

Anthropologies

By Emma Cooper

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ANTHROPOLOGIES

A short play in five scenes.

CHARACTERS

KEITH: English. Amateur magician. Owner of hotel development in Wales.

MARSHA: His young wife and magician's assistant, always eager to please and ever so slightly dim. Essex accent. Heavily pregnant.

DYLAN: The chef. A local, old man. A storyteller. Has lived through revolution and civil war. Welsh accent.

EIRWEN: The Chambermaid. A local girl, welsh accent.

GORAN: A war veteran from the Welsh army. Displaced and confused. Welsh accent

FEET

The hotel foyer, three days before the hotel is due to open. DYLAN and GORAN are repairing a hole in the floor.

GORAN: Three foot.

DYLAN: Five foot.

[Enter KEITH talking on his mobile.]

KEITH:We don't open till Saturday, I'm afraid..... The hotel's not ready...
....no...No...Well, probably because he's a war criminalNo.....No, look, we're
new to the area. My wifeIt's hard enough being English out here, let alone....No.
No, I don't want to upset the locals by harbouring a.....how much?.....Certainly sir,
the executive suite and the conference room will be ready for his arrival on
Friday....Or tomorrow, tomorrow is good. No, thank you sir, thank you.

*[He hangs up looking pleased with himself. He reaches under the desk and
pulls out a brightly painted wooden box. He puts it on the desk, opens it and puts on
his white gloves . He dials again.]*

KEITH: *[To DYLAN and GORAN]* Onward and upward boys! We start trading as of
tomorrow evening. Service of the highest order in order. Big reservation, this one.
With a bit of luck-

*[There is an explosion offstage. DYLAN and GORAN down tools and dive under the
desk. We can hear EIRWEN screaming]*

DYLAN: *[coming out from under the desk]* Must have been a sheep.

GORAN: *[Picking up his hammer]* Place is littered with mines.

KEITH: Littered?

[He takes a deck of cards from his pocket and shuffles them nervously]

DYLAN: All went down in the war.

GORAN: Key strategic site this. Keep the English out, like.

KEITH: Did you say...*[on 'phone]* Marsha!...

GORAN: *[shudders]*. Takes you back dunnit? Screaming.

KEITH: *[on phone]*Yeah, look I've just taken an early reservation....No, I'm
listening...

DYLAN: *[Nods.]* Sheep were restless in the night. Heard them coughing in the valley

KEITH: *[on phone]*for tomorrow so.....

GORAN: Someone must have left the gate open.

KEITH: *[on phone]*...so I'll need the glassware and the cutlery ayzap, ok?

*[Enter EIRWEN. She is beside herself with grief. She is wailing and clutching
something to her chest. She cannot keep still.]*

DYLAN: Eirwen?

[EIRWEN wails louder]

KEITH: *[on phone]* ...It's er, it's the chambermaid.... an explosion.

EIRWEN: I told him...

KEITH: *[moving to look out of the window]* ... They said it was a sheep but ... looks like there's a body... No. A person...

EIRWEN:KEEP OFF THE GRASS THERE GWYN....I told him. I told him.

[EIRWEN sits suddenly on the floor.]

DYLAN: What you got there 'Wen?

GORAN: She can't hear you. She's still seeing it, like. On a loop.

KEITH: *[on phone]* ...No, I'm fine...*[To DYLAN]* Can't you shut her up?

GORAN: *[glazing over]* Never got to see my brother die.

DYLAN: *[to KEITH]* It was her brother.

EIRWEN: He trod...he trod on...his foot. I found his foot.

[She holds up the foot she has been clutching. She will not let the others near her]

GORAN: At the Urdd. Stationed at opposite sides of town, like. When the shells fell. We had a row, like...

DYLAN: Give it to me 'Wen.

[EIRWEN hugs the foot close to her again.]

KEITH: *[on phone]* ... just the glasses and the cutlery...No, there's no need. I need you there ...don't worry about that ...

GORAN: ...His new boots, see. Keep squeaking. Won't shut up about these boots.

KEITH: *[on phone]*... I'll find a replacement...Ok ...bye...Good bye...Oh and table – cloths. No, you've gone.

DYLAN: *[to EIRWEN]* It won't bring him back, bach.

[She weeps louder]

GORAN: Went to look for him...

[KEITH puts the phone down. He looks around him and approaches EIRWEN. He takes three coloured handkerchiefs from behind her ear. She weeps louder.]

GORAN: After, like. Twisted metal and settling dust. And the bodies. They were laying them out, covering them up like. And I see this boot sticking out from under one of the covers...

DYLAN: *[to EIRWEN]* Hand me the foot, love.

GORAN: ...Saw the sun winking in the polish...

DYLAN: Eirwen. Give me the foot.

GORAN: ...One boot through the smoke. Other leg just stopped at the ankle-

[EIRWEN screams. GORAN looks over at her. He picks his hammer up slowly. He thinks it is a gun.]

DYLAN: *[gently reaching out to EIRWEN]* Give me the foot.....the foot.....Eirwen.Give me the foot..... have to let go...

[EIRWEN cries louder. KEITH takes a red handkerchief out of DYLAN's left ear and a blue one from his right. GORAN threatens EIRWEN with the hammer. Motions for DYLAN and KEITH to get behind him. She stops crying and looks up at him]

DYLAN: Goran-

GORAN: Put the foot on the ground and walk away

[EIRWEN puts the foot on the ground]

Now walk away from the foot.

[EIRWEN does not move. GORAN strikes at her with the hammer. DYLAN interposes himself between EIRWEN and GORAN. KEITH flourishes the handkerchiefs over the hammer and it disappears. GORAN stares at his empty hands, DYLAN moves to comfort him. GORAN shrugs him off and exits.]

KEITH: *[To DYLAN]* Leave him. Shouldn't be hard to find a new handyman.

DYLAN: You're *sacking* him?

KEITH: Maybe. Maybe not.

[Beat]

Yeah, I am. Sorry.

DYLAN: Why are you apologising to me?

KEITH: Because you're the one who has to go and find me a new handyman.

[DYLAN shakes his head and exits after GORAN. EIRWEN, more composed now, picks up the foot again. She looks a little embarrassed.]

EIRWEN: Oh.

[KEITH walks over to her.]

I really thought...

[KEITH pulls a bunch of flowers from his sleeve and gives them to EIRWEN]

KEITH: You shouldn't be alone tonight.

EIRWEN: *[Smiling at him]* It's just his shoe. Just his shoe. I thought...

KEITH: You really thought-

EIRWEN: There were so many pieces. *[she drops the shoe]* It's just a shoe.

[She looks up at KEITH. He strokes her face]

KEITH: You need to lie down.

HANDS

It is early morning the next day. The sun has not yet risen. We hear the sound of an old taxi engine outside. The door opens slowly letting in a crack of grey light. Enter a large box, being carried by MARSHA. She carries it to the centre of the room and puts it down.

Exit MARSHA.

Enter KEITH from his bedroom, wearing a dressing gown. He fumbles around in the dark and trips over the box. He clutches his foot in his hands.

KEITH: Shit!

[Enter MARSHA with a suitcase, she hears Keith but does not see him.]

MARSHA: Surprise!

KEITH: Shit.

MARSHA: Keith, where are you?

[She sees KEITH in the middle of the floor.]

Oh, Surprise!

KEITH: *[struggling to his feet]* You're two days early.

MARSHA: I know. I came to surprise you sweetie. Huh? You sounded so down on the phone yesterday and I thought, well, it's not fair is it? Besides, I missed you too much. And I knew you'd want to start rehearsing the show for this early reservation. And you could hardly do that without me, could you?

[PAUSE]

Keith?

KEITH: You did what I told you to before you left though right?

MARSHA: I, I thought it was more important that we were together. I came to support you.

KEITH: If you like.

MARSHA: There wasn't time for all that paperwork.

KEITH: But you arranged the rest right? The glasses? The tablecloths?

MARSHA: You never said tablecloths.

KEITH: Oh, I *said* tablecloths. You arranged the rest though right?

MARSHA: Ye-es.

KEITH: What?

MARSHA: It's just...well, just...

KEITH: What?

MARSHA: Just the teaspoons aren't the exact ones that we wanted. But they're really very close. In fact, I almost think they're better. And my train ticket turned out to be quite expensive in the end so I remembered what you told me before. About recovering your losses.

KEITH: Go-od.

MARSHA: Well, I worked out it cost twice as much to have them package it all and deliver it here and seeing as how I was coming here anyway....

[She goes to the box and opens it. As she lifts the lid, a look of horror crosses her face. She quickly tries to shut it again, KEITH stops her and opens it. It is full of cutlery and broken glass.]

KEITH: You stupid bloody woman!

MARSHA: The cutlery's all fine at least. Look. *[She holds up a fork]*

KEITH: *[Picking up a teaspoon]* Feel the weight of that! Rubbish. *[He throws it back in the case]* What the hell did you think was going to happen?

MARSHA: They might not all be broken....

[She starts to sort through the case with her hands looking for an undamaged glass]

KEITH: Might not all be broken? *[He kicks the case in rage. MARSHA gives a little scream]* Of course it's all bloody broken, love. Look at it! *[He boots the case again, less violently and walks away]*

MARSHA: Keith-

KEITH: *[Turning back]* This is you being supportive is it? You've.... I'm going to have to phone my mother.

MARSHA: Keith, my-

KEITH: *[mockingly]* "Keith, my..." What Marsha? Your what?

MARSHA: -my hands.

[She holds up her hands, they are covered in cuts and blood.]

KEITH: Now look what you've done.

MARSHA: Sorry.

KEITH: Sorry's no bleeding good when you're bloody bleeding all over the brand new bloody carpets twelve bleeding hours before the bloody first big booking arrives, is it?

[MARSHA looks down at her hands.]

Well? Go outside and bleeding bleed out there.

[MARSHA goes to leave. She stops at the door.]

MARSHA: Keith, I didn't mean to...

KEITH: Be so stupid? No, you never do, do you?

MARSHA: I-

KEITH: It was a rhetorical question.

MARSHA: Oh? I-

KEITH: You're not supposed to answer it.

MARSHA: Oh.

[Beat]

I'm sorry Keith.

[Exit MARSHA. KEITH sighs. He rushes to his bedroom door and calls into the room]

KEITH: Up! Quick! Up and outta there! *[lowering his voice]* My wife's come early. *[louder]* Up! Out!

[EIRWEN runs out of the bedroom wrapped in a sheet and into the bathroom.

KEITH sighs, shakes his head and moves Marsha's cases into the bedroom.]

LEGS

[DYLAN is cleaning his shoes. Enter MARSHA, her hands still bleeding. She sits on a step and cries to herself. DYLAN watches her.]

MARSHA: Stop looking at me!

[DYLAN smiles to himself and shrugs. He looks away.]

MARSHA: What?

DYLAN: Nothing. Reminded me of something.

MARSHA: Oh. *[She puts her head in her hands and winces with the pain.]* Ow.

DYLAN: What've you done there? *[He looks. Calls off]* Eirwen! Bandages! *[To Marsha.]* What happened love? *[He takes her hands gently in his and examines them.]*

MARSHA: Accident.

DYLAN: Sorry.

[Enter EIRWEN with the first aid kit. DYLAN starts to bandage MARSHA's hands.]

MARSHA: Reminded you of what?

DYLAN: Nothing much. There was this woman whose husband was always angry with her for being stupid. Everything she did, she got something wrong and he shouted and hollered at her every time but still she was as stupid as ever. She sat on the step in the garden.

MARSHA: That's it?

DYLAN: No that's what always happened. The story comes after.

MARSHA: So what changed?

DYLAN: So, they had a cow in the garden and the woman thought that the cow was staring at her.

"What?" she shouted but still the cow stared, chewing slowly under its steady gaze.

"Stop it!" The woman shouted and stamped her foot, "Shoo! Shoo!"

But still the cow just stared and chewed and chewed and stared. So the woman became crosser and angrier and she grabbed the nearest thing to hand – it was an axe – and brought it crashing down between the cow's eyes.

"That'll stop you staring at me!" she screams and the cow lurches one way, then the other, lets out a long low moo and falls dead to the floor.

Well. Her husband, he heard all this commotion, comes rushing outside to see what stupid thing she has done now, like. He saw the dead cow and his face went red, then purple, then blue and then white with rage.

"Stupid woman!" he roared "Now where will we get our milk from? I'll have to save what I can of the meat and try to recover our losses."

So he butchered the cow into steaks and offal and salted some of it to put in the store for the winter. Some of it he packed up to take to sell at market. The rest he left and said to the woman,

"Put that with the cabbage and we will have as much as we can before it goes off."

And off he went to market. The woman thought it was best to do what her husband had told her this time. So, she gathered up the meat in her arms and carried it out to the garden.

"Strange." She thought, "That he should think this will help us through the winter."

And so the cabbage patch was full of steak and chops and liver and tongue and all the dogs from the neighbourhood came sniffing around and began to eat the meat.

"No! Shoo! Away!" shouted the woman. But dogs don't "shoo" so she grabbed the nearest thing to hand – it was a stick – and began to beat them with it. Most of the

dogs escaped her blows. But one old, pregnant dog couldn't run as fast and the woman tried to beat this one weak animal for the crimes of all the others. The old dog yelped and ducked and darted until she found herself cornered in the cellar.

"Now I've got you." said the woman tying a rope around the dog's neck, "Where shall I tether you?"

She grabbed the nearest thing to hand – it was the cork on a wine barrel – and tethered the dog to it. Then she took up her stick and, well, the dog panicked like, and it tugged and tugged until, Pop! And away it ran across the fields. The woman ran after it but she was soon out of breath and returned home to find the cellar knee-deep in wine.

"Oh!" she whined, "Husband will not like this. If I could only cover it up..."

So, she grabbed the nearest thing to hand – it was a bag of flour- and she emptied it over the top of the wine. It wasn't enough so she emptied another sack, then another until all the flour for the winter was gone.

"There!" she thought, "He'll never know."

Well, when her husband came home and found shreds of raw meat all over the garden and a sea of wine-mud in the cellar, he went blue, then white, then grey with rage.

"STUPID WOMAN!" and he grabbed the stick - it was the nearest thing to hand - and began to beat her ...*[He is distracted and looks into the mid-distance.]* Who's that coming now?

[EIRWEN and MARSHA look in the same direction]

That Goran?

[EIRWEN looks closer and shakes her head]

EIRWEN: No, Goran's got two legs.

ARMS

As before, EIRWEN, MARSHA and DYLAN are watching the figure approaching down the hillside. Enter GORAN on crutches. He has lost his left leg. He pushes past them into the foyer and starts searching on the floor frantically as he speaks.

GORAN: So, ok, so I'm down the DSS waiting in line. This guy, he's wearing a big coat all buttoned up to his eyes like. There's people tucked in all around him sweating in shorts and he's peeking out from his parka. Staring at the back of the head in front of him at the counter.

DYLAN: Leave it Gor.

GORAN: Seems he'd been by there before see. He knew what they were going to tell him. The man at the counter didn't. Cashier told him there was no money and he cried like. Knelt down on the floor banging his fists like a prayer. My man steps up. Then I smell it. Marzipan but burnt. And BA BA BABOOM. Whole place goes up like.

EIRWEN: The DSS?

GORAN: Perspex screens melting in their frames. Running and screaming. Guess he was a soldier by here. Knew where the ammo dumps were like and helped himself.

DYLAN: No money, no mercy.

GORAN: I was trapped, see. Under some sort of beam. And my leg started to melt with the heat. Only a cheap one, like. So I undid the buckles, left it there. Pulled myself away with my hands. They took me to the hospital. Just bandages left. No painkillers, no anaesthetics.

[He finds the repaired hole and starts to rip up the floorboards. EIRWEN and DYLAN try to stop him, he swipes at them with his crutch.]

EIRWEN: Lucky you didn't lose your real leg.

GORAN: Aye. Well, that's when I first heard it - "General Saessenegge" like they was trees and his name's the bitter wind rustling through them, stripping them bare. They say he's coming. Say he's on tour.

MARSHA: Does this story have a happy ending?

GORAN: It's not over.

DYLAN: This isn't a story, cariad.

MARSHA *[confused]*: But I thought...sorry.

GORAN: Say he wants to ask forgiveness.

DYLAN: For the war?

GORAN: Aye, or at least for what he did, the orders he issued. He was in the valley the other week, had them all hugging each other.

EIRWEN: But the Eisteddfod? The massacre?

GORAN: And my brother dead without a grave. He'll not get away with it. I'll see to that see.

[Enter KEITH, now dressed for his magic show. He is carrying a maid's uniform, a spangled leotard and chefs' whites]

KEITH: Come on my people, look lively!

[MARSHA jumps up and tries to look lively]

KEITH: Well?

[He gives DYLAN the whites, EIRWEN the maid's uniform and MARSHA the leotard. MARSHA immediately tries to struggle into her costume. This is no easy task.]

Uniforms on. Our guest will be here soon. *[He sees GORAN]* What is he doing here?

GORAN: Saesenegge. Keith's big reservation.

KEITH: V.I.P. B.I.G pay packet. Worth opening early for.

DYLAN: *[throwing down his uniform]* No sorry, I'm on strike. I won't be a part of this. He's a convicted war criminal.

KEITH: He confessed!

EIRWEN: And that makes it ok?

KEITH: *[turning on EIRWEN]* You too?

[EIRWEN shakes her head and exits with her uniform, staring at the floor.]

KEITH: Fine. *[To DYLAN]* Marsha can do your job. It's not like she'll be busy on reception. You can join Hopalong here in the dole queue. Run along Marsha.

[DYLAN gives his whites and hat to MARSHA as she struggles with her leotard.]

DYLAN: I'm sorry but people around here will... react. Here, the valleys, the mountains, people, their lives are different, like. Have to be. It will be a peaceful protest, I'll be sure of that. But we owe this to our absent families. We owe it to the very hills themselves and we shall not be-

GORAN: I wouldn't be so sure

[He has uncovered the hole in the floor. It is full of bombs. He starts to pull them out and lines the room with them]

KEITH: What are you...the war's over.

GORAN: Not when people like him are still walking and people like Gwyn are still dying. Eye for an eye, see.

KEITH: He's an old man. He wants to ask-

GORAN: I don't do forgiveness. Not like that.

EIRWEN: What is 'asking' going to resolve? You have to *do* something.

DYLAN: Have to change.

KEITH: *[starts to shuffle his cards nervously]* Do what?

[GORAN stands with difficulty, having placed explosives all around. He puts a big red button in the middle of the room.]

GORAN: I want an apology. A written apology. On my terms. Or I press the button.

[He pulls out some wire and a car battery from the hole in the floor. He starts to make a circuit connecting them to the central button.]

DYLAN: Placards. I'll need a placard.

[He starts sorting through the wood that has been torn up from the floor.]

KEITH: So it's just brinksmanship then? You're never actually *going* to press the button.

GORAN: Will if he doesn't say he's sorry.

KEITH: And when he does?

GORAN: Sorry?

KEITH: When he does say he's sorry. What are you going to do then?

[PAUSE]

GORAN: Sorry?

KEITH: You haven't even thought this through. Someone will have to pay for this, you know. And for what?

GORAN: Retribution. *He* has to pay.

KEITH: Retri... What? F.Y.I he's one of the good guys. Working for peace. Trying to put things right. Reconcile. Of course he's going to apologise. And then? What? So he's under threat of death and he says he's sorry. What does that achieve?

MARSHA: *[still trying to squeeze herself into her costume]* Well, if he says he's sorry then Goran *can* forgive him.

KEITH: You can't forgive someone just because they say they're sorry out of fear.

MARSHA: I always do, Keith.

[KEITH turns slowly to face MARSHA. She freezes under his angry gaze. She looks ridiculous. The leotard does not fit anymore.]

KEITH: *[To MARSHA]* Look. If you don't want to do the show, just say so.

MARSHA: I... I want to do the show, Keith. I always want to do the show. I'm just-

KEITH: You're just too fat. You're never going to get into that. Look at you! Always *something*, isn't there? You're going to make me a laughing stock. Christ. Why did I marry you?

MARSHA: Because I got pregnant.

KEITH: Well it's no good. I can't perform with you like that.

[MARSHA looks as though she is about to cry. Enter EIRWEN in her maid's uniform. It is far too big for her]

KEITH: Perfect!

MARSHA: *[Pulling off her costume sulkily]* She doesn't know the moves.

KEITH: Then you'll be busy preparing everything else while I teach her the moves won't you?

EIRWEN: Teach me the moves?

KEITH: Swap clothes with Marsha. Think of it as maternity cover.

EIRWEN: Sorry? Oh, I don't think I-

KEITH: It's a damn sight easier than waitressing and double the money.

[MARSHA throws the spangled outfit at EIRWEN who takes it, sighs and exits to get changed. MARSHA follows her.]

KEITH: The General's going to be so taken with my magic show. He'll forget all about your stupid apology.

GORAN: Then I'll blow him to pieces. And all of this with him.

*[There is a low rumbling noise. The lights flicker out. Enter **EIRWEN** in the leotard and headdress carrying a hurricane lantern.]*

EIRWEN: Goran, did you remember to shut the gate behind you?

[There is the sound of a large explosion followed by the baaaa of a dying sheep.]

HEADS

Later that day. Back in the hotel foyer. The room is lit by candles and hurricane lanterns. Throughout the scene, we hear the intermittent sound of sheep blowing up outside. MARSHA, dressed as a maid, goes back and forth laying the reception desk for the General's dinner. EIRWEN and KEITH practice their magic routine. DYLAN stands holding his placard by the door. He has taped over his mouth. GORAN sits by the button preparing the General's apology.

GORAN: *[as he writes]* I the undersigned English bastard General do hereby accept all responsibility for any actions negative or otherwise which may have directly or indirectly damaged the Welsh people, their heritage, homes and farm animals. Not only do I confess and take on my culpability I also wish to make an apology from one country to another by way of the aforementioned apology for the following;

KEITH: Just indicate that it's empty.

[EIRWEN gestures around the magic box showing the 'audience' that it's empty. MARSHA looks on with envy. She covers the desk with a sheet.]

GORAN: I am sorry for the massacre of three hundred indigenous welsh peoples at the National Eisteddfod in Llangollen two years past and for my own significant part therein.

KEITH: You're a natural, honey. When I tap this three times you open it.

[He taps the lid of the box three times, EIRWEN opens it, he pulls out a white rabbit. MARSHA slams the cutlery and a mug down on the table, breathing heavily and exits.]

GORAN: I am sorry for the death, which was entirely my fault and particularly unfair given that they were not, at that time, on speaking terms, of Morgan Pliers, deceased brother of Goran.

EIRWEN: What time is he due in?

KEITH: E.T.A *[he checks his watch]* Couple of hours.

[Enter MARSHA, breathing very heavily, staggering under the weight of a tray. She never takes her eyes off KEITH and EIRWEN.]

GORAN: I am sorry for England's initiation of military force against Wales on the Northern Border three years ago that led to Welsh retaliation in the form of the border defence minefields that caused the death in peacetime of Gwyn Gwyn Dafies, brother of Eirwen.

[EIRWEN pretends to cry, KEITH pulls a string of handkerchiefs from his sleeve for her. MARSHA, with her back to the audience, grasps the table, blowing]

MARSHA: Keith-

KEITH: And that's it. Now we just wait.

[He and EIRWEN sit down to wait.]

GORAN: I am sorry on behalf of English History for its flagrant omission of the Rebecca Riots and the Merthyr Rising accounting for the struggle of the Welsh workers against the English feudal autocracy of the nineteenth century by way of the storming of workhouses and burning of tollgates whilst riding wooden horses dressed in women's clothes. Connected to this, I am also sorry for the brutal actions of the English military at *that* Newport Hotel and the violent quenching of Chartism in the 1850's and furthermore now own that they were indeed right all along.

KEITH: *[To EIRWEN]* You know you're really very good at this.

GORAN: For that last, I am not sorry.

MARSHA: I can't do this. Keith!

KEITH: A minute, Marsha. *[To EIRWEN]* There is one more thing we could try.

[MARSHA drops to the floor, spilling a jug of water.]

GORAN: I am sorry for the establishment of English-speaking judiciary and educational establishments which have for the past one hundred years persecuted and exploited the Welshman and attempted, albeit feebly, to crush his native tongue.

KEITH: I'd like to saw you in half.

MARSHA: Keith, the baby.

KEITH: Can't it wait?

GORAN: I am sorry for the evacuation, destruction and flooding of Welsh villages for the pathetic purpose of reservoirs to water the over-populated cities of England.

[MARSHA breathes heavily, hard and fast. She is having contractions. KEITH stares at her, rooted to the spot. EIRWEN goes to her and tries to make her comfortable.]

GORAN: I am sorry for and hereby retract loopholes in English bylaws allowing the murder with a crossbow by an Englishman in his garden after dark, of a Welshman.

MARSHA: Keith! *[She holds out her hand to him.]*

GORAN: I am sorry we shut the mines.

[KEITH takes her hand awkwardly]

GORAN: I am sorry St George killed the dragon.

EIRWEN: *[looking]* I can't see the head...

GORAN: Lastly I am sorry for and deeply ashamed of England, our behaviour and attitudes as a nation and as individuals over all time and I am, most saliently, sorry for being English.

Signed....

Blah. Blah. Blah. Now we just wait.

KEITH: You're really having the baby now?

[MARSHA cannot answer.]

GORAN: Isn't this all a bit...quick?

[MARSHA gives one more push. EIRWEN stands suddenly and walks away.

MARSHA watches her nervously.]

KEITH: Come back, I can't...I need you.

EIRWEN: I'm sorry Keith.

KEITH: Sorry? What for? I'm about to become a father.

EIRWEN: Well, that's just it...

GORAN: *[laughing]* She's not pregnant is she?

[PAUSE. They all look down at MARSHA.]

MARSHA: II am.

KEITH: She is.

[GORAN strides over to her, reaches up her skirt and pulls out a pillow which he presents to KEITH]

GORAN: There you are. Your heir.

KEITH: Marsha – I married you. How could you? Why?

[They start to close in on MARSHA angrily. DYLAN turns and faces into the room.]

MARSHA: Why? How could I? How could you, Keith? *[her voice is becoming a scream]* You never ask to see me in half anymore!

KEITH:*[Advancing on her, threateningly]* Only because I thought you were pregnant. You st-

[DYLAN, with his mouth still taped jumps into the angry throng.]

DYLAN: STOP THIS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU TALK OF RIGHT AND WRONG, WHAT YOU DESERVE, WHAT YOU WANT. IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU. FINE. DON'T FORGIVE EACH OTHER, DON'T FORGIVE HIM. MAYBE IT IS TOO SOON. BUT WE HAVE TO WORK SO THAT ONE DAY WE OR OUR CHILDREN OR THEIR CHILDREN CAN FORGIVE AND FORGET AND BE TRULY RECONCILED. YOU. ALL OF YOU. YOU MUST FORGIVE YOURSELVES FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE BEFORE ANY OF THAT CAN BEGIN. NOW ALL OF YOU SHAKE HANDS AND MAKE UP.

[Ashamed, they all begin to shake each other's hands and apologise softly. GORAN refuses to take KEITH's hand.]

GIVE HIM BACK HIS HAMMER.

[KEITH places his magic box in front of GORAN and taps it three times. It lights up. GORAN opens it and smiles. He takes out his hammer and shakes KEITH's hand.]

NOW WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE TAKE THIS BLOODY TAPE OFF MY MOUTH?

[KEITH takes the tape off. All except EIRWEN crowd around DYLAN, apologising to him and hugging him.]

MARSHA: The story. Tell us the end of your story.

DYLAN: *[stretching his mouth]* Well, after her husband hit her, the woman ran to the top of the tower in the ruins of a rich man's folly and cried her eyes out. Well, as she cried, her hand fell into a hole in the stone and she felt something hidden there. She pulled it out. It was a bag of gold coins.

"Now who's stupid?" she said when she showed the gold to her husband

"This is fantastic!" He said "But we must never tell anyone. The officials will want to take it from us"

*[The noise outside has stopped. **EIRWEN** moves unnoticed, away from the group. She looks at the button. She sees the magic box. It lights up. She kneels, opens it and takes out her brother's shoe.]*

DYLAN: So he hid some of the gold up the chimney but first he took out seven gold coins to replace the wine and flour they had lost and he set off to market. No sooner than he had left he came back running and shouting to the woman, "Run! Hide! The Chicken armies are invading! Quick! Hide!" So, she hid petrified and trembling down in the vegetable store with the closed wooden trapdoor right above her head...

*[He is distracted when he sees **EIRWEN** holding the shoe over the magic box.]*
What you got there, 'Wen?

EIRWEN: Don't bring them back. None of them. Don't make it better.

[She puts the shoe back in the box and carries it over to the button. She puts the box down.]

It's not over. I don't want to forget. I'm sorry.

[She stamps hard on the detonator button.

We hear a gigantic explosion.

BLACKOUT

PAUSE.

*The magic box begins to glow. We hear a faint noise. **DYLAN** has survived. He crawls over to the box in the darkness and opens it. His face is lit, confused. He takes out a newborn baby and cradles it in his arms.*

BLACKOUT.]