baby and pigeons and rabbits.

MANSIE greets SINGH with another tankard of home-brew. SINGH decks the area with silks and satins.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* I left The Bu richer by five pounds ten and fuller by two more pints of home-brew.

Whereupon he meets DOD CORRIGALL bearing yet more ale.

SINGH: *(TO AUDIENCE:)* Beside the bay the farm of Skaill, Mr George Dod Corrigan, a man of gentle voice and shy presence. Here the ale is imbued with a most delicate creaminess, as if a black cow had browsed all winter among malt in a kiln.

He drinks of his ale then:

SINGH: (TO AUDIENCE:) Mrs Corrigan comes in from feeding the hens, and orders her husband from the room.

DOD CORRIGALL exits.

SINGH: (TO AUDIENCE:) She buys with dispatch a pair of large red knickers, which she puts in a drawer.

He lays the knickers down reverentially. The whole of the 'rural' area of the stage is now garlanded with colour.

He moves on, a little unsteady now, and is confronted by AGATHA FORTIN-BELL.

SINGH: (TO AUDIENCE:) At the laird's house I am greeted by the horse-faced woman, accompanied by several large dogs. She is not, I conclude, of a mind to buy large red knickers.

He moves on.

SINGH: (TO AUDIENCE:) I walk the five miles back to the village. I call at the schoolhouse. There is a new teacher. She is courteous, melancholy, a little resentful.

He lays out his wares for INVERARY'S inspection. She shakes her head.

SINGH: Pyjamas. For your future husband. Paisley pattern.

INVERARY: No thank you. Nothing.

SINGH: As you wish.

He packs the things away again.

INVERARY: Wait! I will take the...Paisley pattern.

In the bar, SKARF is reading to the regular assembly: SCORRADALE, BERT, IVAN and TIMMY.

SKARF: Here in the palace was a blasphemous parody of the divine cosmos...

He breaks off as SINGH enters.

SINGH: Forgive my interrupting.

BERT: You've done us a favour.

SINGH: My wallet runneth over. Everyone must be treated to whisky and bottles of heavy ale.

TIMMY: Timmy enjoys both whisky and ale.

SCORRADALE sees to the drinks.

IVAN: And where will you sleep tonight, Johnny?

SINGH turns to the audience.

SINGH: (TO AUDIENCE:) Now, dear Uncle, my confession can be postponed no longer. I make my way to the house of the much-loved one. Sweetly the rose smoulders in the gathering darkness.

As he crosses to ALICE'S doorway. The rose stands in the jar. He picks up the rose. He knocks at the door. ALICE lets him in.

The stable. HECTOR is blindfolded, holds the horse-shoe. Now he wears a green shirt.

MANSIE: We have come to the third station, the station of the Green Corn. What are you seeking here, Sower, among the master horsemen?

HECTOR: A kingdom.

THE MEN: Thou root. Thou worm. Thou dung.

MANSIE: The crofter with hungry wife and bairn, what does he know of any kingdom?

HECTOR: An house secure it stands, beyond the reach of fishermen and hunter.

MANSIE: What hinders you from this kingdom?

HECTOR: I am blind. Sun burns me, rain drowns me, wind shakes me. As any scarecrow I am blind and dumb. I do not know where I shall find the word.

MANSIE: Are you willing to bear the weight of noon? Can you thole the burden of ripeness? Will you take the mark of the sun on your flesh?

THE MEN: Answer. Answer.

HECTOR: I am willing.

The men take the shirt off HECTOR, turn it inside out. The other side is yellow. They put it back on HECTOR. MANSIE bares the left shoulder. One of the men hands him a sickle.

MANSIE: Reaper, of a meikle sharpness is the book of life. Be cut down as low as to the roots.

He raises the sickle to cut the flesh.

Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

INVERARY rings the school bell.

INVERARY:(*NARRATION*) On the fourth day.

The kids gather outside the school.

INVERARY: It's such a lovely day we'll do nature study. I want you all to go to the beach or to the fields and find something to bring back. Perhaps a shell or a flower. And there'll be a prize for the most interesting item. Off you go.

And they're off, in many directions.

On the pier, IVAN waits for his early morning passengers. JOSEPH approaches in his Sunday suit.

JOSEPH: Are we ready? I have to attend a very important county council meeting.

IVAN: And we have to wait for Johnny to finish his oats.

JOSEPH: What?

A nod from IVAN towards ALICE'S house as SINGH emerges, very tired but very, very happy and crosses to them.

IVAN: Hurry up, Casanova. And fasten your flies.

SINGH checks but they are, of course, already fastened.

In a field, SIDNEY VOAR, CHARLIE BROWN and SIMON ANDERSON pass round a half-smoked cigarette.

CHARLIE: We could take some bones back.

SIDNEY: Bones?

CHARLIE: There are bones buried here. A skeleton of a boy.

SIMON: Was he murdered?

CHARLIE: He was murdered all right.

SIMON: Who by?

CHARLIE: Your great-great-great grandfather.

SIMON: I don't believe you.

CHARLIE: It was a Spanish ship that went ashore over there on the North Head. A long time ago, in the time of Oliver Cromwell. Most of the sailors were drowned and the Hellya farmers, they went on board and killed the rest. And the ship was carrying a cargo of wine and the farmers drank the cargo and then they saw these two children. A boy wearing a blue silk suit and a gold ring on his finger. And a girl wearing a blue silk dress. And they chased them ashore because they were witnesses and they killed the boy here, on this very spot. Your great-great-great grandfather split his skull open with a spade.

SIMON: I still don't believe it.

CHARLIE: Your mother still wears the gold ring off the boy's finger.

SIMON: That's her wedding ring.

SIDNEY: What about the girl?

CHARLIE: The women at Skaill farm took her in. They learned her to speak English and to brew and spin and make cheese. When she grew up she married the eldest son. Dod Corrigan of Skaill has Spanish blood in him.

SIMON: I don't believe that either.

CHARLIE: The truth's the truth.

Outside the shop, OLIVE sits on a box, knitting as ELLEN approaches.

ELLEN: I need some sugar and ham and flaky biscuits.

OLIVE: And pay on Saturday?

ELLEN: I have my purse.

As ALICE approaches, yawning.

ELLEN: A fine morning, Alice.

ALICE: It is that, Ellen.

As RACHEL approaches.

ALICE: A fine morning, Rachel.

RACHEL: It is that, Alice.

OLIVE: If you don't mind waiting till I turn the heel of this sock. Mr Evie was over twenty pounds down last year, on account of bad debts.

ELLEN: I have my purse.

They stand in silence but speak their thoughts, perhaps with a little music to ease their passage.

ALICE: I thought he would have forgotten. Last year his uncle dragged him away but he remembered. His kisses were like eating purple plums.

RACHEL: God knows, I'm anxious about Samuel. Though he's a good fisherman, he has no business going near that Red Head, at his age. I just want him to sit under the window and make creels all day and maybe paint the boat at the end of winter.

OLIVE: A man has come to this island. He is biding in the hotel. He is not a tourist. Mr Evie knows who he is but he won't say. There is something very mysterious about him. Listen...

The sight and sound of the STRANGER typing in his room.

ELLEN: As soon as this bairn inside me is weaned and walking, I will pack everything I can carry and I will just walk out on him, me and the bairns. He'll come home drunk to an empty house.

ALICE: There is nothing so good as love and kisses and children. It was like taking the sun into a winter bed. We were soaked in honey all night long. Yes we were.

RACHEL: The ways of providence are most mysterious. Here we are, come to a lonely old age with no blessing of children. Yet here is a fat violent woman, married to a drunkard, her womb is never empty. And here is a girl who has lain with every man in Hellya, including my Samuel one terrible night seven years ago. And the shopkeeper's wife with the scorpion tongue, even she had the blessing of a son, until he fell over the crag at Broganess bird-nesting and was broken on the rocks. And I, the Lord's chosen, stand guard over an empty womb and an empty grave.

Again the sound of typing.

OLIVE: If you ask me, he's here to clean up this island. The drinking, the bad debts, the false tax returns, the malingering, the wrong claims for subsidies. Yes. That's it. I know it.

ELLEN: Of course, I'll never go back to my father's farm on Quoylay. He's long dead and the farm was sold a long time ago. But there'll come a day when son Willy grows to his full strength and the object comes home drunk and insults me. And Willy turns on him like a tiger and throws him to the floor and then trembles for having struck his own father. And I tell him to forget about it, go out and have a good time. Then I pick up Bert Kerston from the floor, empty his pockets and wash the blood from his face. I lay him down on top of the bed and I kiss him, my own dear darling Bert Kerston.

OLIVE finishes her work, snaps them back to reality.

OLIVE: We'll get your messages now. Please take note of the new sign behind the counter. Terms cash. No tick.

ELLEN: I have my purse.

The BUDGE cottage. BEN is in bed, coughing badly, as BELLA mops his brow.

BEN: You'll have to finish that goddam letter yourself, Bella.

BELLA: I'll phone for the Quoylay doctor. I'll have to do it from the shop. It costs fourpence.

BEN: Keep her headed into the wind. I've sprung a leak, Bella. The goddamn bed's all wet.

He resumes coughing.

Late breakfast at the FORTIN-BELLS. INGA is reading a book. The elders are reading the Times and Telegraph.

INGA: I've been invited on a boat trip tomorrow. To a lighthouse.

AGATHA: Not with Westray.

INGA: Well...yes.

AGATHA: You mustn't, darling. It would be most unwise.

INGA: I see. Well, I'll get up early and go for a walk instead.

AGATHA: What are you reading?

INGA: D. H. Lawrence.

COLONEL: I remember him. Arab fellow.

The manse.

MRS McKEE and SIMON.

McKEE: Do you have a busy day ahead?

SIMON: I should go to see old Ben Budge.

But he obviously won't.

SIMON: And you? Expecting any visitors?

McKEE: Yes. But I might send them away. I might read a book instead. Do we have any books about someone called Krishna?

SIMON: No idea what you're talking about, old thing.

He gets up, leaves.

The sound of the sea.

SAMUEL is at sea, lifting his creels one by one. And one by one they are empty.

A distance away he sees BERT in his boat. He calls:

SAMUEL: How many lobsters did you get today?

BERT: A lot.

He lifts up a heavy box by way of proof.

SAMUEL: I got none. Not one.

BERT: Too bad. That's the luck of the game.

SAMUEL: I think you lifted the creels I had under Red Head.

BERT: You're a goddam liar.

SAMUEL: I wouldn't add to the sin of thieving with the worse sin of blasphemy. Watch your tongue.

BERT: I saw some Quoylay fishermen under the head. Two men in a boat. I couldn't see their faces.

SAMUEL: I don't believe you.

BERT: Just bugger off, you old fool!

Dusk.

The women are in the shop, gathered as if waiting for someone.

ELLEN: A tin of syrup, and I have my purse. (*THEN, TO AUDIENCE:*) A whole box of lobsters! They can say what they like, and maybe he does drink too much, but Bert Kerston is a good enough fisherman when he puts his mind to it.

ALICE: A packet of safety pins. (*THEN, TO AUDIENCE:*) I'm sure as can be that the seed

struck home. You can always tell. He kissed me like rain falling. In the cleared soil, deep down, the new root struck and quivered.

RACHEL: A half-pound of New Zealand butter. (*THEN, TO AUDIENCE:*) 'What does it matter,' I told him, 'whether you ever catch another fish. We have money in the bank on the mainland, enough to see our time out, besides what we keep between the pages of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.' But he kept saying: 'It is an evil and corrupt island and the Lord will not suffer Hellya to trouble the sea for long...'

OLIVE: Do you want anything else? Mr Evie is back from his county council meeting and wants his tea.

Then they all turn, fall silent, as they see BELLA in the doorway. This, we sense, is who they've been waiting for.

BELLA: I want two yards of grey flannel. The doctor's just off. I'll be busy all night at the sewing machine. Ben'll be needing it before the weekend, I doubt. He was off Cape Horn all day in a hurricane, until the doctor put the needle in his arm.

The women move towards her.

The schoolroom.

INVERARY surveys the debris of the day: flowers and shells and various indeterminate objects.

She takes a single flower - an Orkney primula - and puts it in a pot. The rest of the stuff she tips into a waste bin.

The honking of a motor horn.

COLONEL FORTIN-BELL stands outside the shop. JOSEPH emerges, clutching a file.

JOSEPH: I'm ready.

The COLONEL nods in the direction of the hotel. The STRANGER emerges, carrying a brief-case. He walks past them towards the car. They follow, exit.

The bar.

Present are SCORRA DALE, SKARF, BERT, IVAN and TIMMY.

SCORRA DALE: He must be writing a book about Orkney.

SKARF: How the hell can a man write a book about a place if all he does is sit on his arse at a typewriter?

SCORRA DALE: He's gone up to the Hall with Joseph Evie.

IVAN: A fat lot he'll learn from those two scarecrows.

SCORRA DALE has served up the drinks.

SCORRA DALE: Who's paying?

BERT: I am.

He brings out a roll of pound notes.

TIMMY: No. Timmy will pay.

He brings out an old bottle.

SCORRADALE: We don't accept old bottles as legal tender.

TIMMY: Timmy found it on the beach. Wait.

He fishes inside the bottle and brings out a very old ten dollar bill and a letter.

TIMMY: Ten dollars. American dollars. And a letter from a man on a ship.

IVAN: Let me see.

He looks at the letter.

IVAN: The Titanic?

BERT: I'll pay. If you start accepting dollars from bottles we'll all end up as mad as Timmy.

IVAN: There's no shortage of lunacy on Hellya.

SKARF opens his book and reads:

SKARF: Mansie Hellyaman stands with a thousand others round a stake outside St Magnus Kirk in Kirkwall. He shouts with a terrible joy as a huge masked man kindles the logs around Sigrid Tomson's feet. Mansie believes, with the others - the sheriff and the minister and the merchants and the fishermen - that the girl is a witch. That she put a curse on cow and stallion, that she lured ships upon the rocks. Yet Mansie Hellyaman, hemmed in by bigotry, was true to his own flame. For the man of reason is not an enemy of natural joy. Our mouths are made for kisses and honey and song.

In the schoolroom, INVERARY, now in her dressing-gown, lights the green lamp and places it in her window.

In the bar.

SCORRADALE: Ten o'clock. Closing time.

IVAN: Yes. I have to be up early.

To their surprise, he leaves. He sees the lamp. He heads towards the school as SKARF continues.

SKARF: There was a state of war between England and France and one day Mansie Hellyaman was seized among his furrows by the press-gang. Soon, from the deck of the man-of-war, he saw Hellya, a distant whale-shape against the sunset.

SKARF: How did he keep the precious flame burning during the years that followed? Through that summer morning among Caribbean islands? The thing they accused Mansie Hellyaman of was an accident - a sudden turn and his elbow knocked the jar of grog out of the bo'sun's hands. A quick accusation, a quick sentence, the stripping and the roll of the drums. Did he think of Sigrid Tomson as the lash lapped his body in flame? Or when they brought to his wounds then a new coarse white flame - the flame of salt?

SCORRADALE serves a fresh round of drinks. BERT pays.

SKARF: Peace was signed. Mansie Hellyaman stumbled home, a bitter man with a taste for rum. He was more broken than an otter released from a trap. But in spite of everything, the flame endured. Mansie Hellyaman, grown poor in his over-populated island, decided upon

emigration. He herded sheep in Queensland. In the stations of Hudson's Bay he traded for pelts with the Indians. He stood on the verge of a diamond mine near Johannesburg and organised the descent of black men who went down, and down, and down, and were poor always. Mansie Hellyaman came home again, with shares and securities that he put into the safe keeping of the bank at Hamnavoe. He buys three old crofts cheap and knocks them into one decent-sized farm. He has horses, cows, a hundred sheep, a servant man and a cart. Every year the bank sends him a statement assuring him he has more money than the year before. Mansie Hellyaman is a capitalist. The crude lamp of feudalism is broken at last. He lives according to another light.

He closes his book.

In the schoolroom INVERARY extinguishes the lamp.

The stable. HECTOR stands, blindfolded, horse-shoe in hand, dressed as before. One shoulder is bare and livid.

Light comes from a single lantern.

- MANSIE: We have come to the fourth station, the station of the Yellow Corn. What are you seeking here, Reaper, among the master horsemen?
- HECTOR: A kingdom.
- MANSIE: The crofter with his wife and son and daughter - gleaners, they stoop after his scythings - what does such a poor man know of a kingdom? Were it not good for him indeed to bide in the humble station whereunto he had been called - to labour awhile under the sun and then to die?
- HECTOR: Our arms overflow with barley and corn, earth treasure, a rich abundant surety.
- MANSIE: What hinders you from the place?
- HECTOR: Blindness. Wounds. But I have heard an utterance of wind in the corn. I have half understood that word. Tell me what I must thole now?
- MANSIE: Death. *(PAUSE)* Not the kindly death of candles. Thy bones must be broken with flails in the barn.
- HECTOR: No.
- MANSIE: I speak of the death of circling millstones.
- HECTOR: No.
- MANSIE: And of the death of twisting flames.
- HECTOR: No.
- MANSIE: Through these gates your road goes. I do not know what is at the end of it. Are you willing to thole it?
- THE MEN: Answer. Answer. Answer.
- HECTOR: I am willing.

The men stand about HECTOR with flails and querns and burnt stones.

The lantern is extinguished.

HECTOR cries out in the darkness.

MANSIE: It is finished. He is gone from the trampling of hooves. He has entered into the stone
and the fire.

Silence and darkness.

SCENE FIVE

A fog-horn sounds.

SKARF sits outside his cottage.

SKARF: On the fifth day, Bella feeds the hens. Then she washes the body of her dead brother.

In the BUDGE cottage.

BELLA, using water from an enamel bucket, washes BEN'S body.

BELLA: Bless you, Ben, this is like when you were a peedie boy and you'd fall over and I'd wash your knees to make them better. Oh but I shall miss your cursing and your swearing. All those words you brought home with you and the fine places you brought them from...Shanghai, Bombay, Liverpool, Boston. There now...

She pauses to admire her work then lights a candle at the bedside.

BELLA: All ready to receive boarders.

INGA arrives at the pier. IVAN is waiting. Again the fog-horn sounds.

IVAN: I was thinking you'd changed your mind.

INGA: No.

IVAN: Did you tell them where you're going?

INGA: No.

IVAN: Well, it's your family.

INGA: For my sins.

IVAN: You're know that better than me. Come on.

He leads her to the boat.

In the BUDGE cottage, BELLA, sitting at the bedside, becomes aware of TIMMY standing in the doorway.

TIMMY: Timmy is very sorry about Ben.

BELLA: Thank you Timmy.

TIMMY moves on, to be followed by ELLEN, ALICE and RACHEL, who's carrying a bunch of bluebells.

The women come into the cottage, move closer to the bed.

ALICE: He looks that bonny.

RACHEL: Do you have some water for the flowers?

BELLA: In the bucket.

ELLEN: If only we had known, we would have sat with you.

BELLA: Ben and me, we managed fine by ourselves.

ALICE nods towards the door, where SKARF stands.

He raises his clenched fist in a salute.

SKARF: Goodbye comrade.

In the schoolroom, INVERARY is telling a story.

INVERARY: Once upon a time there was a little princess in Norway. Her name was Margaret. One day her father the king said, 'The King of Scotland has a son. You must go to Scotland and marry that prince. Then one day you will be Queen of Scotland. Here is a picture of the prince.' Margaret had never seen such a handsome prince, with his long fair hair and his suit of golden armour. A ship was got ready and the little princess went aboard to the sound of trumpets. The ship weighed anchor and the silken sails were hoisted and the king waved farewell to Margaret from the castle battlements. Now the King of Norway had a great enemy, a wicked witch who had power over sea and wind. The witch's name was Inga. She stirred a pot of water in all directions and the North Sea became rough and Margaret was seasick. Then the witch blew the pot of water with her bellows and the ship was tossed with terrible gales and Margaret lay in her bunk and could neither eat nor sleep. Then the witch threw a live peat into the cauldron till it hissed and was full of steam and then the ship was lost for a whole week in dense fog.

From outside, the fog horn again.

INVERARY: At last the fog lifted and the ship's captain sighted islands in the west. 'These are the Orkney Islands...' he said. But it was too late. They carried Margaret ashore to a little fishing village beside the sea and there she died and she never saw her prince with the long fair hair and the golden armour. They call the village where she died St. Margaret's Hope. It is in the island of South Ronaldsay.

A sob from SHIRLEY VOAR.

INVERARY: There there, Shirley, it's only a story.

SIDNEY VOAR intervenes.

SIDNEY: Please, miss, if it's only a story, I think the prince came and kissed her and she came back to life again.

INVERARY: I don't think so, Sidney.

SIDNEY: Please, miss, I know the name of the prince. He's called Ivan.

INVERARY: Geography!

She unrolls a map, decisively.

In the BUDGE cottage, JOSEPH is fussing around BELLA, who remains unmoved.

JOSEPH: The death certificate will have to be signed by the doctor but don't worry, I'm the registrar so there'll be no difficulty. Then there's the undertaker, that's Andrew Hoy of Rossiter and the gravedigger, that's Samuel Whaness. I'll fix all that.

SIMON McKEE arrives on the scene.

SIMON: Good for Ben. He's off on his last voyage. He'll be all right, old Ben.

BELLA: It's dark for him.

SIMON: Dark, yes. For a watch or two. But he's sailing into the sunrise, old Ben. Go in peace, old sailor. The anchor's up.

The fog horn again, but louder, more immediate.

SAMUEL at sea.

SKARF tells the story to the audience, as if it's the latest chapter in his history, which in effect it is.

SKARF: Samuel Whaness knows it is a nonsense to put out to sea on such a day but he is determined to raise the creels he has set out under the Red Head before the thief Bert Kerston can get to them.

SAMUEL starts raising the creels.

SKARF: The catch is good but the inshore waves are huge. Samuel is right at the base of the Head. He can see the kittiwakes on the cliff, watching him with utter indifference. Then the sea flings the boat at the crags.

SAMUEL falls, falls, falls...

SKARF: He is falling now, the boat still under him. From a ledge, the bones of a sheep rise to meet him. He hears, among the sea noises, a crunching and splintering of wood. Joy floods all his veins. From near and far, through all the aisles and bays of the temple, comes sweet sacred music.

SAMUEL gets up to his feet. A bright light shines on him.

SKARF: Samuel Whaness sets out, smiling, to discover the habitations of the saints.

In the shop, OLIVE is writing letters.

OLIVE: To the Director of Education. Dear Sir. It will be of some interest to you that your teacher in Greenvoe, Hellya, is carrying on to a scandalous extent with the island boatman, a person of bad character. Is this a fit person to be in charge of our innocent children? Yours faithfully, A Friend.

She folds the letter, slips it into an envelope, moves on to the next.

OLIVE: To the Moderator, Orkney Presbytery, Church of Scotland. Reverend Sir. I am sorry to say that your incumbent in Greenvoe, Hellya, is drinking to such an extent that he is bringing the cloth into disrepute. Is this a fit person to have the cure of souls in this island? Yours faithfully, a Shepherdless Sheep.

She folds the letter, slips it into an envelope, moves on to the next.

OLIVE: To the Manager, National Assistance. Dear Sir. It may be of interest that one of your beneficiaries, Timothy John Folster of Greenvoe spends most of his relief money on methylated spirit for purposes of refreshment. Keir Hardie and Lloyd George did not intend this. Yours faithfully. Pro Bono Publico.

She folds the letter, slips it into an envelope, moves on to the next.

OLIVE: To the Lord-Lieutenant. Sir, I wish to bring to your notice the case of a man devoting his whole life to the service of the people of the island where he resides and never receiving recognition in the Queen's honours. I refer to Joseph Evie, General

Merchant, Greenvoe, Hellya, Orkney. I speak for the entire community. Yours faithfully, Housewife.

She folds the letter, slips it into an envelope, smiles. A good morning's work.

At the manse, MRS McKEE sits in her chair as the PROSECUTOR resumes his work.

PROSECUTOR: I ask the court to consider a little boy, ten years old, in a sick-bed.

He indicates young SIMON in his sick-bed, a distance away

PROSECUTOR: He is recovering from measles but he is a delicate boy and the recovery is taking much longer than with others of his age. But more than the ills of childhood are troubling this small boy. He has not yet recovered from the death of his father six months before. The father had been severely wounded in the First World War and who knows what nightmares he carried with him in his soul?

With an accusing look at McKEE.

PROSECUTOR: One day the mother reads an advertisement in a newspaper, praising a miraculous tonic wine which, according to genuine testimonials all available for inspection on request, is a reliable cure for depression, insomnia and debility, the after-effects of childbirth, shingles, flu, gastritis and measles...

The young ELIZABETH crosses to the bed with a glass of the wine. SIMON drinks it.

PROSECUTOR: The mother buys a bottle of the wine from a licensed grocer and the boy drinks of it. Within a week, the boy recovers. Whether it is the wine, or the sudden arrival of fine spring weather, or the natural healing processes of Nature cannot be scientifically ascertained. What we can demonstrate, beyond any reasonable doubt, is that the first person to put alcoholic drink into Simon's mouth is his mother, Mrs Elizabeth McKee.

Our focus remains on the PROSECUTOR as young SIMON and ELIZABETH exit.

PROSECUTOR: Simon is a clever boy at school, and a clever young man at university. But it comes as a shock - but, goodness gracious, a pleasant enough shock - when he announces he is going on to study divinity. Nevertheless, the young man, in the fullness of time, is ordained into the Church of Scotland and inducted as an assistant minister to the church of St Kenneth in the city of Glasgow. His minister is Dr Fordyce, a kindly man.

He looks across at FORDYCE.

PROSECUTOR: Dr. Fordyce, tell the court your views on Simon McKee.

FORDYCE: A gifted young man with a sweet nature. His sermons were great. I was as green as the tree in the manse garden with envy.

PROSECUTOR: At what point did you become aware that Simon McKee was an alcoholic?

FORDYCE: Within two weeks of his arrival. It is an all too familiar phenomenon in the city of Glasgow.

PROSECUTOR: And what was your recommended solution to the problem?

FORDYCE: That he find a quiet place in the country, preferably with no pub or licensed grocer, where he might work out his own salvation.

FORDYCE exits as the PROSECUTOR resumes his case.

PROSECUTOR: The good Dr Fordyce moved heaven and earth to find a suitable place for Simon. He was successful. There was an island called Hellya in the Orkneys that stood in need of a pastor. That was over four years ago and the Reverend Simon McKee is still an alcoholic, sustained by pathetic charades which amuse the whole island, the latest being his mother's gargantuan need for hot toddies to cure her - as we know, non-existent - cold. Yet is there not a beguiling symmetry in his concern for his mother's health? When we consider that in the beginning we see a pale boy, fretted with pain, lying listless on an Edinburgh couch. A woman holds out a glass of red wine to him. The boy drinks.

And the PROSECUTOR leaves.

SKARF sits outside his cottage.

SKARF: The parable of the horse-faced Samaritan.

AGATHA FORTIN-BELL enters, carrying a wicker basket full of old clothes. Outside the shop she finds a flat barrow. She plonks the basket on the barrow.

AGATHA: Mrs Evie! I've taken your barrow!

She wheels her way to KERSTON cottage. ELLEN comes to meet her.

AGATHA: Mrs...Kerston, isn't it?

ELLEN: It is. And Mr Kerston is a very proud man who would kill me if I accepted charity clothes. And I agree with him. My father had one of the biggest farms on Quoylay. Good afternoon.

She leaves AGATHA on the doorstep.

SKARF: The dialogue of whale and horse.

AGATHA makes her way to the BUDGE cottage.

BELLA: Come in, Miss Fortin-Bell.

AGATHA: It's the annual distribution of clothing from the Hall. Inga was supposed to help me but she's gone off for a walk somewhere...

BELLA: Bless you, I have enough clothes to see my time out. And Ben isn't needing anything...

AGATHA sees BEN'S body.

AGATHA: Oh dear God...I didn't know...nobody told me...

She turns, leaves.

SKARF: The colloquy of horse and hen and skull.

AGATHA makes her way to TIMMY'S, who dives into the clothing, finds a pair of boots.

TIMMY: Timmy is most grateful. Timmy is badly in need of a pair of boots. With tackets on the soles, so he doesn't slip on the stones. When he's working on the beach. Oh yes, he works. The other day he found a bottle and a ten dollar bill. Timmy is a man of means. Would the lady deign to enter his humble abode?

AGATHA: No, I think not.

She sniffs, moves on.

SKARF: The dialogue of horse and otter.

AGATHA finds herself face to face with SKARF.

SKARF: Don't relieve your conscience at my door. Bugger off. Away, you centaur.

AGATHA turns, heads towards ALICE'S.

SKARF: The confrontation of horse rampant and tarnished sun.

ALICE greets AGATHA with enthusiasm.

ALICE: It's lovely to see you again. The children all look forward to their presents from the big house.

AGATHA: How many do you have now?

ALICE: Seven.

AGATHA: Goodness! However do you remember their names?

ALICE: I call them by their fathers' names. It keeps them from being jealous of one another. The teacher calls them all Voar but that's to make it easier for her register. So there's peedie Skarf...

AGATHA: Skarf?

ALICE: He's a lazy man but you can't deny he's clever. And there's Sam Westray. And do you know, I've never had a penny from Ivan Westray? And there's Shirley Whaness...

AGATHA: Do you mean to say Samuel Whaness...?

ALICE: Yes, he did. And very kind he and Rachel have been to me. They're good Christian people. And Sander Scorradales. I get two bottles of Guinness every weekend and a half-bottle of gin at New Year. And Sophie Kerston, she's little like her father, and a wicked temper. And Sidney's the eldest. He'll be going to the big school on the mainland next year, and after that to college. I'd like him to be a minister but he's got nicotine stains on his fingers so perhaps he isn't kirk-inclined.

AGATHA: Sidney who?

ALICE: Didn't I say? Sidney Fortin-Bell.

AGATHA: Fortin-Bell!

ALICE: It was when I was a kitchen maid at the hall. He's a nice old gentleman, your uncle. He sends me a ten-pound cheque every quarter and never misses, and he lets me live here rent-free. Now what have you got in your basket?

AGATHA has to get away.

AGATHA: Here! Take the lot!

ALICE: Thank you kindly.

SKARF: The dialogue of pigeon and horse.

AGATHA leaves the barrow outside the shop.

OLIVE: I will thank you not to take Mr Evie's barrow without permission in future.

AGATHA glares at her, then exits.

Again the fog horn sounds, louder now.

SKARF: The passion of Samuel Whaness.

SAMUEL, centre-stage, tells his story. He holds a boat-hook as if it were pilgrim's staff. Music punctuates his words.

SAMUEL: I addressed myself to the pilgrimage. Shawled women came about me and ministered comforts to me. One kissed me on the cheek and she smelled of roses.

A spotlight on ALICE.

SAMUEL: But I could not see the face of the one I loved but fruitlessly with the love that is due from husband unto wife and I bade the women sternly begone.

We lose ALICE.

SAMUEL: I looked about me and beheld a fair and a merry hullabaloo and a booth for the sale of ardent liquors.

BERT enters, approaches SAMUEL, who shrugs him off as:

SAMUEL: And a man lurched from the place of drunkards and retched violently in the road and clung to my coat. I shook him off and passed on but discovered to my amazement a frond of seaweed on my sleeve and in my hand a limpet shell. It was as if a sign had passed between fishermen.

Spotlight on BEN.

SAMUEL: And as I walked on through the deepening night, a man walked with me. And his talk was of foreign lands, of bazaars and icebergs and albatrosses and it might have been a pleasant diversion but it was plentifully studded with profane and blasphemous words.

SAMUEL addresses BEN directly.

SAMUEL: Unless you purify your tongue you will in no wise pass through the portals of God.

BEN: Attend me with spade and shuttering three days hence.

Light out on BEN.

SAMUEL: And a terror came upon me and I stood stockstill on the road and I could hear the crash of the waves and I looked down and I was standing on a cliff top.

The fog horn sounds.

SAMUEL: And I remembered, when I was a boy the three best cragsmen on the island were Ben Budge and Mansie Anderson and Samuel Whaness. My feet found niches, narrow bases, felt down, probed, hesitated. Twenty feet below me I saw a half-destroyed boat. A man's body was lying in the stern.

A light on BERT lying on the floor close to SAMUEL.

SAMUEL: It was the drunkard, the blasphemer, the thief. A thin green stream oozed from his mouth, the spew of drowning. I knew I must try to save this man.

He kneels down to give BERT the kiss of life.

BERT comes to life instantly, rolls over so that their positions are reversed.

BERT: For God's sake, man, stop rambling!

SAMUEL opens his eyes.

SAMUEL: What?

BERT: By God, you nearly had it today. The sea nearly got you. You'll never be closer.

The BUDGE cottage. ANDREW HOY is measuring BEN.

ANDREW: Standard size, that's good. Who do you want to carry the coffin?

ELLA: The Best kens.

ANDREW: You'll need to have a bottle of whisky for them. Maybe two.

BELLA: Rum.

ANDREW: Whisky's more usual.

BELLA: Rum.

ANDREW: I'll see to that, and to everything else. I have the coffin lashed to my bike outside. An oak coffin. I hope you don't want pine.

BELLA: Anything.

ANDREW: And then you must excuse me. I have a meeting tonight in The Bu stable.

The fog horn sounds.

SKARF: There was a man in Hellya called Ivan, who ferried men and beasts between the islands. He was the son of William who was at home in the farm called Anders in Hellya. William was the son of Thomas who went mad one winter in the town of Edinburgh in Scotland.

IVAN and INGA on the boat. Again the fog horn sounds.

IVAN: I don't know where we are. And that's the truth of it.

INGA: Never mind. It's been a marvellous day. Super. Look. It's like a journey through the land of the dead. The ghosts are all around us.

IVAN: Try your fancy talk on the fog.

INGA: Don't you know where we are, knight of the sun?

IVAN: I've set course for Hellya. We'll hit something.

INGA: Aren't there reefs and rocks and things?

IVAN: I'd rather die in the sea than in the eventide home.

He abandons the wheel and sits beside her.

INGA: Shouldn't you be steering or something?

IVAN puts his arm around her.

IVAN: The boat knows its way as well as I do.

He kisses her. Initially she cooperates. Then she resists.

INGA: No.

IVAN: Daddy will never know.

INGA: No.

She hits him. He smiles, forces her to the floor.

SKARF: The granddaughter of the chief man in Hellya asked the boatman to take her to the sea tower. There was much fog on the way back. The boatman whose name was Ivan forced Inga to lie with him in the boat called Skua.

IVAN and INGA get up and make their way on to the jetty.

SKARF: Inga said he had done her a great wrong that day and that he would suffer for it. Ivan laughed and said...

IVAN: We'll see about that.

They go their separate ways.

In the shop.

OLIVE: Old Ben Budge. How much would he have left now?

JOSEPH: Go to bed. I still have work to do.

OLIVE: You will see my letters are posted?

JOSEPH: I will.

OLIVE leaves.

JOSEPH examines her four letters. He tears up three of them. The fourth he re-seals. It's obviously not the first time he's done this.

In the bar: SCORRADALE, BERT, TIMMY and SKARF.

SCORRADALE: Is his boat completely wrecked?

BERT: Smithereens. I saved his oars and a few of his creels. Rachel gave me a five pound note from out of an old book.

He produces the fiver, sniffs it.

BERT: It must have been in there for years.

- SKARF: Ivan Westray's late.
- SCORRADALE: He went up to the schoolhouse half an hour ago. He looked as if he'd been in a fight.
- BERT: I pumped him for half an hour before his pulse started up. And do you know what he said, coming in to the pier?
- SCORRADALE: When are you going to start reading, Skarf?
- TIMMY: Timmy likes it when Skarf reads.
- SKARF: Not tonight. Never again.
- BERT: He looks at me, all accusing-like, and says: 'What were you doing there anyway, Kerston, at the place where my creels are?'

Again the fog horn.

The STRANGER sets out on a stroll around the village, stopping at each place to make a note in his book.

The men sense this.

- SCORRADALE: The stranger.
- SKARF: I've written all I know. What's coming to this island is beyond prose. It will be poetry and music. The Song of the Children of the Sun.

A silence then:

- TIMMY: Timmy is drinking to the memory of Ben Budge. We must all be pall-bearers at the funeral on Monday.

They drink to BEN as the STRANGER goes about his business.

In the stable, MANSIE and the men are gathered around HECTOR, who lies blindfolded and bandaged, the horse-shoe on his chest.

The men light candles and stand about HECTOR.

- MANSIE: The fifth station. This is the end of the sufferings of the hungry and the poor. Now art thou cancelled, crossed out. Thou art nothing. Thou hast no part in the estate of man any more, nor ever can have, being dead, having suffered the pain beyond death, being now ashes and cinders and dust; departed out of the sweetness of the sun and the knowledge of men, a thing of darkness and silence. I take from thee the sign of the horse.

He takes the horse-shoe and replaces it on the nail on the wall.

- MANSIE: With thee it is everlasting winter. Men will come soon with a stone to set upon thee.

They spread a shroud over HECTOR.

They lay a stone at his head.

They blow out the candles.

Darkness.

ACT TWOSCENE ONE

Half-a-dozen men in overalls and hard hats make their way from IVAN'S boat and head on to the island.

IVAN follows at a distance. SKARF watches from outside his cottage.

SKARF:(NARRATION) The arrival of the children of the Sun.

Then he calls to IVAN.

SKARF: What are they doing here?

IVAN: They're here to dig a hole.

One of the men - a Glaswegian called JOCK McINTOSH - sets up a theodolite, looks through it, starts making notes.

SKARF: Why?

IVAN: It's a secret hole.

SKARF: What is the secret?

IVAN moves closer to SKARF.

IVAN: The secret is, I normally charge fifteen shillings for the crossing from the mainland. These men pay twenty-five without a murmur. And there are hundreds more where they came from. Isn't that a fine secret?

SKARF: A fine secret indeed.

McINTOSH murmurs to one of the workers.

McINTOSH: What's the name of the wee village?

WORKER: Greenvoe.

McINTOSH: It's in the way. It'll have to go.

A blast on a whistle.

The WORKERS converge on the bar.

McINTOSH: Six pints of heavy, Scorrie.

SCORRA DALE has the pints lined up waiting.

Six more WORKERS cram into the bar.

McINTOSH: And another six.

SCORRA DALE: Ivan. Earn your money.

IVAN appears behind the bar, helps serve the men.

As the men drink, SKARF, TIMMY and BERT watch from a distance.

TIMMY: Timmy is frightened to go in the bar.
 SKARF: Timmy is a good judge.
 BERT: Where's a man to go for a drink of an evening?
 SKARF: There is no room at our inn.

In the bar.

McINTOSH: Are there any women on this island?
 SCORRA DALE: Of course. There's the minister's mother and the schoolteacher and...
 McINTOSH: No. I mean women.

Exchange of looks between SCORRA DALE and IVAN. They hesitate, then SCORRA DALE whispers a name to McINTOSH.

McINTOSH leaves the bar, makes his way to ALICE'S cottage. He knocks. She comes to the door.

ALICE: Yes?

McINTOSH brings out a five pound note.

McINTOSH: Is this enough?
 ALICE: What?
 McINTOSH: Five pounds. Is it enough?
 ALICE: I don't understand.
 McINTOSH: For God's sake, woman, what do you normally charge?
 ALICE: I don't take money from men.
 McINTOSH: Better still if it's free.

He takes a step towards her.

She slaps his face.

He slaps hers.

She pushes him away, closes the door on him. McINTOSH looks around, sees SKARF watching him.

McINTOSH: It's time this bloody island grew up!
 SKARF: You may well be right.

The ringing of the school bell.

But this time it isn't to summon the kids to school, but the locals to a meeting in the schoolroom.

JOSEPH EVIE is in the teacher's position. Alongside him is ALOYSIUS, a bureaucrat in a suit.

The 'class' comprises our locals: SAMUEL and RACHEL, BERT and ELLEN, SKARF, IVAN, TIMMY, ALICE and BELLA.

JOSEPH: I would like you to read these forms and if you agree, I would like you to sign them and return them to me.

He hands out the forms.

They look at them.

SKARF: It says Black Star at the top. What is Black Star?

JOSEPH: Mr Aloysius is from Black Star. He will explain.

ALOYSIUS: Black Star is a government project of the utmost secrecy.

IVAN: A hole in the ground, I was told.

SAMUEL: They want us to leave our cottage?

JOSEPH: But we will all be doing our patriotic duty.

ALOYSIUS: There will be work here with Black Star for those with appropriate skills.

SAMUEL: What will happen to our cottage?

JOSEPH: The entire village will be demolished.

ALOYSIUS: Those who stay on to work will be given alternative accommodation.

BERT: In those huts you've been building?

ALOYSIUS: They're surprisingly comfortable. I can vouch for that. And soon there'll be a social club and a cinema.

RACHEL: A cinema!

She's horrified.

ALICE; My children love their cottage.

JOSEPH: But the cottage doesn't belong to them. Not in law.

ALICE; I know it truly belongs to the laird. But he's always been very good to me.

SKARF: Where is he, the laird? And old horse-face? Why aren't they here?

IVAN: I took them to the mainland this morning.

SAMUEL: When are they coming back?

ALOYSIUS: They're moving to the West of Scotland.

SKARF: They've sold the island?

ALOYSIUS: In law, yes.

BERT: And us with it?

JOSEPH: You will find Black Star are making you a much more generous offer than they are legally compelled to, as a gesture of their goodwill.

BERT: Goodwill!

He's not impressed.

ALICE: Where is Miss Inverary?

IVAN: I took her to the mainland this morning, too. She is being interviewed for a teaching post in Edinburgh.

SAMUEL: But if the island doesn't belong to us, why are we being asked to sign this piece of paper?

JOSEPH: By signing, you will accept Black Star's compensation offer...

RACHEL: The pieces of silver.

JOSEPH: It will enable you to start a new and productive life somewhere else.

TIMMY: Timmy doesn't want a new life. Timmy is very contented with his old life.

JOSEPH: We have made special arrangements for you, Timmy.

TIMMY: Timmy already has special arrangements.

SKARF: And which of us will qualify for work under the new order? Which of us has appropriate skills?

JOSEPH and ALOYSIUS check their files.

JOSEPH: There will be work for you, if you wish as...

ALOYSIUS: As a clerk, in the office.

SKARF: A clerk!

JOSEPH: Samuel Whaness...light labouring duties.

SAMUEL: But I'm a fisherman.

JOSEPH: Alice Voar...cleaning.

He closes the file. That's it.

IVAN: What about me?

ALOYSIUS: We shall obviously make extensive use of your services, Mr Westray, until the completion of the new ferry terminal.

IVAN: What new ferry terminal?

ALOYSIUS: And the helicopter pad.

IVAN: Damn your ferry terminal! Damn your helicopter pad! And damn your Black Star!

IVAN gets up, leaves the meeting.

BELLA: And what will happen to my chickens?

BERT: Those bastard Irish labourers will carry on stealing them.

ELLEN: Watch your filthy tongue.

JOSEPH: You have twenty-four hours to sign these and return them to me at the shop.

ALICE: Twenty-four hours?

JOSEPH: That is when the shop will close and soon afterwards Mrs Olive Evie and I will be leaving for Kirkwall.

The meeting breaks up.

They go their separate ways, clutching their forms.

SKARF seeks out IVAN, who's staring out at the water.

SKARF: What did I always tell you? Between global imperialism and global capitalism, there's very little room for an honest ferryman.

IVAN: You're an educated man, Skarf. Tell me. Why do we never find things out until it's too late?

SKARF: What have you found out?

Pause.

IVAN: I love this island.

SKARF nods.

SKARF: You're quite right. Too late.

Music, percussive and menacing.

LABOURERS manhandle a rubbish skip on to the stage.

McINTOSH and ALOYSIUS are there to direct operations.

A stylised sequence as the LABOURERS take the rostra which have signified the various parts of Greenvoe and stack them in the skip, in the following order:

JOSEPH EVIE signs his piece of paper. ALOYSIUS gives him a brown envelope. The LABOURERS dismantle the shop and place it in the skip.

The process is repeated with SCORRADALE and the bar.

Then with SKARF and his cottage.

Then SAMUEL and RACHEL WHANESS.

Next, the wrecking crew approaches the KERSTON cottage. They are greeted by BELLA BUDGE in midwife mode.

BELLA: There's a woman in here expecting a baby.

ALOYSIUS: We'll start again tomorrow.

McINTOSH blows a whistle.

McINTOSH: The new social club's open, boys.

ALOYSIUS, McINTOSH and the WORKERS exit. BERT KERSTON emerges.

BERT: Social club?

He follows them.

The place is now silent and deserted.

TIMMY enters, looks around with horror at the scene of devastation. Then, since it's his natural habitat, he explores the contents of the skip.

He pulls out a wad of typewritten sheets. He reads aloud:

TIMMY: Timothy John Folster. Bachelor. Only surviving issue of John and Mary-Anne - nee Linklater - Folster, Greenvoe, both deceased. No distinguishing physical characteristics. Casual worker on farms and beachcomber. No income declared. In receipt of public assistance.

TIMMY: (*Contd.*) Property - one house, in poor condition, consequent on a fire. Value approximately ten pounds. Medical note - occasional methylated spirit drinker. Winter bronchitis. General health surprisingly good. Black Star potential - nil.

TIMMY thinks about this.

TIMMY: Nil?

He's a bit hurt, moves on to the next sheet.

TIMMY: Veronica Ann Alice Voar. Spinster. Eyes grey. Hair blonde. Mole, rose-coloured on right breast. Mole, honey-coloured, on left buttock. Housewife. In receipt of state assistance. Irregular payments, in cash or kind, from putative fathers of some of her seven children. Property: one shed, one rosebush, one garden spade. Resides rent-free in cottage, courtesy Colonel Alasdair Fortin-Bell. Relatives numerous. Health excellent. Character - see note on children - otherwise not vicious or abandoned. Black Star potential - nine.

He's impressed.

TIMMY: Nine.

He moves on to the next and reads:

TIMMY: Samuel Ezra Whaness. Hair blonde, interspersed with white and grey. Distinguishing marks, harpoon wound, a traverse three-inch silvery scar along right ribs. Fisherman, married Rachel Whaness nee Tomison. No issue. One illegitimate daughter, tacitly acknowledged, by Veronice Ann Alice Voar - see under Voar. Property - two-room cottage inherited from father. Cash - £3,228-9s-7d in various denominations deposited about the cottage, e.g., interleaved in copy, dated 1793, of Pilgrim's Progress. In Bank of Scotland, Hamnavoe - £6,221-2s-1d. Lobster creels, oars, sail, spars, fishing lines, hooks. No fishing boat at present. Health, sound despite his age and recent setback. Black Star potential - four. Labourer?

TIMMY is intrigued.

TIMMY: Black Star is very clever. Black Star knows everything. Black Star knows about Samuel's money and Alice's buttock.

He moves on to the next sheet.

TIMMY: Ivan Westray. Eyes blue, hair bronze. Bachelor. Only son William Albert and Catherine, nee Manson, both recently deceased. Owner-occupier of ferry-boat Skua. Educated Greenvoe Primary School, Kirkwall Grammar School, Aberdeen University - only one year completed, rusticated for violent disorderly conduct. Property - abandoned croft, Anders, inherited from parents, value approximately two hundred pounds. Post Office Savings Bank - £25-4s-6d. Health 1) Physical - excellent 2) Mental - hereditary instability. Issue 1) Illegitimate son by Agnes Carroway, Aberdeen 2) Illegitimate daughter by Deborah Ask, Kirkwall 3) Illegitimate son by Veronica Ann Alice Voar, Greenvoe, see under Voar. Black Star potential nine. Special knowledge of local waters, reefs, etc. But see note about mental instability.

TIMMY is about to move on to the next sheet when JOSEPH calls across to him.

JOSEPH: Come along Timmy.

TIMMY: Come along where?

JOSEPH crosses to him, carrying a suitcase. TIMMY, a touch guilty, dumps the sheets of paper.

JOSEPH: To your new life on the mainland.

He points across the stage to a woman wearing the uniform of a hospital MATRON.

MATRON: You shall have your own room, with clean sheets.

JOSEPH leads TIMMY across to the MATRON.

MATRON: And you'll be able to go to the shops, and do the messages for the old men.

TIMMY: Timmy is very good at going to the shops.

As he approaches the MATRON, the smell hits her.

MATRON: But the first thing we'll do is to give you a good scrubbing and burn those nasty old clothes.

TIMMY: Timmy loves his nasty old clothes.

JOSEPH: Do as you're told, Timmy.

They lead him off.

At the point of exit, he turns, addresses the audience.

TIMMY: When they finished demolishing Timmy's house, they found ninety-seven empty bottles.

They take him off.

Musical punctuation.

MRS McKEE sits in her rocking chair in a pool of light.

McKEE: Simon!

SIMON replies from the darkness.

SIMON: I'm popping out to play darts with the workers, old thing.

A clink of bottles.

McKEE: Promise me you won't drink too much.

SIMON: I have to be sociable. I have to win their confidence. I have to carry out God's will.

McKEE: But they're breaking up the tombstones in the cemetery. They're summoning the island dead to testify against me. You must stop them interfering with the dead people in the churchyard.

SIMON: Thank you very much, Jock, yes, I'll just have one more, that's very decent.

McKEE: Simon!

This time there's no reply.

McKEE: You have to tell them. Tell them not to interfere with the graves. Don't you see? Soon there will be nothing in Hellya but skeletons and shadows. God pity me. I have brought ruin to everything I have touched and known. I brought ruin to my husband, Alan. God pity me. I brought ruin to my son when he was a little boy. God pity me. And now I have brought ruin to this whole island. This is happening because I live here. God pity us all. Simon!

SIMON: I can't go without buying everyone a round, you've all bought me one. A man of God has to be a man of honour in these situations.

McKEE: All the lorries and the cement-mixers! Just look at the dust on the blossoms. And the rain is falling and it's wearing away my face. And the walls are whispering and soon they will fall and bury me alive. Is this the judgement? That my days have been wicked and perverse and desperately deceitful? God pity me. Simon!

SIMON enters, brisk, business-like and stone-cold sober.

Lighting change to everyday normality.

SIMON: How are you, old thing? Feeling better today?

McKEE: I don't know.

She looks around.

McKEE: Where am I?

SIMON: You're back home in Edinburgh. Don't you remember? We got notice to quit. We brought your old rocking chair along for company.

McKEE: What has happened to the island?

SIMON: That is no longer our concern.

McKEE: But all those dead people...

SIMON: Hush.

In a Black Star office, SKARF sits typing.

There's a pile of work he's completed nearby.

ALOYSIUS enters.

ALOYSIUS: How are we progressing?

SKARF: Done.

Hands him the finished work.

ALOYSIUS: That was quick.

SKARF: A little late in life, I have discovered I am one of nature's bureaucrats.

ALOYSIUS: I'm impressed by your equanimity, bearing in mind what we've done to your island.

While they're speaking, McINTOSH, doing his rounds of the site, comes across the papers dumped by TIMMY.

He picks them up, browses.

SKARF: You mustn't look at it that way. Industrial man, bureaucratic man, is a superior creature to agricultural man. Just as the farmer is an evolutionary stage beyond the dark blunderings of the hunter. The island is a microcosm. What is happening here will happen, inevitably, all over the cosmos.

McINTOSH reads from a document as ALOYSIUS leaves the office.

McINTOSH: Jeremias Jonathan Skarf. Bachelor. Only son of Rolf Skarf and Rina, nee Williamson, both deceased. Health - severe astigmatism, incipient multiple sclerosis. Education, Greenvoe Primary School. Property - one fishing boat, not seaworthy, together with forty-five creels. One house, two rooms, uncultivated garden, approximate value - one hundred and fifty pounds. No savings. Pastimes. 1) Beer-drinking to an innocuous extent 2) Intensive study of the theory of socialism. Calls himself a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist. Active and tireless propagandist, his ideas much tinged with mysticism. N.B. This man is a high security risk. He should on no account be offered employment at Black Star or any other envisaged site, in Hellya, or elsewhere, in any capacity whatsoever.

McINTOSH crosses to ALOYSIUS, shows him the document.

McINTOSH: I think you should read this.

ALOYSIUS glances at the document, then crosses to SKARF.

IVAN, sitting on the pier, takes up the story.

IVAN:(NARRATION) Skarf was given his cards and a fortnight's salary. He was escorted from the site by two security men. He was abandoned to time and chance.

SKARF is escorted by the SECURITY MEN as described. He goes to the site of his old house and then to the beach.

IVAN:(NARRATION) He said goodbye to his house then walked to the beach. He collected several heavy round stones and put them in his pockets. Then he walked to his boat.

SKARF walks past IVAN on the pier.

IVAN: Skarf.

SKARF: Ivan.

SKARF sits, centre-stage. He mimes the struggles with the oars.

IVAN:(NARRATION) The engine was old, dry, corroded. He fitted oars into rowlocks, dug the blades into the water, and pulled strongly towards a big broken area of water where the sound of Hellya and the Atlantic Ocean intermeshed. He would come to a place where the sea was all mountains and chasms.

IVAN stands up, looks at the moment through binoculars.

SKARF stops rowing.

IVAN:(NARRATION) By now the boat was a sixth full of water. Skarf picked up the bailing tin and hurled it away to the mercy of the tide. He folded his arms and looked back at the island.

SKARF: Above the hush and boom of the sea, I could hear the whine of the pneumatic drills and the volleys of blasting. The sacred music of the Children of the Sun.

SKARF smiles, lies down. It is finished.

IVAN lowers his binoculars.

BERT is on the pier, bearing today's catch. IVAN is telling him the story of SKARF.

IVAN: I could see him clearly. He was smiling.

BERT: He's lucky.

IVAN: He's dead.

BERT: Everything's dead on this bloody island. Look.

He shows IVAN his catch.

BERT: Seven lobsters, all dead. There are dead fish floating on the water by the Head. These people, they've poisoned the water.

IVAN: What did you expect them to do?

RACHEL approaches.

RACHEL: Your wife is asking for you, Mr Kerston.

BERT: Why would she do that?

RACHEL: She's in labour.

BERT: She's been in labour all her bloody life.

RACHEL: It's a difficult labour.

BERT: It's her job, having babies. It's my job, catching fish. I've done my day's work and I'm going for a drink in the social club. She can send a message to me when she's finished her day's work.

He heads off towards the club.

In the area of the Black Star headquarters he passes SAMUEL, who's sweeping up.

BERT: Samuel.

SAMUEL: Mr Kerston.

BERT exits.

SAMUEL carries on with his sweeping, slowly but efficiently.

ALOYSIUS approaches.

ALOYSIUS: Samuel, I have a job for you.

SAMUEL: Yes?

ALOYSIUS: After the social club closes tonight, would you rearrange the chairs?

SAMUEL: Rearrange the chairs?

ALOYSIUS: They're presently arranged for bingo. The priest would like them in neat rows with a table set against the gable wall at the end. And sweep up the cigarette ends first, obviously...

SAMUEL: Did you say the priest?

ALOYSIUS: Yes. He's coming over from the mainland. To celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

There's a silence.

SAMUEL: I'm sorry, Mr Aloysius, but I cannot be a party to such a thing.

He lays his brush down.

ALICE enters, carrying a sweeping brush.

ALOYSIUS: Mrs Voar, there is a job we'd like you to do.

ALICE: No more jobs. I'm leaving.

ALOYSIUS: Is this also on religious grounds?

ALICE: It's bad enough you knock down my house. But today one of your men drove a tractor across my rosebush. So yes, I suppose it is religious grounds.

She lays her brush down, across SAMUEL'S so they form the sign of the cross.

A woman cries out in pain.

WILLY, the eldest of the KERSTON children, runs on.

WILLY: Where's Dad?

ALICE: He's drinking in the club.

WILLY goes off, returns dragging BERT, who's drunk.

WILLY: Mum's had the baby.
 BERT: Good. What sort?
 WILLY: A dead one!
 BERT: And I suppose that's my fault?
 WILLY: Of course it is!

And he attacks his father, viciously.

ALICE and SAMUEL drag him off.

RACHEL emerges from the KERSTON cottage.

RACHEL: Oh Lord, why hast thou forsaken us?

Lighting change.

A bright morning.

IVAN WESTRAY stands on the ferry landing.

IVAN:(NARRATION) The final voyage of Ivan Westray, the ferryman, from the island of Hellya.

ALICE and her children arrive on the landing. ALICE is pregnant.

IVAN: Alice.

ALICE: Ivan.

They all file past.

IVAN:(NARRATION) Alice and her children go to her sister's house in Hamnavoe. Her sister locks the door against her. The wandering tribe is given an old second-war army hut on a granite hillside. The bairns run happily among swarming faces and a weave of stone and are gathered into the new community. In the springtime, Alice brings forth a tiny, sun-kissed idol and calls him Singh Voar, after the young man who brought colour and sweetness to Hellya.

The KERSTONS and their children arrive on the landing. BERT has a piece of sticking plaster on his face.

IVAN: Ellen.

ELLEN Ivan.

IVAN: Bert.

BERT: Ivan.

IVAN: How is your face?

ELLEN: I kissed him better. Like this.

She kisses him again, by way of demonstration.

The KERSTONS file past, on their way to the ferry. Like ALICE and her kids, they all carry cases and assorted belongings.

IVAN:(NARRATION) Bert Kerston takes his wife and family to the island of Hrossey. There, Mr Selfridge, owner of the Sutbreck Hotel, willing buyer for many years of undeclared crabs and stolen lobsters, gives Bert steady work at a modest wage, looking after the tourists who visit. His task is to instruct them in the art of fly-fishing in the loch and to prevent them from injuring or drowning themselves in their pursuit of relaxation.

SAMUEL and RACHEL arrive on the ferry landing.

SAMUEL: Ivan.

IVAN: Samuel.

RACHEL: Ivan.

IVAN: Rachel.

SAMUEL and RACHEL make their way to the ferry.

IVAN:(NARRATION) Samuel and Rachel Whaness go to the island of Hoy, and move in with Rachel's brother, Willie Tomison, a crofter-fisherman and a widower.

IVAN: (CONTD.) Says Willie to them: 'You're welcome to stay as long as you like, so long as you don't preach at me, nor pray over me when I have the cold, nor read that Pilgrim's Progress out loud when I'm having a smoke and a dram after my day's work.' Samuel, having sworn off fishing for life, finds an old yawl, paints it so that it's good as new. A week later he is fishing again.

BELLA BUDGE arrives on the pier, clutching a chicken.

BELLA: Ivan.

IVAN: Bella.

BELLA makes her way to the ferry.

IVAN:(NARRATION) Bella Budge takes her last surviving chicken to Kirkwall where, she is told, the council will find her suitable accommodation, no pets allowed. She writes to cousin Tom in Vancouver, Canada, to tell him of the changed circumstances. Cousin Tom never replies.

Now IVAN is alone on the pier.

He turns as ALOYSIUS appears, hands him a sheet of paper.

ALOYSIUS: There are some items for you to collect on the mainland.

IVAN looks at the list.

IVAN: What is a karaoke machine?

ALOYSIUS: It plays loud electronic music. And anyone who wishes may sing along with the music into a microphone. It helps if you're drunk at the time, apparently.

IVAN: You want me to bring a machine that makes electronic music to my island?

ALOYSIUS: A request from the work-force. They sent a small delegation to my office and...

He gets no further. IVAN whacks him, sends him sprawling, then:

IVAN:(NARRATION) And that was the last voyage from the island of Hellya of Ivan Westray, the ferryman.

IVAN leaves.

MANSIE ANDERSON enters.

MANSIE:(NARRATION) The bulldozers, having flattened the village, turned inland.

As he speaks, half-a-dozen LABOURERS, wearing Black Star overalls and hard hats, dismantle and stack the rostra at the rear of the performance area.

They are directed by McINTOSH and ALOYSIUS.

MANSIE:(NARRATION) The Glebe went down in a brief clatter of stones. The farm of Isbister shuddered and fell some days later. The smell of living lingered for an hour, then mingled with the wind and was lost to the sea. Rossiter died in a cloud of dust. Blinkbonny had, for five centuries, puts its reflection in the loch. The bulldozers raged and the mirror lost its faithful image for ever. The loch was drained and the mirror smashed a month later. The destruction of Skaill caused some excitement when a wall fell and a workman saw a faded gleam.

A LABOURER holds up the artefacts.

ALOYSIUS takes them from him, sets them carefully aside.

MANSIE:(NARRATION) The Viking sword and shield and helmet - a death hoard - were flown to Edinburgh where they caused brief wonderment among archeologists and historians, before they were cofined in a glass case, far from Hellya.

Now only one rostrum remains: that of The Bu.

MANSIE crosses to The Bu, and confronts ALOYSIUS and McINTOSH. The three of them, in their turn, are surrounded by LABOURERS.

ALOYSIUS: Mr Anderson, all the other farmers have accepted Black Star's generous compensation and left the island.

MANSIE: I know. I have watched them go.

ALOYSIUS: You didn't reply to our first offer.

MANSIE: I threw your letter on the fire.

ALOYSIUS: So we made you an improved offer. We increased it by twenty-five per cent. Sufficient to set you up in a new farm anywhere in Orkney, or to retire in comfort.

MANSIE: I threw that letter on the fire, too.

ALOYSIUS: That was a month ago.

MANSIE: I don't remember. My mind is on the harvest.

ALOYSIUS: If I can't persuade you to see the inevitable sense of the situation, perhaps these gentlemen will.

JOSEPH EVIE and the CONTROLLER enter.

ALOYSIUS: You know Mr Joseph Evie?

MANSIE: Mr Joseph Evie, M.B.E. I understand.

JOSEPH: Yes. I'm here to see fair play.

MANSIE: Fair play. Good.

ALOYSIUS: And this is the controller.

CONTROLLER: Mr Anderson.

MANSIE: What do you control?

CONTROLLER: Black Star.

MANSIE: My my. Will you take a glass of beer?

CONTROLLER: Thank you, no. We need clear heads if we are to understand each other.

He unfolds a blueprint, spreads it on the rostrum.

CONTROLLER: This is a plan of the project. It is highly confidential. It is costing millions of pounds. Also dangerous. Two men have been killed driving the underground tunnels, and another drowned. You see the shape of Black Star?

MANSIE: I can see a star.

CONTROLLER: The star is utterly essential to the security of the western world. Here, in the centre of the star, where we are standing now, will be the one permanent entrance to the underground complex. Here, where we are standing now, will be the focus of Black Star headquarters. Here, in the centre of your cornfield, will be determined the fate of nations.

MANSIE thinks on this then:

MANSIE: I am thinking next year I will sow turnips in this field.

CONTROLLER: Mr Anderson, you must understand.

Young HECTOR ANDERSON appears, holding a shotgun.

HECTOR: He understands.

He points the shotgun at the controller.

HECTOR: He understands there's been a farm here for over a thousand years. The first farmer we know about was Thorvald Harvest-Happy, who built The Bu in the year 1006. That's what he understands.

There's a silence then the CONTROLLER nods at McINTOSH who blows a whistle.

The ring of LABOURERS is now surrounded by another ring of ARMED SECURITY MEN, with guns trained on the ANDERSONS.

They look up as they hear the sound of a helicopter hovering overhead.

HECTOR puts down the shotgun.

He and MANSIE raise their arms in the sign of surrender.

The LABOURERS remove the final rostrum, signifying The Bu. The rostra that signified the inner part of the island are now built up like a wall across the back of the performance arena.

The rest of the stage is totally bare.

On to the bare stage is projected an image of a BLACK STAR.

There's a strange electronic hum that turns into music that sounds like an echo from a hostile future.

Everybody leaves except HECTOR who stays to continue the story.

HECTOR:(NARRATION)After fifteen months, as suddenly as they had begun, all operations ceased in the island. The order came within an hour of the controller receiving an urgent message by telephone. It was as if an armistice had been declared. The huge radii of tunnels into Korsfea and The Knap and Ernefea petered out in a black wasted star. The HQ complex itself, in the centre of The Bu, remained a truncated concrete battlement. The wooden huts were left to warp and wither. The rats and the birds and the spiders returned delicately and secretly. Deep in the heart of Hellya the Black Star froze.

The image of the Black Star fades and disappears.

The music changes tone.

HECTOR:(NARRATION) One evening at midsummer, ten years later, a rowing boat dipped under the Red Head. Seven men made their way ashore and climbed the crags on to the island.

The men appear over the back wall formed by the rostra. They are all young, apart from MANSIE ANDERSON, and he's the one they help.

HECTOR:(NARRATION)Tom Kerston, Sidney Fortin-Bell, Johnny Corrigall, Gino Manson, Hector Anderson and the one we used to call Peedie Skarf.

HECTOR joins the others.

MANSIE looks around.

MANSIE: Yes. This is the place. This is the broch.

MANSIE takes a horse-shoe from a canvas bag, lays it on the floor, covers it with a black cloth.

They all don the ceremonial clothing as worn in the earlier scenes.

Young SKARF strips to the waist and kneels down. SIDNEY and JOHNNY blindfold him.

TOM KERSTON lights the lantern.

MANSIE: Lie down.

They tie a grave-cloth round SKARF'S jaw, bind his wrists in front of his body and set a stone at his head.

MANSIE: This is the Station of Stones. For thee, Harvester, the road goes no further. It is winter. Thou wast long in search of a kingdom. Thou hast come to thy kingdom. It is the kingdom of the dead. Thy heart is a few grains of cold dust. What does it hold now, thy heart, in the way of hope?

A silence then:

SKARF: Rain. Share. Yoke. Sun.

HECTOR: It is a wind that moves in the dust. His mouth is ashes. The wind shakes a sound from the dust that was his mouth.

MANSIE: But what did the dust seem to say? He was looking for a word. Unless he has found the word we are locked in the stone. We belong to the kingdom of death.

The men consult silently. Then GINO bends down and puts his ear to SKARF'S mouth.

GINO: I will make bold to speak. It ill becomes me. You will call it foolishness. Yet I still say what I heard. The dust seemed to utter this word - Resurrection.

MANSIE: The dust that was his foot has stumbled on a new stone. He is dead, but the dust that was his tongue has uttered a new word. Take the shroud from the dust that was his eyes.

The men remove the bandages from the eyes and wrists of SKARF.

MANSIE lifts up the black cloth and in place of the horse-shoe he finds a loaf and a bottle.

The men help SKARF to his feet.

They all gather around MANSIE.

MANSIE: We have brought light and blessing to the kingdom of winter, however long it endures, that kingdom, a night or a season or a thousand years. The word has been found. Now we will eat and drink together and be glad.

He uncorks the bottle.

Bright sunlight shines all around.

MANSIE passes the bottle around.

HECTOR steps aside.

HECTOR:(NARRATION) The sun rose. The stones were warm. They broke the bread.

Then, as they do just that, there's a SLOW FADE TO BLACKOUT.